
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) Renews Two-Year Funding for Luther College's Voluntary Sector Studies Network

Regina, SK – Luther College's Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) will receive renewed support from the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) through a second, two-year grant worth \$217,200 to implement its innovative 2017-2019 Action Plan. The first CIF grant worth \$209,888 was awarded in 2015 to support VSSN's development of the Nonprofit Sector Leadership & Innovation (NSLI) Certificate in 2015-2017.

"The VSSN, through its collaborative approach to learning and research, has the potential to positively impact the nonprofit sector in Saskatchewan both in the short-term and well into the future," indicates Tracey Mann, Executive Director of CIF. "The CIF is very pleased to renew its funding to ensure the VSSN has the capacity to continue to build upon the strong foundation established during the past two years."

"Luther College's academic program has always emphasized community engagement and the VSSN is simply the latest and fullest manifestation of that engagement," says Dr. Bryan Hillis, President of Luther College. "We are very grateful to CIF for its enabling funds that will allow VSSN to continue to connect voluntary agencies, help in their training and extend the research these agencies require to continue their good work."

The funding announcement was made on June 9, 2017, at the annual VSSN/SNP conference, which aims to strengthen the nonprofit/charitable sector within the province. Entitled "Common Threads: Weaving a Stronger Nonprofit Sector" and co-hosted by the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership (SNP) and VSSN, this year's conference welcomed more than 100 individuals representing students, academics, and nonprofits gathered to network and explore trends, including policy, advocacy, inclusivity, and participation in the nonprofit sector.

The response to this year's conference was extremely positive. Within the first week of registration, the conference was nearing capacity. "The number of conference registrants increased by over 110% from last year," states Jennifer Billan, Coordinator of VSSN. "This growth in participation clearly indicates the need for conferences such as this, and VSSN is grateful for the funding from CIF and Luther College at the University of Regina that allows us to continue to advance our work with the nonprofit sector."

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“Weaving a stronger nonprofit sector is essential to the success of our collective efforts as community-based organizations,” indicates Dr. Corey Hadden, Regional Director of Saskatchewan Abilities Council. “Individually, nonprofits throughout Saskatchewan support some of the most marginalized and vulnerable members of our communities. By weaving our efforts together, we are able to demonstrate the significance of our efforts to society as a whole. Today’s conference allowed us to network, share, and learn together, and we are thankful for the opportunity.”

Launched in October 2014, the VSSN is an interdisciplinary, community-university collaborative at Luther College at the University of Regina, comprising students, voluntary organizations, and faculty and staff, involved in dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships to learn, research, and innovate.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Michelle Clark

Manager of Alumni Relations, Development & Communications

Luther College at the University of Regina

communications@luthercollege.edu / 306.585.5144