

# News Release



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Luther College's Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) Receives Top International Award in Education for Sustainable Development from United Nations University**

Regina, SK – The United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) in Tokyo has awarded Luther College's Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) with a Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Award for its role in "Enabling Policy and Contributing to Capacity Development in the field of Higher Education." VSSN was designated an "Outstanding Flagship Project," the highest designation for this international award.

"This award is very important to VSSN because it is an acknowledgement, on an international stage, of the important role that VSSN, and Luther College, is playing to enhance the sustainability of the nonprofit sector," indicates Dr. Franz Volker Greifenhagen, Academic Dean of Luther College. "With the global exposure given to VSSN, this could lead to global opportunities for projects and research by VSSN as well as potentially building connectivity between Saskatchewan and the world."

"It is quite rare for projects to receive the highest designation of 'Outstanding Flagship Project,'" notes Dr. Roger Petry, co-chair of RCE Saskatchewan and Luther College professor. "With this award, Luther will be recognized around the world by 146 RCE regions, the UN University, and the UN System, as an example of best practices for an ESD project including knowledge production and research. The voluntary sector plays a key role in addressing many of the pressing sustainability challenges the world is facing."

This international award specifically recognizes VSSN's innovation in education through the Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation (NSLI) Certificate, a certificate program developed as a result of being identified as the highest priority and greatest need by the voluntary/non-profit sector. "Pending approval by the University of Regina Senate, this certificate will be available at the University of Regina beginning in the Fall 2016," indicates Dr. Mary Vetter, Interim Director of VSSN and Luther professor, "and will provide students

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with the knowledge and experience for leadership in the sector. Luther College will teach the NSLI courses, which will be based on a community-engaged, project-based learning approach.”

“We are very excited about this international recognition by the UN University,” says Dr. Bryan Hillis, President of Luther College. “The recognition also reflects well on the University of Regina which is a partner with Luther College in establishing this program. The Certificate is the first educational opportunity in Saskatchewan where students can learn explicitly about the voluntary/non-profit sector and its many community-based careers. Its main purpose is to generate interest in, and passion for, the voluntary sector through new university courses as well as to foster direct links to diverse career opportunities in the sector.”

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

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

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