

President Hammersmith's Spring Report "Growing Into Our Fifth Decade" Lilly Event, New Main, 4.15.09

Where life and learning meet.™



Good evening. I'd like to express my special appreciation to David and Perrin Lilly for making this event possible, and I thank every one of you for joining us today.

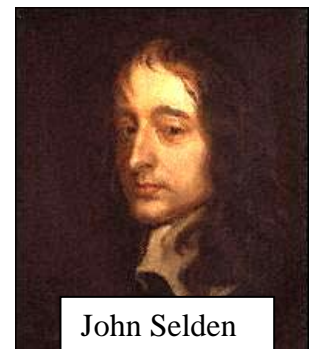
It seems like only yesterday that I arrived as Metropolitan State University's sixth president. The faculty, staff, students, and the community have made me feel very welcome, very at home. I am inspired by their loyalty, commitment, and creativity, and I am delighted to be part of this University,

As I've settled into the Presidency here at Metropolitan State, I have really come to appreciate the complexity and uniqueness of the institution. And just how many different things need to be tended to, all at the same time:

- Planning, budgets, meetings, policies.
- Getting to know and working with students, faculty, alumni, legislators, mayors, MnSCU officials, community leaders.
- Moving ahead with building projects, energy conservation, educational and community partnerships
- Strategic investments, and—of course—the dreaded budget cuts from the State.

John Selden, a 16th century English Statesman, could have been talking about a modern University when he said, "The world cannot be governed without juggling." I've discovered first-hand that being a University president is a lot like being a juggler:

- You have to keep lots of things up in the air.
- You have to keep your eye on everything.
- You can only touch one or two things at a time,
- But you are responsible for keeping everything in motion.
- And it is considered very bad form if things hit the floor.



The items they were juggling represent the main points of my presentation. Metropolitan State has been doing incredible things. Way too many to get into tonight. So I hope you will embrace the juggling metaphor as I throw out some points of pride for Metropolitan State University.

I've found that the Metropolitan State story impresses even those who thought they knew all about us. We have a unique history of innovative programs, community engagement, exceptional faculty and staff, and we have outstanding support for adult learners and other nontraditional students.



We also are the only truly affordable university in the Twin Cities. Our tuition and fees are less than half of the University of Minnesota's and one-sixth of the average private institution in the Twin Cities. That's because we don't fund stadiums, recreation, personal services, or residential life. We just focus on education, and we keep it affordable.

We're also very accessible to learners in many different populations, life circumstances, locations, and ages. Students of color, including many new Americans, now make up 30% of our students. That is the highest figure in Minnesota or in any of our neighboring states. We also serve the largest percentage of part-time students and adult learners of any of Minnesota's public universities.

We "wrote the book" on being flexible:

- Using both resident faculty and community faculty gives us enormous flexibility in our program design and delivery.
- We were a national pioneer in online learning and the enormous access and flexibility that offers.
- Our individualized majors give us flexibility to meet the unique educational needs of individual students.
- And we can develop new programs to meet new needs faster and better than anyone.

We are radically student-focused:

- We organize our entire schedule and delivery system around the needs of our students, so we teach evenings, weekends, and online.
- I'll talk more about this in a bit.



We consider our campus to be the entire metropolitan area. State statute defines our campus as the seven-county metropolitan region, and we teach in 17 different locations across the metro area.

As Metropolitan State prepares to launch into its fifth decade, I want to note the characteristics that have set Metropolitan State apart during the past 40 years:

- an unapologetically nontraditional approach,
- active student involvement in the educational process and
- a focus on demonstrable learning outcomes, however they are achieved.



These founding characteristics are still alive and well at Metropolitan State. They are embedded in five core values that continue to guide the University as we enter into what I believe will be a truly transformative fifth decade:

1. accessibility
2. a student-focused mission
3. dedication to quality and innovation,
4. commitment to the community, and
5. growth to serve our students, community, and the State.

At Metropolitan State, these values pervade the University's history, mission, programs, and even our Web site. And they are not static. They are all dynamic. And that's what we juggle as we move into the future.



The first theme I invite you to juggle in your mind is ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION.

A global economy dictates that virtually all high school graduates must have some post-secondary education in order to support themselves and function in society. And yet too many Americans do not have meaningful access to higher education.

Metropolitan State reaches out to residents across the Twin Cities. We have a TRIO program, Upward Bound, and the Power of You program, which we offer with Saint Paul College and MCTC. The Power of You has more than doubled

the number of Saint Paul or Minneapolis Public School graduates continuing into higher education.



Metropolitan State also reaches out to our communities of color, new immigrants, and busy working adults who want to better their lives. As a result, Metropolitan State is home to the most diverse student body of any public university in our five-state region.

Thirty percent of our undergraduates are students of color. As of 2008, the graduation rates of our minority students are on par with those of our white students. In short, Metropolitan State has no “achievement gap.”

That's good for our students and good for the Twin Cities.

It's also almost unheard of in higher education. How do we do it? I would suggest three factors:

- First, we have small classes that promote a high level of interaction and active learning.
- We also have invested heavily in professional staff that provides personalized advising, retention services, and cultural support.
- Finally, we have a culturally diverse faculty and staff, which strengthen both our workplace and our learning environment.



Another sign of meaningful access is the strong and steady enrollment growth. Our class enrollments this year are 7% over last year's, and we expect that trend to continue. We offer classes in the evenings, weekends, and online, allowing many students to attend who otherwise could not continue their education. We also have more than 200 articulation agreements with the two-year colleges, extending access to those students.

For Metropolitan State, access drives when, where, and how we offer our classes. We offer courses at 17 different locations across the metropolitan area. Our biggest growth is in online education, which increases access for busy adults. As we look to the future, we look at new locations and modes of delivery that will continue to make us affordable, convenient, and accessible to our students.

Our 2nd theme to juggle is being STUDENT-focused.

Metropolitan State is known nationally for its extraordinary student-focus.


- We're so student-focused that we maintain a student-faculty ratio of 13 to 1. That compares to St. Thomas at 16 to 1, Hamline at 15 to 1, and the U at 21 to 1. Student-to-faculty ratios like ours are the gold standard in higher education. None of our classes enroll over 45 or 50 students, and most are much smaller.
- Our academic advisors and retention specialists function like personal coaches. They actively reach out to students to make sure they stay on track, get the classes they need and overcome any obstacles they run into.



- 95% of our students are transfer students from the University of Minnesota, other MnSCU institutions, or elsewhere. We recognize and accept prior college work of the transfer students without making them start over or lose half of their credits, as often happens elsewhere.

- Many of our students have had significant prior learning, perhaps from the military, in the workplace, or through independent study or experience. We pioneered the program, nationally, for assessing and giving college credit for such prior learning.
- And students with unique educational interests or needs can pursue an individually designed major. Some examples of these majors include:
 - Community Development and Political Activism
 - Global Cultural Studies
 - Service Learning and International Development

"The Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree program offered much greater flexibility, support, and self-directed opportunities than any other program I could find."



Ochen Kaylen
Web Producer,
American Radio Works
BA Individualized Studies '08

As I talk with students and alumni, I hear two powerful statements over and over again.

- Alumni often describe their education at Metropolitan State as “transformative.” That is the highest praise any university can receive.
- Second, students and alums tell me about the personal relationships they developed with particular faculty members or advisors.

As a result of all this, Metropolitan State was selected among all the universities in the country to receive the 2008 Outstanding Service Award from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). They wrote:



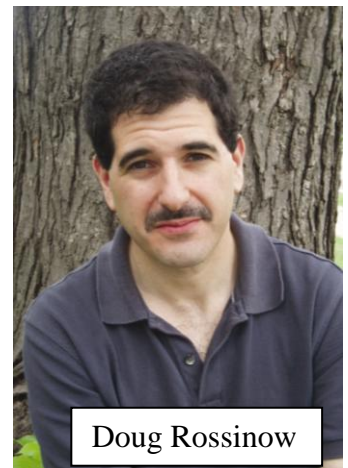
“CAEL honors Metropolitan State’s student-centered approach to serving adult students which includes recognition of demonstrated learning gained outside the classroom, access to small classes with flexible class schedules, and a commitment to high-quality, affordable education for working adult students.”

Our third theme to juggle is QUALITY & INNOVATION.

Metropolitan State has a core commitment to quality and innovation. Our students and alumni tell me that our full-time Resident Faculty are exceptional teachers, mentors, and innovators.



- Creative writing professor Alison McGhee, for instance, has authored 17 books. She is a Pulitzer Prize nominee, a New York Times #1 best-selling author, and recipient of more literary and book club awards that I can mention.
- In 2008, the History News Network named professor Doug Rossinow as one of the nation’s “Top Young Historians.”



As good as our Resident Faculty are, though, it's our use of Community Faculty that really sets Metropolitan State apart. The Community Faculty are outstanding practicing professionals who bring their extensive experience and expertise directly into our curriculum and into the classroom.

- Alumnus Jesse Bethke Gomez, for example, tells me that he was thrilled to be able to take his first strategic planning class from the Vice President in charge of strategic planning for Honeywell International.
- And Tim Caskey, HR director at Allina Hospitals and Clinics, was able to take an operations management class taught by a Mayo Clinic Vice President.

Community Faculty
“We Practice What We Teach”



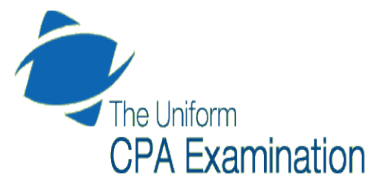
*Saint Paul Police Chief
John M. Harrington
teaches Community-
Oriented Policing*

*Larry Morgan, Principal
of Orion HR Group,
teaches Compensation
Management*

*Senator Sandy Pappas
teaches Legislative
Lobbying*

That combination of Resident Faculty and Community Faculty is absolutely priceless. And it shows in the quality of our students.

- According to MnSCU's statistics, Metropolitan State graduates have a 93% pass rate on their professional licensure exams. That's the highest pass rate of any of the 7 universities in the MnSCU system. Higher than Winona, Mankato, St. Cloud, or any of the others.
- Our graduates also are well-represented among the top-ten-scoring students on the CPA exam, and our students have the highest pass rates in Minnesota on the Certified Management Accountant exam.
- This spring 7 statewide Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarships were awarded to MnSCU students from across the state. Three of the seven went to Metropolitan State students.



Metropolitan State was a national pioneer in developing online learning and putting student services and entire degree programs online. The National Academic Advisors Association has recognized our Center for Online Learning and our online student services with both their Outstanding Advising Award and their Outstanding Advising Technology Innovation Award. Our online courses have the same student retention, completion rates, and demonstrated learning outcomes as our face-to-face courses.



Last month, our regional accreditation team told us they were so impressed with the quality of our online programs that Metropolitan State should serve as the model, nationally, for all online education.

And then there is the United States Peace Corps. The Peace Corps accepts volunteers with 2-year community college degrees, and they wanted to give the volunteers an opportunity to pursue or complete their bachelor's degrees while serving in the Peace Corps. Two years ago, following a national competition, the US Peace Corps awarded Metropolitan State University an exclusive contract to offer our Bachelor of Arts degree in Individualized Studies to active and returning Peace Corps Volunteers. I am proud to announce that our first Peace Corps graduate, Carrie May, will earn her degree this spring.



Metropolitan State also has a rich history of corporate educational partnerships. We hold exclusive contracts to provide degree completion programs, with significant online components, for the Minnesota Society of CPAs and for the Schwann



Company. We also partner with Travelers Companies on the Travelers Pathway program to meet their future workforce needs.

We are proud to have been chosen to host Minnesota's Center of Excellence for Strategic Information Technology and Security. Working with business, industry and other educational institutions, we are proud to be at the forefront in recruiting and educating this workforce of the future.



Finally, Metropolitan State was one of the first universities in the country to commit to the AQIP program, for continuing quality improvement, as the framework for our regional accreditation. Just last month, we had our accreditation team review and site visit. The results were as good as they get. They said they were particularly impressed that they saw a systematic culture of continuing quality improvement throughout the organization.



Another important theme to juggle is our COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY.

One of Metropolitan State’s founding principles is a deep commitment to the communities we serve. Since we moved to Dayton’s Bluff in the 1990s, we have actively pursued that commitment.



Consider our library, for example. Dayton’s Bluff had never had a branch library, so when we began planning for ours, we reached out to the Saint Paul Public Library to explore the possibility of our hosting a branch library for the Dayton’s Bluff community. Our library has been open for five years now, and the results speak for themselves.



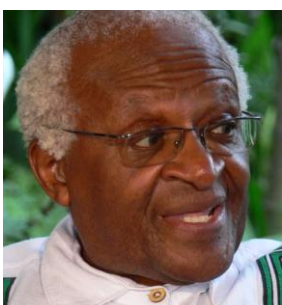
In the University library, community members can obtain library cards and use online terminals. There is a reading corner for young children, a Homework Help Center and a Family Literacy Program that serves recent immigrants.

Our art gallery also is reaching out to the community. In recent months we’ve entered into an agreement with the family of the late famed Saint Paul photographer, Gordon Parks. Next year, our art gallery will be renamed the Gordon Parks Gallery. Our gallery is actively partnering with Gordon Park’s great-niece, Robin Hickman, and with the Dayton’s Bluff Elementary School, Cleveland Middle School, and the Gordon Parks High School to extend his legacy, inspiration and hope to children in our local community. Gordon Parks wrote that his camera was his “weapon of choice.” And we want to help these young people develop their art and their voice as their best “weapon of choice.”

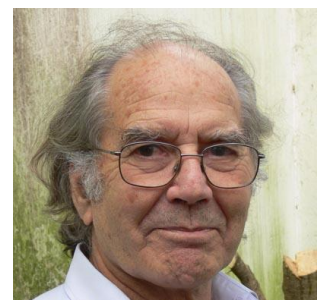


Our Center for Community-Based Learning is another creative engine for community connections. Throughout the year “College for Kids” and the “YOUiversity” programs bring school children to campus for a day to sample classes and programs. We help them understand that this university can be part of their future, and that studying hard to prepare can open wonderful doors for them.

In partnership with youthrive, we also hosted a unique event called “PeaceJam.” Peacejam uses Nobel Peace Prize recipients to inspire high school youth to build peace in their communities and in the world. A year ago we hosted Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, and just last month we welcomed Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of Argentina. Each of these Nobel Laureates delivered a



Desmond Tutu



Adolfo Pérez Esquivel

Presidential lecture for the campus and the public, and then spent the whole weekend inspiring and working with Twin Cities high school students.

Metropolitan State University also participates in the national American Democracy Project to promote among young people an understanding of and commitment to our system of democratic government. This past year our students

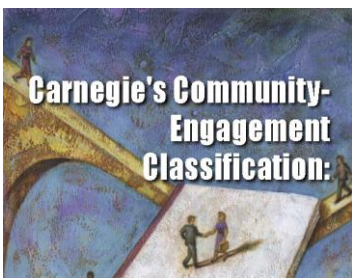


conducted a vigorous get-out-the-vote drive. Many of our students were first-time voters. Some were brand new citizens. Our faculty and staff also include many new citizens who had voted only once or twice before.

On Inauguration Day, over 300 Metropolitan State students, faculty, and staff gathered on the Saint Paul campus to witness and celebrate the inauguration of our new U.S. President. We noted the historic significance of the event—a 200-year tradition of the peaceful transfer of power, and an historic moment when we stepped over the great racial barrier. Democrat, Republican, Independent, other—it didn't matter. We all celebrated together. As we did so, three bald eagles circled outside the windows of the Great Hall.

Metropolitan State alumni tend to stay in this area and play an important role in the community. We are very proud of the success they've had in business, government, education and more. Our alumni include:

- Jim Lukaszewski – communication expert
- Caroline Lowe – WCCO-TV
- Sam Sumana – Vice President of Sierra Leone
- Pat Flahaven – who recently retired as Secretary of the Minnesota State Senate.

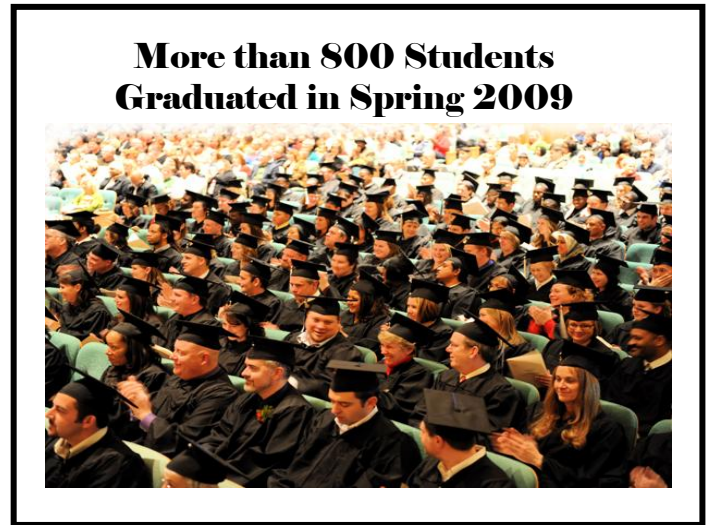


This year, Metropolitan State's legacy of community involvement was recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. It established a new Community Engagement classification to recognize the U.S. colleges and universities who are national leaders in community outreach and partnerships. Metropolitan State University was one of only 119 institutions so designated.

Our fifth and final theme to juggle is our commitment to GROWING OUR CAPACITY TO SERVE OUR STUDENTS, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE STATE.

Our enrollments are growing at a healthy rate already, increasing by 11% in just the last two years, and our State Demographer projects that the audiences we serve will continue to grow significantly. MnSCU Chancellor McCormick has challenged us to grow to 20,000 students by the year 2020.

What accounts for Metropolitan State's enrollment growth? Our biggest growth is in online courses. One in three Metropolitan State students is enrolled in at least one on-line course.



We also continue to develop new degree programs that meet emerging needs, such as:

- computer forensics
- management accounting
- urban teacher education
- a master's degree in nursing for people who have undergraduate degrees in non-health-related fields.

This spring we will graduate our first doctoral students, with a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. And next year we plan to launch a Doctorate in Business Administration to meet needs expressed by business and industry.

We also are growing in our physical plant. We are no longer, thank heavens, a "university without walls." Both the Minnesota House and Senate budget bills include funding for our "Smart Classroom Project" next to St. John's Hall. We also are about to break ground on a new state-of-the-art Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Education Center, a Metropolitan State University building that will be located in Brooklyn Park. Finally, we are in the planning stages for a large Science Education Center that will go up across 6th Street from the Saint Paul campus.



CONCLUSION

These are some of the things I've had the pleasure of juggling this year. Higher Education in the nation and in Minnesota is facing a time of transformative growth and change, and I look forward to that. But the most important things at Metropolitan State will not change. We will continue to be a distinctive University. We will continue to make our programs affordable, flexible, accessible, student-focused, and designed for people across the entire metropolitan region. We will continue to serve a diverse student population with diverse faculty and staff.

And we will stay true to our legacy, in the next ten years, by focusing on the five themes and values we have discussed:

- an accessible education;
- a student-focused mission
- a dedication to quality and innovation
- a deep commitment to the community, and
- a strategic pattern of growth to support our students, community, and State.



For those of us leading the University, it will continue to be an exercise in juggling. I have given you quite a bit to remember and juggle in your own mind. I hope you leave this evening with a sense of enthusiasm and pride for what we're doing. Metropolitan State University is unique and we're making a unique contribution for the benefit of our 9000 students, the Twin Cities and the State of Minnesota. We have a very exciting future ahead of us, and I invite you to be connected and be a part of our future.

As for me, I'll keep juggling the affairs of Metropolitan State University. I am so pleased to be a part of this enterprise. Thank you for your interest in Metropolitan State University, and thank you for coming this evening.

We'll stay in touch.