

**Remarks of Sue K. Hammersmith,
President of Metropolitan State University,
to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees
Ad Hoc Committee on System Planning Listening Session**

*Hennepin Technical College – Brooklyn Park Campus
January 21, 2010*

I am Sue Hammersmith, President of Metropolitan State University. Thank you for this opportunity to comment, briefly, on the major changes and challenges we face here in the metropolitan area, and on the planning priorities that are needed to address those challenges in the years ahead.

The MnSCU institutions here in the metropolitan area all face a tremendous market demand and tremendous enrollment pressures. Metropolitan State enrollments have grown over 20% over the past three years. The Metro Alliance two-year colleges are also experiencing tremendous enrollment growth. They now serve **150,000 learners a year**. Approximately half of those students plan to complete a baccalaureate degree.

This is a huge educational “pipeline,” a huge talent pool, a huge potential economic asset. I urge you to make it a priority to expand our capacity to serve this enormous market here in the Twin Cities.

That means expanding our physical presence, our visibility, and our staffing. It also means recognizing and publicizing the quality of the baccalaureate and graduate education we offer right here in the Twin Cities.

On your dashboard measure of educational quality (the graduates’ pass rates on their professional certification exams) Metropolitan State graduates score the highest of any of the MnSCU universities: 10 percentage points higher than MSU-Mankato and 9 percentage points higher than St. Cloud State University. On the Educational Testing Services’ national competency exam for baccalaureate business graduates, which is taken by 83,000 students a year, Metropolitan State’s business students scored at the 85th percentile in accounting, the 85th percentile in economics, the 80th percentile in finance, and the 75th percentile in management information systems. That is demonstrable quality.

Metropolitan State also has been specifically selected to serve as the educational provider by the US Peace Corps, the Minnesota Society of CPAs, Travelers Insurance, Saint Paul Fire Department, and the Schwann Company. We have the highest retention and graduation rates of all the MnSCU Universities, and we have won national awards for excellence in online education, adult education, academic advising, and civic engagement.

We are meeting real workforce development needs at the baccalaureate and graduate level, and we have active partnerships with the two-years colleges across the metropolitan area, including this very campus where we will be offering baccalaureate and graduate programs in law enforcement and criminal justice in our new LECJEC facility that will open in August 2010. We have over 400 articulation agreements and we teach on all of the college campuses: on our campuses in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Midway; and four other locations across the metro area.

In short, Metropolitan State offers high-quality education that is affordable, convenient, and geared to meet today market needs. Our Metro Alliance institutions serve the diverse populations and communities of the Twin Cities more effectively and more economically than any other institutions. Metropolitan State offers a high quality education at the lowest cost among the MnSCU universities. I know that's important to you.

We need your support and investment to expand capacity in light of the growing demand without compromising the quality we've worked so hard to achieve. To expand enrollments without the requisite infrastructure is a recipe for disaster. Consequently, we urge that you make it a priority to provide the infrastructure we need to do the job that the market demands here at Metropolitan State University.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment.