

Metropolitan State University

# buzz

FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

SPRING 2019 VOLUME 11, NO. 2

**Alumnus  
of the Year  
Michael O'Connor '92**

Metropolitan  
State University





*Botanical*  
Becca Peterson  
drawing, 2017

# Office Hours



Greetings! In the press, when innovation and higher education are mentioned together, what follows is often a story about colleges and universities being threatened by “disruptive innovation.” And it is true that every profession and organization needs to discern new trends, adapt to new challenges that they could choose to ignore, and strive to provide services and products that will meet people’s needs well into the future.

But, in fact, innovation has long been one of higher learning’s most important contributions to society. Today, it’s a two-way street: universities continue to discover and disseminate new ideas, new solutions, new technologies, and new ways of serving and empowering communities. At the same time, we seek out new ways of carrying out our own work, from unprecedented teaching and learning strategies to getting as close as we can to campus operations with zero carbon footprint. Our communications with our current and prospective students are visible examples of a sea-change in how we operate and in the results we can achieve.

I often find myself quoting an acquaintance and colleague, Jaime Casap, Google’s “Chief Education Evangelist,” who said at a recent conference in this area that colleges have asked students for too long, “What do you want to major in?” What they should ask, he says, is “What problem do you want to solve?” Then they should help each student create the degree program to support solving that problem.

Many of you know that our original degree program, for many years our only degree program, and still today our most popular degree program, is the Bachelor of

Arts in Individualized Studies. That innovative platform, paired with skilled guidance and support from faculty and advisors, is ideal for both transfer students and more experienced students who often have very clear ideas of what they want to work on. It means that thousands of Metropolitan State students have designed unique, unrepeatable degree programs, and then put them to work. That is innovation.

You won’t be surprised, but I am sure you will be pleased to learn that we have now launched two new programs, a Master of Arts and a Master of Science in Individualized Studies. We are bringing the same openness, creativity, lifelong learning, and problem-solving to the graduate level because our world now presents us with graduate-level problems to solve.

Years ago, a Metropolitan State alumna had an innovative idea. As a community faculty member, Sen. Sandy Pappas regularly taught classes that met at the State Capitol. What would happen if she joined with the university to invite alumni to meet for breakfast at the Capitol, early in each legislative session, to meet other alumni, hear from the university’s president, and get acquainted with legislators, some of whom are also alumni? No one else was doing it, but what would happen if we tried?

The result, again this January, was a large room full of people on a cold morning, enthusiastic conversations about achieving the best for the state and the university we love, new relationships, and a table full of empty coffee urns.

I am excited about the innovation taking place at Metropolitan State University. I am especially excited about the innovations we can’t predict. Each student who receives a scholarship that enables her to stay enrolled and finish a program represents new ideas and accomplishments that are unleashed to solve big problems. I am so proud to invite you to join me in the work of turning loose this generation of students’ curiosity and energy, one degree at a time. Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia Arthur". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Virginia “Ginny” Arthur, JD  
President

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Community	6
Learning in the Community	
Alumni Spotlight	8
The Alumnus of the Year: Dr. Michael O'Connor '92	
Outstanding Students	12
Fall 2018	
Celebrating Success	14
The Scholarship Celebration	
Student Success	16
Rakea Begum '19	
Leading the Way	17
Susan Misterek	
Metro Matters	18
Honorary Alumnus Joseph Ellis II	20
Dean's Notes	22
Dr. Charles Tedder, PhD	
College of Individualized Studies	
Lifelong Learning	23
Masters of Science and	
Masters of Arts in Individualized Studies	
Out and About	24
News and Notes	29
Benefits	32
Director's Notes	34
Calendar	35

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Executive Editor

Rita Dibble

Vice President for University Advancement,  
Foundation Executive Director

Managing Editor

Kristine Hansen '07

Alumni Relations Director

Editor

Emily Seddon

Development Director

Design and Layout

Diane DeRosier '05

Associate Editor

Matthew Spillum '06

Editorial Assistant

Noriko Ramberg

Correspondence should be sent to:

Alumni Relations, Metropolitan State University

700 East Seventh Street

Saint Paul, MN 55106-5000

Phone: 651-793-1808

e-mail: [alumni.relations@metrostate.edu](mailto:alumni.relations@metrostate.edu)

An equal opportunity educator

Cover photo by Jeff Achen

# Alumni Association

## Metropolitan State alumni are an impressive bunch.

While serving on the Alumni Board, I have had the opportunity to meet so many of you at alumni gatherings. This winter and spring we have been busy creating opportunities for alumni to make connections to one another and the university. You will see photos of some of those gatherings in this issue of *buzz* magazine. Speaking on behalf of the board, we would love to meet even more of you. More importantly, we invite you to become an advocate for the university.

What does it look like to be an alumni advocate? Advocacy can take many different forms, but here are some ideas:

1. **Talk about Metro State.** Many have called us the best-kept secret on the Twin Cities higher education landscape. It's a nice compliment, but we shouldn't be a secret. Our alumni stories can inspire and encourage future students. Your example of hard work turned into success is also an example of what employers can expect from other Metro State graduates.

2. **Be a career connection for students and alumni.** Join our LinkedIn group. Through the group, you can share job opportunities or make a connection with a student or fellow alum who wants to learn more about your field.
3. **Stay connected.** We want to celebrate your successes through News and Notes in *buzz* magazine. We also want you to be informed about all of the exciting things happening at the university. Sign up for the alumni newsletter at [www.metrostate.edu/alumni](http://www.metrostate.edu/alumni). Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Keep learning about the ways you can support Metropolitan State University.

With summer just a few weeks away, we look forward to seeing you on campus and around the Twin Cities Metro area. All the best,



Irene Wright '92  
President, Alumni Association Board



## 2018-2019 Alumni Board members

- Sandy Best '88
- Steve Campos '17
- Ron Edlund '04
- Akmed Khalifa '08
- Linda McCann '06
- Isaac Muhammad '12
- Carmen Shields '15
- Andrea Steen '11
- Irene Wright '92

# Learning in the Community

By Emily Seddon

Professor Don Eubanks begins each of his Comparative Racial and Ethnic Analysis classes by asking students, “how many reservations are in Minnesota?” At this point, almost all students realize that they have no idea. They aren’t alone. Most Minnesotans would not be able to answer the question. The answer is 11. Now you know.

Metropolitan State University’s Social Work program strives to build multi-culturally competent graduates by offering intensive experiences to learn about the different cultural communities in Minnesota. It was one of the first programs to provide a cultural focus and remains one of the few.

Professor Eubanks has lived this model, both as a 1997 graduate and, currently, as the program’s field director. He witnessed that many of the students who focus on learning about the Native American community complete their field practicum at the Division of Indian Works in Minneapolis and, yet, most had never been to a reservation. For this reason, Professor Eubanks began organizing visits to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe’s reservation an hour-and-a-half north of the Twin Cities.

Metro State’s instructors have a reputation for teaching from their practical, real-world experience. The social work program’s field trip follows this tradition. Professor Eubanks, a member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, served as the tribe’s Commissioner of Health and Human Services for more than five years. Drawing on this experience, he designed the excursion to include a discussion of tribal sovereignty, the tribe’s programs and services, and a tour.

The trip is an opportunity for students to deepen their learning, to make stories from the classroom real. However, there are many differences between the reservations in Minnesota. Nina Vongpheth, a current social work student, went on the November 2018 trip to the Mille Lacs Band’s reservation. She recalls, “I was the only student on the bus who had been to a reservation. I was comparing it to the one where I grew up. The housing was similar, but there were many differences including the governance structure and the size.”

For Andrew Young, the March 2018 trip helped him better understand the current challenges facing the tribe. He described the experience as getting to “understand the real context. What we learn in the classroom isn’t just history.” For Young, the tour of the Pow Wow Grounds and Fishery were the most memorable, and where he learned about efforts to balance environmental conservation and business.

The partnership between Metro State and the Mille Lacs Band is mutually beneficial. Professor Eubanks explains, “all tribes have an interest in social work students developing cultural competency to serve Native clients. The Twin Cities region is home to a large and tribally-diverse Native American community, so many tribes have urban offices. Metro State social work graduates are the type of people these offices and other Native-serving organizations need working for them.”

*“Metro State social work graduates are the type of people these offices and other Native-serving organizations need working for them.”*

Both Vongpheth and Young encourage members of the Metro State community to step outside their comfort zone. Young says, “ignorance is bliss, but we have a responsibility to look behind the pretty picture and understand our own biases.” Vongpheth encourages everyone to “get out there. We are lucky to have so many opportunities in the Twin Cities to see people thrive in their culture.”

*“...ignorance is bliss,  
but we have a responsibility  
to look behind the pretty  
picture and understand  
our own biases.”*

The field trip has become such a core component of the social work cohorts’ learning experience that Professor Eubanks has begun offering a second trip each year. And there is still room to grow. Professor Eubanks is spending his sabbatical exploring how Metro State can expand their social work program to Indian country or how to replicate the program and offer it to tribes.



Students on a field trip to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwa Reservation.



# Alumni Spotlight

## Alumnus of the Year: Michael O'Connor

By Matthew Spillum '06

*For Dr. Michael O'Connor, a life filled with service and philanthropy started in the observing eyes of an attentive youth. "I remember as a kid that my dad did a lot of volunteering for our church, and he had four kids, which included me. It'd be around ten o'clock and he'd go to help clean up from the Fall Festival, as an example—he's working all day, working all week, spending time with us kids and he goes, and he volunteers his time. Then, when I started playing soccer at a young age in Maplewood, my soccer coaches worked at 3M and they were from England and Ireland, and they were giving their time to teach me how to play. So when I got older and I started to have time, I thought 'it's time to give back.'"*

That giving back had taken many forms, from coaching and refereeing soccer, to volunteer work and positions on multitudes of organizational boards. When totaled together, Michael's time commitments result in nearly forty years of philanthropic activity. As director of Strategy and Project Management in Corporate Science, Technology and Innovation for Medtronic, Michael maintains a full plate already, but his ability to do "a little of everything" extends to his volunteer work, including at Metropolitan State University. For Michael, the Medtronic mission to alleviate pain, restore health, and extend life and the Metropolitan State mission of lifelong learning, innovative student-centered programs that enable students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals meld neatly together. "Michael stands out for us because, even among his other accomplishments and commitments, he has consistently prioritized the university," says Alumni Relations Director Kristine Hansen. "He genuinely wants to make a difference for students at Metro State, as a member of the community faculty, as a past member of the Alumni Board, and now as a trustee of the Foundation Board."

Over his many years in the medical device industry, Michael has "pretty much worked in every area besides sales and marketing." However, his drive, focus, and versatility were nearly brought to bear on a quite different path. A young athlete with recognized promise, Michael had hoped to make it in the world of professional soccer. "I had some tryouts and I had some success, but I never made it. So when I was about twenty-four, I decided to go back to school. I had already attended Lakewood Community College (now Century College), where I got my Associate of Arts degree and met my wife in chemistry class, of all places. After finishing up a two-year Quality Control Technology Diploma at 916 Vo-Tech (now Century College also), I decided I needed to do something more. So I thought, I could go to Metropolitan State to complete my Bachelor of Arts degree and apply my undergraduate credits. Metro State fit my schedule, it was nearby, and I was able to go to work and go to school."

From that initial bachelor's degree in business and individualized studies (and later a minor in project management), Michael found himself looking at the world of medical devices. "I had been working at 3M, working graveyard shifts from 11 p.m.–7 a.m. I was about to get married and my wife-to-be said 'no more graveyards. You need to get a daytime job.' This was back in 1991. So, I went down to Saint Paul and the James J. Hill Reference Library. I remember looking at microfiche and seeing 'medical device...hot area...hot area' and I said, that's what I'm going to do. I liked health and fitness and I wanted to do something where I could apply what I'd learned so far to help people and patients." A bit more research led to applications to Boston Scientific and Schneider, where he encountered a Metropolitan State connection during the interview process. "One of the gentlemen interviewing at Schneider me was a classmate from Metropolitan State in a human engineering class, and I started the job there soon after."

Making that connection began nearly 30 years of work in the medical device industry, during which Michael has been a lauded and dedicated worker in product development and project management. In 2014, he was named a Medtronic Technical Fellow in recognition of his "consistently demonstrated significant technical expertise and leadership." Over the course of his time in the field, he has overseen 22 projects/products from conceptualization to

*"It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional career to design, develop, and commercialize a product that has significantly improved patients' lives."*



Michael O'Connor speaking at Spring 2018 Commencement.



Michael O'Connor with Saint Paul Saints mascot, Mudonna, after he threw the first pitch at a game, 2018.

implementation, including the Schneider Esophageal Covered Stent, which was the first device of its kind to market.

“We overcame significant technology and material hurdles in a short time to bring this product to market,” he says, “and I was able to personally witness many patients who were able to benefit from this medical device technology immediately after their procedure. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional career to design, develop, and commercialize a product that has significantly improved patients’ lives.”

The combination of his sense of obligation to give back, and his humble recognition of the ways Metropolitan State positively affected his own life, made dedicating time and energy to the school a natural fit for Michael. As a member of the Alumni Association Board, which he stepped down from this past year to take a seat on the university’s Foundation Board of Trustees, he was proactive and creative in his service to Metropolitan State. As Kristine Hansen recalls, “One time, he had a business trip planned for Las Vegas. Knowing that he would be there for several days, and would have some downtime, he volunteered to meet with other alumni in the area to talk about Metro State. It was a generous offer because

his work life is fairly intense and he was willing to share some of his down time with us. Even though he has work, family, and other volunteer commitments, he has a generosity of spirit and fundamental concern for people that make working with him an enjoyable experience.”

One thing Michael is particularly keen to stress is how simple it is for Metro State alumni to get involved. “Don’t be nervous to reach out—to Kristine, to the Alumni Relations folks, to anyone whose name is in a *buzz* article—to try and understand where your strengths, talents, and passions might be of service to Metro State. There are a lot of ways for people to get involved here and that first step is just to reach out and find out where you can help.” One of the largest examples of the power of getting involved with the university our 2018

Alumnus of the Year can point to is the Jason R. Carter Science Education Center. “One of the first classes I took here was a human engineering class right here at the Saint Paul campus. We were still in the old hospital buildings. Now we have the Science Education Center, which is just a beautiful facility. I’ve met the Carters; they are lovely people. I’m really interested to see what that building can do for students looking to get into industries like mine.” This great intersection of the university’s science and technology efforts will help students prepare for the future and changing industry needs. Michael is excited to see new and meaningful partnerships develop in the future!

*“Don’t be nervous to reach out—to Kristine, to the Alumni Relations team, to anyone whose name is in a buzz article...”*

# Outstanding Students

## Fall 2018 Award Recipients

**Russell Alliev** graduated with a bachelor's degree in accounting and was selected as the President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student award recipient for the university's College of Management.

"Russell was an integral part of the College of Management Student Association," Dr. Joel Wilson said. "It was a pleasure working with Russell. He was always in attendance at board meetings and was ready to help with event planning."

**Katherine Anschutz** graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in alcohol and drug counseling and is the recipient of the President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student award for the university's College of Community Studies and Public Affairs.

Deborah Mosby, who was Anschutz's advisor and nominator, said, "Balancing a challenging job, a demanding school schedule, and family commitments, Kate maintained an "A" average and graduated *summa cum laude* with a 4.0-grade point average. She is the first grandchild on both sides of her family to graduate from college, which she says 'feels like an amazing accomplishment that we have all shared along this journey.'"

**Julia Buermann** graduated with an Entry Level Master of Science in Nursing (ELMSN) and was awarded the President's Outstanding Graduate Student Award in university's College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Buermann's nominator, Deborah Matthias-Anderson said, "I nominated Julia Buermann mainly because of the exemplary leadership she demonstrated during her time in the ELMSN program. This was especially noted during her senior year, as she assumed the presidency of the Nursing Student Organization (NSO). During Julia's work with the NSO, activities/programming expanded and membership in the organization increased."

**Jahlaynah Cici** graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and was chosen as the President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student in the university's College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Cici earned an associate's degree from Anoka-Ramsey Community College in 2008 and a bachelor of science in biology from Hamline University in 2011. She is currently employed as a registered nurse at Regions Hospital and plans to continue working there, while continuing to pursue her newfound interest in holistic nursing.

"I am thankful for the MANE Nursing Program's commitment to finding valuable and diverse clinical learning experiences for graduating students," she explained.

At Metropolitan State, Cici was active in the Nursing Student Organization, as well as the Minnesota and American Holistic Nurses Associations. She also has been an active member, advisor and alumna of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society since 2007. She hopes to become more involved in healthcare committees and quality improvement efforts, and gain more experience in pediatrics.



Back: Jessica Maistrovich, Katherine Anschutz, Julia Buermann, Crystal Spanjers. Front: Tanya Juarez-Sweeney, Laura Trujillo, Karen Parker, Boern Vang, Jahlaynah Cici.  
Not pictured: Russell Alliev and Andrew Edwards.

**Andrew Edwards** graduated with a bachelor's degree in English Teaching was selected as the President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student award recipient for the university's School of Urban Education.

"Drew is the embodiment of the School of Urban Education's mission and why we exist," said Dr. Paul Spies, professor in the School of Urban Education. "He is a community organizer, mediator, and activist. His commitment to equity and social justice is deep and unwavering for anyone and any community."

**Tanya Juarez-Sweeney** graduated with a master's degree in technical communication and was chosen as the Outstanding Graduate Student in the university's College of Liberal Arts.

Tori Sadler, who submitted Juarez-Sweeney's nomination, explained that "all faculty in the technical communications program contributed to the nomination." She continued by saying, "I think Tanya was chosen because she really is outstanding, and by that, I mean she is accomplished."

**Jessica Maistrovich**, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics, was selected as the President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student award recipient for the university's College of Sciences.

Cindy Kaus, advisor and one of the faculty who nominated Maistrovich for this recognition, said, "Jessica Maistrovich is one of the top math students I have had in my 22-year career as a math professor. Her joy and passion for learning are contagious. She passes her love of math and science onto everyone around her: her peers, her teachers, and the many students she tutors and teaches."

**Karen Parker**, who graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree, was chosen as the President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student in the university's College of Individualized Studies. Active in community service, Parker was instrumental in the early stages and served as a co-chair in the development of Parents of Latin American Children and its summer camp for children adopted from Latin America. For a decade, she has participated in Mission Jamaica and travels there each year to help repair the orphanage and interact with the children.

"I know that [Karen] has wiped away the tears from the eyes of some children. She lightens the load for others. In her heart, her communities have no boundaries, borders, or walls. She embarked on another mission to Guatemala in February... Thank you for your devotion, relieving some suffering and saving lives, and knowing the fight others have for their freedom and dignity," says Judith A. Minning, academic advisor for the College of Individualized Studies.

**Crystal Spanjers** graduated with a bachelor's degree in English literature and was chosen as the President's Outstanding Graduate Student in the university's College of Liberal Arts.

"As a working mother, when I determined I wanted to go back to school, I chose a university that was friendly to non-traditional students. Metro State had great reviews from students such as myself, who were looking for flexible class schedules and online options to balance school schedules with work and family schedules," Spanjers said.

"Crystal will be the first to quickly rework the narrative on the 'difficulty' of being a mother and a student into a story of how being a mother can inspire or enhance her identity as a student," says her nominating advisor, Tammy Durant, associate professor and Literature and Language Department chair in the College of Liberal Arts. "And her work demonstrates this inventiveness, incorporating film and graphic novel to illuminate difficult theoretical concepts."

"Crystal is an astonishing representative of the kind of nontraditional student served by Metro State. Somehow, she balances the demands of being a working mother with being a truly outstanding student," Durant says.

**Laura Trujillo**, who graduated from the Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management (MNLM) program, was chosen President's Outstanding Graduate Student in the university's College of Community Studies and Public Affairs.

Trujillo previously earned a bachelor's degree in human services administration from Metropolitan State. She begins a new role as executive director at Juel Fairbanks Recovery Services this month.

"In our MNLM program, there is no better news than to hear one of our students has been promoted to executive director," says nominating advisor, Crystal Fashant '11, associate professor in the Department of Public and Nonprofit Leadership in the College of Community Studies and Public Affairs.

**Boern Vang** graduated with a master's degree in management information systems and was selected President's Outstanding Graduate Student award recipient for the university's College of Management.

"I wanted to learn and gain as much knowledge and experience as possible in management information systems," Vang said, as he reached his goal and earned a master's degree in the field. "It wouldn't be enough just to get the degree if I couldn't learn and absorb all the information."

Vang was born in a refugee camp in Thailand, and was five years old when his family moved to Minnesota. As a student, Vang was president of the Analytics Club at Metropolitan State. After graduation, Vang would like to collaborate with Metropolitan State University professors, working on research to help the university and its programs. As he starts his career in management information systems, he is also considering pursuing a doctoral degree where he can focus on machine learning.

"Boern took three of my classes, and was in the top five percent of students in all three," said Dr. Simon Jin, professor of management information systems.

# Celebrating Success

## 2019 Scholarship Celebration

*The opportunity for donors and students to meet each other is one of the highlights of the academic year. Each spring, the Metropolitan State University Foundation honors student success and expresses gratitude to our donors at the annual scholarship celebration.*

*On Thursday, April 4, 2019, donors to Metropolitan State University scholarship funds gathered to celebrate students who benefit from their generosity. Donors who make gifts of any size to university scholarships are invited to attend this joyful occasion.*



President Ginny Arthur addressing scholarship recipients and donors.



Beth Marino, Zacharia Salad, Colin Partridge '00.



Larry Meuwissen, Joyce Maddox



Reatha Clark King, Julie Schuett



Judith Graziano, Jessica Sherlock, Maryllis Oehlke, Francis Oehlke



Burak Tekin '16, Matt Musel, Frank Schweigert

# Student Success

## The Importance of Scholarships

By Rakea Begum '19



Susan Misterek, Rakea Begum '19

My name is Rakea Begum, and I am an international student from Germany. I chose to come to Metropolitan State University because of the diversity of the students, and because it is affordable. I am a proud recipient of the College of Management Scholarship. Spring 2019 is my final semester! I will graduate soon with a major in finance and a minor in project management.

Receiving the College of Management Scholarship has been a new and exciting experience for me. It is the first scholarship I had been awarded. I was thrilled to have received one. This particular scholarship allowed me to put forth all of my academic efforts and imbued me with the confidence I needed to forge a successful academic career. The scholarship lightened my financial burden and allowed me to begin the upcoming semesters under less pressure. I was able to enjoy getting to know my classmates. It also allowed me to train my entire focus on my studies.

Receiving financial assistance from people who don't know me, but have demonstrated faith in my abilities and judged me worthy of this scholarship, has taught me a lot. Having others show faith in my capabilities has increased my faith in myself—I will now move forward into my future sure-footed, with confidence and conviction. I hope to apply the knowledge that I gained here at Metro State and make other people's lives easier—be it with my financial and project management skills or my passion for leadership. Helping others, especially those we don't know, is not always easy, but the selfless devotion of Dr. Misterek and her late husband has set an example that I will always follow.

# Leading the Way

## Donor Profile: Susan Misterek

By Emily Seddon

College of Management Professor Dr. Susan Misterek and her late husband Kinney Misterek held firmly to the belief that education, especially higher education, was the key to building a better life for oneself and one's family. In 2016, when Kinney passed away at the age of 61, Dr. Susan Misterek challenged herself to put their belief in higher education into action. She quickly realized that the answer was right under her nose at the campus she visits every day. She would honor Kinney through a gift to Metropolitan State University.

The Mistereks would not describe themselves as wealthy. She is an academic and he was an officer at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis who taught accounting at local universities in the evenings. In spite of having some knowledge of the basics of personal finance, estate planning was a task they hadn't undertaken.

Metropolitan State University's values mirror the values the Mistereks held as a family of educators. Both knew that the university's greatest asset is its students. Both valued action that produces results. And both believed that learning is a lifelong endeavor. Susan Misterek also knew that she wanted to immediately see the impact of the gift she and her husband gave.

Consequently, Susan Misterek committed to funding fifty \$1,000 scholarships during each of the next five years. She set generous criteria for applicants: scholarship recipients must be enrolled in the College of Management and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75.

Susan explains that her contribution has had an impact on many students. "The scholarship isn't going to make anyone rich, but it is helping Metro State students reach their goals. I received a thank you letter from a single mom who said that the scholarship helped her work towards her degree while parenting. I received another from a student who said it was helping him serve his community as an immigrant."

Susan Misterek encourages everyone to be prepared with a will or estate plan. She firmly believes that your spending and giving choices are personal decisions. For her, supporting Metro State students today was the right way to honor her husband's life and her work.



Susan Misterek, students, and faculty colleagues at the Spring DBA conference

# Metro Matters

2018–2019



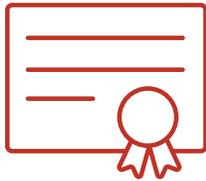
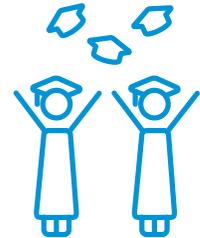
38,523

alumni

76%  
of alumni  
live in  
Minnesota



11,375  
total number of  
enrolled students



## Top FIVE Degrees:

- Individualized Studies
- Business Administration
- MANE BSN (Nursing)
- Accounting
- Psychology



Average tuition  
(annual undergrad)

\$7,556



number of  
endowed  
scholarship funds

53

4.7%  
international students



number of countries  
represented  
by our students 63



we are a  
Yellow Ribbon  
University

student  
financial support provided:

\$365,683  
awarded



# Making a Difference: The Metro Fund

You instinctively knew when you began your learning journey at Metro State that your education was about more than credit hours. Didn't you?

Your education was enriched by the professional experience of professors. You learned from the lived experiences of other students and shared your story with them. You gained skills and insight serving in the community, completing internships and practicums.

Partnerships like those you've experienced and those you've read about here—the Social Work program's field trip to the Mille Lacs Band's reservation and customized training from the Institute for Professional Development—are made possible by the Metro State community, your community, and we need your help.

Partnerships don't always present themselves on a schedule. They are the product of nurtured relationships, intentional information sharing, and sometimes luck. The university needs resources to seize partnership opportunities when they arise, not just when they coincide with the budget cycle.

The Metro Fund is the tool for you to help Metro State benefit from community connections because it is designed to be responsive to the university needs. **Will you please join me in making a gift to the Metro Fund before July 1?** Because of your contribution, today's students will be able to embrace the knowledge held in the community through the university's many partnerships. **You can give any time at [www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now](http://www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now).**

The Metro Fund has supported some amazing student and university accomplishments. But we need your help to ensure that we can continue to grow support for partnerships and student scholarships. I hope we can count on your support.

Yours in working to ensure students have learning opportunities outside the classroom.



Emily Seddon  
Development Director  
651-793-1807



You can help a student on their educational journey by making a gift. With your help, we can achieve the goal of gathering 770 alumni donors to inspire and support current students.

- Give online at [www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now](http://www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now)
- Mail your gift to 700 East Seventh Street, FH219, Saint Paul, MN 55106
- Take advantage of your matching gift benefits. Many companies match their employees' donations. Check with your employer to see if your company will match your support to Metro State.

# Honorary Alumnus

## An Interview with Joseph C. Ellis II

By Emily Seddon

**You currently serve on the Board of Trustees for Metropolitan State University Foundation. How did you first get involved with the university?**

There is a long history of partnership between Wells Fargo, my employer, and Metro State. But, for many years, I wasn't aware of the unique and important role of the university in the Twin



Cities. In June of 2006, I was asked to give a presentation focused on the economies and markets of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, U.S., and world to Metro State faculty and staff at the College of Management. I remember the presentation like it was yesterday—the average price for a gallon of gas in the Twin Cities was \$2.82 and there was concern as gas prices were trending higher. After the presentation, I was invited to join the Foundation's Board of Trustees, but I knew, at that time, I would not be able to commit the time and energy I desired to give.

In early 2008, I got my formal introduction to Metro State when I visited and toured the Saint Paul campus. I also met with board members and Bill Lowe, Metro State's interim president at the time. During these meetings I learned about Metro State's history, students, and the broader impact the university has on the community. This was the point at which I fell in love with the university. I was excited about the life enhancing opportunities it provides to students, positively changing their career trajectories, and also that of their families. This was when I knew that I wanted to make a lifetime commitment to serving Metro State.

**We appreciate such a thoughtful commitment. What activities have you been engaged in through your service?**

Upon joining, I became vice chair of the Foundation Board the chair of the Investment Committee, in addition to serving on the Finance/Audit and Scholarship Committees. I remember this time vividly because it was the 2008 financial crisis. I knew that to support our students, I had to provide strong leadership, governance, and oversight of the Foundation's investments. Former Metro State President Sue Hammersmith later recognized my contributions in successfully shepherding the foundation's investment through the crisis and beyond. By the end of the 2011 fiscal year, the three-year

average annual return of the foundation's endowment was ranked among the top 30 universities according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). Because our endowment is almost entirely directed to student scholarships, this was a critical achievement.

I have also been a guest lecturer in the College of Management and served on the Corporate Advisory Board of the university's Applied Business Doctoral (DBA) Program.

**We are lucky to have your financial and investment expertise. Have you been involved in other activities?**

I have many great memories...way too many to list. In 2009, Metro State hosted Minnesota's first African-American Male High School Summit during which more than 200 high school students from throughout the Twin Cities spent an entire day on the Saint Paul campus. I was asked to give the morning keynote. For me, this was a tremendous responsibility. I created an interactive presentation titled "Athlete or Owner?: You Decide...It's Your Call!" that prompted the young men to ponder whether it's better to own Nike tennis shoes, own shares of Nike stock, play professional basketball, or become a Nike executive. It also highlighted how that choice is limited for those without college education. The students and I had a lot of fun. There was so much positive laughter that one would have thought it was a high school rally, not a university hosted summit!

**I would have loved to be a fly on the wall for that. When you're not volunteering at Metro State, how have you spent your time?**

I joined Wells Fargo's predecessor bank in 1994, so I've spent 25 years at the company. My positions included Private Banker, Investment Portfolio Manager, Stock Analyst, and progressive leadership roles within the Wealth Management division.

Currently, I am a Senior Vice President. I serve as the Emerging Affluent Segment Manager for Enterprise Marketing and Brand Strategy in which I work across all our lines of business, in addition to advising Human Resources. This work builds on work I did at Oxford University's Saïd Business School, which contributed to an action-orientated, problem-solving platform geared towards addressing some of the most complex issues facing the world across generations, nations, and business sectors.

**Thank you. Any final words today?**

I am proud of my Metro State community, our history, and our many firsts. I look forward to my next ten years of service to the university in whatever capacity I'm needed!

# Arts at Metropolitan State

On Thursday, Nov. 8, 2018, Metropolitan State and Trio Student Support Services celebrated First-Generation College Day to recognize the success of first-generation college students. To mark the occasion, one of our students, Nuney Said '19, wrote and presented this poem at the celebration.

First Generation College Day is celebrated each year on Nov. 8 to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1965.



## Education

*Nuney Said*

Education is important to me because it's my purpose of life other than being a Mumin

Also known as a Muslim.

Education is the key to every door in life;

Education is one of the things that no one can take away from me other than my beliefs. Being a successful young lady is my family dream.

Education gives me the opportunity to be successful and makes my life less stressful.

I don't come from riches, but I come from a straight warzone.

Gunshots and grenade bombs circled my small home.

Went from a place tourist come to see, to the place all its people flee.

They think "Would I ever see a brighter day, where Somalis can ever come together and embrace one another."

We came here to live "The American Dream."

I stay in school hoping I accomplish what I came here for.

Life isn't so pretty to me no more.

It's all about making it for the ones I left back home.

So, when you see me striving twice as hard,

Just know it's cause I get flashbacks and never want to go back.

Got young siblings looking up to me for hope.

I got to give back something, knowing I leave my mother at home while she is hurt.

My grandmother was as simple as housewife,

My grandfather was her provider and protector; he was very well-respected.

Both my role models and I'm soon to carry their legacies.

Education is key, and without it you ain't opening no doors

You'll simply have nothing to live for.

# From the Dean

Dr. Charles Tedder, College of Individualized Studies

As I write this, on my desk sits a memo written in 1974 by founding president David Sweet. It reads, “From the beginning of the college, those responsible for its inception have assumed that at some point in time the college would offer a master’s degree.” Who could have predicted that the college would grow into a university. The flagship individualized BA thrives among an expanded constellation of programs and majors. I am proud and honored that we will launch an individualized master’s degree in fall 2019.

President Sweet’s memo goes on to say that a master’s program must be offered “in accordance with our basic education tenets.” The original tenets of Metropolitan State College remain core to the values of the College of Individualized Studies, and thus our master’s degree will be “one for which the student has responsibility and authority, one which is competency-based, and one which relies heavily on community resources.” Through a partnership with established graduate programs at the university, as well as the broader community, we are poised to extend individualized education to the graduate level.

The individualized graduate program will offer students the opportunity to pair a core area of study with complementary learning in related fields. Students will draw from the range of graduate offerings available in programs across the university to create a unique plan of study, resulting in either a Master of Science (MS) or Master of Arts (MA) degree. In this way we honor and extend the original mission of Metropolitan State, to bring new educational opportunities to students in the Twin Cities and beyond.

Across the range of possibilities for higher education, our student-centered framework allows us to honor and support learners throughout their educational journey. The College of Individualized Studies continues its tradition of innovation at the baccalaureate level with several new initiatives, including a Transportation Management concentration in partnership with Dakota County Technical College. Our course Metr110, Reinventing Your Career, this year featured a close partnership with 3M, connecting students with a major Twin Cities employer. This kind of creative programming allows students to return to school throughout their careers for new credentials to advance their lifelong goals.



Over the past year, we have also launched the Credit for Prior Learning Assessment Network (CPLAN), a Minnesota State System initiative coordinated by Metropolitan State and closely connected to the individualized program’s competency-based approach. The opportunity to be assessed for experiential, lifelong learning has been key to how we serve students for more than 45 years. Now CPLAN will promote and strengthen opportunities across several institutions within the Minnesota State system with plans for future expansion.

With these new programs in graduate education, career development, and credit for prior learning, we carry forward the values and hopes expressed by President Sweet in the memo that sits on my desk today. We look forward to the privilege of serving learners at all points in their educational journey for years to come.

# Lifelong Learning

## Master of Individualized Studies

By Daniel Woldeab '01

Are you looking for the next step in your educational and professional development? Starting in fall 2019, Metropolitan State University is offering two exciting new options: a Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Science (MS) in Individualized and Interdisciplinary Studies! You could design your own individualized program, combining courses offered by existing graduate programs at the university to achieve your unique educational goals—all within 32 credits.

If you are eager to reflect upon and make meaning of your education, then an individualized master's degree may be for you. As a CIS graduate student, you will consider how you can expand your concept of citizenship, engage in lifelong learning, and deepen the ways in which you contribute to society in general.

Did you know that the very first undergraduate program at Metro State was an individualized program, designed to meet the educational needs of experienced working adults? That program is still going strong at the College of Individualized Studies. In keeping with that tailored approach, our college is now thrilled to offer the two new masters programs.

Graduates of the individualized MA/MS program will be highly skilled interdisciplinary learners, with the ability to link theoretical and experiential learning. They will apply skills and knowledge within structured opportunities for self-directed learning, employing interdisciplinary perspectives inclusive of diverse viewpoints, leading to an effective presentation of their Capstone Project/Research to faculty, other graduate students, and the Metropolitan State University community.

The individualized MA/MS degree is perfect for students whose learning needs are clearly defined but are not met by existing graduate programs at Metro State. In this master's program, you will develop an individualized study path, relying mainly on high-quality graduate courses already offered through other colleges at the university. Your journey can span disciplines, subject areas, and professional studies, reflecting your diverse interests and passions.

We know that these two new graduate programs will attract a highly diverse group of students, reflective of the dynamic Twin Cities Metro area—are you going to be among them?

The College of Individualized Studies will accept applications for Spring 2020 beginning April 2, 2019. The deadline for consideration is Sept. 1, 2019.

For more information, visit us at [www.metrostate.edu/academics/programs/ma-and-ms-individualized-studies](http://www.metrostate.edu/academics/programs/ma-and-ms-individualized-studies). Or you can contact the Graduate Program Director, Daniel Woldeab, at [daniel.woldeab@metrostate.edu](mailto:daniel.woldeab@metrostate.edu) or 651-793-1781.

**Apply now  
for Spring 2020 admission.**

**Application deadline is  
Sept. 1, 2019.**



**INDIVIDUAL**

**MAKE YOUR DEGREE  
YOUR OWN**

**MASTER OF ARTS OR SCIENCE  
IN INDIVIDUALIZED STUDIES**

**metrostate.edu**

# Out and About

## Breakfast at the Capitol

Metropolitan State alumni were out in force at the annual breakfast hosted by alumna Sen. Sandy Pappas '86. Alumni had the opportunity to hear from legislators, including two alumni who are newly elected representatives to the Minnesota State House: Rep. Hodan Hassan '10 and Rep. Mohamud Noor '09. Adding to the lively conversation, Sen. Foung Hawj and Sen. Chuck Wiger shared their views on the importance of Metropolitan State to the community.



L-R: Rep. Hodan Hassan '10, Sen. Sandy Pappas '86, Ginny Arthur '17, Sen. Foung Hawj, Rep. Mohamud Noor '09, Zuki Ellis '11



Sen. Foung Hawj



Sandy Best '88



Sen. Chuck Wiger

### Greetings from the Advocacy Committee!

I feel a sense of pride when I hear someone say, "I am a Metro State graduate." I have witnessed first-hand the hard work that goes into earning your degree. I know what it meant to my family when my husband, Emanuel, earned his degree in 2008. And, as executive vice president of People Operations at a fast-growing tech company, I know how important a four-year degree is to prepare the state's workforce. This pride is why I joined the Metropolitan State University Foundation Board of Trustees and why I have chaired the Advocacy Committee for the past two years.



Along with eight other volunteers and staff, the Advocacy Committee is charged with increasing awareness about Metro State and advancing legislation, policy, partnerships, and funding that enhance educational opportunities. On a month-to-month basis, this means we try to engage more Metro State alumni and influence conversations that impact the future of the university. It's a big job, and we need your help.

Metro State serves Minnesota's adult learners and diverse populations better than any other university. But for us to meet the needs of our students and the future workforce, the community has to know we are here. If every Metro State graduate told three coworkers about the university, we'd convince more than 115,500 people that Metro State can help them reach their goals. If you found value in your education, if Metro State helped shape you, please share your experience with others. In doing so, you will help lead Metro State into the future.

Today, we are living the future that Metro State's founders envisioned: We are developing a talented workforce through education that is tailored to meet the unique needs of our students. To keep this up, we need you to say, "I am proud to be a Metro State graduate" when you tell your unique story.

Your story is part of the larger case for why Metro State is so important to its students and our communities. Thank you for being a part of that.

Yours in championing the mission of Metro State,  
Teri Calderon



Sen. Sandy Pappas '86, Earlsworth "Baba" Letang



Victoria Khanh '16, Eh Ta Zar '16, Kathryn Ganfield

# Out and About

This fall and winter, Metropolitan State alumni gathered across the country and around the Twin Cities to connect, share stories, and hear from President Ginny Arthur '17 about the future of the university. Follow us on social media and sign up for the alumni newsletter so you can learn when we will be in your neighborhood.

## Fall Donor Event—Saint Paul



Joe Commers '82, Lois West Duffy, Joe Duffy



Craig Morris, Bobbie Anderson '16, Tracy Hatch



Ginny Arthur, Rita Dibble



Roger McCabe

## DBA Gathering—St. Louis, Mo.



David Bolz, Marcia Hagen



Firasat Khan '14, Rich Howey '16, Eric Grube '15

# Arizona Alumni Gathering—Scottsdale, Ariz.



Cayden (future alumnus, class of 2040), Ginny Arthur



**Front L-R:** Rita Dibble, Scott Malone '13 with Cayden, Jung Ah, Ginny Arthur, Patricia Becker, Roxann Volling '92, Thomas LeMere '76. **Back L-R:** Michael Blackstone '86, Carolyn Vasko, Ed Vasko, Maureen Buhl '95, Janine Dallmeier, Mark Dallmeier, Camille Cornelious '12, Paule-Emelyne Joyner '15, Al Becker '75.



Ginny Arthur, Deb Otto

The Alumni Association thanks Jennifer Ryan, Deb Otto, and our presenting sponsor Alerus Bank and for hosting the Duluth alumni gathering.

# Metro in Your Neighborhood—Minneapolis and Saint Paul



Barrie Borchers, Jeannette Wallen '13, Kristine Hansen '07, Emily Seddon



Rita Dibble, Ginny Arthur, Frank Birch '97

# Stay Connected

Stay connected with the Metropolitan State Alumni Association and your fellow alumni. We'll keep you updated with the latest Metropolitan State alumni news and events.

## Association Membership Benefits:

- Library privileges
- Volunteer activities
- Invitations to alumni events
- Discount on Liberty Mutual auto and home insurance
- Career workshops and Career Center appointments
- *buzz* magazine mailed to alumni donors twice each year
- Access to the Alumni Scholarship for alumni pursuing a second or advanced degree
- Discounts on continuing education programs through the Institute for Professional Development
  - Recognition opportunities through the Alum of the Year award
  - Access to membership at the Fitness Center (Saint Paul Campus), *fee applies*

You can learn about the Alumni Association and sign up for our monthly email newsletter.

Visit [www.metrostate.edu/alumni](http://www.metrostate.edu/alumni)



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**Follow us on Twitter:**

MetroStateAlumniMN @MetroAlum\_MN

# News and Notes

Note: All towns are in Minnesota unless otherwise noted.

By Grace Doyle

**Genhi Givings Bailey** '99, Chicago, Ill., joined Perkins Coie as chief diversity and inclusion officer. Bailey previously led the diversity and inclusion department at DLA Piper for eight years. Prior to this she was a legal placement and diversity consultant at Ajilon and a practicing attorney focusing on trademark and copyright in the entertainment industry.

Bailey has also been a board member and volunteer for various groups including Diversity and Flexibility Alliance, the Chicago Sinfonietta, Umoja Student Development, the Posse Foundation, and the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals.



**Kevin Barton** '03, Saint Paul, joined the Board of Directors at the International Institute of Minnesota. Barton has been working at Land O' Lakes as a business intelligence analyst for

the past four years and is currently on the International Institute's Festival of Nations committee.

**Marissa Brown** '18, Richfield, was hired as a member relations specialist at First Community Credit Union.

**Christina DeVries** '18, Minneapolis, was hired as director of development at Students United. Prior to this, DeVries worked as a grant writer at Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis and spent two years with Peace Corps in Nambia as a Community Health HIV/AIDS volunteer.

**Michael Hanratty** '09, Elroy, Wis., was elected school board member for District 2 in Winona County. Hanratty is a caseworker for Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota in the Guardianship and Conservatorship program. He also serves as a board member of Beyond Tough Guise and on the board of trustees at Wesley United Methodist Church.

**Hodan Hassan** '10, Minneapolis, was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in District 62A. Hassan is a Mental Health Clinician and worked as senior clinical social worker for Hennepin County and as an affordable housing advocate for Project for Pride in Living in Ventura Village.

**Kerrington Hing** '02, Atlanta, Ga., was appointed as general manager of the Waldorf Astoria Atlanta Buckhead hotel. Having worked in hospitality for 27 years, Hing previously served as general manager of Waldorf Astoria Park City, the Ritz-Carlton Club, Aspen Highlands and The Ranch at Rock Creek.

**Ember Johnson** '16, Center City, read from her work in the Boliou Gallery as a part of "Conversations about Unspeakable Things," Carlton College's collaboration with the Veterans' Voices Project of the Minnesota Humanities Center.

Johnson was a winner of the 2013-14 Loft Mentor Series and her work has appeared in *Georgetown Review* and *Fourth Genre*.



**Wayne Johnson** '01, Cottage Grove, was elected Washington County commissioner as the representative for District 4. Previously, he was on the Cottage Grove City Council and a former member of the city's planning commission. Apart from the public arena, Johnson owns Furnace Doctors and Dust Doctors in Little Canada.



**Katie Lavin** '11, Granite Falls, was hired as a special education teacher at Yellow Medicine East, covering grades 11 and 12. In an interview with *Granite Falls News*, Lavin said that she was attracted to teaching at Yellow Medicine East, "because of the location, community and wide range of diversity and culture."

**Troy Mathias** '17, White Bear Lake, was hired as a therapist at Lee Carlson Center.

**Jane McClain** '05, Chestertown, Md., was recognized as 2018-2019 Influencer by the International Association of Women IAW and acknowledged as a leader in entrepreneurship. McClain founded Fitness For Your Lifestyle, LLC in 2007, working with clients in their homes and offers fitness training and classes to help them achieve their desired level of fitness. She is also a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

IAW spokesperson Star Jones said, "I'm pleased to welcome Jane into this exceptional group of professional women," and, "Her knowledge and experience in her industry are valuable assets to her company and community."

**Jeannine Mueller-Harmon** '95, Duluth, joined the Behavioral Health Department as a nurse practitioner at the Essentia Health-Duluth Clinic.

**Mohamud Noor** '09, Minneapolis, was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in District 60B. Noor also serves as the executive director of the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota and is a former board member of Minneapolis Public Schools.



**Katie Rhoades** '10, St. Louis, Mo., was featured in an article by *Town&Style* on her organization, Healing Action. In the article, she said, "Healing Action believes in a community free of exploitation," and that they serve, "adult survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography, survival sex and sex trafficking—anyone who had to use their body to get their needs met."

Rhoades has been working to support individuals who have been through the commercial sex trade since 2005 and started Healing Action in 2012.

**Raymond Strom** '05, New York, N.Y., wrote a novel called *Northern Lights* that is being published by Simon & Schuster. Strom's writing has appeared in *Fiction*, *Tweed's* and

*The New York Times*. He currently works as an academic advisor and studies romance languages.

**Erin Swanson** '18, Saint Paul, joined Essentia Health-St. Joseph's Baxter Clinic in the Urgent Care Department as a nurse practitioner. Swanson said, "I love the fast pace of the Urgent Care setting and the variety of patients I get to take care of."

**Gary LaTraille** '05, Maple Grove, was appointed as quality director of Diversified Plastics Inc. (DPI). LaTraille worked as manager of quality assurance and regulatory affairs at Kips Bay Medical, prior to joining DPI, and has more than 30 years of experience in medical device manufacturing, quality management, and regulatory compliance.

**We want to hear from you.**  
Send your news to [alumni.relations@metrostate.edu](mailto:alumni.relations@metrostate.edu)

Saint Paul, Minn. native **Amaiya Zafar** (Individualized Studies major) says Metropolitan State University feels a lot like home. She jokes that she grew up on the Saint Paul Campus. Amaiya visited campus often and attended events with her father, Mohammad Zafar (BA '08 and MA '14), while he was a student and then an employee of the university. When Amaiya enrolled at Metro State, focusing on sports and exercise science, her relationship with campus changed. In addition to being a place and community she loved, Metro State became a place for hard work and discipline.

Amaiya knows firsthand the importance of discipline. She is a world-class featherweight boxer. Amaiya has trained since she was 13, but faced a major obstacle in November 2016. USA Boxing disqualified her from a national championship for wearing a full-body uniform and her hijab. This experience turned Amaiya into an activist. In 2017, she succeeded in changing the USA Boxing rules to allow athletes to wear their hijab. This was an undeniable victory, but Amaiya still could not compete on the world stage. She kept fighting, finding solidarity with other boxers. Then, in February of this year, the International Boxing Association changed their rules to allow fighters to wear their hijab during competition.



Amaiya says that her discipline in boxing and in school are linked. "If I am doing well at the gym, I am doing well at school." She equates her time at the gym to eating a good breakfast. "Without it, my whole day is messed up." Amaiya's discipline as a student and athlete has opened many doors for her. She has two years of coursework left to complete her bachelor's degree and is interested in pursuing a degree in nursing. Now that she is free to compete on the international stage, she is also thinking about the 2024 Olympic Games.

Wherever her talents may take her, the Metro State campus still has Amaiya's favorite skyline view of Saint Paul.

# Emeriti

# In Memoriam

**Kelly Hazel**

2002–2019  
Professor Emerita

**Maythee Kantar**

1987–2019  
Professor Emerita

**Santos Martinez**

1994–2018  
Professor Emeritus

**Doris Shepersky** '80, Woodbury

**Frances Rivard** '81, Minneapolis

**Michael Potaczek** '92, Plymouth

**Michelle Nies** '16, White Bear Lake

**Mary Ryan** '95, Bird Island

**Jacqueline Kearns** '07, Saint Paul

**Charles "Chuck" King** '99, Windsor, Conn.

**Donise White** '16, Robbinsdale

**Gloma Hamernick** '88, New Richmond, Wis.

**Lorraine Kluver** '87, Brewster

**Diane McNearney** '92, Rosemount

**Gerson Bello** '18, New Brighton



*Tomato Kimono*  
Erica Spitzer Rasmussen  
mixed media with handmade paper,  
45 x 58 x 6 inches, 2017

# Alumni Benefits

## Metro State Institute for Professional Development

By Emily Seddon

Metropolitan State is one of the most successful schools in the country in helping low-income students achieve social mobility through education. The university's focus on adult learners seeking a degree is part of this success. But what if you just want to brush up or learn a new skill and don't need the credit? What if you want to continue your learning, but aren't ready to pursue an advanced degree? Metro State's Institute for Professional Development (IPD) can help and alumni receive 15 percent off the cost of classes.

You can visit [www.metrostateipd.org](http://www.metrostateipd.org) to learn about the wide variety of unique classes available. For example, IPD offers the first and only university guild-approved Business Architecture program in the United States. These courses will help you better understand your organization, anticipate the effects of change, and adjust your business model as necessary. You can also take classes in change management, project management, Agile, and Scrum.

In addition to serving lifelong learners and enhancing the social mobility of students, IPD embodies Metro State's commitment to community partnerships. IPD has created customized trainings for specific professions and populations. For example, IPD created an all, online crisis intervention training for police officers to learn de-escalation skills. The institute also created custom curriculums for the Association of Minnesota Counties, League of Minnesota Cities, and Urban Scholars Program.



Jeannette Grace '02 teaching Getting Buy-in for Just About Anything

### LEAD Academy Public Supervision Certificate

The public sector workforce is changing dramatically. More than a quarter of County Managers are new in the last couple of years. Baby Boomers and Millennials are leaving jobs in the public sector at similar rates. There are thousands of new supervisors across the state, many of whom are long-term employees but are new to management. The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), League of Minnesota Cities, and Sourcewell partnered with Metro State's IPD to design training that can help public sector managers be successful in their jobs and in recruiting and training future leaders. From this partnership, the LEAD Academy Public Supervision Certificate arose. Heather Bandeen, Research and Program Development manager at AMC, said, "We truly appreciated that Beth Schaefer, director of IPD, and her instructor team walked side-by-side with us to design the Public Sector Supervision Certificate. They listened to cycles of input from local government leaders and designed a program that exceeded our expectations." The program is set to launch in May 2019 in the Twin Cities and Staples, Minn. The certificate's unique design includes several public-sector-specific case studies and activities. Program participants will also build a peer network that will endure beyond the certification as they complete the academy in cohorts. You can learn more at [www.lmc.org/leadacademy2018](http://www.lmc.org/leadacademy2018).

### Urban Scholars Leadership and Professional Development Program

Urban Scholars is a 12-week leadership and professional development program for college and graduate students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, housed in the City of Minneapolis' Department of Civil Rights. The program combines a public sector internship with professional development and leadership training. Weaving racial equity and social justice into the curriculum is a core tenant of the Urban Scholars Program.

For the first couple of years, the program was challenged in how to intergrate timely discussions on issues in the community, a unique and necessary part of the program. For participants to have time and space to process these events, while still receiving planned training, they needed a curriculum that was intentional but wasn't stacked. Metro State IPD worked with the Urban Scholars Program to create a leadership and professional development curriculum that didn't fall like dominoes when the group took time to discuss a current event.

Metro State IPD also helped the Urban Scholars program keeps their costs down, while maintaining quality of the program. After the initial design of the leadership and professional development curriculum, Urban Scholars has been able to use their staff and third and fourth year Urban Scholars to supplement outside instruction. It's a win-win. Scholars are learning facilitation skills and get to practice immediately as they advance learning for new cohorts. You can learn more about Urban Scholars at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/urbanscholars/index.htm](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/urbanscholars/index.htm).

"Broadly, our mission at IPD is to *cause others to flourish*. We are inspired by our partnerships and love watching our students move up through their companies and careers," says Beth Schaefer, Director, Institute for Professional Development.



Students at IPD

# Director's Notes



Since our founding in 1971, Metropolitan State University has sought to respond to the needs of students and our community. In the beginning, the university responded to the need for working adults to earn a degree based on a combination of academic coursework and prior experience. Over time the university has evolved to serve the changing needs of our students. In this issue of *buzz* magazine, we highlight new academic programs in the College of Individualized Studies and experiential learning opportunities that benefit students and the communities they will serve.

In this issue, we also celebrate exceptional achievement and service. Michael O'Connor, the recipient of the Alumnus of the Year award, is an alumnus, who exemplifies lifelong learning, achievement, and giving back to Metro State. You will also find a profile of one of our most dedicated volunteers, Joseph Ellis. For many years, he has worked to help the Metropolitan State Foundation grow. Because of Joseph's exemplary service to the university, the Alumni Board has granted him the title of Honorary Alumnus.

This winter and spring, our calendar has been filled with alumni activities. From small gatherings with the president for coffee and conversation to the large group who assembled for Breakfast at the Capitol, it has been a delight to meet so many alumni. As we move into the summer months, there will be even more opportunities to come together. I invite you to join us. The goal of these gatherings is two-fold. We want to give you the opportunity to connect to other alumni, enjoy each other's company, and build your networks, but we also hope that these events will spark you to get involved with the Alumni Association through volunteering, advocating, or making a gift to support students.

Our university has served the community well, and I hope that as an alumnus/a you choose to support Metro State as we grow and innovate.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristine Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristine Hansen '07  
Alumni Relations Director

# Calendar

**Now through June 27** *We Come from the Flower*, a year in the life of the Hmong American Farmers Association. Pictures and stories by Mike Hazard. Saint Paul Campus, Gordon Parks Gallery. Gallery Hours are Monday–Thursday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.



**Every Third Tuesday** Game Night at the Library, Library and Learning Center Lounge, 4–7 p.m. Whether you want to try out a new video game system or show off your gaming skills, Metropolitan State University invites you to join us the third Tuesday of each month. Snacks and music provided. Game night at the Library is sponsored by Metropolitan State Library and Information Services and the Saint Paul Public Library.

**June 1** First Saturday Science: Switch On: Power of Electricity First, Science Education Center, Saint Paul Campus, noon–2 p.m. Saturday Science is a program designed by Metropolitan State University's Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship for community children of all ages to expand their exposure to science. Once a month, students are guided through an exploration of a specific field of inquiry in a hands-on laboratory activity.

**June 12** Metro in Your Neighborhood, 5–7 p.m. Watch for more information in the alumni e-newsletter.

**June 30** End of the fiscal year. Your last chance to show your support for students and the university this school year. Make an online gift at [www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now](http://www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now). Thank you for your generosity.

**July 25** *Metro in Your Neighborhood*, 5–7 p.m. Watch for more information in the alumni e-newsletter.

**August 21** Convocation, Saint Paul Campus.  
Oct. 26 Grad Expo, New Main, Great Hall,  
9 a.m.–1:30 p.m. If you would like to volunteer, email [alumni.relations@metrostate.edu](mailto:alumni.relations@metrostate.edu).

For more information about events, sign up for the alumni e-newsletter by emailing [alumni.relations@metrostate.edu](mailto:alumni.relations@metrostate.edu).

The artwork featured on this page is part of the *We Come from the Flower* gallery show.





MINNESOTA STATE

Metropolitan State University,  
A member of Minnesota State



*ou topos*  
Alonso Sierralta  
wood, charred wood, 72 x 68 x 41 inches, 2018