

Metropolitan State University
Alumni Association Board Meeting
January 26, 2021, 5:30-7 p.m. Via Zoom

Board members attending: Sandy Best, Fowsiya Dahir, Kjersten Jaeb, Thulani Jwacu, Lucky Lee, Fidelis Odozi, Scott Pilgram, Nancy Uden, Shanasha Whitson, Jolanta Young

Board members not attending: Mohamed Ahmed, Salman Mian, Sam Mwangi, Andrea Steen

Guests: Virginia Arthur, Josefina Landrieu

Staff attendees: Sai Chang, Rita Dibble, Kristine Hansen, Emily Seddon, Noriko Ramberg

Nancy Uden convened the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

University update by President Arthur:

President Arthur gave an overview of what's happening at the university:

- Enrollment
 - Spring semester is mostly online courses. The lab and clinical work for nursing and science students are scheduled in-person starting in February. Nursing students will be vaccinated when they begin clinical work in the hospitals.
 - Spring enrollment was better than expected with 3% lower than last year. In comparison, enrollment was down 9% across the Minnesota State System.
 - The summer session will be online courses.
 - Fall semester registration is being delayed until April in order to possibly accommodate more in-person instruction.
- Second federal funding
 - Metropolitan State will receive approximately \$10 million
 - \$2.7 million is to be used for student emergency aid or tuition.
 - The rest of the fund is to be used for university-related expenditures caused by Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. installation of shields, computer purchasing in the library, etc.)
 - The university will continue to figure out ways to put as much funding into student aid as possible.
- "Student Journey Map" project
 - The project evaluated the processes of a prospective student through his/her educational journey all the way through graduation.
 - The project team identified the barriers along the way to better tackle the road blocks for a student.
 - Through this project, the university learned that our students rated becoming an alum or having an affiliation with Metro State as very low.
 - Educating students on the meaning of affiliation with their alma mater is an ongoing challenge but is worth reexamination.
 - Some of the suggestions from the consultants for action are exit-orientation and finding ways to connect alumni and students through mentoring, shadowing at jobs or community networking to build connection to the university.
 - President Arthur will attend May meeting with more information from the report, and the Board will discuss additional opportunities to support alumni affiliation.

The concept of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) by Josefina Landrieu, sr. director of equity and inclusion

- Equity 2030—a system-wide framework and goal to close gaps for black and indigenous students of color, first generation students, and Pell-eligible students by the year 2030—was set by the Minnesota State system, and each campus is requested to create and develop plans to achieve and make progress towards educational disparities among those populations.
- At Landrieu's office, the focus in the university strategic plan are Student Success and Respect, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Office priorities
 - Building infrastructure and offer support for students and employees to abide by the equity, inclusion and anti-racism values
 - Ensuring student academic outcomes by analyzing data and identifying equity gaps
 - Ensuring workforce diversity in partnership with the Human Resources Office
 - Launching a student survey to collect findings on campus climate
 - Policy, compliance and investigation
- Guiding concept
 - Diversity = *Representation*: It encompasses accepting, valuing, and respect of all individuals while recognizing individual differences.
 - Inclusion = *Sense of belonging*: An environment to create a welcoming, respectable, hospitable and accommodating of all individuals, especially those who are historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.
 - Equity = *Outcomes*: Proportional distribution of desirable outcomes across groups. Equality (equal treatment—the same for everybody) vs. Equity (making sure individuals or groups receive what they needed to reach their potential)
- Things to keep in mind in applying the concepts in the makeup and the activities of Alumni Association
 - Is the Board well-represented in terms of diversity?
 - How the diversity of thought and experience are included in its decision making and processes?
 - Are we organizing events by following the guiding concepts?
 - How could we operationalize the guiding concepts about building your own capacity by including others in the field who can provide opportunities and guidance?
 - How could we define the term anti-racism and have a discussion of its meaning?
 - Are we thinking about ways to engage young alumni, alumni of color and diverse backgrounds to foster the sense of belonging and affiliation to Metro State?
 - If our practice hasn't been fully equitable for marginalized communities, what are some efforts we could make?
 - Have we looked at the data in an equity-minded way? Can we desegregate data by race, ethnicity or different categories?
- Suggestions and ideas for the Alumni Association
 - Establish the DEI subcommittee or chapters to institutionalize practice, expertise and knowledge
 - Incorporate DEI elements to the alumni survey

- Sponsor, attend, and have visibility at events hosted by cultural groups to foster relationship building with students.
- Promote monetary strategies to support the DEI. “Commitment without currency is counterfeit” (quote by Damon Williams, Ph.D.)
 - Metropolitan State established the George Floyd Memorial Endowed Scholarship for Racial and Social Justice last year. It is an endowment of \$50,000, and the first scholarship of \$2,500 was already awarded in the fall semester.
 - Metropolitan State is designated as AANAPISI (Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving) institution and has received a \$1 million grant to spend over the next 5 years to improve academic programs for minority students.
 - The university is currently working on specific scholarships that will assist immigrant students, undocumented students, Native American students and students from underestimated communities.

Key findings and questions from the diversity break-out sessions:

- Do the Admissions, enrollment management and financial aid team members have the right tools? Do they reflect and represent the makeup of our student body?
- We need to make sure that our students and graduates feel the sense of belonging throughout their entire educational journey. How do we help them feel connected?
- What are some short-term quick actions the Board could do that could have a great impact to support the bigger things?
- What actions can we take to support the President’s “Student Journey Map” project?
 - Board members visiting classrooms to introduce the work of the Alumni Association to new students
 - Linking board members and other alumni who are in the same profession
- The quote by Damon Williams, “Commitment without currency is counterfeit” is powerful, and we should put that to the test.
- Being that our Board consists of diversified members, we could reach out to various councils to have representation.
- Seek out alumni where they are at and help them facilitate more involvement with the university.
- Continue with the momentum of diversifying board representation.
- What are out-of-the-box ways of reaching out to alumni who are currently not reachable due to lack of internet or email addresses? What channels could we use to reach out to those people?

Foundation’s fundraising report by Emily Seddon, Development Director:

- The Foundation’s total FY21 fundraising goal is \$1.25 million. We are on track to achieve this goal.
- One of the Foundation’s strategies was to raise money for the Metro Fund, which was used to help those students who were not eligible to benefit from the CARES Act.
- The money from the Metro Fund was also allocated to the George Floyd Scholarship to respond to the immediate needs of the award recipient.

- The Foundation continues working with the Fundraising Committee of the Alumni Board and the Outreach and Engagement Committee of the Foundation Board to meet the goal for the second half of the fiscal year.
- An area for growth is to raise the percentage of alumni giving and the alumni engagement score with the number of alumni participating in events and volunteer work.
- Notable fundraising facts
 - As of 12-31-20, the number of alumni donors is about 400
 - Thirty-four of them gave for the first time, thanks largely to the Give to the Max Day effort that the Board members assiduously promoted.
 - People have been very generous this fiscal year despite the pandemic and unforeseeable future. Nearly 200 people increased their giving amount.
 - The increase in sustaining donors makes the Foundation plan better for the future.
- As usual, 100% participation of the Alumni Board in giving is the Foundation's goal, the goal of the Fundraising Committee and the expectation of the Alumni Board.

Getting to know each other:

- Fidelis Odozi
 - Accomplishments
 - The 2016 Amazon acceleration project for a large toy manufacturer
 - Raising two daughters
 - Fun facts – He could be bribed with a lot of rice
- Shanasha Whitson
 - Accomplishments
 - Starting a consulting firm Community Partnership Collaborative, LLC in 2017
 - She has published an article in a research journal.
 - Fun facts – Traveled to Africa with a band
- Thulani Jwacu
 - Accomplishments
 - Being in education and nonprofit in his career and landed in his current job as Director of College Access at College Possible
 - Moving to the United States from South Africa
 - Fun facts – Growing up playing all the British sports

Consent agenda and other business:

- All materials and reports sent in advance were reviewed and approved by the Board members. Any questions should be directed to the board president.
- The membership Committee is currently working on the board matrix to recruit members with the stress in diversity. If you have any input, please direct them to Pilgram and Best.
- The fundraising Committee is working on the fundraising plan. More information to come as it becomes available.
- Events coming up this week: Real-life Career-Marketing – Thursday, Jan. 28, 5:30-7 p.m.

Uden adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Noriko Ramberg, Office Coordinator