

Metropolitan State University

Alumni Association Board Meeting

March 30, 2021, 5:30-7 p.m. Via Zoom

Board members attending: Sandy Best, Fowsiya Dahir, Kjersten Jaeb, Salman Mian, Sam Mwangi, Fidelis Odozi, Scott Pilgram, Andrea Steen, Nancy Uden, Shanasha Whitson

Board members not attending: Thulani Jwacu, Lucky Lee, Jolanta Young

Guests: Virginia Arthur, Beth Russell

Staff attendees: Rita Dibble, Kristine Hansen, Noriko Ramberg

Nancy Uden convened the meeting at 5:34 p.m. In an effort to make the acquaintance of fellow board members, the following members shared about themselves:

Greatest achievement at work and in their personal lives

- Sandy Best: Serving in the Minnesota Air National Guard for 37 years; celebrating 33 years of marriage to her husband that blessed them with 4 daughters and 11 grandchildren.
- Fowsiya Dahir: Translated all the Robbinsdale School District's Covid-19 information in Somali; assisting the refugees from Syria, who are in Somalia, with food while they fast during the 10 days of Ramadan.
- Kjersten Jaeb: Receiving and awarded, the Senior Property Manager of the Year from her local community in February and being a member of an international organization for commercial real estate; raising three school-age children and having survived the distance learning for almost the entire year before sending them back to school.

Fun fact

- Sandy Best: Since being promoted to the first female general officer, two more women have been promoted to general officer rank in the Minnesota National Guard. Considering that women have been serving in the National Guard only since the 60s, having a number of female generals in recent years is a great testament to women's advancement.
- Fowsiya Dahir: Dahir enrolled two of her children in Metro State.
- Kjersten Jaeb: Her house has been a zoo with both parents working from home, 3 kids, 3 cats and a geriatric dog

Approval of notes from January 26 meeting:

Motion to approve the notes by Kjersten Jaeb, seconded by Salman Mian, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

University update by President Arthur:

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

- Virtual commencement is being planned for Saturday, May 8.
- The university is conducting a marketing brand equity study survey, requesting feedback from students, employees, alumni, other community college employees, and community partners.
- Federal funds are being distributed.
- The second CARES Act grant from December will be distributed to PELL-eligible students and near PELL-eligible students in the form of financial aid.

- Parking fees and Student Center fees are being refunded to students for the spring semester.
- The third CARES Act grant—\$9 million for student aid and \$9 million for the university’s expenses related to pandemic recovery—will start flowing in a month.
- Employees’ return to work on campus is being discussed as more people get vaccinated and students slowly return to campus. It’s an ongoing process.
- Although the university’s enrollment is down a bit this year from the previous year, Arthur feels confident that enrollment will spring back as people rethink their career-path in the post-pandemic environment and look to higher education opportunities.
- The university is poised to take the next step up with the 50th anniversary coming up and the marketing rebranding effort is underway.
- Arthur will revisit the Student Journey Maps report at our May board meeting, and we will discuss what the Board can do to support the program.
- Metro State and Rep. Betty McCollum’s office are developing a plan to support the capital project for the cyber security operation center by using the federal earmark funding. We’ll know more about the progress status on the project in summer.

Committee highlights:

Events/Communication Committee

- Real Life Career in Marketing on 1-28-2021 – Led by Fidelis Odozi; had great success and feedback from the engaging participants.
- Real Life Career in Nonprofit on 4-26-2021 – Will be led by Thulani Jwacu.
- Real Life Career in Human Resources at the end of June – Will be implementing the learnings from the previous events to gain more participants.

Fundraising Committee report

- The committee is focusing on both the way to bring in more money and how we could increase the alumni engagement score. They are exploring ways to meet people and to get people connected to Metro State.
- Jaeb and Beth Russell are working on getting a member of the Foundation Board to be on the Fundraising Committee.

Membership Committee

- The committee developed a matrix that identifies the gaps in talent, skills, college and diversity on the board.
- As Best is completing her board term this year, she has identified her possible replacement who has a military connection.
- Two candidates for the 2020 Alumni of the Year award were advanced to the final review by the committee. The committee recommends Earlsworth “Baba” Letang. Motion to approve Letang as the 2020 Alumnus of the Year passed by a unanimous vote.

Advancement goals:

Division strategic plan was developed to support the university’s own strategic plan. The team came up with the most important commitments and goals to drive the Advancement division in the next 3-5 years.

- *Commitment #1:* Build the endowment to meet the needs for university strategic initiatives, programs and student aid.
 - *Goal:* Increase access to education, high impact practices and career readiness for all students through funding assistance while ensuring greater recognition for the university’s brand and offerings.

- *Commitment #2:* Create a greater affinity with university alumni by offering avenues for life-long affiliation with Metro State.
 - *Goal:* Design programs and services to create measurable, long-lasting, multifaceted relationships with existing and future Metro State alumni.
- *Commitment #3:* Divisional effectiveness and stability.
 - *Goal:* Build structural and foundational systems and processes that align and sustain programmatic, financial and internal relationships to increase the division's efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The Board broke into small groups to discuss ways to assist the Advancement division's commitments and goals. The discussed ideas will be summarized by Uden and Russell and shared with the Board by email.

Financial Report:

- *Income*
 - We have received 100% of the Foundation support fund as of 2-28-21.
 - Commission from Liberty Mutual is flowing in well.
- *Expense*
 - Scholarship fund has been expensed as scheduled.
 - We have not had an event to-date that incurred expenses.
 - We have not had a meeting to-date that incurred expenses since it's all done remotely.
 - We will use the unspent funding to support the purchase of artwork from the Art Purchase Award recipient.

In budgeting the FY22 financials, the committees are requested to estimate their projected expenses for the year and ask for the Foundation's funding support. The goal is to finalize the request by the end of May. Hansen will post the breakdowns of expenses from the previous years in Slack as a reference.

Timing of in-person meetings:

Hansen will send an email survey to the Board to get feedback on the conditions for in-person meetings. This is the member's opportunity to voice their opinions about the format of the future Board meetings.

Other businesses:

Commencement is Saturday, May 8. Uden encouraged the Board to attend the virtual celebration.

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Andrea Steen, seconded by Odozi, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Noriko Ramberg, Office Coordinator