

Metropolitan State University

Alumni Association Board Meeting

May 25, 2021, 5:30-7 p.m. Via Zoom

Board members attending: Fowsiya Dahir, Thulani Jwacu, Lucky Lee, Salman Mian, Scott Pilgram, Andrea Steen, Nancy Uden, Shanasha Whitson

Board members not attending: Sandy Best, Kjersten Jaeb, Sam Mwangi, Fidelis Odozi

Guests: Virginia Arthur, Amy Gort

Staff attendees: Sai Chang, Kristine Hansen, Noriko Ramberg

Nancy Uden convened the meeting at 5:33 p.m. The Board dedicated a moment of silence in recognition of the one-year anniversary of the death of George Floyd and pondered about how the university, the Board and individuals can collectively work to bring about changes.

Getting to know each other:

In an effort to make the acquaintance of fellow board members, the following members shared this about themselves.

- Salman Mian
 - Achievements
 - Mian came to the U.S. at the age of 18 with his parents. He is proud to have reached where he is today at U.S. Bank and the good life he attained, with the help of a Metro State education that taught him skills that helped him achieve his goals.
 - He was recently promoted to vice president, Software Engineering Manager.
 - He is also proud of losing 45 lbs. of weight last year.
 - Fun facts - Mian is a professional photographer on the side, and he does weddings, birthdays and senior pictures.
- Scott Pilgram
 - Achievements
 - Completing a bachelor's degree, although it was a long educational journey, was a triumph for him and his family, who haven't had previous opportunities to higher education.
 - Being an accounting manager, supervising nine accountants, was an unexpected professional achievement for him.
 - Fun facts - Pilgram has been to Germany a couple of times and experienced the life and culture of Germans from the locals' perspectives.
- Andrea Steen
 - Achievements
 - Steen is proud of getting a master's degree from Metro State in 2011.
 - Being the only full-time alumni relations director in Minnesota State's community college system, she enjoys the flexibility of creating and implementing alumni programs, benefits and activities from the ground up.
 - Fun facts - Steen grew up in a small town in Wisconsin. She broke ground for future female athletes by becoming the only female pole vaulter on the team in her high school to compete in the track conference.

Consent agenda:

The notes from the March 30 board meeting, committee updates and financial reports were sent in advance and were reviewed by the board members. Motion to approve these reports was made by Pilgram, seconded by Steen, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Student Journey Mapping by Provost Gort:

A student journey map is a tool to articulate each step a student takes before and after enrolling at a university. Once the steps are articulated, a university can collect information about their experiences at each step to identify obstacles and inform improvements. This was developed to align with one of the university’s strategic commitments—student success.

- *Launch of student survey*

With journey mapping, the university is able to get a more detailed look at students’ perception and experiences of their educational journey. And in turn, the university hopes to identify obstacles for students and develop an action plan based on best practices to strengthen our support and interaction with post-traditional students.

Below is a graphic description of the six phases, known as the “6As”.



APPLY	ADJUST	ANALYZE	ADVANCE	ATTAIN	AFFILIATE
searching for, applying to, and deciding to attend Metro State	getting oriented to Metro’s programs, people, and places	exploring different topics and communities and Metro State	progressing within a selected program at Metro State	identifying and articulating your end goals after Metro	staying connected to and affiliated with Metro State as an alum

According to survey and focus groups, students placed “Affiliate” as the least important in their journey and indicated the university needs to better meet the expectation in that area. It is interesting to know that students rated community and campus culture as the least important parts of their experience at Metro State. This helps the university to focus on different kinds of initiatives it might do in response, such as the need to mobilize faculty and academic courses to help encourage students to get involved or to take advantage of the support we offer.

Through the recent survey on university rebranding, the university learned that students take advantage of remote student services and appreciate many aspects of Metro State’s learning environment. The university will keep listening to students’ needs and continue to offer services both in-person and on a remote platform to increase student engagement.

- *Student feedback and recommendations*

The university learned from the survey that the students’ highest priorities for impacting their journey were career-related opportunities and networking. They also recommended the university offer digital degree planning, streamlined online appointment scheduling, specialized orientation offerings, and creation of a learning space in the Student Center or Library and Learning Center with a variety of vending machines.

- *Actions and activities on the recommendations*
 - “Career in the Classroom” initiatives started in the College of Liberal Arts, where courses that embedded career readiness are designed
 - Career Center and faculty work group representing all colleges/schools
 - Enhancement of communication about existing career networking opportunities
 - Hiring of a Career Readiness Coordinator, whose goal is to build the infrastructure for an alum mentoring program.
 - Development of a degree planner tool
 - Convening a group to evaluate the best practices for specialty orientation
 - Working with IT for a new Customer Relations Management (CRM) software
 - President’s advisory group formed to discuss campus space has had some initial discussion on the options for more food/vending machine options.

- *Things Alumni Board can do to help students’ educational journey*
 - Volunteer as a mentor and help recruit other mentors from your network
 - Help connect Career Center with your employer
 - Support or develop endowments for scholarships and program support

The university is also using the collected data and student learning patterns from the survey to better serve different groups of students and to find ways to cater their needs.

Uden offered to Gort that she can always count on the Alumni Board members if she ever needs to recruit members for focus/advisory groups.

Breakout sessions:

The Board was divided into small groups to discuss board opportunities and involvement to support the journey mapping process.

Suggested Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) goals

- Group 1 (Pilgram, Uden, Whitson)
 - Pop-up advertisement in the alumni business to share information about Metro State activities and events
 - Host a business crawl for alumni
- Group 2 (Steen, Jwacu, Mian)
 - Highlight high-achieving alumni and feature them in the classroom to foster affiliation and the sense of pride and values in Metro State’s education in which they are receiving/have received.
 - Recruit alumni to mentor, either in-person or by Zoom, upper-division students one-to-one, two hours every other month, match them up by program. This is especially beneficial to younger students with less and no job experience who do not have many business connections in their field.
- Group 3 (Dahir, Lee)
 - Celebrate the achievements of alumni, especially utilizing social media to uplift their achievements and promotions

Uden, Chang and Ramberg will compile the notes and present to the rest of the Board at the next meeting.

Committee reports:

Membership Committee report

The committee is hosting an information session on June 10 for the prospective board members. Eight or nine potential members are expected to attend, and they will be interviewed during the week of June 14.

Fundraising Committee report

Please refer to the notes sent in advance.

Events/Communications report

Please refer to the notes sent in advance.

Board evaluation:

The evaluation survey will be sent to the Board in June; we need 100% participation on this. The results will be shared in July, and further discussion on improvement will be on the agenda at the Board Retreat in September.

Other businesses:

- Committee meetings will continue to be held by Zoom.
- July 27 board meeting will be held remotely.
- Board retreat is scheduled for Saturday, September 25.
- We will revisit the timing for an in-person meeting as time progresses
- Provost Gort will be invited to our May 2022 board meeting for an update of the Journey Mapping process.
- Metro State is undertaking university rebranding with the potential implementation in January 2022. Andrea Bergengren, V.P. of Marketing, will be invited to the November board meeting to give us an update on the project.

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Mian, seconded by Steen, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Noriko Ramberg, Office Coordinator