



2020-2021

IMPACT REPORT

50 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE



President's Thank You

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate our once-in-a-lifetime 50th anniversary, I am delighted to report on the impact of your generosity. Looking back on the turmoil of the past year, when it would have been entirely understandable for our friends, alumni, and philanthropic partners to be more cautious, you came together to provide support for Metro State students.

Your generosity in the midst of uncertainty and sometimes fear is an expression of faith in our campus community and hope for the future. It reflects the spirit of Metro State, which has always seen opportunity in the midst of struggle.

In these pages, you will read about Antavia Paredes, a chemistry

student and single parent who received a scholarship from the Jason R. Carter Endowment in Science. Like many of our students, Antavia has demonstrated perseverance and academic achievement throughout her academic career. Receiving a scholarship empowered her to pursue her degree and give back to the community by working as the program coordinator for Metro State's First Saturday Science program, bringing science education to children and families in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood.

Coming together to create a more equitable society has been woven into the fabric of the university. When North Central University President Scott Hagan challenged the nation's universities to establish scholarships in the name of George Floyd, it became a top priority for our university to answer this call. This report shares a behind-the-scenes look at a call to action becoming a reality through the

commitment of our alumni, staff, and friends.

As I look forward to the next fifty years, I am grateful for your partnership in continuing to meet our mission of serving the unmet higher education needs of the Twin Cities area. Metro State has spent the last fifty years honing the educational innovations that will be needed to thrive in the next fifty. I am confident that our future will be bold and innovative, preparing students and alumni to create a just and equitable community and solve problems we may not even have imagined yet. Thank you for joining us on this journey and for embracing our vision of providing an excellent and inclusive education for all who seek it.

Virginia Arthur

Virginia "Ginny" Arthur J.D. '17
(Honorary)

President, Metropolitan State
University

Your Impact 2020-2021

10,801
STUDENTS

3%
International

50%
Of color

56%
female

\$272,595 awarded in
Foundation Scholarships



Metro State graduates earn higher income.
Metro State is **ranked #1** in Minnesota
in Social Mobility rankings

#1

*CollegeNet's Social Mobility Index



Making a Difference So Others Can Make a Difference

By Matthew Spillum '06

The murder of George Floyd, a Minneapolis man, during an encounter with police officers on May 25, 2020, sent shockwaves through the Twin Cities community, the nation, and indeed the world. And while the aftermath reflected the level of systemic trauma and entrenched resistance to change that engendered the tragedy in the first place, a desire to create and resource initiatives promoting lasting equity blossomed from organizations and individuals alike. Retired Dean of Student Services Joyce LeClaire '75, watching funeral services for George Floyd, listened to a challenge by North Central University President Scott Hagan to set up a scholarship at North Central in Mr. Floyd's name, she realized, "Metropolitan State is probably an even better place for a scholarship like that, and it needs to be doing something like this." From there, the idea, and the initial gift to start the fund, was born.

The response from the University Foundation was immediate. Vice President for University Advancement Rita Dibble remembers, "This was

obviously a very important effort to get behind, and quickly. We worked to leverage our major donors, and tapped Dean of Students Maya Sullivan and former School of Urban Education Dean Timothy Berry to craft the scholarship description and award criteria."

MAKING A LASTING IMPACT

Among those who heeded the call was Ernest Grumbles, of Grumbles Law, LLC. "Like a lot of people living in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, we felt the anger, anxiety, and worry brought about not only by George Floyd's death, but by people being forced to confront the injustice, and worse still, the indifference to the plight of Blacks in the United States... we arrived at a moment, which while terrible, was an opportunity to have our collective eyes opened and actually take action."

As he and those at his boutique law firm based in downtown Saint Paul



considered their individual responses, Ernest looked back at some of his formative adult experiences. “People try to make an impact in different ways: putting out messaging, donating money, lending support... I worked as an inner-city school teacher at a Catholic elementary school in the Bronx working with a nearly all non-white student body after growing up in considerably less diverse circumstances in Dallas, and was forced to confront that difference and work in a social justice-oriented program. So my mind set is always on how to make lasting change, and education is one of the most powerful I know. Right away, I thought about what the firm could do: make a contribution to a scholarship.”

As Ernest thought about what school to contact, he reached out to a friend, Wilson Garland, former executive director for Advance IT Minnesota, co-located with Metropolitan State, who connected Ernest to the staff at the foundation. While that personal connection was important, he could see, like Joyce before him, that Metropolitan State was a fitting choice for a

number of reasons. “We’re really just down the Seventh Street hill from the campus, so we see it every day looking East. But I also particularly wanted to contribute to a school that was serving a diverse population, one that was open and financially accessible, a place that was serving students in different economic situations, including working students.”

RECIPIENTS AS IMPACT MULTIPLIERS

While every scholarship makes an impact, on the

By empowering people to finish school, without debt, it really allows you to do the work you’re really meaning to do, instead of having to take whatever job you can find just to pay that debt back.



Photo Credit: Jeff Achen

person receiving it, the organization working with that student, and the community benefiting from the education of its member, a scholarship like the George Floyd Memorial Endowed Scholarship for Racial and Social Justice has continuing impact at its very heart. The scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate student who demonstrates commitment to racial equity and social justice. As something designed to perpetuate that commitment, it stands to reason that equity and social justice should continue to be championed by those awarded this scholarship. Essence Williams, the initial recipient of this scholarship, provides a wonderful picture of how that initial impact can continue on.

At the time the scholarship was first announced, Essence was struggling with a lack of financial aid. “I lost a lot of hope and kind of just like thinking I need to take loans out, I didn’t have any funding and I had to pay a little bit of money out of pocket, so I just started looking online seeing what scholarships were available and I saw that the George Floyd scholarship had opened for applications.”

Essence worked at the time as a legal advocate at Domestic Abuse Project, a domestic violence center in Minneapolis, helping families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. “I knew I had to be a voice for the BIPOC community and contribute to breaking the faulty criminal justice system,” says Essence. That work aligned seamlessly with the focus of the George Floyd scholarship, and her application was a unanimous choice for the selection committee.

And while the undeniable impact of direct financial support was itself powerful, Essence can see other ways that this scholarship has impacted her life. “I can honestly say that Metro State showed up for me. Being a woman of color, not having funding for school, seeing all that was happening in my community... getting that email saying ‘you are the first recipient’ really boosted my confidence. As the university was asking if they could talk to

me about my story and use that story to reach other people, I was like, wow, I can inspire other people that might be in my situation.”

Essence, who plans on pursuing a Master’s degree in social work in the near future, also notes the way her story can be an inspiration on the donor side. “It is important to recognize that donating to a scholarship is more than just helping somebody pay for school; it is helping people be the reason that other people stay in school.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENDOWMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE

While it was important to bestow the first George Floyd Memorial Scholarship in 2020, Rita Dibble was driven to get the scholarship endowed. “It is one thing to be the first school in the (Minnesota State) system with a George Floyd Memorial scholarship, to recognize a student who works towards social justice and support their educational achievements, but to remove that assistance from the vagaries of appropriations and the changing focus of donors, we needed to get it endowed.”

While endowment is a longer process, requiring enough funding to make the pool self-sustaining, the expedience of getting the scholarship awarded that same year was facilitated by the President’s Office generously granting their discretionary scholarship to the 2020 and 2021 recipients of the George Floyd Memorial Scholarship. After that, the fund is endowed, and can sustain itself. “It was the fastest endowment process I’ve ever seen; just extraordinary!” says Rita. “We want this program, and many other programs, to be in a position to grow, not merely stay afloat. We can only do this through



private gifts, because foundations don't give to endowments. We need to tap into the generosity of people who actually believe in our anti-racist mission." Reaching those people was accomplished not only through contacting major donors, but making the George Floyd scholarship the focus of the foundation's 2020 Give to the Max campaign.

CONTINUING TO RIPPLE THE POND

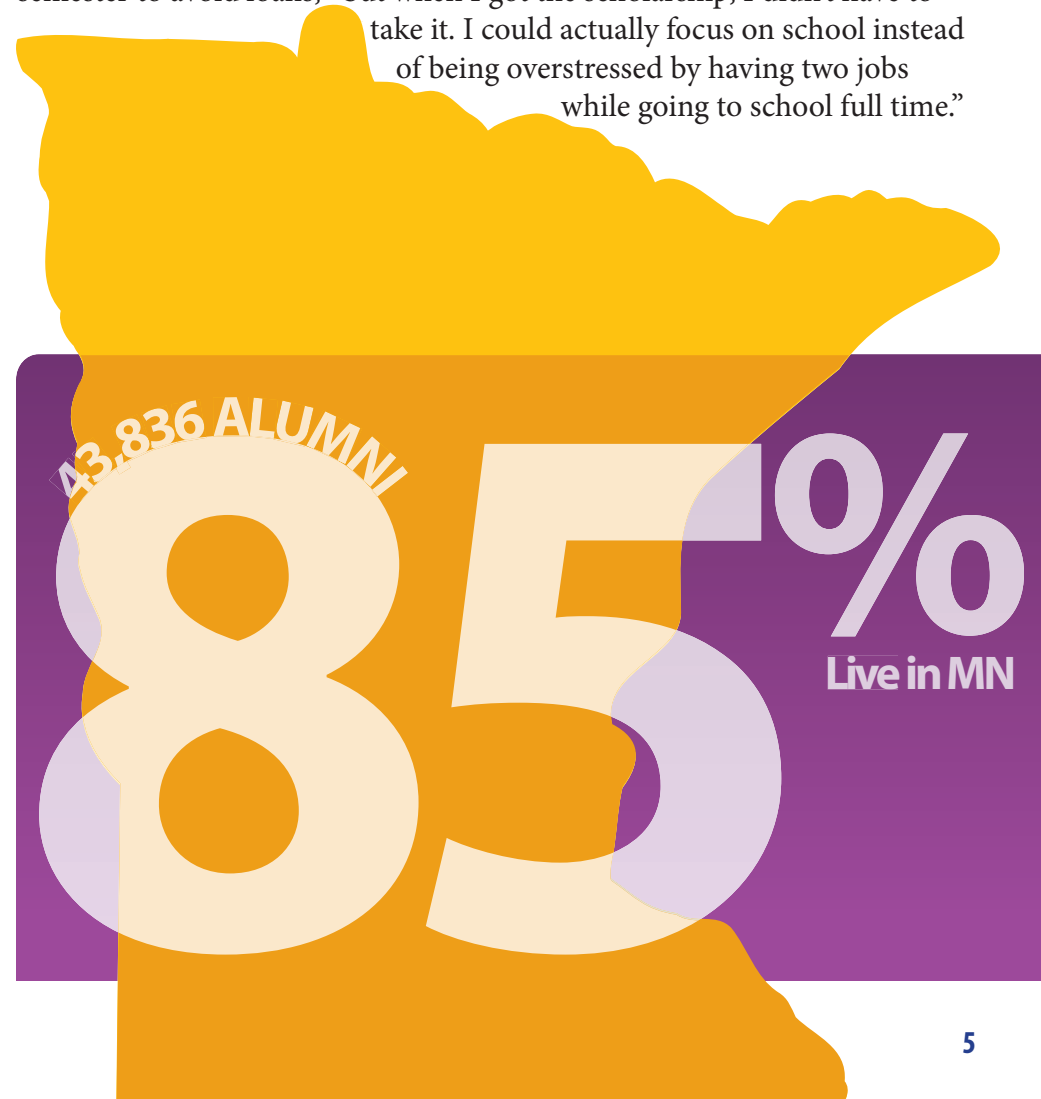
It might seem a bit calculated to have to rely on individual consciences to directly impact issues of social justice. However, as Ernest Grumbles mentioned, we have to confront the indifference to the plight of others that is endemic in our society. Until such a time as this indifference is an odd aberration, the way forward is through the vision of the forward-thinkers.

Given the fact that the enormous burden of student debt lands primarily on those with the most socioeconomic barriers to paying it off, endowed



Photo Credit: Jeff Achen

scholarships, with their sustainable base and independent potential for growth, might just be one of the most transformative tools for economic justice available to society. "By empowering people to finish school, without debt," says Essence Williams, "it really allows you to do the work you're really meaning to do, instead of having to take whatever job you can find just to pay that debt back. Because that's trauma of another kind." In fact, she says that, "I actually had applied for a second job to help pay for the semester to avoid loans, but when I got the scholarship, I didn't have to take it. I could actually focus on school instead of being overstressed by having two jobs while going to school full time."



Taking a Leap of Faith: Antavia Paredes

By Lucia Rivas '22

“I want to acknowledge the privilege it takes to make school your whole life, and I feel so lucky to have been able to do that,” says Antavia Paredes, an undergraduate chemistry student and Jason Carter Endowment in Science Scholarship awardee.

Antavia completed her Liberal Arts associate’s degree at Minneapolis College, one class at a time, while working full time and caring for her son as a single mom. She knew continuing her education that way would take her a very long time but decided to wait for her son to start kindergarten before committing to a more demanding academic workload.

When a childhood friend shared her rewarding experience at Metro State, Antavia was convinced to give it a try by taking one course—precalculus. Antavia recalls, “I decided that if I did well in this class, I would allow myself to pursue a chemistry

degree.” As a first-generation college student, she lacked confidence and mentorship and felt unsure about pursuing a career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). However, with the support of faculty, staff, and peers, Antavia persisted and was able to succeed in the class. “Something that is obviously unique to Metro State is that it’s an Asian Pacific Islander and Native-serving institution. And so, there are a lot more Native students like me here,” says Antavia.

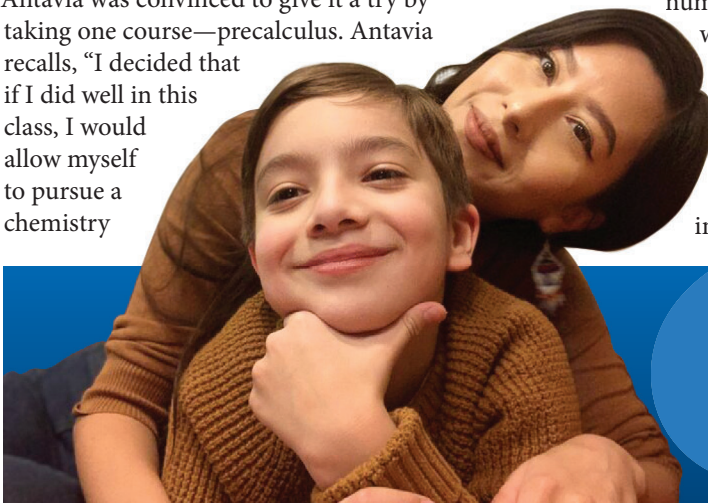
“I took a leap of faith and enrolled full-time and ended up doing really well,” Antavia continues. “I didn’t know how I was going to do that financially, so I applied for scholarships.” Her leap of faith was rewarded, and she earned a number of scholarships, as well as a student worker position at the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES) that allowed her to stay in school. In addition,

Antavia gives credit to services at Metro State, such as the Student Parent Center for providing support and groceries through the Food for Thought Food Pantry.

Antavia also participated in the Conservation Corps’ Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) fellowship, a “college-to-careers pathway” for ‘underrepresented’ STEM students—women, racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities—who are interested in pursuing environmental careers. She did not know what to expect when she applied, but after her interview, she was welcomed into the cohort of 16 selected from more than 100 applicants across the state. Antavia was provided with a scholarship and mentorship and later an internship at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. She says, “It was a full-time job, and they paid me really well. Fair pay is definitely a major piece in building educational equity.” She decided to stay and is now working as a hydro-geochemist, in charge of conducting literature reviews for research

as well as collecting and analyzing groundwater samples in the lab. Antavia says, “My passion is at the intersection of environmental equity and making sure our water is safe for the next generation. And I love science, so I really love what I am doing.”

Antavia will graduate in December 2021 with a BS in chemistry and is applying to PhD programs in Water Resources Sciences. She is determined and says that if she does not get in this year, she will continue working and apply again next year. “My goal is to be a research scientist and use my own labor and love of science to create a more equitable relationship with our environments and with our people,” Antavia says. She plans to work to correct the disconnect between the science done in the lab and how the things researchers study affects real people outside the lab. To her, it is also important to see the representation of minorities in science to benefit all communities, enrich scientific knowledge, and create a better world for future generations.



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Living Her Values by Supporting Metropolitan State University: Lois West Duffy

By Rachel Hughes

Lois learned about Metro State with a phone call to the foundation when she was the vice president of the Ecolab Foundation. She was following up on a request the Metro State Foundation had submitted for the library, and she had many questions. She learned through that conversation that Metro State supported non-traditional students. She recognized herself in these students—she also took a non-traditional path to get her degree as a working adult and mother. This phone call launched her longtime relationship with Metropolitan State University.

Now retired, Lois remains connected to Metro State as a donor and volunteer. She explained why she continues to support the university, “It feels good to be able to participate in something important. Since

I was young, I’ve been trying to move the world forward.” She knows her support of Metro State makes a difference.

And Lois knows that education can be a gateway to a wider world—this is why education is so significant to her. She described, “If you are truly willing to be educated, you learn so much about making a life versus making a living. You learn so much about the world around you. It builds self-confidence, and it’s a credential that opens doors for you as a desirable employee.” She hopes her support can help Metro State students achieve this.

Lois went back to school as a young mother and a graduate of Waldorf College and Mankato State University. She went

on to earn her Master’s Degree in Public Administration from the Kennedy School at Harvard University.

It makes sense for Lois to want to help others on their educational journey because education has opened so many doors for her. First in her career as a journalist who worked for a small daily newspaper and The Associated Press and later working as the press secretary to a U.S. Senator, communications director for the nonprofit Prison Fellowship, and as the community relations director and vice president of the Ecolab Foundation, from which she retired in 2003.

Once she realized the possibilities that Metro State created for students pursuing a four-year degree, she knew she wanted to support this. When Lois retired from Ecolab, they provided her with an opportunity to contribute to the organization of her choice—she chose to establish an endowed scholarship with Metro State—the

Lois West Duffy and Joe Duffy Endowed Scholarship. Since then, she has added to it with contributions of her own. She has been able to make a bigger contribution than she expected when she learned she could make a gift directly from her IRA. “The IRA gift is larger than what I’d make if giving from my monthly income—we both get more, me and Metro State!” Lois shared.

It is no surprise when Lois says, “Helping people always mattered a lot to me.” Her passion for helping people has been evident throughout her life: caring for 30 foster children, raising her own three boys, and her dedication to Metro State and its students. When you talk with Lois, you can hear the compassion and enthusiasm in her voice as she explains her commitment to moving the world forward. We know that through her support of her scholarship fund, she will move students’ lives forward one scholarship at a time.

It feels good to be able to participate in something important. Since I was young, I’ve been trying to move the world forward.



Photo Credit: Jeff Achen

The GROW-IT Center Nears Completion

EXCERPTED FROM AUDACIOUS GOALS:
Building the Grow It Center; buzz magazine, Spring 2020

By Jennifer Houston, Emily Kelson '21, and Jodi Bantley

The small site nestled between Metropolitan State's Studio Arts building and the First Lutheran Church has become East Saint Paul's newest treasure. The GROW-IT Center, the Gateway for Research, Outreach, Workforce Development, Innovation, and Teaching, is a year-round greenhouse and educational space designed to generate and share knowledge about urban food production, healthy food access, and environmental sustainability.

Phase I of the GROW-IT Center project was completed in the fall of 2019. This first phase expanded greenhouse space by more than a third, rehabilitated a secure research area, and equipped the facility with a remote-controlled

HVAC system that enables year-round applied research and learning in pest management, soil health, urban tree propagation, and urban food production.

Phase II of the project is underway and will create a versatile space for demonstrations, workshops to maximize teaching, learning, and material exchanges envisioned by the university and its community partners.

The benefits of learning, teaching, and research at the center will have a long-lasting effect. The collaborative nature of this project also ensures the impact will be felt throughout the community. The GROW-IT Center will help prepare the next generation of scholars and practitioners concerned about

achieving food security and a healthy environment.

The university will use the space to bridge theory and practice for its students, enhancing existing courses and aligning them with the work of community partners. The center will be home to a stream of students from K-12 schools, community colleges, and Metropolitan State as they advance their education and careers.



Metropolitan State University GROW-IT CENTER PHASE I 292DesignGroup

Rebuilding the GROW-IT Center would not have been possible without the philanthropic support of our funders. We would like to express our gratitude to our community partners for helping the vision come to life.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Metropolitan State University

Bush Foundation

Manitou Fund

Hardenbergh Foundation

Metropolitan State University Foundation

Otto Bremer Trust

CHS Foundation

The McNeely Foundation

East Side Funders Group (Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation)

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Neighborhood STAR Program

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Boys Totem Town

Thank you!

The Foundation takes pride in recognizing those who help to preserve the quality education that Metropolitan State University provides. These donors have expressed their belief in our mission and have made an investment in the university's long-term impact on our community. This list recognizes donors from July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

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The Carter Family Foundation
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The stories in the 2020-21 impact report illustrate a few of the ways Metro State, her students and alumni will continue to achieve great things for the next 50 years fueled by your philanthropy.

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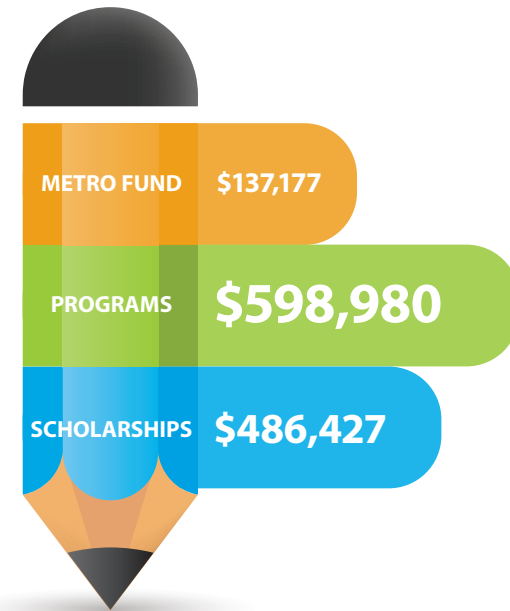
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