

Metro State University
Alumni Association Board Meeting

September 19, 2023, 5:30-6:30 p.m., St. Paul Room

Members attending in-person: Jim Houston, Matt Moe, Scott Pilgram, Amanda Wong, Darrell Young

Members attending by Zoom: Deidra Isaac, Eric Rios, Shahbaz Shah, Shanasha Whitson

Members not attending: Matt Christenson, Bryan Newman, Ryan Ringwelski, Betsy Salvatore

Staff attendees: Kristine Hansen, Rachel Hughes, Noriko Ramberg, Josh Windham

Guest: President Ginny Arthur

Amanda Wong convened the meeting at 5:32 p.m. Scott Pilgram introduced the new member Jim Houston to the Board, and each member introduced himself/herself with an icebreaker question of the favorite thing he/she likes about autumn.

Introduction of Jim Houston '16

- BA in Criminal Justice
- Entire career spent in workforce development
- Inclusion and Diversity Consultant for Xcel Energy, focusing on The Energy Careers Academy for supporting students, especially POC students, ensuring their graduation and hiring process if desired.

President's Update:

- Cyber security program
 - Metro State expects to receive an additional \$10.5 million through the Department of Defense once Congress passes a budget.
 - Metro State established the Cyber Security Clinic to provide students with hands-on experience, protection services and diagnosis to help them get into the field. We have a partnership with Minnesota IT, which provides consulting services to the state's smaller school districts. We currently have 40 applications from entities such as small businesses and nonprofits.
 - Metro State has been connected to the government contracts called Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR). These are federal government programs that infuse money into small businesses. Because these programs require businesses to have a partnership with a university, we have been participating in SBIR and STTR and getting our students engaged in cyber security activities.
 - Metro State plans to have a cyber round table either on Oct. 30 or 31. Rep. Betty McCollum will be the featured speaker. We have been working to have cyber security experts from private and public sectors in Minnesota join the round table. More information to come.
- Urban Education program
 - The program was awarded almost \$1.4 million by the State of Minnesota to support the success of teacher candidates of color. It is notable that Metro State received more than 25% of the grant allocation.
 - With the grant from the state, Metro State will provide scholarships to supplement the tuition for Urban Education students.
 - Metro State received funding for a teaching apprenticeship program, where students will be employed by the school district and be integrating their academic study in teacher education.
- Model Legislature program
 - Metro State received \$150,000 for the next two years through the Higher Education Bill to establish a program called model legislature.

- Model legislature has initially been led in the non-legislative season by Rep. Gene Pelowski of Winona, and the program is set up for high school students to participate in the experience of the model legislature of the Minnesota legislature with the help of Winona State University students.
- There has been an interest to implement this idea in the Twin Cities; therefore, Metro State is currently working on the logistics and details for the fruition of the program for the fall of 2024.
- Enrollment
 - Undergrad enrollment was down by only 1.65% compared to last year, as opposed to the university's original prediction of -5%.
 - Overall enrollment was down by 1.9%.
 - National enrollment trend is down. The two-year colleges of the Minnesota State system are rebounding to positive enrollment figures. Some of the seven Minnesota State Universities are more depressed than Metro State.
 - President Arthur is optimistic about enrollment in the next year or so.

Approval of Committee Notes:

Board members reviewed the committee notes prior to the Board meeting. Motion to approve the committee notes moved by Shahbaz Shah, seconded by Pilgram, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Approval of revised bylaws:

Board members reviewed the revised bylaws prior to the Board meeting. The motion to approve the revised bylaws passed by the majority vote.

Wong expressed gratitude to the ad-hoc committee for their time-consuming efforts to update the bylaws.

Preview of the Retreat:

- Retreat is Saturday, September 30, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Saint Paul Room, in-person only.
- This year's retreat will be facilitated by Sindiswa Georgiades, strategic services consultant of Propel Nonprofits.
- See the enclosed agenda for details.

Alumni engagement Strategy:

Alumni Board uses five tactics for alumni relations. These are the ways that alumni can be actively engaged to support the Metro State mission.



The Board members formed small groups to discuss the following questions in blue. Feedback after the breakout session is in green.

Communications: *Are there opportunities to involve alumni in the creation of content for Buzz magazine? How can we make it a more collaborative and community-driven publication?*

Experiential: *Are there specific university events that have the potential to attract a significant number of alumni attendees, and how can we promote these events effectively?*

Alumni gathering at the Saints game is one event that is beneficial to both parties. Through the interaction and conversation, we would be able to find out more about the person, and it could be an opportunity to introduce him/her to further engagement with Metro State.

A number of Alumni Board members' presence at events or having clear visibility on Facebook group page is another strategy.

Another idea is to expand the existing events and activities with added-values, such as raffles and prizes for being present, to entice people to attend by making it more appealing to generate some interest.

Volunteering: *Are there specific skills or expertise areas that we should prioritize when recruiting alumni for committee service, and how can we identify alumni with these qualifications?*

We could ask them to identify the top 3 skills they have, and we can identify the best match of volunteer opportunities based on their qualifications and skills. Also, try to deliver more information in a simple way because it makes people more likely to engage if they are given a clear direction and expectation.

Philanthropy: *What strategies can we employ to make annual giving appeals more engaging and compelling, beyond the traditional mail or email appeals?*

Sharing personal stories—catalyst for transformation—and success stories are good tactics to get people's attention rather than sharing the stories of need.

Telling stories through metrics may be effective, so people can visualize the impact and the outcome of their gifts.

Advocacy: *What strategies can be employed to ensure that alumni career events and mentoring programs are mutually beneficial, providing value to both alumni volunteers and student participants?*

During the contacts with alumni and students at events and activities, we should continue to ask people questions and track their feedback to understand where/which activities we can add values to. One suggestion would be to include a brief survey or questionnaire for people to answer at events/activities, so we would get guidance on meeting the stakeholders' needs.

Other business:

- Director of Annual Giving and Stewardship, Will Ruckel, was recently hired. He has been with Metro State for 9 years and has a very deep knowledge of the university.
- Upcoming alumni events are listed on the back of the agenda; if you are interested in attending any of them, let the office know at alumni.relations@metrostate.edu or MS Teams site.
- Board members are encouraged to attend the October 25 Metro Connect Networking Event, 6-7:30 p.m., in-person. Great opportunities to mentor students/alumni and share advice on career readiness.
- Darrell Young brought up the idea of bringing outside organizations or groups, such as NSBE, at events and activities to draw more attention and interest of POC constituents. This is something to consider in the future.
- Kristine Hansen will email a survey on dietary restrictions tomorrow. Please respond by Friday.

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Houston, seconded by Matt Moe, and the meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Noriko Ramberg, Office Coordinator