

Metro State University
Alumni Association Board Meeting
March 25, 2025, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Management Education Center, M2200

Members attended: Matt Christenson, Jim Houston, Deidra Isaac; Matt Moe, Bryan Newman, Scott Pilgram, Ryan Ringwelski

Members not attending: Eric Rios, Shanasha Whitson, Amanda Wong, Darrell Young

Staff attendees: President Ginny Arthur, Kristine Hansen, Will Ruckel, Josh Windham, Noriko Ramberg

Ryan Ringwelski convened the meeting at 5:37 p.m.

Consent Agenda:

No consent agenda available.

Advocacy Committee Updates by Matt Christianson:

- Breakfast at the Capitol was well-attended and engaged. The committee may consider changing the room next year due to acoustics.
- A couple of bills that pertain Metro State are in the Senate at the Legislature—\$600,000 for the cyber range and \$280,000 for the law enforcement grant program for juvenile justice establishment and appropriation
- Senate also has bill 2483—Office of Higher Ed (OHE) funding and policy related provisions modifications and appropriations—that covers broader funding request for the higher education institution
- North Star Promise (NSP) has \$10 million in proposed funding in the House bill 2431. A number of bills related to NSP are on the table—one to require residency and citizenship for eligibility, one to end the program altogether, and others.
- The House bill 2431 requests additional support for higher ed institutions for sustenance funding into NSP.

President's Update: *

- President Arthur testified at the Senate Higher Ed Committee hearing about a bill that would amend the existing law to allow Metro State to offer an applied doctorate degree in cyber security. This bill is sponsored by Senators Eric Lucero and Sandy Pappas, Metro State alumni, and it will be included in the Senate's higher education bill. President Arthur is fairly confident that the legislature will pass the bill.
- There will be no increase to the state funding for public higher education in FY26—in fact, there will be a cut in funding because Minnesota State institutions did not receive the additional one-time funding that they received in the last biennium. As a result, Metro State's allocated FY26-27 biennium funding is about \$3 million less than FY24-25, unless the legislature provides a supplemental budget.
- Another bill for \$280,000 that Christenson mentioned in his report is a program called Juvenile Detentions Alternative Initiative (JDAI), available to counties and cities to offer a program that will be an alternative to putting juveniles in jail. Metro State has been working on the program, and this is the special appropriation to keep the program going.
- There is uncertainty on the direction of education at the federal level and how it will impact us at the state level in terms of funding. At this point, we do not see a threat to federal financial aid for students.
- North Star Promise (NSP) scholarship, a "last dollar" scholarship, has helped tremendously with increasing enrollment. Metro State has the most students who are receiving NSP among the Minnesota State system. Interesting fact is that 1/3 of the students who applied

to NSP are actually receiving the fund because 2/3 of them turned out to be eligible for the Pell Grant—47.4% of Metro State students are Pell Grant-eligible.

- There is another bill to modify the income requirements and award formula for NSP in order to support more students who are otherwise not eligible with a tiered scholarship percentage based on income levels.
- Those students who are not eligible for NSP can apply for private scholarships offered by the Metro State University Foundation.
- Metro State's enrollment was up about 12% over all this year—thanks to the NSP.
- Tuition increase, anywhere from 5 to 9%, is imminent starting the fall semester of 2025 due to lack of funding from the state. Tuition was frozen for two years because the legislature paid for the tuition increase.
- Metro State completed the construction of the Educational Secure Operations Center on the Saint Paul Campus.

Kristine Hansen stressed the importance of board members' engagement in advocacy activities to sustain and cultivate relationships with legislators. In addition to Senators Lucero and Pappas, Representative Jess Hansen, a Metro alumna, is on the House Higher Education Committee.

Membership Committee Updates:

- Scott Pilgram reported that the committee had two listening sessions for committee recruitment in February. Five people attended; two of the five filled out applications. The committee will start the interview process.
- Kevin Gam'20 joined the Membership Committee.
- The committee will hold two more listening session in April.

Week of Service/Commencement Expo:

- Week of Service—March 24-29
Josh Windham and the Week of Service committee is collecting personal hygiene items.
- Blood drive—Today, March 25; 30 people signed up
- Spring Fest—Tomorrow, March 26
- Commencement Expo—March 29; 24 alumni volunteers signed up
- A text message was sent to all alumni with volunteer opportunity information with a pitch to give monetary gifts

Hansen reminded the board members that the Commencement Expo is an excellent opportunity to reach out to soon-to-be-grads and grab their attention to show ways to stay engaged and network.

Officer Elections:

The Membership Committee is taking officer elections for the Engagement Officer and Vice President positions. Position description is in the Board Expectation document. If interested, notify Pilgram and Hansen. Nomination is open from now until May 19, and the Board will vote at the May 20 board meeting.

Meeting Schedule:

The Executive Committee proposed switching the board meetings from 6 meetings per year to 4 and adjusting committee meetings to be more project focused and as needed. It has been a challenge for people to make 6 meetings a year post-pandemic.

After a couple of meetings, the Board will check in to assess the validity of quarterly meetings and make adjustments if necessary.

Motion to approve the quarterly board meetings in FY26 moved by Christiansen, seconded by Deidra Isaac, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Hansen will send a survey of preferred meeting date and time for the FY26 board meeting and go with the date/time that works for the majority.

Development Assessment:

Rachel Hughes reported that the Foundation Board is working on its mission, vision and strategic priorities to grow revenue for the Foundation.

The Foundation hired external consultants to assess our program and recommend where the Foundation should invest its time and money. They will present the results in May, and Hughes will share the results with the Alumni Board at that time.

Goal Setting Reset:

The Executive Committee discussed the ideation about potential projects for the Alumni Board that were brainstormed at the last board meeting. Hansen mentioned that the committee identified common themes in them—student engagement and support, resource building, public presence, and alumni pride.

The committee identified the following tangible, measurable projects that would benefit from the Board's engagement and support:

- Week of Service (September/March)
- Commencement Expo (Fall/Spring)
- Give to the Max Day
- Breakfast at the Capitol
- Alumni Career Experience (Fall/Spring)
- Saints Game

Hansen recommended that each board member commit to two (or more) events listed above because these events have one or more components that fulfill at least one of the themes.

Starting in FY26, Alumni Relations Office will send Outlook calendar appointments for above events to the Board. They can accept, pending, or decline the appointments at the time of receipt but confirm the attendance as it gets closer to each event.

Upcoming Events:

- Commencement Expo – Saturday, March 29, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Great Hall, New Main
- Alumni Career Experience – Thursday, May 8, 1-5 p.m., Library 3rd floor

Other business:

- Will Ruckel plugged an alternative way, in addition to financial support, to support the Give to the Max campaign by being featured in the promotional video.
- Hughes will offer a 15-minute tour of MEC after the meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Christenson, seconded by Jim Houston, and the meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Noriko Ramberg, Office Coordinator

**** These remarks were made on March 25, 2025. State and Federal funding and legislation are a fluid situation, and results of legislative and executive decisions may vary from outcome suggest in these notes.***