

**Metro State University**  
**Alumni Association Board Meeting**

May 20, 2025, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
Saint Paul Room or Zoom

**Members attended:** Matt Moe (Zoom), Bryan Newman, Ryan Ringwelski, Shanasha Whitson (Zoom), Amanda Wong (Zoom)

**Members not attending:** Matt Christenson, Jim Houston, Deidra Isaac, Eric Rios, Scott Pilgram, Darrell Young

**Staff attendees:** President Ginny Arthur, Kristine Hansen, Rachel Hughes, Will Ruckel (Zoom), Josh Windham (Zoom), Noriko Ramberg

Ryan Ringwelski convened the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

**President's Update**

- The Legislature approved the amendment to the mission statute for higher education institutions; therefore, Metro State can offer an applied doctorate degree in cyber security.
- The Legislature decided not to restrict the Minnesota State Board's ability to set tuition, unlike what has been done in past years, because the Legislature has no money for supporting higher education institutions.
- The Minnesota State Board will immediately discuss the tuition increase, and it is likely that Metro State will increase tuition by 6% for the upcoming year, pending approval by the Minnesota State Board of Trustees. Metro State Student Association had been consulted on the possible tuition increase, and they expressed the acceptance of feasibility.
- Summer enrollment is up 19% from that of last summer.
- Fall enrollment, although we have 3 more months to the start of the semester, is already up about 12% in undergraduate enrollment compared to last fall. If the trend holds for the next 3 months, we could possibly exceed the highest enrollment from fall 2017.
- The federal government is in the midst of trying to pass the Big Beautiful Bill, and it contains the provisions that are disadvantageous to the kind of students who attend Metro State. The provisions include changes to the definition of a full-time student, from the current 12 credits to 15, which greatly affects students receiving the Pell Grant. Currently, almost 50% of Metro State students receive the Pell Grant; this change will discourage Pell-eligible Metro State students from attending college.
- The Bill also includes the plan called "Risk-sharing", where higher education institutions would be required to reimburse the government for a portion of their students' unpaid federal student loans. If passed, this could shut out some financially-challenged students from enrolling in college.
- The federal-level change may also affect the financial situations of students who receive Medicaid, and that could be the deterrent factor in college enrollment.
- As a system, all the Minnesota State presidents and chancellor signed that letter to the Congressional representations of the two Senators and all the Representatives, expressing the impact that the provisions would have on students in Minnesota and how it negatively affects the workforce in the state.
- The Bill also proposes reduced funding for TRIO programs, which aim to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and/or disabled students who pursue and complete postsecondary education. It will be devastating to lose this funding because Metro State supports four cohorts, such as veterans and students with disabilities, and the employees who support these programs will be affected as well.

- President Arthur commended Ryan Ringwelski for delivering an excellent job addressing the newly graduates at the Commencement.

### Attending Events

- Ringwelski participated in the Commencement as a speaker on May 5, shared the fulfilling experience to the Board and encouraged involvement in the future Commencement. <https://www.metrostate.edu/calendar/fall-2024-commencement-ceremonies> (Ringwelski's speech can be viewed at 1:04:15 for the first ceremony and at 55:26 for the second ceremony)
- Bryan Newman participated in the Alumni Career Experience (ACE) on May 8 and shared his experience. His main goal was to encourage alumni and to make a pitch for the Alumni Association. It was also a great opportunity to network with other alumni, and Newman encouraged the Board to participate in the future ACE event.

### Advocacy Committee Update

The committee chair Matt Christenson was absent; however, President Arthur touched on most of the legislative topics in her updates.

### Foundation Board Update

Matt Moe will participate in the *Creative Fundraising Advisors Presentation* on June 16 to discuss the investment, strategies, and allocation of the Foundation funds considering the current fluid economic market.

Kristine Hansen commended the Foundation Board for their initiative and involvement in filling the tables and the success of the April 24 *Rise to Shine* Breakfast. Moe, who attended both 2024 and 2025 breakfasts, said that this year's event had more energy in the room than last year's.

Rachel Hughes shared that the Foundation Board is currently discussing a development assessment—reviewing the university advancement and its work—to make recommendations on the best way to use the advancement resources going forward—on both time and budget—to help grow revenue, which in turn help more students by offering more scholarships.

### Membership Committee Update

- The committee has four candidates for the possible new board members. Two interviews are scheduled.
  - Zuki Ellis '11 – Frequent volunteer at events
  - Carol Njogu '11 – Current Fundraising Committee member
- After all the interviews are completed, the committee plans to recommend them to be voted at the July board meeting. Their bios are forthcoming prior to the vote.
- Scott Pilgram and Shanasha Whitson will complete their 2<sup>nd</sup> board term in August. The committee will continue to recruit alumni for committee memberships to fill the seats.

### Officer nominations

Hansen reminded the Board that the submission deadline of the FY26 Alumni Board officers (vice president and engagement officer) is June 15. One can self-nominate for a position, or one can nominate others. The voting will take place in early July, and the results will be announced at the July 22 board meeting.

### Recap of Commencement Expo (formerly known as Grad Expo)

Whitson reported that 77 graduating students signed up for potential alumni relations engagement at the Expo. This is a casual, ideal opportunity for board members to engage and connect with soon-to-be graduates and also to find potential board members among the Expo volunteers.

Through the interaction with students and their parents and family, one can truly sense the excitement and energy of students from all walks of life—First Generation students, international students, and like.

### **Alum of the Year Voting**

Nominees are Moustapha (Mohamed) Bande '19, nominated by Bill Baldus, director of the career center, and Leah Spielman '15, nominated by Rachel Nihart, career counselor.

After reviewing the nomination application, the Board took a vote and unanimously selected Leah Spielman for the 2025 Alumna of the Year. Hansen will notify Spielman of the award later this week.

### **Fiscal Year Giving Pitch**

Whitson made a pitch to the Board to make an effort to achieve the 100% board participation. She shared her story of starting with a small gift amount and increasing the gift amount over the years as a testament of giving back to Metro State.

### **Volunteer appreciation**

Hansen reiterated her appreciation to the Board for all of their time, efforts, and commitment serving on the Alumni Board. The Board's work not only contributes to serve alumni but also maintains the health of the university.

In light of Pilgrim and Whitson's completion of the two board terms in August, their work is truly appreciated by Hansen and her staff.

### **End of the Year Playlist**

Will Ruckel plans to create a Spotify playlist of songs that are meaningful to Alumni Board and Foundation Board members and to include the playlist in the donor "Thank You" email as a sign of appreciation to the donors who gave this past fiscal year.

Ruckel requested the Board to email him a special song with 2 or 3 sentences as to why the song is meaningful to them. Ruckel's email is [William.ruckel@metrostate.edu](mailto:William.ruckel@metrostate.edu).

### **Meeting Schedule**

Hansen shared the survey result of meeting times for the FY26. The Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. on a Tuesday in September, January, April and June—two "in-person only" meetings, two hybrid meetings.

Committee meetings will occur as needed. Committee work will be largely focused and carry heavier weight than board work, and their fruition of work will be reported quarterly at the board meetings.

### **Housekeeping**

- Hansen reminded the Board members to refer to the university's strategic plan (linked on the meeting agenda) if anyone has any questions or would like to review the plan.
- Hansen plans to update the FY26 event calendar in the Teams folder soon.

- Upcoming events
  - *Career Toolkit: Rethinking Your Personal Work Brand*, June 17, 5-7 p.m.  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/career-toolkit-rethinking-your-personal-work-brand-tickets-1333023251429>  
Note: A discount code available for the Alumni Board members as an incentive to participate. Refer to the link on the meeting agenda.
  - *Saint Paul Saints Game and Pregame Picnic*, July 26, 5-9 p.m., CHS Field  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/metro-state-alumni-at-the-st-paul-saints-tickets-1360980743039>

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Noriko Ramberg, Office Coordinator