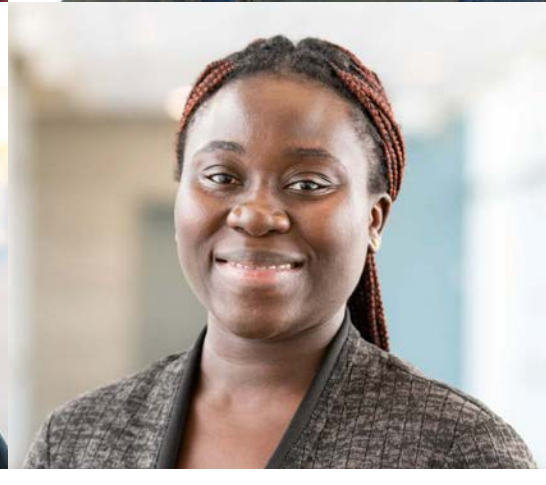
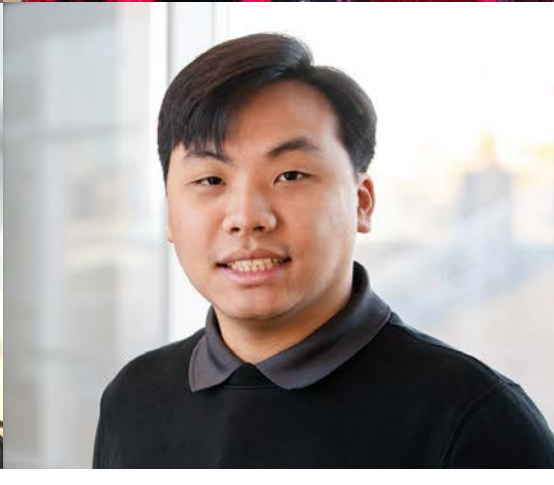




METRO STATE
UNIVERSITY

Elevate Career Success

Career Center 2025 Annual Review



A member of Minnesota State

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2024-2025 Annual Review

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Letter from the Director

Bill Baldus

Colleagues,

What a year! This is one where we saw several significant projects—projects we have been working on for 7 to 8 years, come to fruition. Receiving the Develop and Expand Industry Sector Programming Grant from the System Office was the catalyst for some of our most innovative work yet.

The Career Readiness Project hired a faculty director, associate director, leadership team, and launched a highly successful first Career Readiness Faculty Fellows cohort of 13 faculty members.

And after quickly designing apprenticeship pilots with 5 different employers in the fall, apprentices were hired and started in January. One of the accounting apprentices at KPMG described the experience as a “game changer.” This is what we hoped to hear, and we also heard from our employer partners who were quite happy with our students and are eager to continue building on this first round of pilots.

Right when the new apprentices started their work, we did some of our own hiring. Our talented new Internship and Apprenticeship Coordinator, Susan Hang, also started in January. In her short time with us, Susan has already made some great process improvements and oversaw our first successful cohort of apprentices. With her broad background in Human Resources, Susan brings an employer’s lens to the work, something we have never had on our team.

An interesting bit of data was collected in the campus-wide fall student survey. We asked the question: How often do you think about your future career?

72% thinking about their future careers daily. If you add those who answered weekly, that is almost our entire student body. I think this simple data point tells quite a story. This is compelling and begs the question: how often are we thinking about our students’ future careers? I am convinced that if we can demonstrate to our students that we too are thinking about their future careers and make explicit how what they are learning in class relates to what’s next, it will help them connect the dots, clarify their career thoughts, and help them persevere to finish their degrees.

We’re all part of this community—a growing network of support and encouragement that our students and alumni can feel and know that we are thinking about their careers right along with them. We have their backs.

Yesterday was spring Commencement. A beautiful, sunny spring day in downtown Minneapolis. As the crowd spilled outside to celebrate their graduates, I saw a young man being tossed skyward 5 or 6 times as confetti flurried around him and his admirers. Yes, he was clearly enjoying it and so were his friends and family who would let out a shout with every launch into the air. It was a beautiful sight to witness—pure joy. An inflection point that ends our school year and starts our students’ next chapters.

So, thank you, Metro State family, for all the ways you support and engage in our students’ career hopes and goals: this year and every year.

Bill Baldus
Career Center Director

Staff Profiles



Bill Baldus, Director

Provides overall leadership, strategic direction, and employer relationship development.



Marisa Kelly, Office Manager

Manages day-to-day operations, finances, and supervises student staff.



Susan Hang, Internship and Apprenticeship Coordinator

Creates operational efficiencies, promotes, and coordinates internship and apprenticeship efforts university-wide.



Rachel Nihart, Career Counselor

Supports students and alumni in career exploration, networking, résumés, interview preparation, and more.



Career Center staff members (left to right): Susan Hang, LaBarre Spence (now at Saint Paul College), Rachel Nihart, Marisa Kelly, and Bill Baldus, smiling together on Susan's first day, in front of a vibrant mural.

Staff Recognition

LaBarre Spence was honored with the **Jules Kerlan Outstanding Achievement Award** at the **2025 Minnesota Career Development Association (MCDA)** conference. This prestigious lifetime achievement award recognizes LaBarre's more than 25 years of contributions to the field of career development. His work has empowered countless

students and professionals through mentorship, career readiness programs, and innovation, including pioneering efforts in AI integration and diversity-focused initiatives. His leadership and dedication have had a profound and lasting impact on the career development community.



Jennifer Rogers, MCDA President, congratulates LaBarre Spence as he receives the Jules Kerlan Outstanding Achievement Award at the 2025 MCDA conference.



Career Center Data

Data collected from July 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025

Handshake Data

935

New undergraduate student activations

69

New graduate student activations

62

New alumni activations

1,066

Total new activations

85

New undergraduate profile completions (excluding alumni)

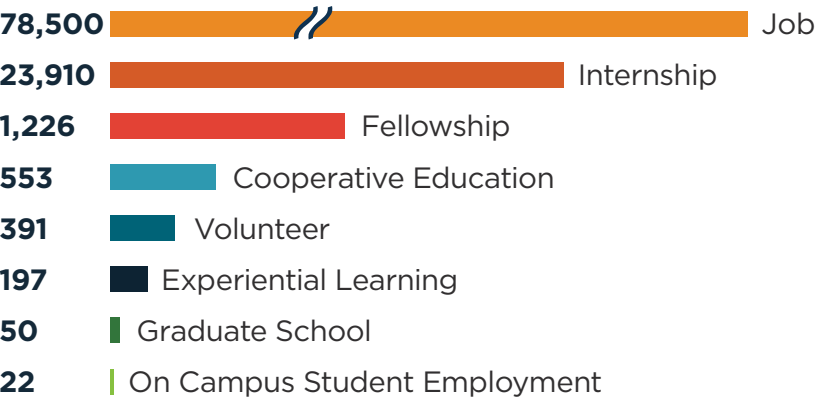
8

New graduate profile completions (excluding alumni)

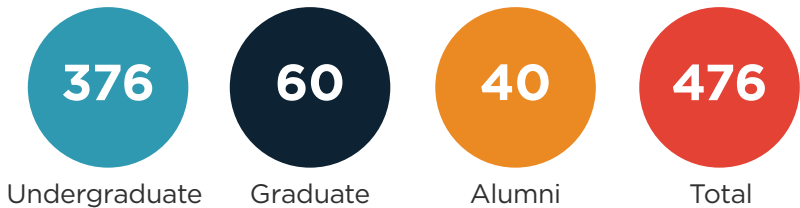
93

New total profile completions (excluding alumni)

Postings by job type



Career Counseling Appointments



Handshake Employer Data

54,496

Number of employers approved

76,393

Number of opportunities posted by approved employers

Online Tools Usage

Candid Career

414

Logins

1,474

Videos watched

Metro State Career Center
LinkedIn group members

1,446

Career Readiness Project Update

Background

The Career Readiness Project is a campus-wide endeavor begun in 2017 by a small group of faculty and Bill Baldus, Career Center director. In Fall 2023, Metro State received \$120,000 from Minnesota State to enhance the Career Readiness work. This funding allowed Dr. Monica Roth Day to be hired in January 2024. Funding was then secured from the Minnesota Legislature through the Develop and Expand Industry Sector Programming grant facilitated by Minnesota State for AY2025. The grant also supported the Apprenticeship Pilots (see page 11) and a research project conducted by Wilder Research (contracted work). Over the course of AY2025, Wilder met with staff, faculty, students, and employer partners to determine the environment for career readiness, the impact of career readiness activities on students and alumni, and opportunities for growth. Wilder will present its findings to the university community Fall 2025.

In September 2024, Dr. Ailesa Ringer was hired as associate director and Dr. Denise E. Williams as faculty scholar. Additionally, a workgroup was established for AY2025 through a formal application process: Caitlin Mahoney, Psychology/College of Community Studies and Public Affairs (resident faculty), Dawn Wing, Library (resident faculty), Erica Berte, Management/College of Business and Management (resident faculty, reflecting industry sector focus), Miriam Nkemnji-Enohnyaket, Nursing (resident faculty, reflecting industry sector focus), Naomi Fernandez, Social Work/College of Community Studies and Public Affairs (community faculty, reflecting industry sector focus), Eric Fotsch, Urban Education (community faculty, reflecting industry sector focus), Kate Ries, Sciences (resident faculty), representing US Air Force Digital Transformation project).

First Faculty Fellows Cohort

Thirteen faculty fellows were confirmed through an application process. Each application had to identify a potential project to integration at least one career competency into courses or programs using a learning activity or assignment.

AY 2025 Fellows: Belo Cipriani (Writing and Literature), Tammy Durant (Writing and Literature), Marilyn Preston (Human Services), Megan Brown (Advocacy and Political Leadership), Antar Salim (Finance), Jessica Blaxton (Psychology), Carissa Wyant (Philosophy and Religion), Dave Smallen (Psychology), Parva Panahi (Writing and Literature), Carmen Cook (Psychology), Ben Maas (Natural Sciences), Susan Hilal (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Mehmet Koseoglu (Strategic Management).

Supporting these areas of focus work was the Career Readiness Workgroup. Two-hour monthly hybrid meetings were attended by more than 90% of participants. Agenda items included discussion of grant activities and insight on industry-specific aspects. A main focus for Spring 2025 was the revision of the Career Competencies to ensure all were well-defined and included concrete outcomes/actions/behaviors. Revisions were completed on April 13, 2025, and results shared with the Fellows, Advocates, Educator Learning Community, and others.

“The Career Readiness Fellows Program has encouraged me to be more vocal and intentional about embedding career education in the general education writing curriculum. Integrating career-themed content and assignments into writing curriculum supports Metro students—many actively exploring or preparing for better careers and lives—in recognizing how skills developed in general education courses connect directly to competencies needed to thrive in personal, civic, academic, and professional lives.”

First Faculty Fellows Cohort, (continued)

Two committees engaged in specific tasks related to Career Readiness. One group focused on professional development, creating guidance on the integration of Career Readiness into PDP/PDRs and the structure of a D2L Career Readiness site. A second group focused on generating content for career readiness activities on D2L, and exploring career readiness assessment in the classroom, and engaging specific policies (syllabus and course proposals) in adding career readiness.

An ELC surrounding career readiness dialogued about career readiness within and across disciplines, and discussed cross-disciplinary collaborations in career readiness activities, and implemented small scale changes surrounding career readiness into courses or professional presentations.



Back row (left to right): Dr. Monica Roth Day, Dr. Antar Salim, Dr. Jessica Blaxton, Dr. Carissa Wyant, Dr. David Smallen, Dr. Benjamin Maas, and Dr. Mehmet Koseoglu. Middle row (left to right): Dr. Ailesha Ringer, Dr. Parva Panahi, Carmen Cook, and Dr. Susan Hilal. Front row (left to right): Dr. Belo Cipriani, Dr. Tammy Durant, Dr. Marilyn Preston, and Dr. Megan Brown.

Delivery of Service

This section highlights our service delivery efforts, focusing on how the Career Center interactions with classrooms and the Stress vs Hope assessment, all with the aim of empowering students to envision and achieve their career goals.

Classroom Visits

In the 2024–2025 academic year, the Career Center continued its mission to connect with students through classroom visits. Our commitment to this initiative remains strong, and we are proud to report that we visited 40 classrooms this year, made possible by the continued support of our faculty partners. Engaging with the Career Center has been shown to positively influence employment outcomes. [According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) (NACE), graduating seniors who utilized at least one career service received an average of 1.24 job offers, compared to 1.0 for those who did not engage with their career centers. These visits provide an important opportunity to bridge the gap between academic learning and career readiness.

Stress vs Hope

Building on our previous efforts and inspired by DePaul University’s Career Center, we continued using the Stress vs Hope assessment, which asks students and alumni to rate their outlook on their future career prospects using a five-point scale. While this tool has traditionally been administered at the conclusion of appointments, this year we also attempted to integrate it into post-event surveys to better capture participants’ evolving mindsets in various contexts. Notably, feedback from events such as the Diversity Networking and Job Fair highlighted the impact of our programming, with one attendee sharing, **“This event re-energized my job search. I was inspired to continue to refine my resume and job search efforts.”** These insights help us better understand how students and alumni perceive their professional futures and allow us to tailor our career support initiatives to meet their specific needs.

“ Rachel, thank you so much for taking the time to join us and speak about career readiness and support. You did a fantastic job! In the post-discussion I had with the students, many of them shared that it was the first time they were hearing about the great resources and services the Career Center offers. ”

—Parva Panahi, Assistant Professor of Writing, Literature, and Language



Metro State University career center space.

Internships and Apprenticeships

Internships continue to be a vital bridge between classroom learning and career readiness, offering students critical hands-on experience, professional mentorship, and pathways to employment. In an increasingly competitive landscape, where internship postings declined by more than 15 percent and applications more than doubled between 2023 and 2025, structured and supportive opportunities like those at Metro State University are more important than ever (Handshake, 2025). The Metro Cybersecurity Clinic, academic internships, and our newly launched apprenticeship programs help students build practical skills while also clarifying their long-term career goals. Based on the [Handshake Internships Index](#) (2025), **72 percent of students seek internships to explore future job paths, and 93 percent report that these experiences help them make meaningful progress toward their careers.** As we continue to expand access and partnerships, Metro State remains committed to creating transformative experiences that equip students for successful and fulfilling careers.

Metro Cybersecurity Clinic: Real-World Internships

Academic Internships at Metro State have been busy this year, with students gaining structured, credit-bearing experiences in a wide range of industries from public and private sectors to opportunities right here at Metro State.

One of our largest internship employers was the Metro Cybersecurity Clinic located on Metro State's Saint Paul campus. The clinic hosted 11 interns over the fall and spring semesters. The internships were led by Mousumi Munmun, faculty director of Metro State Cyber Clinic and learning evaluator; Kyle Swanson, dean of the College of Science and Site Supervisor; and Faisal Kaleem, director of Cybersecurity and Cyber Operations Programs. The clinic serves as both a vital community resource and a pipeline for future cybersecurity professionals. Let's take a closer look at the work:

What is Metro State University Cybersecurity Clinic?

For decades, schools of law and medicine have operated "clinics," where students work with real-world clients with limited resources and gain valuable hands-on experience.

The Metro State Cybersecurity Clinic adapts this model for the field of cybersecurity. The clinic seeks to train students from diverse backgrounds and academic expertise to strengthen the digital defenses of non-profits, hospitals, municipalities, small businesses, and other under-resourced organizations in our communities, while also developing a talent pipeline for cyber civil defense.

What are some of the key projects that interns worked on?

Interns contributed to impactful projects:

- Conducting cybersecurity risk assessments for small businesses, nonprofits, and local government agencies
- Developing cybersecurity training materials tailored to client needs
- Assisting in vulnerability scanning and helping organizations understand basic cyber hygiene
- Creating awareness campaigns around phishing and password security

Why are internships important for students?

Internships are essential for students because they provide valuable real-world experience that bridges the gap between academic learning and professional practice. Through internships, students gain hands-on skills, explore potential career paths, and apply classroom knowledge to real challenges. They also build professional networks, enhance their resumes, and increase their competitiveness in the job market. In many cases, internships lead directly to job opportunities, giving students a strong start in their careers. Most importantly, internships help students develop confidence, improve problem-solving abilities, and better understand their strengths and interests in a workplace setting.

For more information, visit [MN Cyber Clinic page](#).

“As an intern with the Cyber Clinic, I gained hands-on experience working with real-world clients and conducting risk assessments using the NIST framework. This role significantly strengthened my technical and consulting skills and played a key role in advancing my cybersecurity career.”

—Hassan S., Cybersecurity Clinic Intern

Metro State's First Apprenticeship Pilot Cohort

Metro State University expanded its workplace-based learning opportunities with the launch of our first-ever apprenticeship pilots through our Career Center. These paid experiential learning opportunities were introduced in high-demand fields: nursing, mental health, accounting, cybersecurity/computer science/data science; and in elementary education through the School of Urban Education. With system office grant funding and strong employer partnerships, Metro State became Minnesota's first four-year university to pilot this apprenticeship model.

Unlike internships, which are often unpaid and tied to a discipline-specific university course, apprenticeships follow an earn-as-you-learn model, being a clear pathway for students into their careers. Apprenticeships have been shown to increase the academic success of all students. They also increase the skilled workforce while increasing wages and providing career opportunities (Center for American Progress, 2013).

“Touchstone Mental Health has given me a validating and hands-on learning experience that has deepened my understanding of mental health work. I've felt truly seen and supported throughout the apprenticeship, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.”

—Daisy M. C., Mental Health Apprentice

Metro State's apprenticeship pilots are not registered apprenticeships but are employer-driven and co-designed with Metro State to support students in building career readiness skills and reducing financial stressors. Apprenticeship pilots typically last from six months to two years; grant funds cover up to 12 credits of spring semester tuition and fees; and the shared goal of all parties wanting the experience to lead to permanent employment. This model supports students to earn a credential, enjoy sustainable, living-wage employment, and avoid incurring educational debt. This while meeting the needs of local employers to diversify and increase their talent pool.

Program Highlights

- Employer partnerships with Children's Minnesota (nursing), Touchstone and Fraser (mental health practitioners), KPMG (accounting), and Securion (cybersecurity/computer science/data science)
- Ongoing collaboration with Metro's School of Urban Education and Minneapolis Public Schools to start their apprenticeship program in Fall 2025
- 14 students were hired into the first cohort of apprentices
- 5 Faculty Champions worked closely with the Career Center and Employer Partners: Bridget McMahon, Nursing; Sonia Davila-Williams, Mental Health; Steven Hirsch, Accounting; Ibrahim El-Shekeil, Cybersecurity/Computer Science; Wei Wei, Data Science
- Internship and Apprenticeship Coordinator hired and started January 15, 2025: Susan Hang
- The program framework was presented at The Career Leadership Collective 2025 Annual Conference in New Orleans in a session titled "Equity in Action: Metro's Game-Changing Apprenticeship Pilots," delivered by William Baldus, director of the Metro State University Career Center



Members of the Metro State University community gather to celebrate the 1st Cohort of Apprentices, marking a milestone in expanding equitable career pathways.



Student Success Story

Gil Gaitan

Major: Computer Science
New Title: Software Engineer Intern
Organization/Company: SPS Commerce



How did you secure your job? What was your process like? Was there a defining moment or turning point that led to your success?

Last August, I started seeing postings for cool summer internships I was qualified for, but I didn't have a resume put together yet. I realized I needed to get my stuff together if I wanted an internship to be in my future. I had my first meeting with Labarre to get help with my resume and create a plan. Labarre is easy to talk to and shows he really cares about students and their careers. Through a pleasant conversation, he helped me form a well outlined vision of my skills that give me the potential to succeed. This led to more authentic confidence in my ability to communicate and effectively network in the field. I left the meeting with a comprehensive plan and better equipped for the work ahead.

During a busy semester, I had to prioritize the tasks in my career work plan. It was a season of starting new projects, networking opportunities, refining my resources, and trusting in the prep work. I had an interview that didn't go so well, but I followed up with Labarre and we discussed how it went and how I could do better at the next one. Part of my process was keeping in touch with the Career Center along the way. This helped me see the progress I was making and stay focused on my goals.

In November, the Career Center hosted SPS Commerce Day. It included an open house in the morning to network, followed by lunch and a presentation in the afternoon. It was encouraging to see the talent and hard work of Metro State students being valued and sought after with this event. The cool part of the story is how I had a fortuitous meeting with a recruiter at the very end. I asked about an application I submitted a week prior that was rejected, which led them providing a workaround and get my resume back in the stack. Because of my preparation, I had the confidence to assert my qualification for the position at the right time and get my chance. The remaining interview process was smooth and after the second round of interviews I got an offer.

I am so thankful for the Career Center. They provided full support and got me where I wanted to be. I now have a cool summer internship to look forward to!

What advice would you give to students and alumni currently seeking internships or jobs?

Go visit the Career Center first and take advantage of the resources available. For internships, get started early. I saw internship postings 10 months before the start date and I missed application deadlines because I was unprepared. This is common advice for students in technology majors, but worth mentioning: Personal projects and networking is worth the investment. Feel free to reach out to me on LinkedIn if you have questions or just want to connect!

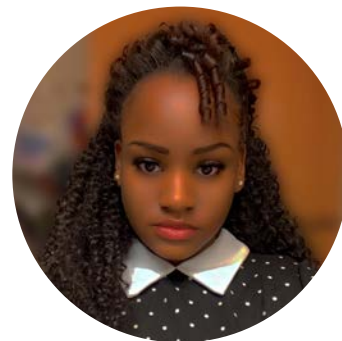
Student Success Story

Morgatha Cephas

Major: Data Science

New Title: Social Work Intern

Organization/Company: Hennepin County Children and Family Services



How did you secure your job? What was your process like? Was there a defining moment or turning point that led to your success?

From the beginning of my internship, I always knew that I wanted to work with women and children (experiencing) domestic violence. I talked to my advisor, Monica, and she told me that Hennepin County offered a paid internship, and that when it comes up again, it should be something I looked into. I made a mental note about it and let my family, friends, and everybody around me know that this was the job I wanted.

The first thing I did was set up an appointment with Rachel at the Career Center to get prepared and get my resume ready. At this point, I had only completed one internship with the Guadalupe Alternative Program, which was not paid. Rachel and I sat together and spruced up my resume, and set up my Handshake account.

I told her how I have an issue with saying the right words. I said I always know what I want to say and have a lot to say, but I can't ever find the right words. She told me we could work on this and it was nothing that should make me feel down. Rachel introduced the idea of AI and how I can use it as a tool to help spruce up my writing. At this time, I felt honored, I felt seen, I felt heard. It was the first time that I felt like someone was investing in me the way I needed them to.

Once it was time for me to apply, I set up another appointment with Rachel to make sure that I had everything that I needed. I had my resume proper. I had my references proper. Rachel gave me some interviewing tips so that when they asked me a question, I know what to say. She told me that it was okay to have notes so that I can have something to refer back to when speaking with them. I remember the night before I couldn't sleep. I was so nervous. I was so scared that I would blow the interview.

When I had the interview, I remember being so nervous ... I was a Liberian girl who's worked hard to be the image of what success looks like in the United States, and I was afraid that I was just simply not good enough.

At the end of my path, I ended up getting the job with Hennepin County. Not only that, I was chosen as a student advocate for the Social Work Department at Metro State. I felt so honored and so humbled that I was chosen, that they saw that I was good enough, that they saw that I was perfect for the position, that they saw perfection in my imperfections.

What advice would you give to students and alumni currently seeking internships or jobs?

I had a friend who doubted herself. She was a Muslim girl in a big social work program just like me, and I suggested that she connect with Rachel as well. I told her what helped me the most in this process was knowing that all I needed was tools. I assured myself that if other people did it, I can do it too. We all have the same number of hours in a day, and we all have the same resources in this world. The difference between others and me is that I couldn't find it. Nobody showed me where to go and who to go to. I had to take initiative to look for these things myself; finding the Career Center was that for me.

For the person that thinks that they're not good enough ... that thinks that they are not worthy ... or that success does not look like them. I would tell them to seek the Career Center. Find a person like Rachel: a person who is patient with you, doesn't mind repeating things if need be, that can speak life into you, and build your confidence up to where you need to be. Perfection isn't easy. Perfection isn't overnight. Perfection is hard work. And if you're willing to give the hard work and willing to put in the time, you can be as good and as amazing as anybody else in this position. You got the job already. All you must do is show up.

Diversity Networking and Job Fair

This year, the Career Center proudly hosted the Diversity Networking and Job Fair in person for the first time since the pandemic, welcoming 251 students and alumni back to campus for this signature event. To ensure participants were well-prepared, the Career Center partnered with Alumni Relations to offer a pre-fair orientation session. This interactive workshop guided attendees through effective networking techniques, job fair preparation tips, and the importance of making strong first impressions. Alumni volunteers with expertise in recruitment and hiring offered one-on-one resume reviews and led small-group networking practice, helping students and fellow alumni build confidence ahead of the fair.

The in-person Diversity Networking and Job Fair featured a wide range of employers committed to diversity and inclusion, including Mayo Clinic, Hennepin County, U.S. Bank, Xcel Energy, and Securian Financial, among others. Open exclusively to Metro State students and alumni, the event provided a valuable platform for meaningful career connections and professional development. With strong attendance and positive feedback from both attendees and employers, this year's fair reinforced the Career Center's role in advancing equitable access to career opportunities across industries.



Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Revenue and the Department of Employment and Economic Development connect with students during the Diversity Networking and Job Fair, highlighting career pathways in public service.



Back row (left to right): Josh Windham, associate director of Alumni Relations; Bill Baldus, director of the Career Center; Kristine Hansen, senior director of Alumni Engagement; and Tracy Van der Leeuw, professional writing tutor. Front row (left to right): Rachel Nihart, career counselor; Denise Yu, TRIO SSS advisor and retention specialist; Marisa Kelly, Career Center office manager; and Luke Morgan, director of Writing Center.

Career Ideas Festival and Social Mobility Summit

Keynote speaker Jim Wolfston

On April 1, the Career Center hosted two back-to-back events that celebrated innovation in career development and the university's mission-driven commitment to equity: the Career Ideas Festival and the Social Mobility Summit. The day began with the Career Ideas Festival, featuring keynote speaker Jim Wolfston, CEO of CollegeNET and creator of the Social Mobility Index (SMI). Wolfston spoke on the transformative power of higher education and the crucial role institutions like Metro State play in advancing social mobility for economically disadvantaged students. Following his keynote, attendees including students, alumni, faculty, staff, and employer partners participated in a networking reception that fostered meaningful connections across the career ecosystem.

Later that afternoon, the Social Mobility Summit, held in collaboration with the President's Office, continued the conversation with an emphasis on Metro State's national leadership in social mobility. President Virginia "Ginny" Arthur opened the event, followed by a keynote from Jim Wolfston, a featured presentation by Star Tribune journalist and editor Emma Nelson, and a powerful student panel with Emma Gabbert, Kameel Asha, and Benito Lopez-Sanchez Jr. Attendees engaged with university leadership and industry professionals

to explore how Metro State supports students through accessible education and intentional career pathways. We extend our sincere thanks to U.S. Bank for their generous sponsorship, which helped make both events a success and reaffirmed our shared commitment to opportunity, equity, and career advancement.



Jim Wolfston, CEO of CollegeNET, delivers the keynote address at the Social Mobility Summit, emphasizing the importance of equitable access to higher education.



Summit speakers, students, and university leaders gather for a group photo following a panel discussion on advancing social mobility through education.



Student panelists Emma Gabbert, Kameel Asha, and Benito Lopez-Sanchez Jr. share their personal experiences and insights on navigating higher education and social mobility.

Alumni Career Experience

The Alumni Career Experience returned as an impactful in-person professional development conference tailored to support upcoming graduates and alumni as they navigate their career journeys. Hosted by the Career Center in collaboration with Alumni Relations, the event welcomed 43 attendees for a full day of interactive learning, networking, and skill-building. Participants received free professional headshots, LinkedIn profile tips, and personalized resume reviews from industry professionals. Mock interviews with experienced hiring managers provided valuable, real-time feedback to help attendees enhance their interviewing skills and build confidence in their job search.

In addition to career development sessions, attendees had the opportunity to connect directly with a range of employers, including KPMG, Mayo Clinic, U.S. Bank, Hennepin County, the State of Minnesota, and more. These employer partners facilitated resume reviews and mock interviews, giving alumni and soon-to-be graduates a meaningful way to engage with hiring professionals and explore potential career paths. With a strong focus on real-world preparation and relationship-building, the Alumni Career Experience continues to serve as a vital bridge between education and employment for Metro State’s alumni community.



Talent Acquisition representatives from Hennepin County connect with a student during the Alumni Career Experience, sharing insights and building professional relationships.

Promote, Advance, Connect Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Students

For the past five years, Metro State has benefitted from a US Department of Education Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) grant, the only four-year institution in the Minnesota State system to receive this grant. The grant is being used to improve and expand Metro State's capacity to serve Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students.

The goals of the grant include: **Promoting cultural awareness and competency; Advancing career readiness; and Connecting graduates and students—PAC Program.** The university sponsors cultural and career events, outreach to community organizations and schools with AAPI students, and provides cultural-competency training for staff and faculty. Career readiness is enhanced through mentorship, financial literacy training, and career support. The university is working to develop strong connections with graduates through ongoing programs.

Community Partnership: Cybersecurity Tutoring with Hmong American Partnership (HAP)

In collaboration with the Hmong American Partnership (HAP), Metro State University provided academic support for students enrolled in CompTIA Tech+ and A+ certification preparation courses. Three Metro State cybersecurity students were selected to be virtual tutors, offering guidance to 45 learners across two six-week training cohorts.

Tutoring was conducted online, which allowed for a tailored to individual student needs. A follow-up survey showed great success: **9** out of **10** respondents rated the tutoring as **"Very helpful."**

Participant feedback highlights

- "Tutoring can help us learn from a different angle than what we're taught in class."
- "The tutors are very helpful and knowledgeable about the materials."
- "They have so much knowledge to tell you or to let you know how things are in the IT field."
- "This course requires in-depth understanding, and sometimes you just need a bit more help."

The partnership supported HAP's mission of empowering its community to achieve its potential and helped aspiring IT professionals prepare and learn with confidence so they could advance toward certification and employment. It also providing Metro State cybersecurity students with real-world teaching experiences.

Strategic Engagement: Expanding Partnerships with Asian Business Resource Groups

Over the past year, Metro State University deepened relationships with Asian Business Resource Groups (BRGs) from organizations including Target, U.S. Bank, and Cargill. These partnerships are focused on aligning BRG goals with Metro State's Asian American student success initiatives

A list of potential partnership opportunities—ranging from class visits to networking training—was shared with BRG representatives.

Key accomplishments include

- U.S. Bank representatives attended a student networking training workshop led by a Hmong facilitator.
- Metro State was invited to present at an Asian Professionals Alliance of Minnesota (APAM) event, "Stronger Together", facilitated by contacts at Target and US Bank. APAM includes representatives from 3M, Cargill, General Mills, Medtronic, Wells Fargo, and Best Buy as well.
- Expanded connections to Wells Fargo and Cargill resulted from the APAM presentation. Wells Fargo representatives participated in Metro State's Career Ideas Festival on April 1. A class visit to Cargill is planned for this coming fall.

Our goal is to continue to foster these relationships, identifying shared goals, and invite APAM member organizations to partner with Metro State through mentoring, events, and career development initiatives.

National Alumni Career Mobility (NACM) Survey

We are now finished with our 5-year National Alumni Career Mobility Survey (NACM) project. That means we have 10 years’ worth of data from alumni 5- and 10-years post-graduation

The highlight that really caught our attention

Compared to other NACM schools across the country, Metro State students are motivated primarily by career aspirations.

The top three motivations for obtaining a degree are:



This should not surprise us too much. Especially given the data we asked students last fall: How often do you think about your future career? **72%** said daily.

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So now that we know without a doubt that our students come to us primarily to improve their career options, we can harness the power of these motivations by continuing to integrate Career Readiness into the entire Metro State student journey.

One way to do this is focus on something else we learned about in the national pool of NACM data, they identified a set of 6 Career High Impact Practices (see the CHIPs graphic). Note how the first 3 are shown to reduce equity gaps. Although we cannot do everything for our students, we can do this.

By inviting an employer to speak to your class to talk about career opportunities and offer some useful career advice, we’ve addressed 3 career HIPs with one action. An employer class visit is an easy way to build some current career thinking into your class. The commitment can be as low as a 15-minute prep call and a 15-minute virtual class visit. With virtual classes, employers can simply Zoom in from their office. If you are interested in exploring bringing one of the university’s many employer partners to your class; they are keenly interested in connecting with Metro State students and we can help you do it!

Career High Impact Practices (CHIPs): 6 things faculty can do today

- 1 Support students in understanding career opportunities
- 2 Help students create a plan for their career
- 3 Create opportunities for students to network with employers
- 4 Provide helpful career advice, specifically from employers
- 5 Encourage internships related to career goals
- 6 Teach critical thinking/problem solving

These activities have been shown to close equity gaps

METR 111: Applying What you Know in Internships

Start Early. Start Now. Internship Preparation and Search!

This course prepares students for potential internship opportunities. Through internships, students may earn credits by applying theories to practice, attain experiential learning that can also be listed on their resume, and in some cases, develop relationships that enhance civic engagement and lead to employment. This course includes lectures, discussions, group and individual work, and guest speakers focused on internship preparation and the search process.

1. Create your professional portfolio (resume, cover letter, references)
2. Create an action plan to identify, select, and obtain an internship
3. Build your internship and career tools and resources
4. Open to all majors, with Fall 2025 having a focus on computer science/cybersecurity and related majors.

METR 111 is a 1-credit in-person course held on Tuesdays from **September 30**, to **October 28, 2025**, from **6 to 8:30 p.m.** on the Saint Paul campus; [view details on the e-Services course page](#).

METR 310: Reimagining Your Career

For **METR 310, Reimagining Your Career: Job Search Framework and Strategies**, I invited Fraser to serve as our organizational partner last fall. This was our first time partnering with a nonprofit. Fraser had also agreed to join us in designing a Mental Health Practitioner apprenticeship pilot which meant that for students who were interested in applying, the two-credit class carried extra meaning as they prepared their applications.

This fall, we look forward to partnering with Hennepin County, one of the state's largest employers. Their highly organized HR team has plans well underway with a full schedule of class visits—all golden opportunities to expand students' professional networks and learn about exciting career paths with in a local government setting. Here's a preview:

Overview of Hennepin County and Leaders Panel

Tuesday, September 30, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Commissioner Irene Fernando
Chela Guzman-Wiegert

Daniel Rogan
Sheriff Dawanna Witt

Register: forms.office.com/r/m3WXvFFtub

Note: the entire campus community is invited to join us on September 30!

Workplace Inclusion

Julia Messina

World Café Day

Tuesday, October 14; 2-3 department representatives per table, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR)	Social Worker Children and Family Services (CFS) Amy Gulden	Public Health/Healthcare Nicole Monette Christina Kallapurakal Anney Yang ack Madson
Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) Yaz Rosario Allie Stepka	Long-term Services and Supports (LTSS) Stacy McClendon	Cybersecurity Tim Weid Travis J Knutson Meghan Frehse Jose M Gonzalez Lee Vang Eli Lutgen
Client and Community Restoration (CCR) Kari Wright	Youth Justice Behavioral Health Unit supervisor Matthew Thornhill	
Finance/Accounting Naweed Ahmadzai		

Register: forms.office.com/r/28XAatT3Az

Note: the entire campus community is invited to join us on October 14!

Building a Future Workforce: Internships, Diverse Paths, and Total Rewards

Maivncais Her

Mock interviews

Katie Bakke Pajoua Chang Kris Checco	Tanisha Foster Alexandra Gaetan Fahad Mansoor	Corinne Miles Majestanina Vang
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Names of Hennepin County professionals are included to show the breadth of connections students can make. On **September 30** and **October 14**, Hennepin County is pulling out all the stops and bringing many people—including a Commissioner! These events will be in-person only and take place in Library 302 on the Saint Paul Campus, please register at the links above.



Metro State Saint Paul Campus

Recap of Significant Career Center Events

Throughout the academic year, our Career Center hosted a variety of engaging events, strengthening collaborations with various departments and employers. These events served as an opportunity to network, gain insights into different industries, and enhance professional development skills.

Significant Career Center Events

August 14, 2024	AAPI New Student Welcome Event The semester began with a warm welcome for AAPI students, hosted by Metro State's Multicultural, American Indian, and Retention Services (MAIR) in collaboration with Career Center staff member LaBarre Spence. The event featured a "Success Hacks" student panel, spoken word performances, campus tours, and information on AANAPISI scholarships. Students had the opportunity to connect, engage, and start the year with confidence.
September 12, 2024	Diversity Networking and Job Fair Orientation
September 26, 2024	Diversity Networking and Job Fair
October 3, 2024	Rock Your Resume: Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) The Rock Your Resume workshop, hosted in partnership with the Center for Accessibility Resources, the Career Center, and Tutoring and Testing Services, offered students an introduction to the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) and support for resume writing. Participants received individualized feedback to refine their resumes and enhance career readiness.
October 4, 2024	Elevate Your Resume and LinkedIn Rachel Nihart hosted a workshop for Ramsey County's Young Adult Career Academy (YACA) interns, focused on resume writing and LinkedIn optimization.
October 17, 2024	AAPI Career Journeys The documentary Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Career Journeys, produced by Kevin Yang, premiered with a screening that highlighted the career and education experiences of six AAPI students and alumni. Exploring societal expectations, non-linear paths, and community belonging, the film offered insights on supporting AAPI students and professionals in their career journeys.
October 25, 2024	Government and Nonprofit Fair The Government and Nonprofit Career Fair, sponsored by the Minnesota Colleges and Universities Career Services Association, gave students and alumni the chance to connect with over 60 employers from government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Career Center staff member Rachel Nihart volunteered at the fair, assisting with check-in and supporting event operations.
November 7, 2024	SPS Commerce Day The Career Center hosted SPS Commerce Day to celebrate a long-standing employer partnership and explore future collaboration. The event featured an open house for students and alumni to connect with SPS representatives and learn about career opportunities, followed by a lunch and learn session to exchange ideas and build stronger connections.
February 12, 2025	Leveraging Military Experience for Civilian Careers The Career Center partnered with Veteran Services to host a panel discussion focused on transitioning from military service to civilian employment. Panelists shared personal experiences, career advice, and strategies for translating military skills into the civilian job market. The event concluded with a networking session where attendees connected with fellow veterans, panelists, and staff for additional support and guidance.
April 1, 2025	Career Ideas Festival
April 1, 2025	Social Mobility Summit

April 2, 2025

Pathways to Government Careers

An interactive event introduced students and alumni to careers in government and public service, featuring insights from professionals across agencies including the State of Minnesota, Hennepin County, Ramsey County, the City of Minneapolis, and the City of Saint Paul. Attendees explored career paths in fields such as IT, healthcare, social work, and justice, participated in speed networking, and gained practical tips on applications and leadership opportunities.

April 15, 2025

People of Color Career Fair

As part of the 14th People of Color Career Fair’s Saint Paul debut, the Career Center brought in more registrations than any other partner organization, with 87 participants signing up through its outreach. The event connected over 1,000 Professionals of Color with more than 50 Minnesota employers committed to workforce diversity. A Career Center meet-up spot welcomed attendees, who engaged in networking and explored job opportunities.

April 24, 2025

Fastenal Alumni Career Panel

The Career Center and College of Liberal Arts hosted an alumni panel featuring successful Fastenal employees who are proud Metro State graduates. Panelists Sebastian Gonzales Bustamante, Mitchell Klein, and Michael Moe shared their transitions from college to career, highlighted current roles, and offered insights on building long-term success in the industry. Attendees networked over pizza, connected with alumni and peers, and joined in door prize giveaways, making the event informative and engaging.

April 30, 2025

Mental Health Practitioner Apprenticeship Summit

May 8, 2025

Alumni Career Experience

Recurring Events

Weekly on Wednesdays Résumé Drop-In

Available to students and alumni via Zoom while classes are in session from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. No appointment needed. Get instant feedback and tips from Career Center staff and Writing Tutors to enhance any résumé.

Monthly

Academic Internship Info Sessions

Students are encouraged to attend monthly virtual [Academic Internship Info Sessions](#) to learn how to earn academic credit through internships. These sessions provide valuable guidance on finding internships related to your program, understanding the registration process, and making the most of the experience. Attendees will also learn about available resources and get answers to common questions such as:

- What are the benefits of an academic internship?
- How do I find one related to my program?
- When should I start searching?
- What is the process once I find one?
- What support and resources are available?

Sessions are held via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m. and the third Thursday at 5 p.m.

Upcoming Events

October 28, 2025

People Of Color Career Fair

The 15th People of Color Career Fair returns to the Minneapolis Convention Center, connecting more than 1,000 Professionals of Color with 50+ Minnesota employers committed to equitable hiring. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Ballroom, attendees can explore opportunities, network, and visit the Career Center’s meet-up spot for support.

October 31, 2025

Government and Nonprofit Career Fair

The Government and Nonprofit Career Fair, sponsored by the Minnesota Colleges and Universities Career Services Association, will connect students and alumni with a wide range of government and nonprofit employers offering full-time roles and internships. For details on the event schedule and participating agencies, please visit the fair [website](#).



METRO STATE UNIVERSITY

A member of Minnesota State

Thank you for reading our Annual Review. Please let us know if you have any questions, ideas, or suggestions!



Career Center

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