

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

November 19, 2024, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
<https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/98538928998>

**Members attended:** Matt Christenson (until 5:45 p.m.), Matt Moe, Bryan Newman, Scott Pilgram, Ryan Ringwelski, Shanasha Whitson (until 6 p.m.)

**Members not attending:** Jim Houston, Deidra Isaac, Eric Rios, Amanda Wong, Darrell Young

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

Ryan Ringwelski convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

**Review Engagement Metrics:**

Kristine Hansen reviewed the alumni engagement metrics discussed at the October 5 Board Retreat. The data presented was from the FY23 alumni engagement survey metrics presented at the retreat. Based on the discussion at the retreat around the need to have accurate benchmarking schools, Hansen assigned a university to each board member at the last meeting to research commonalities and dissimilarities in order to find a pool of institutions that we could benchmark.

Our goal is to identify peer institutions that we could better benchmark with us, and to find ways to improve the effectiveness of our efforts through benchmarking. If we could identify a pool of institutions, the Alumni Board can ask the Foundation for funding to create our own benchmarks.

After group discussion, here are some findings from the research:

- Cleveland State University (Research done by Bryan Newman)
  - Commonalities
    - Similar size, urban university
    - Have active career services, strong engagement of alumni and community
    - Have diverse student population, notably more women students than men by about 16%
    - Commuter school
  - Dissimilarities
    - Raise 15 times more funds in Annual Giving than Metro State, and their alumni are notably involved in the effort
    - Robust sports team
- California State University–East Bay (Research done by Scott Pilgram)
  - Commonalities
    - Located near San Francisco on the hills overlooking the bay with two other campuses in Oakland and Concord, CA
    - Have 12,000 students, slightly larger than Metro State
    - Sex-ratio: 59% female students and 40% male students
    - Diverse student body—majority is Latinx, followed by other nationalities
    - Have an annual distinguished alumni award and also annual 40 Under 40 awards
  - Dissimilarities
    - Robust sports team, NCAA Division 2
    - Have a separate webpage for sports
    - Have a newspaper, *The Pioneer*, but no mention of a magazine on the web
    - Weak alumni web page and not much info on fundraising
    - Residential housing
- Kutztown University of Pennsylvania (Research done by Shanasha Whitson)
  - Commonalities

- Alumni magazine, *The Tower*
- Have a department for interdisciplinary programs
- Diverse student population
- Dissimilarities
  - Large endowment thanks to their longevity—established in 1866
  - Robust sports team—NCAA Division 2
  - Offer extravagant events for alumni and have ties to politicians
- Portland State University (Research done by Matt Moe)
  - Commonalities
    - Urban campus
    - Open for 78 years—a little longer than Metro State
    - Alumni newspaper—*The Portland State Vanguard*
  - Dissimilarities
    - Robust sports team—NCAA Division 1
    - Traditional college experience with residential housing
    - \$100 million endowment
    - 23,000 students in the fall of 2023
    - Connection to business leaders
- University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point (Research done by Ryan Ringwelski)
  - Commonalities
    - Online alumni magazine, *The Cupola Post*
  - Dissimilarities
    - Rural university with vast land
    - Robust sports team, NCAA Division 3
    - Active fundraising thanks to sports
    - Not diverse student body—13% International student
    - Very active alumni web page with active alumni fundraising events and volunteer opportunities
    - Alumni chapter

The board members determined that Cleveland State, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, and California State—East Bay could possibly be used for benchmarking with further research.

Hansen will request other board members who have not yet shared their research to submit their findings to her. Moe mentioned that the Greek sororities and fraternities are another element for alumni's connectivity to their alma mater and can be looked into as a means of alumni engagement.

Once all the research is completed and 5 or 6 universities are identified for our benchmarking, the Board will request the funding to have a custom benchmark.

### **Attendance Policy Review:**

The Board will be more assertive in enforcing the attendance policy going forward to encourage robust commitment and engagement. Hansen will reach out to all board members to reaffirm their commitment.

### **Board Expectations Doc Update:**

Ringwelski stressed the importance of being an ambassador to the university prior to voting.

- Recruit alumni to engage with the university
- Be an active advocate
- Be a partner to enhance the student experience

- Promote and protect the interests of the Alumni Association

He also highlighted some of the things that promote healthy governance of the Alumni Board.

- Attend all board and committee meetings
- Come prepared to discuss agenda items
- Participate in a committee to carry out the annual board work plan

Motion to approve the Board Expectations and Responsibilities document as an informal guiding principle for the Alumni Board was moved by Pilgram, seconded by Newman, and the motion approved by unanimous votes.

#### **Membership Committee Update:**

Pilgram reported that the committee offered two Listening Sessions in October for alumni who are interested in committee membership, but no one showed up. The committee will follow up with those who signed up. Next sessions will be offered after the holidays.

Pilgram and Whitson are completing their 2<sup>nd</sup> board term at the end of this fiscal year. Pilgram encouraged the Board to recommend any eligible alumni from their professional or personal networks for board or committee membership.

#### **Fundraising Committee Update:**

- Give to the Max Day (GTMD)  
We have two GTMD Ambassadors—one of them is Pilgram—who will share Metro State's posts on social media to promote giving. Other board members are encouraged to do so.
- Alumni Professional Development Fund  
We have 39 eligible applicants. Two \$500 grants will be awarded next week to recent alumni for use in their professional development. (*See additional notes at the bottom*)

We continue to raise funds for this grant since there seems to be a great need among our alumni.

#### **Proposal for Leadership Training:**

The Institute for Professional Development at Metro State can create a customized training with an inclusive leadership certificate. This is an extensive, two-part training—online (2 hours) and in-person (6 hours).

Hansen needs the commitment from the full board members to attend if they would like to execute this proposal. The decision will be made after further discussion at the January board meeting.

#### **Other business:**

- The January meeting will be online only, and we will reengage in discussing the strategic plan development and alumni-led initiatives.
- The March meeting will be at the Management Education Center and is an in-person meeting only.

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Ringwelski, seconded by Moe, and the meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

*\*After reviewing the applications and convening, the fundraising committee chose to make three awards this year based on the strength of the pool.*