



MINNESOTA STATE
Board of Trustees

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

NAME: Academic and Student Affairs Committee

DATE: March 19, 2024

TITLE: Mission Statement Change: Metropolitan State University

Action

Review and Discussion

This item is required by policy

PRESENTERS

Satasha Green-Stephen, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Ginny Arthur, President, Metro State University

PURPOSE

To present Metro State's revised mission, vision, and values statements for Board approval under Policy 3.24 and Procedure 3.24.1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Metro State recently concluded an 18-month campus-wide process to review and consider our existing mission, vision, and value statements, in preparation for development of our next strategic plan and our next HLC reaffirmation of accreditation process in 2026. All three statements have been rewritten based on this collaborative campus process. The revised mission and vision statements of Metro State University are being presented for Board approval. The accompanying revised values statement is also being presented for Board review. The mission and vision meet the criteria identified in Board Policy 3.24 College or University Type and Mission, and System Mission, Part 4: Approval of College or University Mission Statement.

Metro State University has provided liberal arts and professional education since 1971 when it was chartered as Minnesota Metropolitan State College. The university has focused on serving non-traditional (now referred to as post-traditional) learners and transfer students since its inception.

The university offers 73 undergraduate degree programs including five Bachelor's of Applied Science (B.A.S.) degrees in Computer Forensics, Information Assurance, Early Childhood Studies, Organizational Administration, and Individualized Studies, which accommodate the

transfer needs of students with A.S. degrees. Metro State has 24 master's degree programs, two accelerated bachelor's + master's degrees, and three doctoral degrees in business administration, family nurse practitioner, and nurse anesthesia. In addition, the university offers 12 undergraduate certificates and 11 graduate certificates, all of which are stackable into related degrees.

The top 10 undergraduate programs include: psychology; business administration; individualized studies; computer science and cybersecurity; nursing; accounting; social work; criminal justice; alcohol and drug counseling; and computer information technology. In addition to institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission, several university programs hold specialized accreditation. These include nursing (Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education), social work (Council on Social Work Education), business (Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs), urban teacher preparation (Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board) and B.S. in alcohol and drug counseling, post-baccalaureate certificate in substance use disorders, and M.S. in co-occurring disorders recovery counseling (national Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission).

Metro State has been designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the National Security Agency. The university houses the [MN Cyber Institute](#), a statewide initiative that provides quality education, innovative public/private partnerships, interdisciplinary research, and community engagement. Additionally, Metro State is one of four universities in the nation awarded a multi-million dollar NSA grant to establish the [MN Cyber Clinic](#) initiative, providing small businesses, nonprofits, schools, and government organizations in the state with access to free cybersecurity vulnerability assessments by Metro State students.

Metro State is a federally recognized Minority-Serving Institution, as an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander (AANAPI) institution. It is a five-time recipient of the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award, most recently in 2023. In 2022 CollegeNet ranked Metro State #22 out of 1,414 U.S. universities that were ranked and #1 in the state of Minnesota for promoting the social mobility of its graduates. Recently, the Minnesota Business Journal reported that Metro State graduates earn the second highest salaries of all bachelor's degrees recipients from Minnesota institutions, five years after graduation.

As of FY 2023, student demographics for Metro State are as follows:

Characteristic	Statistic
Part time (headcount)	63.0%
Full time (headcount)	37.0%
Transfer (headcount)	92.7%
First time in college (headcount)	7.3%

Male	41.6%
Female	57.5%
<i>Underrepresented total</i>	<i>70.1%</i>
Students of color	54.2%
Pell eligible	42.8%
First generation (Federal definition)	55.9%
Average age (<i>Range is 15-85</i>)	30 years
Undergraduate	87.0%
Graduate	13.0%

A. RATIONALE FOR CHANGING MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

HLC accreditation Criterion 1: Mission, requires an institution’s mission statement to be current. Currency is generally demonstrated by providing evidence of a recent review and updating as needed to respond to changing conditions for the university. During the mid-cycle check in by HLC in 2021, the institutional liaison noted that a review of the mission, vision, and values should be completed prior to the full accreditation visit. Metro State University’s mission and vision statements were last reviewed formally and affirmed in FY 2015 in preparation for HLC’s previous 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation visit. At that time no changes were made to mission, vision, and values.

The university completed a strategic planning process in fall of 2019 and unveiled its strategic plan for FY 2020–2024, “Building A Resilient, Student Ready University” in December 2019. That plan comes to a close at the end of the current fiscal year. In preparation for launching a new strategic planning process in spring 2024, the president formed a broadly representative task force to review the mission, vision, and values statements in spring 2022. Our society, U.S. higher education, and Metro State face a very different environment in light of a worldwide pandemic and a reckoning on racial justice and equity, making it imperative to reexamine our statements for currency and relevancy to a changing world.

The revised statements will guide the development and execution of the university’s next strategic plan. The process also satisfies HLC’s requirement of currency in the statement.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES TO MISSION, VISION AND VALUES STATEMENTS

Current Mission Statement:

Metropolitan State University is a comprehensive urban university committed to meeting the higher education needs of the Twin Cities and greater metropolitan population. The university will provide accessible, high-quality liberal arts, professional, and graduate education to the citizens and communities of the metropolitan area, with continued emphasis on underserved groups, including adults and communities of color. Within the context of lifelong learning, the

university will build on its national reputation for innovative student-centered programs that enable students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals. The university is committed to academic excellence and community partnerships through curriculum, teaching, scholarship and services designed to support an urban mission.

Proposed Mission Statement:

Metro State University empowers learners to transform their lives and communities through relevant, student-centered education in an inclusive, anti-racist, and supportive learning environment.

Current Vision Statement:

Metropolitan State University, a member of the Minnesota State College and University System, will be the premier urban, public, comprehensive system university in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and will provide high-quality, affordable educational programs and services in a student-centered environment.

The faculty, staff and students of Metropolitan State will reflect the area's rich diversity, build a culturally competent and anti-racist learning community and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to civic engagement.

Proposed Vision Statement:

Metro State University will deliver the transformative power of higher education to all. As a national leader, we will innovate to meet emerging challenges, remove barriers to access and success, and propel the social and economic mobility of diverse learners and their communities.

Current Values Statement:

Excellence

Your education has to be the best. Because you're not just investing money, you're investing time and passion. So, we make it a priority to provide innovative, high-quality educational experiences from instructors who are experts in their fields. We don't just help you earn a degree. We'll help you prepare for your future.

Engagement

We're plugged into our community and take an active role in its success. We partner with area businesses and organizations to give our students real-world learning experiences. And we offer ourselves as a resource to local groups who work to improve our local community.

Integrity

Integrity isn't a one-way street. So as much as we expect our students to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical manner, we also demand the same from ourselves. We're transparent in how we operate. We make sure that all voices are heard. And we're accountable for our actions.

You deserve nothing less.

Diversity and inclusion

We celebrate and include all voices in our quest for quality higher education. We value all forms of diversity, no matter one's ethnicity, religious or sexual preferences, income level, learning style or area of academic focus. All are welcomed. All are valued.

Open, respectful climate

Students learn better in a safe, open and respectful environment. You'll find one here. We encourage students and faculty to engage in meaningful conversations that embrace differing viewpoints and perspectives. These provide rich experiences and a healthy communication model students can take into their careers.

Proposed Values Statement:

Anti-racism

We actively identify, challenge, and change the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism to create a more equitable and just university. We equip learners to be agents of change.

Inclusion

We seek unity in diversity, find strength in our differences, and create a space where all people feel like they belong and can contribute, while identifying, challenging and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic bias against people based on their age, race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, religious beliefs, immigration status, sexuality, social class, or disability status.

Integrity

We expect and support honesty, transparency, fairness, and curiosity from all members of the university community. We listen to understand, seek reconciliation of differences, and hold each other accountable.

Meaningful Education

We inspire and challenge diverse learners to pursue and apply knowledge for the good of their communities, recognizing competencies achieved through unique lived experiences, discoveries, individualized study, and engagement. We equip learners with the knowledge, communication and critical thinking skills, and information literacy to analyze and resolve the problems of today and tomorrow.

Transformation

We accelerate social mobility and economic advancement of learners and graduates, their families, and their communities by providing a dynamic and affordable education that helps them achieve their aspirations. Learners see a Metro State University education as a catalyst for their personal transformation.

C. CRITERIA FOR CHANGE FROM SYSTEM PROCEDURE 3.24.1

The revised university mission and vision statements respond to the following elements in the system procedure:

1. Alignment of the proposed mission with the Minnesota State mission and statewide needs

According to the Minnesota State [website](#) the core commitments of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are to ensure access to an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans, be the partner of choice to meet Minnesota's workforce and community needs, and deliver to students, employers, communities, and taxpayers the highest value/most affordable higher education option.

The revised mission and vision statements for Metro State are aligned with these three core commitments. The focus on empowerment and transformation applies to both those who study at and graduate from the university and the Minnesota communities where students and graduates live and work. We emphasize the removal of barriers to education to assure access to all who seek and will benefit from a baccalaureate or graduate degree. Affordability is one aspect of access. Our focus on the social and economic mobility of students and our communities addresses the partnership with employers and community leaders to meet evolving workforce needs and to create active citizens. Metro State successfully serves a unique population of students who are the key to the future prosperity of the greater Twin Cities region and of the state as a whole. Our aspiration, expressed through the new vision statement, is to increase the number of learners from these growing communities and improve their success rates, for the good of our entire state.

2. Meeting expectations of law and how it relates to other institutions of higher education

The legislation that created Metro State in 1971 specifically stated that the university was chartered to meet the unmet educational needs of the Twin Cities seven county metropolitan area. Those with unmet needs included students completing two-year degrees at community and technical colleges and working adults without a degree. For more than 50 years, Metro State has fulfilled this legal requirement. Its mission and vision remain focused on meeting unmet educational needs for transfer and post-traditional students. Metro State has a unique educational niche in the state of Minnesota and across the upper Midwest. Its academic schedule, programs, and student services are all focused on meeting the needs of the students we have always served and will continue to serve. No other institution granting bachelor's or master's degrees in the state is solely focused on transfer and post-traditional students.

3. The array of awards it offers

As noted in the background section, Metro State offers a wide variety of programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. It offers a sound liberal arts program, complementing the Minnesota transfer curriculum with eight credits of upper division liberal studies coursework and a racial issues graduation requirement. Professional programs meet the needs of the state for urban pre-K-12 educators, nurses and nurse practitioners, accountants, managers, nonprofit leaders, addiction and mental health counselors, human services professionals, computer science and cybersecurity professionals, advocates and political leaders, chemists, and statisticians. The College of Individualized Studies provides a unique opportunity for students to meld together diverse intellectual interests into a cohesive academic program. Graduates with degrees in individualized studies have served as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commissioner of Public Safety for the State of Minnesota, the first female general in the Minnesota National Guard. Individualized studies graduates have started successful nonprofit organizations and businesses, became lawyers, and achieved political office. Metro State prepares liberally educated professionals who are actively engaged in civic and community life.

4. Compliance of the mission with statute, policy, and regional accreditation requirements

As previously noted, Metro State's revised mission and vision are designed to guide the university in achieving its purpose as outlined in the legislation that created it. The discussion in each of the subparts of this section are designed to show the alignment of the proposed statements with Board Policy 3.24.

The Higher Learning Commission's Criterion One for Accreditation on mission requires evidence that the mission fits with the context and operations of the university and is clearly articulated. It must also demonstrate commitment to the public good and provide opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world. The proposed mission, vision, and values statements together incorporate each of the required components of the mission criterion. The university has amply satisfied this criterion in past visits and the current statements and their application will continue to do so in the ways described earlier in this statement.

5. Consultation with students, faculty, staff, and members of the local, civic, nonprofit, and business communities

Development and refinement of the proposed mission, vision, and values statements began in spring 2021 with the creation of broadly representative task force. The Task Force was co-chaired by an administrator and an IFO faculty member. All bargaining units and divisions of the university were represented as was the Student Association, Alumni and Foundation boards, and community partners.

During spring 2021 and fall 2022, the Task Force refreshed their knowledge of the history of Metro State and researched effective mission statements. The work also drew on the significant research that had been carried out for the university rebranding

project the year before, which engaged more than 3,500 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners in identifying distinctive and valued characteristics of Metro State. They reviewed the recently updated strategic enrollment plan and a student journey map, which had been crafted in summer and fall 2021. They then drafted a statement and surveyed the campus to gather feedback. The draft was shared at meet and confer and labor management meetings of all bargaining units, the Student Association, and Alumni and Foundation boards and additional feedback was solicited. In fall 2022 the task force turned its attention to review and potential revision of the vision statement. Members of the task force formed five research teams that developed white papers on the following topics:

- Adult Learners and what they need to succeed
- The future of high school student recruitment
- The future of transfer student recruitment
- The public perception of the value of higher education
- Demographic trends, community needs, and workforce implications

The white papers were widely shared and discussed with campus stakeholders, culminating in a well-attended Town Hall in March 2023, as a means of understanding trends that are shaping the higher education environment, with a focus on the impacts to Metro State and its current positioning and seeking affirmation of its conclusions as noted below:

In many ways, the findings of the Mission, Vision, and Values Taskforce regarding the future of higher education and the implications for Metro State University indicate that the biggest challenge lies in remaining steadfastly true to the university's core. Given that the programs and services Metro State provides remain in demand by the Twin Cities area communities it serves, and that the populations most a part of Metro State's student body are the ones projected to grow the most of nearly any in the state, it seems wise to lean further into the institution's founding principles, while embracing the hard-won lessons of the intervening 50+ years.

Allowing for the uncertainty of any picture of the future, Metro State might best position itself to thrive by continuing to provide a community involved, service oriented, radically inclusive institution of higher education for a diverse population of contemporary learners, in an anti-racist environment that honors and values lived experience, educational attainment, and the lives of our students both in and out of the classroom.

A vision survey was distributed after the Town Hall and the task force completed an initial draft of a vision and values statements.

With the support of the Task Force, the president engaged an external consultant to conduct focus group discussions with the leaders of all five bargaining units, academic deans, vice presidents and other administrators, Metro State's Student Association, Foundation and Alumni Board members. The facilitators provided a detailed report on the group conversations, which was then used by the Task Force to hone and polish a second draft of all three statements.

The revised drafts were presented at the opening convocation gathering and a second round of facilitated focus groups was held to review them. The second round included two groups with community faculty members only, two additional student groups, the Faculty of Color caucus, the Black Equity Employee Resource group, Latiné employee resource group, Foundation Board members, and two groups open to any faculty or staff member. Comments were invited from all campus constituents.

From mid-September through mid-November the Task Force continued to meet, study the focus group and other feedback, debate, and complete final drafts they recommended to the president for adoption. The president shared the recommendations with the executive team for their feedback before accepting it. The final drafts were then presented to the Alumni Board, Foundation Board, at meet and confer and labor management meetings, and to the broad campus at a Town Hall in December 2023 attended by more than 200 campus stakeholders. The response of all stakeholders to the final drafts, being presented to the Board at this meeting, has been positive.

Some of the comments in the Zoom chat from the December Town Hall meeting include:

“Our group felt that the revisions to the mission, vision, and values have the possibility to inspire students, faculty and staff to consider attending or working at Metro State. This has been the case for many of us, currently. The meaningful education aligns with our experiences with our students, who seem to so intentionally attend Metro State, given they often make big time sacrifices to attend our institution and complete their degrees to improve themselves and their lives.”

“The mission, vision and values reflects the day to day work we do in our areas or should be doing in our areas.”

“Such a good change in values 😊 It shows progress, evolution.”

“Members in our group discussed the authenticity of the statements and the inspiration they provide.”

“We (our group) talked about the importance of being mindful about implementing our mission within our department. Have rich conversations about our mission.”

“Our group resonated most with the Meaningful Education statement, because it really illustrates the ways in which Metro State shows up for our students and provides the educational opportunities that we mean to provide to our community.”

“Love the commitment to making sure people feel safe and comfortable on campus. build trust with students and our employees.”

“The importance of storytelling for defining purpose, and how these MVV center the student as the Hero, and Metro as the Guide.”

“A call to action for each of us to LIVE OUT these values in our day-to-day practices and behaviors!”

“The mission and vision of Metro State University guide me towards a transformative education that fosters personal growth and community impact.”

“Three out of four of our break-out people were Metro grads! We all talked about the

statements “feeling like Metro,” in our experiences, and definitely guiding out work.”
“Of the values presented, "Meaningful Education" stands out as particularly impactful to me.”

“It’s a testament to Metro that our community gets involved like this!”

“Our group spoke about the MVV in terms of how do we operationalize these concepts. In the classroom, advising, in our academic programming. Also the thoughtful application of MVV through co-curricular and community engagement. Finally how do we use MVV to aspire not just settle.”

“Mission, vision and values as presented are mostly common sense particularly in higher education. I believe we all should embrace them not only in our work but our lives in general.”

“Thank you so much to all the task force members for your work and leadership! You've done a great job capturing who we are and what we want to achieve!”

D. REVIEW BY MINNESOTA STATE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION DIVISION

The draft mission, vision and values statements were shared with the Marketing and Communication Division of Minnesota State in January, 2024. Director Hawton provided feedback on a few edits for greater clarity and consistency in the wording but did not suggest any substantive changes. She was comfortable with our planned presentation to the Board.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Academic and Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the mission statement change of Metropolitan State University.

Date Presented to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee: 03/19/24

Date Presented to the Board of Trustees: 03/19/24

Date of Implementation: 03/20/24