

### President's Thank You

Greetings!

Fiscal year 2020 was a year unlike any other! We began the year with high aspirations and a great deal of momentum, only to face the challenges of COVID-19, economic upheaval, and racial injustice beginning in March. Each challenge has had a unique impact on our students, who are among the most vulnerable in our community. We've yearned for human connection as faculty and staff began working from home and students undertook remote learning and we faced so many trials. Through it all, we have been sustained by your support and commitment. You not only shared your treasure, you lifted our spirits through your expressions of belief in our mission and our students.

This report highlights our fundraising success for fiscal year 2020 – we exceeded our goals in the first six months of the year with a large gift to the Metro Fund. A gift that became seed funding when we wanted to meet emergency needs for students adversely

impacted by the pandemic in the second half of the fiscal year. We established the George Floyd Memorial Scholarship to honor the spirit of racial and social justice that was unleashed by Mr. Floyd's killing. And while graduation was delayed in hopes of gathering joyfully in August, 880 students received their degrees in a virtual ceremony in August. They never gave up, and neither did we.

Our donors have helped the university stay true to the aspiration of becoming a student-ready university, which aspires to create an anti-racist learning environment, in the most trying of times. This report comes with deepest personal gratitude for your generosity in this, the most unusual of years, to YOU, the most extraordinary supporters.

Your generosity has made more of an impact than you can ever imagine.

I'm so proud to be your partner in serving our extraordinary students!

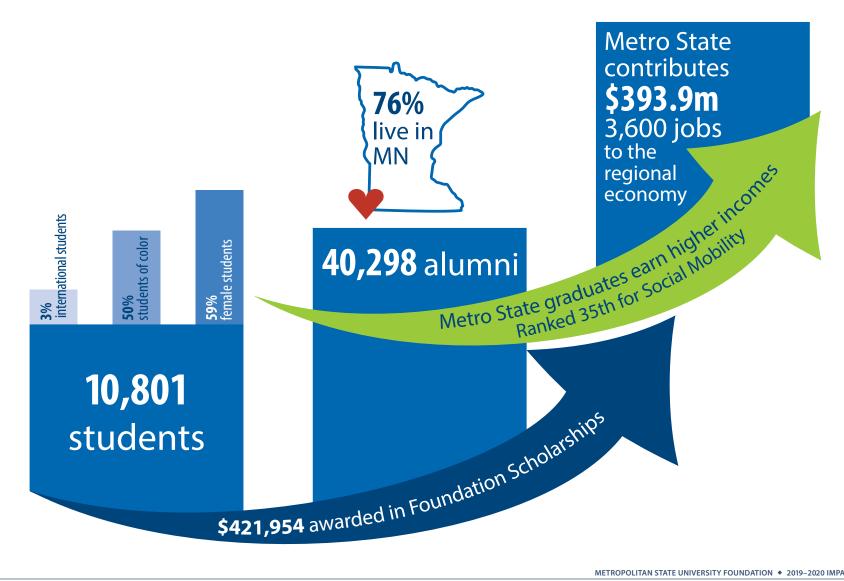
Sincerely,

Virginia arthur

Virginia "Ginny" Arthur, JD '17 (Honorary) President, Metropolitan State University



### Your Impact 2019-2020



### Keeping Students Safe and Enrolled Amid Crisis: The SAFE Fund

By Emily Kelson '21

When the SAFE (Student Assistance for Emergencies) Fund was seeded by an unrestricted bequest to Metropolitan State University in the fall of 2019, we could not have imagined just how important it would be. This individual put their trust in the university and left a gift to the Metro Fund in their will. Their confidence made it possible for many students to receive much-needed aid during this challenging time.

With a student population that is 50% people of color, 44% in very-low income households (measured by Pell Grant eligibility), and majority working adults with families to support, COVID-19 has directly affected most of the Metro State community. Nationwide, communities of color have been disproportionately hurt by the pandemic. The CDC reports that "long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many people from racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19." Right now, many of our students are struggling and the SAFE Fund is one way we can assist them.

After the university realized the impact COVID-19 was having on our students, raising funds for the SAFE Fund became a priority. The Foundation also used \$60,000 from the Metro Fund and nearly \$20,000 from other sources to provide SAFE grants to students. The Metro Fund's flexibility allowed the university to respond to our students' most immediate needs.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the Foundation awarded 106 SAFE grants totaling \$92,949. While not a factor in determining eligibility, post-grant analysis showed that 69% of grants went to students of color. These grants help students pay rent, utilities, and other sudden expenses. One student used the funds to pay for a serious dental health issue that was not covered by her insurance. The pain was so bad she could barely focus on schoolwork. She hopes to become an attorney one day and knows taking too much time off would have detrimental effects on her education. She lives with her six siblings and their father, who is the sole provider for the family. They barely make ends meet and this added expense would not fit into their budget. She applied to the SAFE Fund and received a grant that paid her dental bill. Now, she is feeling much better and will be graduating this Fall.

Community support is the backbone of the SAFE Fund. In the past year, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends have given nearly \$26,000 directly to the fund. Michelle Obama said, "when you've worked hard, and done well, and walked through that doorway of opportunity, you do not slam it shut behind you. You reach back and you give other folks the same chances that helped you succeed." Donor support allows us to leave the door wide open and guide students through.

102 students received 106 SAFE Grants totaling \$92,949

**Emergency Need for Grant:** 



COVID-19 related emergencies









### Supporting Students: Dr. Kate Ries

By Emily Kelson '21

For Dr. Kate Ries, Associate Professor in the Natural Sciences Department, advocacy comes naturally. Before bringing her talents to Metropolitan State University she was on a tenure track at a school in San Antonio, Texas that served the Hispanic community, first-generation students, and veterans. Ries said, "the work was great, and there were a lot of similarities between it and Metro." She arrived at Metro State in 2012 and has dedicated her time to helping students access the resources they need to excel.

Ries' commitment to supporting science students led her and her colleague Dr. Zack Mensinger to bring the STEMFoundations program to Metro State. STEMFoundations is a program that was started at North Hennepin Community College and is designed to support students to develop competency in chemistry and biology and build lifelong learning skills. Foundational science courses are designed to "weed" students out, but Metropolitan State's philosophy is different. "I loved this idea of having a separate section for students who scored C or worse on their first exam, then sending a positive message and congratulating them on being invited to STEMFoundations," Ries said.

Spring 2018 was a limited pilot semester. Students shared feedback about how much they appreciated the STEMFoundations cohort and support. Some have even expressed their desire to expand the program. All of the STEMFoundations participants passed the course, compared to only 20% of those who were

invited but chose not to participate. Based on these positive results, Metropolitan State University decided to expand the program. Professors Rachel Bergerson, Cindy Harley, and Rondedrick Sinville joined Ries and Mensinger to offer the full program 2019-2020 school year with funding from the University Foundation.

In the 2019-2020 school year, \$14,000 from the Metro Fund was invested in the STEMFoundations program. Six-thousand dollars of which has gone directly to student scholarships. Ries believed that it was important to include these scholarships once Metro State offered the full program because, "our students' lives are so complicated, and if there is something we can do to take some of that pressure off—so they can get to class and not have to worry about something outside of class—that's the least we can do." The devotion Kate Ries has shown is creating an immediate and positive impact on our community.

Ries is also a monthly sustaining donor and champion for the SAFE (Student Assistance for Emergencies) Fund. In November of 2019, Ries responded to a message about the SAFE Fund's predecessor, the Metro Supports Fund, running out of funds within a couple of days due to overwhelming need. Kate asked her fellow faculty and staff to join her in giving so that more funds would be available to our students. "Our student population just really needs that help, and it makes a difference in whether they complete their education. I just thought, there have to be other people feeling this way, and maybe we

can put another little pot together to help those who still need it." Ries' message made an instant impact, receiving backing from President Arthur to match SAFE Fund donations for a month. Ries' efforts helped raise \$5,600 for the SAFE Fund over the winter.



### Trust the Authority of the Learner: The Wisdom Scholarship

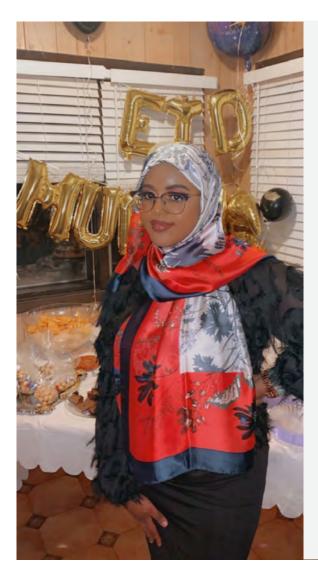
By Mai Nyua Lee '19

How do you know that where you land is where you are meant to be? From a young age, Jane Jensen '10 didn't know where life was going to take her, but she stepped into the world with confidence and determination to make an impact on those around her and in her community.

Jane carried her thirst for knowledge to Metropolitan State University. Jane had searched for a college that would accept her many transfer credits as part of her degree. Here, with Metropolitan State's Bachelor of Arts in Individualized Studies, was where she applied her passion in engineering, art, and finance into a specialized degree.

Inspired by her classmates and grateful for the Metropolitan State experience, Jane knew she wanted to leave her legacy at Metropolitan State. Before Jane lost her battle with cancer in 2016, she and her family outlined the vision for a new scholarship, the Wisdom Scholarship. It would be the first scholarship specifically for students in the College of Individualized Studies. The scholarship would demonstrate the trust that Metropolitan State has in their students to chart the path that is most meaningful to them.

Support from Jane, her family and friends, and the alumni community enabled the Foundation to award the first Wisdom Scholarship this spring. We are honored to share thanks from Zaynab Said, the first Wisdom Scholar, who is moving forward to pursue her education on her own terms, as Jane had done before. •



Dear Wisdom Scholarship Donor,

I just wanted to sincerely thank you for honoring me with this scholarship. Throughout my years in university, I haven't received much recognition for my academic achievement, or in my in-college career in general. When I got the notice that I would be receiving a scholarship for my academic achievement, I was very surprised and caught off guard. I'm very happy and grateful to be able to receive this award.

Coming from an immigrant household, we are conditioned to work hard, whether in school, work, personal life, etc. As an East African Muslim, it's difficult to get recognized for our achievement and getting this award made me realize how well I've been doing in school. I've always doubted myself and getting that email that said I would be getting a scholarship made me feel hopeful and appreciate my hard work more.

Once again, I would like to wholeheartedly thank the donors for not only giving me this scholarship but for recognizing my hard work.

Sincerely, Zaynab Said

Left: Zaynab Said, student

### The Last Semester: Student Success Scholarships

By Emily Kelson '21

In 2017, more than 1,500 Metropolitan State University students who had at least 100 credits had exhausted their lifetime eligibility for Pell Grant funds, a federal aid program that provides low-income students with the resources to attend college. There are several reasons this happens. Students may take longer to graduate because they take fewer credits, or more breaks, to have time for work and family. For some, the loss of eligibility means choosing between completing their degree and postponing their education. Murwo Mohamed, a Student Success Scholarship awardee, encounters that decision every semester.

Murwo is working 12-hour shifts, Friday through Sunday, while attending Metropolitan State. She supports herself and family in Africa, and her wages don't cover their bills plus the cost of school. She plans to keep applying for scholarships, saying, "I couldn't afford to complete my degree without help. When you do not have enough income, you couldn't think of going to school." For Murwo, education means a more secure life for her and her family, which is why it is a top priority. Murwo could graduate in 2021 if she receives another scholarship that's comparable to the Student Success Scholarship.

The Katherine B. Andersen Fund of the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation helped launch the Student Success Scholarship in 2017. They have supported several other Metro State programs, including the Gordon Parks Gallery, the university's library, and the Urban Teacher Program. The Katherine B. Andersen Fund's commitment, plus that of Otto Bremer Trust, and individual donors has resulted in 55 students receiving Student Success Scholarships.

Within the first year of the program, 68% of awardees graduated within a year,

and 87% graduated within two years. During the 2019-2020 school year, 64% of awardees graduated or have been approved to graduate. This is important because a college education leads to higher wages and better financial stability, which is exactly what Murwo is hoping to achieve.

Murwo is one student grateful for the community's support. She says, "to people who donate money to Metro State, I would like to say thank you very much. Without help, it's impossible to go to school." She is working towards a bachelor's in ethnic studies and is extremely close to earning her degree. She only has 39 credits left but is unsure of when she'll complete her education due to her financial situation. When she does graduate, Murwo wants to work with minority groups or serve her local community. However, overall, Murwo just wants a comfortable life for her and her family.

### Supporting Post-Traditional Students: Mariah Wilberg '19

By Emily Kelson '21

Mariah Wilberg used education to rewrite her story. Over seven years ago, she served time in prison for drug-related crimes. Mariah was diagnosed with HIV at 19 years old, and while in prison, she learned that it had progressed to AIDS. She thought her life was broken and beyond repair. Desperate to make a change, Mariah took control of her narrative. She completed a 15-credit office support certificate while in prison. This rekindled her love of learning and motivated her to seek further education when she was released.

While researching universities, Mariah realized that there weren't many geared toward working adults. She was already in the workforce and needed a university that would fit into her schedule. Metropolitan State University provided that environment, and, in December 2019, Mariah earned her Master of Public and Nonprofit Administration degree. As one of her class assignments, Mariah created a proposal to survey infectious disease

providers about how they were having conversations with their patients living with HIV. That assignment is now a 10-state survey, and Mariah presented the results at the United States Conference on AIDS.

There were times when the journey was not easy. Education can be a sacrifice, but for Mariah, there were benefits beyond a career. "The most valuable part has been my personal and professional growth, paycheck aside. Finishing my degree made me a better citizen, friend, family member, and person in general," she said, "finishing your degree is one of the most significant investments you can make in yourself and your future." Mariah's past self would be proud if she could see everything that she has accomplished.

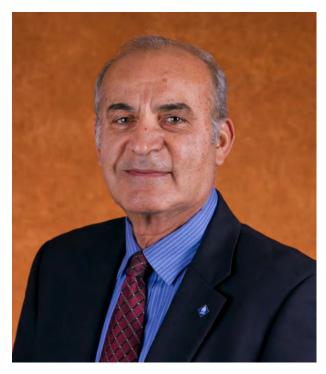
Mariah has continued to use her experiences to educate others. Since September 2019, she has been the Statewide HIV Strategy and Services Coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. She is also a motivational speaker who talks about her experiences with HIV, incarceration, homelessness, survival sex and sex work, substance use and harm reduction, intimate partner violence, trauma and resilience, and mental and emotional well-being. If there is a chance to serve and educate the community, Mariah is going to take it. She is determined and will continue to be a positive voice.

Gifts from donors help make stories like Mariah's possible. •



### Leaving A Legacy: Dean Rassule Hadidi

By Lucia Rivas '21



Dean Hadidi's personal story is one that many Metropolitan State University students can relate to. He arrived in the US in 1975 as a first-generation student ready to start his Ph.D. program. With two suitcases, little money, and a scholarship promise, Dean Hadidi began his journey. His story is an inspiration, showing resilience, empathy, and hard work.

A pioneer in online learning, Dr. Rassule Hadidi joined Metropolitan State University as the new Dean for the College of Management (COM) on July 1, 2019. Dr. Hadidi has more than three decades of leadership experience and has directed the development of several degree programs and certificates with face-to-face, online, and blended delivery modes. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Science, and Bachelor of Science degrees from the University of Missouri–Columbia. He also earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Statistics from Shiraz University in Iran.

The dedicated and hard-working students at COM inspired Dean Hadidi to endow a scholarship at Metropolitan State University to help them succeed in their academic and professional journeys. He had already set up a scholarship at his previous institution, the University of Illinois–Springfield. He expressed he feels a sense of responsibility to contribute to society and the community he serves.

"COM seems like a big family," says Dean Hadidi. To him, team spirit was what has characterized staff at COM since his first interview for his current position. This dedicated and hard-working group of people work proactively to bring to life their dreams for the College of Management. "Our main purpose is to help students be successful and happy with their studies," noted Dean Hadidi.

The vibrant community of the Twin Cities brings the university not only knowledgeable staff and resident faculty, but also experienced community faculty. The combination of degree qualifications and first-hand professional experience prepares COM staff and faculty to address the post-traditional student body's specific needs at Metro State. To Dean Hadidi, continuous improvement is key for COM's efforts in teaching, scholarships, and services to students.

A scholarship, such as the one set up by Dean Hadidi, may be the difference between a student finishing their degree or withdrawing from classes due to their family responsibilities. Dean Hadidi's decision to endow the scholarship will help students for many years into the future and sets an example of how others can advance the student body's social mobility.

### Inspiring Life Long Learning: Joseph Ellis '19

Interview by Emily Seddon

# You currently serve on the Board of Trustees for Metropolitan State University Foundation. How did you first get involved with the university?

In June of 2006, I was asked to give a presentation focused on the economies and markets of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, U.S., and world to Metro State faculty and staff at the College of Management. I remember the presentation like it was yesterday—the average price for a gallon of gas in the Twin Cities was \$2.82 and there was concern as gas prices were trending higher. After the presentation, I was invited to join the Foundation's Board of Trustees, but I knew, at that time, I would not be able to commit the time and energy I desired to give.

In early 2008, I got my formal introduction to Metro State when I visited and toured the Saint Paul campus. I learned about Metro State's history, students, and the broader impact the university has on the community. This was the point at which I fell in love with the university. I was excited about the life enhancing opportunities it provides to students, positively changing their career trajectories, and also that of their families. This was when I knew that I wanted to make a lifetime commitment to serving Metro State.

## We appreciate such a thoughtful commitment. What activities have you been engaged in through your service?

Upon joining, I became vice chair of the Foundation Board and the chair of the Investment Committee, in addition to serving on the Finance/Audit and Scholarship Committees. I remember this time vividly because it was the 2008 financial crisis. I knew that to support our students, I had to provide strong leadership, governance, and oversight of the Foundation's investments. By the end of the 2011 fiscal year, the three-year average annual return of the foundation's endowment was ranked among the top 30 universities according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). Because our endowment is almost entirely directed to student scholarships, this was a critical achievement.

I have also been a guest lecturer in the College of Management and served on the Corporate Advisory Board of the university's Applied Business Doctoral (DBA) Program.

## We are lucky to have your financial and investment expertise. Have you been involved in other activities?

I have many great memories...way too many to list. In 2009, Metro State hosted Minnesota's first African American Male High School Summit during which more than 200 high school students from throughout the Twin Cities spent an entire day on the Saint Paul campus. I was asked to give the morning keynote. For me, this was a tremendous responsibility. I created an interactive presentation titled "Athlete or Owner?: You Decide...It's Your Call!" that prompted the young men to ponder whether it's better to own Nike tennis shoes, own shares of Nike stock, play professional basketball, or become a Nike executive. It also highlighted how that choice is limited for those without college education. The students and I had a lot of fun. There was so much positive laughter that one would have thought it was a high school rally, not a university hosted summit!

### Thank you. Any final words today?

I am proud of my Metro State community, our history, and our many firsts. I look forward to my next ten years of service to the university in whatever capacity I'm needed! •

In recognition of his service and accomplishments, Joseph Ellis received an honorary degree from Metropolitan State University in 2019. Joseph Ellis joined the Foundation's Legacy Circle in 2020.





### We make it easy for you to give

### Where to give...

You can designate where your dollars will go.

**Metro Fund.** Gifts to the Metro Fund meet our students' and the university's greatest needs. This may be scholarship funds, emergency assistance grants, testing out an innovative program, or something else.

Scholarship Funds. Contributions made to scholarships support students in their academic journey. This is especially critical for students who have exhausted their state and federal funding options and need your help to complete their education.

**Program Funds.** We have many innovative programs that welcome your contributions. You can give to the college or program where you took classes or to support student services.

You can find the full list of designations at www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now.

### How to give...

There are many easy ways to make a gift to Metropolitan State University Foundation. Choose the one that best fits your situation.

**Online Giving** – Give with a credit card anytime at www.metrostate.edu/give/give-now

Check or EFT – You may send us a check for a one-time gift or a voided check to set up a monthly Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Checks should be made payable and mailed to Metropolitan State University Foundation, 700 East Seventh Street, Founders Hall 142, Saint Paul, MN 55106.

**Donor Advised Funds** – Grants from your Donor Advised Fund should be made payable and mailed to Metropolitan State University Foundation (EIN #: 23-7296162) 700 East Seventh Street, Founders Hall 142, Saint Paul, MN 55106.

**Memorials** – Honor a loved one by directing memorial gifts to Metropolitan State University Foundation.

### **Corporate Matching Gift Programs -**

Many companies offer matching gift programs that can double your contribution. Check with your company or organization to see if it has a matching gift program.

**Stock** – Appreciated stock can be a tax-wise way to make a gift to Metropolitan State University. To ensure we know who the stock transfer is from and can receipt you properly, please contact Rachel Hughes at 612-499-8754 or rachel.hughes@metrostate.edu with the number and type of shares you are transferring. Share this information with your broker to make your stock transfer:

Firm Name: Pershing, LLC

Tax ID: 13-2741729

DTC #: 0443

Account Name: Metropolitan State

University Foundation Account #: Q28135293

IRA Rollovers – If you are 70 and one-half years or older you can make a rollover gift up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to Metropolitan State University Foundation, which is referred to as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). You may use a QDC from your IRA to satisfy some or all of your required minimum distribution, which could provide tax savings. To be considered a QCD the check must come directly from your financial institution to the Metropolitan State University Foundation, Founders Hall 142, 700 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106.

### **Legacy Giving**

There are many easy ways to make sure our families are taken care of while also making the best gifts of our lifetime to organizations we hold dear, such as the Metropolitan State University Foundation.

**Bequest through your will** – To leave a gift to Metropolitan State University Foundation through your will, you can specify a dollar amount or percentage. Some options exist for setting up your will on-line, or you can consult an estate planning attorney to set this up for you.

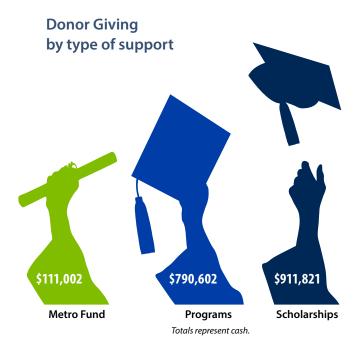
Retirement Plans – You can name Metropolitan State University Foundation as a beneficiary on your 401k or IRA. You can update your beneficiary form directly with your financial institution.

Life Insurance Plans – You can name Metropolitan State University Foundation as a beneficiary on your life insurance. You can update your beneficiary directly with your policy holder.

Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) – You can make a gift now to Metropolitan State University Foundation; then, we will manage the assets, and you will receive an income payment for the rest of your life with tax savings, or your partner's life in a joint annuity. When you pass away (or your partner if you set up a joint CGA), the remaining assets will go to the Metropolitan State University Foundation to be used in the way you designate in the CGA agreement. Metropolitan State University Foundation can provide example illustrations for you.

### Your investment will benefit Metropolitan State University and our students for years to come.

Your gift to the Metropolitan State University Foundation will create a long-term benefit to the community. Through your annual gifts and contributions to endowments we look forward to sharing the many ways in which your investments are making a difference in the lives of our students.



### Thank you!

The Foundation takes pride in recognizing those who help to preserve the quality education that Metropolitan State University provides. These donors have expressed their belief in our mission and have made an investment in the university's long-term impact on our community. This list recognizes donors from July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020.

#### Visionary Society-\$100,000+

The Carter Family Foundation Diana and Robert Carter Su Family of Fidelity Charitable Josephine and Vincent Su Estate of Darrell W. Waidelich\* '94

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### Letter from the Chair

Happy New Year!

On behalf of the Metropolitan State University Foundation Board of Trustees, I thank you for your generosity last year. The pandemic and uprising for justice that followed George Floyd's murder caused us to examine our philanthropy and our impact. You may be pleased to know that alumni and friends came together to give more than \$1.8 million to support Metro State students and programs in 2019-2020. This support has already provided much needed help to students to weather challenges brought on by the pandemic such as keeping students safe and on their path to graduation when faced with loss of housing, the shut off of utilities, or medical needs not covered by insurance.

We are also grateful to have had the ability to match generous gifts from Joyce LeClaire, retired Dean of Student Services: Grumbles Law; and many other community members to establish the George Floyd Memorial Endowed Scholarship for Racial and Social Justice. This scholarship honors the university's long-standing commitment to racial and social justice and will support students who are committed to these principles.

Finally, I want to recognize the gift of time and talent. Thank you to everyone who has given your time to students this year, from the faculty and staff that moved classes and services online to alumni whose guest speaking became virtual. And thank you to the many Metro State students and alumni working in healthcare, as first responders, as teachers, and in other fields where this year has tested your training and shown how you help raise our community up.

In gratitude,

Chris Boese

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