

## Dean's Notes: Dr. Francis Schweigert



**Greetings on behalf of the College of Community Studies and Public Affairs. As we come to the conclusion of our second year as a college, we have a lot to celebrate and appreciate.**

First, and above all, we hail the hundreds of students and dozens of faculty and advisors who constitute the learning community that we are. All five of our departments are characterized by a deep interest in the human person and human community and a powerful commitment to the betterment of the human condition. This interest and commitment flows through everything we teach and learn, in all five of our departments:

- *In research*, from the studies of human behavior being conducted by students and faculty in the Psychology Department to the investigations of gun violence and police practices in the School of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.
- *In cultural competence*, from intensive on-site experiences in the Social Work Department's community learning centers to group facilitation in Human Services and Drug and Alcohol Counseling internships.
- *In social justice* in many forms, from the annual conference on Understanding and Responding to Mass Incarceration to the incisive advocacy skills honed in the Master of Advocacy and Political Leadership program.
- *In public service* as exercised in public administration and nonprofit management, in law enforcement and restorative practices, and in violence prevention and corrections.
- *In basic human care*, from the earliest stages of life in the early childhood studies program to the embracing and generous understanding and competence of aging studies and disabilities studies.

Second, we move forward with a sense of mission, captured in the following statement drafted through many discussions in this academic year:

"The mission of the College of Community Studies and Public Affairs (CCSPA) is to prepare students with broad liberal arts education, research abilities, and 21st century career readiness skills so they can have a meaningful impact on diverse and complex human social systems. We prepare our students to understand the science of behavior and to apply this knowledge in a variety of contexts as they seek to become resilient agents of service and change.

Our programs are responsive to our students' needs and incorporate multicultural and experiential learning in community settings. We challenge our students to confront corruption and injustice so that collectively we may overcome oppression in our communities. Through our degree programs, we aim to improve the well-being and safety of individuals, communities, and the public at large."

As we complete the many tasks to conclude this second year—in classrooms and laboratories, in papers and exams, in study groups and internships—we look forward with anticipation and joy to our third year as a college. We build on our strengths, but even more, we build with our desire for a better world for all, by all, and with all.

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# Giving Back to Those Who Serve

By Caitlin Mahoney



For four and a half years, Laura Harder '14 worked as a manager for case workers in a local homeless shelter. As a highly empathetic person, she found it difficult to remove her own emotions from those of her clients: “families and children experiencing the lowest part of their lives.”

The experience of compassion fatigue is common among people who work with people, but the job was challenging for other reasons too. Harder saw clients move on and then come back to the shelter, prompting questions about whether she was effective at her job. Could she have done more? Did she fail them? And despite singular successes, another client was always waiting; homelessness itself seemed unrelenting. She might rejoice that she had helped one family secure a place to stay, and in the next moment, another family that needed help would walk through her door (a dynamic she's coined “the revolving door”). Harder felt like she was treading water. She was not alone.

During her time in direct service, Harder noticed many colleagues develop symptoms of emotional exhaustion, detachment, and diminished sense of accomplishment—indicators that she now understands point to the experience of “burnout.” She watched as some of her co-workers left the job for another, while others left the field completely. She notes that a sense of pride may prohibit those that stay from admitting their own exhaustion. “Many love the work they're doing, believe in its value, and experience burnout as a personal failing.” Caregivers may also feel guilty about taking time for self-care, which itself may exacerbate stress when it becomes another thing to do atop an already growing ‘to do’ list.

Ultimately, Harder left her job in advocacy to pursue a master's degree in psychology at Metropolitan State, where she devoted her studies to better understanding the experience of work stress and burnout. Through her research, she found that when staff suffers, clients also suffer. She has come to believe that “in order to help others be well, we must first be well ourselves.” She emphasizes that beyond individual responsibility for wellness, “organizations and

leadership play a key role in staff well-being. Organizations and practitioners alike must commit to well-being in order to effectively serve their clientele.”

Harder earned her MA in psychology in 2014 and was named the outstanding graduate student in her college. Since 2015, she has worked as community faculty, teaching courses in Positive Psychology and Group Dynamics. She continues her program of research in partnership with Professor Caitlin Mahoney (psychology/CCSPA) and in active collaboration with Metropolitan State's psychology laboratory.

Currently, Harder and Mahoney (along with psychology interns Mimosa Greer '17 and Davionna Hicks '18) are investigating the effects of practitioners' stress on their approach and potential for success with clients, a study which includes collecting saliva samples from volunteers to test for the presence of stress hormones. The team is working closely with the university's human subjects pool, which provides undergraduates opportunities to participate in research on campus. Harder and Mahoney hope to take what they've learned and translate it for use by community organizations to promote staff well-being and effective client service.

To that end, Harder has recently launched her own workplace consulting company. Happy With Work <sup>LLC</sup> will deliver the first of its training programs this year at beloved craft breweries and coffee shops across the Twin Cities. The Self-Care Social Series will offer short topical trainings, focused on stress, burnout, and self-care practices for a busy life.

Harder is “excited to be able to give back to the community of social service workers, whom I love so much.”

# Office Hours



Greetings! It is a pleasure to welcome you to this issue of *buzznews*, with its focus on lifelong learning—a core value and a daily practice from Metropolitan State’s earliest years. As I work with my colleagues to lead the university through a disruptive environment to expand our outreach to adult and underserved learners, I am reminded that learning continuously is as imperative for university executives as for students and alumni!

This semester, I am grateful that I now have a permanent executive team in place. We have been working carefully to identify and attract highly-qualified leaders to fill positions that had been in “interim” status. Our work of building the best possible learning experiences for our students is benefiting from the expertise, stability, and cohesiveness that this team-building work has produced.

Speaking of hiring, I want to share the recent news that the Minnesota State Board of Trustees has just appointed a new chancellor for our statewide system. After a national search, the board offered our former interim president, Dr. Devinder Malhotra, a three-year appointment as chancellor, which he has accepted. The continuing transition will usher in an important new era for the work of public higher education across Minnesota. I look forward to working closely with Chancellor Malhotra as we pursue new solutions to the education and workforce issues facing our metropolitan region and the state.

One specific workforce shortage we are addressing is Minnesota’s significant and long-term lack of professionals trained for cybersecurity careers—a February industry analysis found a shortage of more than 5,400 workers in that field. We have launched an educational program in cybersecurity, and we are working to expand that platform to support the educational and training needs of state agencies, employers, and the National Guard.

Another initiative, supporting both lifelong and civically-engaged learning, is the GROW-IT Center, for which we have been planning for three years. Our funding is now in place, and final design work will be completed in time to allow construction to begin in June. Our goal is to have this refurbished 1990s greenhouse ready for occupancy at the start of the 2019 growing season. We are excited by the ways in which this asset will serve diverse community interests and partners in the years ahead, as we bring faculty expertise to bear on issues such as food security, urban agriculture, youth development, and many more, and as we learn from our neighbors in the process.

For our lifelong learners, an important inflection point in their learning journey is their graduation from the university. That memorable day is taking on a new look and feel this year, as Metropolitan State has made the transition to hosting two smaller ceremonies, on a Saturday, each fall and spring. Our first experience with this approach went well, and we continue to learn how to make graduation even more memorable for students and their families. As the nature and content of work in our global, networked society continue to change, the demand for high-quality learning, delivered appropriately for busy professionals and for previously underserved communities, will only increase. At Metropolitan State University, we welcome that challenge and as your academic home, we want to remind you that we remain open to your continued academic needs. You are welcome to join us anytime, to refresh your own knowledge and skills, to continue lifelong learning by starting something new or to share your experience and talent with the next generation of eager Metropolitan State learners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia Arthur". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Virginia “Ginny” Arthur, JD  
President

# Alumna Spotlight

## Andrea Jenkins '99: Serving the Community

By Matthew Spillum '06, '17

Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins' office, with its view east from City Hall, has a just-getting-started feel to it. Leaned against two walls, dark stained wood picture rails await installation, while framed pieces, including a James Baldwin poster, sit in seeming anticipation of being properly placed. Jenkins' own journey, on the other hand, seems anything but just getting started, and the artist, activist, community organizer, former city council staffer, and the newly elected council member for Minneapolis' Eighth Ward described a path that will sound familiar to many Metropolitan State alums. "I spent three years at the University of Minnesota," Jenkins says, "I spent some time at the Minnesota School of Business, I moved back home to Chicago and went to Triton College for a couple of semesters, and Metro State was a place I could take all that experience and get credit for it."



In addition, Jenkins remembers some of the other elements that made Metropolitan State a good fit for her. “It was more affordable than other options, and it was more manageable—you could actually call the registrar! My academic advisor knew who I was; I was not just a number here.” That sense of belonging extended to her academic experience, and she noted several factors that prepared her for the many stages her life would traverse afterward.

“One was when I took a class with Wally Swann. It was a nonprofit administration class, but it was more like a political science class—he was an elected official at the time. I was really interested in politics, and so we talked a lot about politics. The second factor was Metro State’s strong commitment to including what we called diversity then, what I would call racial equity now, into every aspect of its curriculum. There was this powerful commitment to community—having instructors from the community, also having connections to the community—that really was a strong thread for Metro State as opposed to other institutions.”

Jenkins really flourished, she says, when she experienced the practical expression of Metropolitan State’s community engagement focus. “Metro State was intentional in its practice of community engagement, and to see that in a real way was inspiring. As a Metropolitan State student, I had an internship at a place called Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC) in North Minneapolis. An instructor named Titilayo Bediako, was just starting a program called the WE WIN Institute, which is a program that works with African American students in the Minneapolis Public Schools to help them understand culture and history, provides after school activities, helps them stay out of trouble. One of the students in the program was a woman named Jamecia Bennett, who was pregnant at the time. She gave birth to a girl named Paris Bennett, who you may have heard of, since she was second runner-up on American Idol. The two of them recently played Glinda and Dorothy, respectively, in *The Wiz* at the Children’s Theater Company. So she was 17, pregnant—many people would have written her off—it still happens today. But she



BRIDEGGLIND

prevailed because people believed in her. I haven't thought of this story for a while, but the community embracing our young people, that means a lot. It showed me the power of community, giving back, being engaged."

That experience gave Jenkins the chance to build deep connections to the community, forging important networks and relationships that continue to bear fruit today. "I continued to work at PCYC after the internship was over, and really most of my professional life since has been in community-based nonprofits." After taking a position as an employment counselor with Hennepin County, Jenkins had a transformational opportunity to replicate that community centered, networked model. "I was part of a group that started a community-based office to build on community assets and bring them to our clients. Whether they needed government assistance, a parole officer, social worker, employment counselor, all of these professionals were in one space. Many times, families receiving assistance have a probation officer that's across town, a social worker that is downtown, a case manager that they have to go to Century Plaza to see, and none of these entities ever talk to each other. So we had this integrated office, where we could get together and talk about one case. We could eliminate the situations where people were not showing up for appointments they couldn't get to and consequently losing their benefits. We became a part of the community. 'Hey that's Andrea—she's my case worker, but also my neighbor.'"

It was during that time that Jenkins met Council Member Robert Lilligren. "He asked me to join his team because of this community experience I had," Jenkins says, "I worked for him for two and a half years, in the same ward that I had been working in, so I knew a lot of the people. It was a really valuable experience; I learned a lot and then went to work for Council Member Glidden. It has just been sort of a natural progression, and now, being the council member, I have all these deep relationships with people that go way back. One of the things about being an elected official is you have earned the trust of the people, and I feel like I have been able to build that up over time through the work in the community."

Jenkins, the first openly transgender black woman elected to public office in the country, may just be getting started in her position, but it feels, as she puts it, "like a natural progression. I feel my lived experience as an African American, as a member of the broader LGBT community as a transgender person, and as a woman helps me understand a lot of the issues—you have to have all of that and you must understand and be deeply engaged in the policy to do the work." The work seems in good hands, even before the picture rails are installed.



# Growing a Healthy Community

By Kristine Hansen '07

*“The university is committed to academic excellence and community partnerships through its curriculum, teaching, scholarship, and services designed to support an urban mission. And the vision for the university states: The faculty, staff, and students of Metropolitan State will reflect the area’s rich diversity and will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to civic engagement.”*

## Metropolitan State University Mission Statement

Community engagement takes on many forms. At the **“Love Grows Here Wellness Center”** located across the street from **Metropolitan State University Saint Paul Campus**, community engagement takes the shape of the healing hands of a nursing student. Every Wednesday night for the past 11 years, volunteers from First Lutheran Church provide community meals for neighbors in need and Metropolitan State University nursing students provide health care services supervised by Professors Joyce Bredesen, Ruth Staus, and Deb Matthias-Anderson.

The Wellness Center emerged from a collaboration between First Lutheran Church, Metropolitan State University/Nursing Programs, the Police Homeless Outreach Project (P-HOP), the Dayton’s Bluff Block Nurse Program, and other community partners. “Volunteers from the community come to help make and serve a meal, and our nursing students provide services. We offer foot care, blood pressure screenings, resource connecting, hand massage, advocacy; the list goes on,” Bredesen says.

Building trust with their clients is key. Students serve a two-week rotation under the supervision of faculty. The trust built between faculty, students, and clients makes a difference. “I can go up to the table of clients and say, ‘hey, this is one of my nursing students. Would you let them take your blood pressure? Would you like to come over and have a hand massage?’ They just brighten up,” Bredesen says.

For the students, the Wellness Center offers a transformative learning opportunity. Bredesen describes the student experience in this way, “because of the richness of our student population, many of our students can relate in various ways to this community. There are also many students who have never had an opportunity to sit down with someone who is homeless or who lives in extreme poverty and listen to their story. I always use foot care as an example. I tell my nursing students that foot care is my favorite thing I do as a nurse because when you are kneeling at someone’s feet, something magical happens; the clients open up and share their life stories. Our students have an opportunity to connect with clients differently within this setting.”

Shannon Marchiando, a student in the RN-BSN program, describes her experience in the program:

*“My time spent at the Wellness Center showed me how this group of people, who were struggling to get by, were still members of a strong and loving community. So many people look at the homeless as outcasts, burdens, or dangerous people, but what I saw was a group of caring, loving souls who invest in each other. It was like any other community dinner; people were laughing, visiting, and catching up with one another. It showed me that no matter who my patient is, we all, at our core, need to feel accepted and cared about and that when we get that feeling we will return it. I was able to see how this program affects this population; many carried their blood pressure cards with them and were very interactive in the conversations regarding their health. Others had brought friends, telling them about the services they would receive. I witnessed how important this night was for everyone there.”*



JOYCE BREDESEN

It is meaningful that the collaboration has been well supported by university administration, including the generosity of University President Ginny Arthur. Once or twice a year she funds a meal and helps to serve. In December, President Arthur financially supported a holiday meal, and her leadership cabinet volunteered to serve the community meal at the Wellness Center. It is so important for the community to see that Metropolitan State

University truly supports its mission through the work it does within the community.

Metropolitan State put down roots on the east side of Saint Paul, and through the work of **Love Grows Here Wellness Center**, the university continues to have a transformative impact on our students and the community.

# News and Notes

Note: All towns are in Minnesota unless otherwise noted.

By Grace Doyle

**Fartun Ahmed** '12, Minnetonka, was elected to the Hopkins School Board, making her the first Somali woman in the country to be elected to a school board and the second in public office.

In an interview with Lakeshore Weekly News, Ahmed said, "it shows our district is ready to move forward," and, "it shows our district is open to connecting and engaging with someone despite the differences they may have."

Ahmed's 8-year-old sister wrote her a letter the day before the election, wishing her good luck. Ahmed said, "I want her to grow up in a community where she knows her leaders and people will listen to her and people will respect her."



**Jacob Beasley** '12, Richfield, is the chief technology officer of a tech startup, DotComGuy, which provides customers with a direct connection to technical assistance service professionals. Beasley said the company's app is a

mobile and desktop friendly platform for consumers and small businesses to find a technician in minutes. DotComGuy technicians install or repair computers, WiFi services, printers, smart home devices and much more.

**Brandon Bragg** '12, Eagan, was hired as an officer at the Hastings Police Department.

**Lauren Haefemeyer** '17, Minneapolis, was hired as an officer at the Woodbury Police Department. She previously worked as a paramedic with Woodbury Public Safety and as Emergency Medical Services staff for several Twin Cities hospitals.

**Joseph Hawkinson** '16, Maplewood, was hired as an officer at the Rosemount Police Department. Hawkinson has worked as a civilian community service officer in Rosemount since 2015. Hawkinson has also worked as a military police officer in the Army National Guard.

**Angela Edwards** '15, Minneapolis, received the Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero award. Edwards is the founder of the nonprofit Education Explosion, where she works with students in north Minneapolis on test preparation, counseling and computer training.

**Carl Eller** '94, Minneapolis, was appointed marketing and planning vice-president at Premier Biomedical. Eller is a retired NFL professional football Hall of Fame inductee who is also president of the NFL Retired Players Association, helping former players transition into retirement. A former defensive lineman, Eller was a six-time Pro Bowl participant who appeared in four Superbowl games with the Minnesota Vikings.

Eller has worked to raise awareness of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). He is also a licensed drug and alcohol counselor, and founded a group of substance-abuse clinics called Triumph Life Centers.

**Chad Frederick** '10, Louisville, Ky., published his book, *America's Addiction to Automobiles: Why Cities Need to Kick the Habit and How*. He also accepted a tenure track position at Grand Valley State University. Before this, Frederick was a senior research associate with the Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods at the University of Louisville and an instructor of public policy at Sullivan University.

**Jamie Jansen** '07, Minneapolis, was appointed vice president of sales at Logic PD. Jansen joined Logic PD as director of information technology in 2016 and before that, held a senior strategic technology role at Cogentix Medical.

**Andrea Jenkins** '99, Minneapolis, was elected to the Minneapolis City Council. Jenkins is the first transgender candidate to win a city council election in a major U.S. city and is the first transgender person of color to win election to public office anywhere in the United States.

**Sharon Mohr** '94, Medina, has been hired as Central Lakes College's interim human resources director. Mohr has experience working in Minnesota State system human resources for over 30 years, at Metropolitan State University, the system office, Hennepin Technical College and as interim system director for HR initiatives.

**Linda Moua** '17, Oakdale, was hired as an officer at the Eden Prairie Police Department. Moua has worked as a training instructor for Mall of America security and serves in the Army National Guard as an information technology specialist.



**Michael O'Connor** '92, Lino Lakes, received the 2017 Kerzner Award for Excellence in Project Management through the Project Management Institute.

**Marcus Owens** '04, Minneapolis, was named a "40 Under 40" by the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*.

**Bryan Schafer** '05, New Richmond, Wis., was appointed as school board member in New Richmond. Schafer has previously served on the School District of New Richmond's Board of Education.

**Justin Teerlinck** '02, Lakewood, Wash., was promoted to the position of occupational therapy services manager at Western State Hospital.

**Kent Therkelsen** '96, Minneapolis, retired from his position of executive director at Dakota Communications Center, which he led the startup of in 2007. In an interview with Rosemount Town Pages, Therkelsen said, "it has been more rewarding than people will know."

**Fanice Thomas** '15, Raleigh, N.C., was selected to be a part of a national leadership program to build health equity. Thomas is a PhD student in applied social and community psychology at North Carolina State University where she researches ways to encourage healthy diet and exercise behaviors in immigrant populations. As part of the Health Policy Research Scholars program, she will work with other scholars towards building a culture of health.

**Kathryn Thompson** '10, Saint Paul, was hired at Electromed, Inc. as vice president of reimbursement. Thompson has been in the healthcare industry for over 20 years. She previously worked as revenue cycle director at Fairview Health Services/University of Minnesota M Health and managed the billing and reimbursement function for Virtual Radiologic.

**Ismael Tounkara** '09, Virginia Beach, Va. was awarded the Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal. Tounkara is a Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer intern and contracting officer for the Common Electronics Integrated Weapon Systems Team with the Naval Supply Systems Command Weapon Systems Support.

**Yorn Yan** '96, '00, Cottage Grove, won the Legacy Award from the Minnesota Humanities Center. Yan has been executive director of the United Cambodian Association of Minnesota for 14 years. Yan is president of National Cambodian American Organization and the author of *New Americans, New Promise: A Guide to the Refugee Journey in America*. Previous to this, he worked as a management consultant for the Wilder Foundation.

# Director's Notes



The best part of my job as the alumni relations director at Metropolitan State University is when I have the opportunity to sit across the table from a Metropolitan State graduate and listen to their story over a cup of coffee. I come away from these meetings with a profound respect for the people, some of whom have traveled long and winding paths, who now proudly

claim the title Metropolitan State Alumni. It is a badge of honor, as well as academic achievement.

Over the course of many cups of coffee and many pleasant afternoons, I have noticed some distinct commonalities among my fellow alumni. Chief among these characteristics is the willingness to push the boundaries of their experience and explore new possibilities.

In this issue, we are featuring trailblazing Minneapolis City Councilmember Andrea Jenkins, who throughout her life and career has asked: “what’s possible?” We also include a profile of Kurt Zilley, an alum, and member of the most recent Masters of Public and Nonprofit Administration cohort. Returning to Metropolitan State to complete an advanced degree, Zilley is also an example of a lifelong learner.

Metropolitan State was founded on the belief that people should have the opportunity to make possibilities into realities through continuing their education and completing a degree. Our alumni are living proof of this reality.

Kristine Hansen '07

Alumni Relations Director

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