

# THE METROPOLITAN

The Metropolitan State University Student Newspaper

## The Pink House v. Metropolitan State

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The expansion of Metropolitan State University's St. Paul campus has not been without controversy. The height of the parking ramp, for example, didn't make the university many friends in the neighborhood. However, blowback over the obstructed view of downtown wasn't the only resistance the school faced. Situated on the southeast corner of Metro State's new parking ramp, a small, uniquely-styled dwelling at 393 Bates Avenue refused to surrender to the university's construction plans.

Built in the 1920s and inspired by the Spanish style, the house at 393 Bates had a flair all its own. While the actual structure was standard block wall, the exterior was a pastel-pink stucco surface which, at the front of the house, curved outward where it met the ground. The sidewalk was angled to follow the juttied-out contour of the entryway, which had two slender, single-side windows bookending the front door.

With an otherwise flat top, the only sign of a standard pitch roof was the house's most distinctive feature of all: two tiny pent roofs



With an otherwise flat-top design, the only sign of a standard pitch roof was the house's most distinctive feature of all: two tiny pent roofs perched atop the outside edges of the front of the house.

perched atop the outside edges of the front of the house. Former Pioneer Press columnist Larry Millett's described then as "eyebrows above the side windows." All of these unique features befit a property bent on non-conformity and an unwillingness to go down easily.

This unwillingness began a few years back, when Metro State's growth created the need for a new science center, student center and multi-level parking ramp.

The proposed size of the ramp and surface lot required the purchase of three properties along Bates Avenue, one of which was the pink house. The other two purchases went off in relatively smooth fashion. The 393 Bates location: not so much.

"Our attempts at purchasing the three properties began in earnest around 2012 or 2013," said Dan Hambrook, who is the associate vice president of Facili-

ties Management at Metro State. When asked what the biggest obstacle was to acquiring the property at 393 Bates, he answered, "reaching an agreeable price."

Over the years, the house was privately bought and sold several times. Then, in 2009, JTRBSDC, Inc., a corporate partnership based in St. Paul, purchased 393 Bates for \$1. Interestingly, in 2015, the house was

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## Metro hosts budget forum: \$1.1 M deficit in FY 2016, New budget process introduced

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On February 18, students, faculty and staff gathered in the Ecolab room of Metro State's Library and Learning Center to participate in a discussion of the school's budget. Viewers at the Midway Center, the Minneapolis Campus, and the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Education Center watched the forum via video teleconference.

The event was conducted by Interim President Devinder Malhotra, Interim CFO and Vice President of Administrative Affairs Bruce Biser, and Associate Vice President for Financial Management Anthony Roan.

Malhotra began the event by announcing a new budgeting process designed to foster a more transparent environment and to give the university community a stronger voice in decisions about university finances. The new process will move Metro State "towards a sustainable, growth-oriented future," said Malhotra.

Roan's presentation was concerned with the results of FY15 and projections for the rest of FY16. The past few years have been a drain on the school's resources. The period from FY14 to FY16 have seen the construction of the Student Center, the Science Education Center, the new parking ramp at the Saint Paul Campus, as well as traffic calming work on Maria Avenue and a build out of the 1380 Midway site. Cost overruns from these projects, especially expenses related to soil remediation under the parking ramp, have forced Metro State to draw money from reserves. Unrestricted reserves have decreased from \$24.2 million in FY13 to \$12.7 million by FY15.

SEE BUDGET ON PAGE 3

## Grand opening of the new Science Education Center

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The new Science Education Center (SEC) is holding a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony at noon on Tuesday, April 12. The event is a chance for current and prospective students to tour the building and familiarize themselves with the new SEC student resources and Metropolitan State's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs.

The addition of the Science Education Center provides space and resources tailored to students enrolled in the university's science and math courses. The delegation of the new space feeds anticipation for new degree programs in the future to enhance the university's current profile of STEM programs.

Currently, the university offers both undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing, biology, chemistry, dental hygiene, urban science education, life science teaching, applied mathemat-

ics and environmental science, among others.

The building will offer classrooms, laboratories and resources to advance student research, such as lasers, ventilated lab tables and a 3D projector for the study of anatomical structures.

The \$39 million building features three floors totaling 65,700 square feet comprising six classrooms, a large symposium room, nine teaching labs, four research labs, one geographic information systems computer lab, eight small group study rooms, a science and math tutoring center, a large atrium to host civic and academic functions, and a catering room.

The building features innovative design and architecture inspired by the sciences. Each floor displays a different color scheme to symbolize the many disciplines of science. For example, the first floor, which offers biology courses, is designed with earth tones. The first floor also displays many pieces of art. A large, hand-blown glass sculpture cre-

ated by local artists, represents waves of light.

Solar panels, donated by Xcel Energy, line the building's roof. The building's water use and waste water production are tracked automatically. Salt-tolerant landscape plants shape the Sixth Street side of the building, and native Minnesota prairie plants complement the landscape near the back sidewalk, where porous pavement and terraced sand beds provide a reduction in runoff water. Student study rooms are equipped with whiteboard paint, allowing a nearly 360-degree projection of ideas and collaborative student work.

Faculty members and current STEM students will be available to answer questions and share their experiences and future plans at the grand opening. Food and tours will be provided. Information on the artists whose works are featured in the building may be found at [www.inplainsightart.com](http://www.inplainsightart.com).



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The Metropolitan State University  
campus newspaper

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The submission deadline for the  
May issue is April 10, 2016.

News briefs: Academic and community events

Metropolitan State to expand  
bachelor’s degree options of-  
fered at North Hennepin

Starting this fall, students will be able to complete their English and Economics majors at the North Hennepin Community College campus in Brooklyn Park. Communications studies and health systems will be offered in fall 2017 and psychology will begin in fall 2018.

This is an expansion of the partnership in which Metropolitan State offers courses on the NHCC campus to serve students living in the west metro. The current Metropolitan State bachelor degrees in nursing and business administration will continue.

The new programs are in response to increasing demand for degrees at the baccalaureate, bachelor’s and master’s levels.

Search for Metro State’s new  
president narrowed to two can-  
didates

Virginia (Ginny) Arthur and Fernando Delgado have been named as the two semi-finalists in the search for Metropolitan State University’s next president. Arthur has been Metro State’s executive vice president and provost since 2015, and as provost and vice president for

academic affairs from 2012 to 2015. Delgado has been vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost University of Wisconsin-River Falls as since 2009.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities’ (MnSCU) board of trustees will select the next president, and will consider Chancellor Steven Rosenstone’s recommendation at their April 20 meeting. The new president is expected to start by July 1, 2016.

Rush Line transit study meeting  
April 19

Transit options that will potentially affect Metropolitan State’s Dayton’s Bluff campus will be discussed 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 19, at the Hayden Heights Library at 1456 White Bear Avenue in Saint Paul.

Portions of White Bear Avenue and Maryland Avenue are being considered as a potential route for light rail transit (LRT) or Bus Rapid transit (BRT). The entire route would connect downtown Saint Paul to White Bear Lake or Forest Lake, or potentially further north.

Input from residents and businesses, who are invited to learn about the transit options and provide feedback, are an important part of the process. Project staff will be

available for questions.

Upon requests submitted by Friday, April 8, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority will provide interpreters or reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities who wish to attend the committee meeting. To submit a request, email [info@rushline.org](mailto:info@rushline.org) or call 651-266-2760.

Cardio at the fitness center

Treadmills, elliptical machines and stationary bikes are now available at the fitness center in the new Student Center on the Dayton’s Bluff campus.

While the fitness center opened in February, exercise options were limited to free weights and dumbbells, resistance machines, balance balls, medicine balls and a stretching area.

Islamic Awareness Week is April  
11-15

Metro State’s Muslim Student Organization is hosting Islamic Awareness Week this April. Nightly events include a food showcase, a Quran listening session, a documentary and a speaker. Contact MSO for details.

The Equal Oppotunity and Diversity office

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After serving eight years in the Army and as a student worker for the Veterans Center. I ended up working at the EOD office at the St. Paul Campus. My first thought was Explosive Ordnance Disposal. As a Combat Engineer serving multiple tours, I was not about to walk toward any bombs — that could make a great day bad faster than a top tier dragster. The EOD office at Metropolitan State University does, yes, deal with sensitive situations. They deal with the unseen issues that affect us as students and employees. The ones that shake us to the core: in short unprovoked negative actions we do to one another as individuals.

At Metropolitan State University, EOD actually stands for Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Under the guidance of Craig Morris, the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity and Diversity Director, your EOD office is taking a more active role in your life as a student.

Personally, I never knew anything of this office beside the traditional stereotypes. The EOD office is far more inclusive of student than you may think. Here is our traditional role:

The Equal Opportunity and Di-  
versity office

1. Sponsors 1B.1 Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Policy and Procedure Training for all staff, faculty and student employees.

2. Assists faculty, staff and students who believe they have been harassed or treated unfairly.

3. Assists the university community with understanding, and application of federal and state laws and regulations that impose special obligations concerning equal opportunity and affirmative action. The director serves as the university’s affirmative action officer and ombudsperson.

4. Monitors recruitment efforts and the progress of campus units toward achieving affirmative action goals, in collaboration with the Human Resource office and other university divisions.

Enforce Equal opportunity for  
students and employees

Your EOD office has an enduring commitment to enhancing your quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees.

Enforce Nondiscrimination

No person shall be discriminated against or harassed based on race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Key Policies and Procedures

- 1. Affirmative Action Plan
- 2. University Diversity Plan

3. Metropolitan State University Procedure 101and 1010 - Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education

4. 1B.3 - MnSCU Board Sexual Violence Policy

In the future, you will notice we are going to shift from being just investigators and enforcers of the policies. We are going to become educators and mediators. We are willing to listen, learn and mentor any student organization, department and everything in between that is willing to roll up their sleeves and become part of a solution.

Handling complaints is one of our many jobs. What we are going to do is host training seminars and events on EOD. Let’s face it, not everyone goes to the St. Paul Campus, so we are going to multiple campuses to better reach the students and staff members. With that being said, keep an eye out for forthcoming announcements. Please don’t click delete right away; read it a little. Then if you’re not interested, go ahead and delete it.

We roughly have 11,500 students, of that 38 percent are of color, 25 percent need assistance, the average age is 32, and 8 are percent veterans. Those are just numbers, but the people they represent are real. They are your classmates, your teachers and coworkers. We want to celebrate our own personal identity. We all have a variety of faiths, backgrounds, ethnicities and ways of thinking. What we in our office strive for is understanding and acceptance. We as in-

SEE EOD OFFICE PAGE 8



# On Campus

## Student Senate recommends parking fee remain \$12/credit

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At their March 18 meeting, the Metropolitan State Student Senate voted to recommend to Metro's administration that the school maintain its current parking fee structure into the next fiscal year. Senate also recommended that students with disabilities that prevent them from driving be exempted from the fee. Official decisions about student fees are made by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), but the Student Senate and Metro State administration's recommendations are taken into account when the decision is made.

The parking ramp, which was finished in June of 2015, cost \$24 million to build, and was financed with lease revenue bonds. The Saint Paul city government required that the ramp be constructed as a condition of building the new Science Education Center and Student Center. Between yearly debt service of \$1.65 million and operating and maintenance expenses of \$598,000, the parking ramp costs the school more

than \$2.2 million per year.

In order to cover those expenses, Metro State assesses a \$12 per credit parking fee on all students. When this fee was introduced, it caused concern among some online students, many of whom felt it was unfair to be charged a fee to support a parking ramp that they were not using.

As a result, Senate and the administration considered other fee options. School administration presented two scenarios for the next school year: Metro State could keep the same fees as last year, or it could adopt a new structure with parking fees assigned only to on-site credits. Under the proposed plan, the school would add a parking fee of \$17.50 per credit for courses taken at a Metro State building, such as the St. Paul or Midway campuses, and it would not charge a parking fee for online credits.

On March 15, three days before the vote, the Student Senate hosted a forum to inform the student body about the two plans and to solicit student opinions. Four members of the Student Senate — Matt Rubel,

## Haute Dish Live!



KEVIN MILLER

Debbie Dathe, former managing editor of Haute Dish, reads a poem March 26 at the literary and arts magazine's spring reading at Open Book at the Loft in Minneapolis.

Rico Lopez, Sarah Leistico and Brian Wermerskirchen — as well as Metro State's Interim CFO Brian Biser and Associate Vice President for Financial Management Anthony Roan attended to answer questions and participate in the discussion.

At the high point of the forum, there were approximately 12 students in attendance. Both of the proposed plans had some support among

attendees, though the majority seemed to favor keeping the current fee structure in place.

The forum also included a discussion of waivers. Some attendees suggested providing waivers for students who purchased a bus pass. Currently, the only students that can get parking fee waivers are active duty members of the military taking online classes.

## Health service option coming to campus

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Students will have another way to access health care starting Fall Semester 2016.

Federal law requires universities to offer some form of health services to students. In order to comply with the law, Metropolitan State University has chosen Fairview as its health service provider. Fairview's proposal combines in-person consultations with telemedicine, which an advisory committee deemed to be most convenient for students.

"This model made the most sense from a logistical perspective and a cost perspective," said Herbert King, dean of Students at Metro State. The limited infrastructure will help keep costs lower; students will pay a \$2.50 fee per credit.

A health care adviser from Fairview will be based on the St. Paul campus and will serve as a primary point of contact with students. This adviser, called a "Health Care Navigator," will be accessible in person or through the internet, King said.

Students can consult the navigator for information about symptoms such as back pain, flu, eczema, preventive care, medication refills and other primary care types of services, King said.

In a way, the service is a bit like an initial office visit. The navigator will show students how to access referrals and pharmacies that are compatible with a student's current health insurance.

"What we're paying for is basically the copay," King said.

Specific services are still being ne-

gotiated. However, the plan is flexible and subject to change at prescribed times to meet the needs and preferences of Metro State students, King said.

The telemedicine, which the navigator can teach students to use, will allow students to go to a website and get a diagnosis. King said this is important for a school with multiple campuses.

Wellness initiatives are also part of the package, according to King. The health navigator from Fairview will conduct trainings on various topics related to healthy lifestyles and maintaining a work-life balance. "They're going to engage student to determine those topics," King said, noting that the timing is fortuitous with the opening of the fitness center in the new Student Center.

"We're excited about the opportunity," King said.

Creating a full-service clinic on campus like some other universities would not be cost effective or practical for Metro State, which, aside from not even have residence halls, draws students "with mortgages and families who live in 12 different counties," said Tom Cook, special assistant to the president in September.

In addition to primary campuses at Dayton's Bluff and Midway, students take classes online and at 15 partnering two-year colleges throughout the Twin Cities area each semester. Most of that space is leased. "For the majority of our students it wouldn't be convenient," Cook said.

The services will be phased in over the summer and should be up and running by this fall.

## CFO says slowing enrollment, static state funding are challenges for FY17

BUDGET FROM PAGE 1

And at the end of FY16, the school is projected to be down another \$1.1 million.

Biser said that FY17 is also going to be a challenging year as new enrollment is slowing, yet contributions from the state of Minnesota have remained static. "We have to be a little more cognizant of where we're spending money and why," said Biser. However, Financial Management is not projecting any deficit for FY17.

Partly as a way to address these issues, the Financial

Management department has been working on a new budgeting process. This new process will take effect for the FY18 budget, with planning activities slated for as early as July of 2016. According to Biser, in previous years' budgeting, we weren't taking advantage of all the time that we had available.

The new system will add six months into the budget-planning process. This extra time will be used to create several iterations of the school's budget and to solicit feedback on the budget

drafts from the Metro State community, especially at the divisional and departmental level.

The FY17 budget will take effect in July of 2016. At the same time, budgeting for FY18 will begin with a review of strategic goals and metrics.

An initial draft budget for FY18 will be produced in the fall of 2016. The budget will then go through a process of review and revision based on community and departmental feedback.

During the winter break,

Metro State's Executive Strategic Council will revise the budget. Divisions and departments within the school will analyze and respond to their revised financial targets, and the school will hold stakeholder forums to gather more feedback.

A "Near Final" draft of the budget will be reviewed by the Executive Strategic Council and presented to the university president in March of 2017. Once the president approves it, the final budget will be communicated to all stakeholders

and submitted to MnSCU in April. The FY18 budget will become effective on July 1, 2017.

**Note:** This article makes use of the idea of a fiscal year. A fiscal year lasts for the length of a year, but it does not begin on January 1. At Metro State, the fiscal year starts on July 1 and ends on June 31. Fiscal years, or FYs, are named after the year in which they end. So, the fiscal year that ends on June 31 of 2015 would be called "Fiscal Year 2015" or "FY15."



Community

Phoenix Market: Rising from the ashes

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Phoenix Market harkens back to the corner store of old. Sure, it carries the usual assortment of grab-and-go items — chips, canned and frozen meals, sodas and sandwich meats — that can be found at most convenience stores. But customers can also find things like incense, T-shirts, winter gear (in winter) and handbags.

“We bring the stuff in because customers request it,” said manager Tarig Mohamed. Situated on the corner of Third Street and Maria Avenue, the store caters to a wide group of customers, many of whom are regulars from the surrounding neighborhood. Some of those regulars don’t have the means to travel to Target or other places for non-food necessities, said Mohamed, who has worked at the store since 1997.

Aside from Phoenix Market, the closest convenience store to the neighborhood is the Holiday station by the Downtowner car wash on Seventh Street.

The Phoenix Market has been catering to the neigh-



The Phoenix Market caters to the needs of the community when possible by trying to respond to requests. This includes interesting candy to please children, handbags and seasonal clothing, and incense.



borhood’s needs since it opened in September of 1994, but store owner Ali Artol, a Sudanese entrepreneur, has been a mainstay in the area even longer.

Artol ran a similar corner market for several years until 1993, when a leak in a gas main resulted in a massive explosion that destroyed the block. Artol’s grocery store, a bookstore and four apartment buildings were reduced to rubble in the inferno that took 70 firefighters to contain.

Two people died and seven people, including Artol, were injured. According to

Mohamed, Artol was badly burned. It took a year and 45 surgeries for him to recover.

After the accident, Artol opened a new grocery store because he wanted to continue serving his neighbors. A woman in the neighborhood suggested that Artol call his new store the Phoenix Market, a reference to the nearly immortal bird in Greek mythology that obtains new life by rising from its own ashes.

The personal connection Artol and Mohamed have with their customers is evident. Several custom-

ers made a point of seeking Mohamed out to needle him or give a quick update of their personal lives during a midafternoon mini-rush. And Mohamed often stops what he’s doing to joke with customers.

Even though Phoenix Market is only three blocks from Metropolitan State University (337 steps to be exact), the store has flown under most students’ radar.

That changed in 2009, when the store started serving hot foods. Mohamed said that a number of students come there for lunch. The most popular item is the

gyro, but the market also offers Philly cheese steak, fries, fried chicken and seafood such as catfish, tilapia and shrimp.

Besides Artol and Mohamed, two employees work at the Phoenix, which adds to the cozy, familiar atmosphere and sense of community at the store.

“It’s like my second home,” Mohamed said. “Most of the customers are like my friends now.”

Metro State expansion continued during negotiation process

PINK HOUSE FROM PAGE 1

again sold to one of the partnership’s members for \$525,000; this is a seemingly improbable number, given that the house’s market value was well below this figure.

Prior to this, in 2013, Metro State offered to buy the lot for a purchase price of \$275,000. The owners accepted, planning to move the house to a new location. But Metro State had to withdraw this offer due to the bylaws of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU). The two properties next door had sold for much less, and MnSCU limits how much can be offered above a property’s value.

This decision is ultimately made at the state level, where both the Minnesota Senate and House have to sign off and approve the purchase offer. When it reached the Legislature, “the House rejected the offer and the Senate was quiet,” said Hambrock. Moreover, he added, “In 2014, the Legislature placed a specific cap on the allowable dollar amount which can be of-



The saga ended on an overcast day in late February, with a large yellow excavator culminating the demise of the small, peculiar pink house.

fered, that being no more than 10 percent above the property’s appraised value.” This limitation tied Metro State’s hands even more when it came to price negotiations, eventually leading to a monetary impasse between the school and the owners of 393 Bates.

During this time, Metro State proceeded with its expansion while also accommodating for its singular pink neighbor, which was surrounded by graded dirt

and construction equipment.

In an effort to stabilize the ground of 393 Bates, a retaining wall was built from steel I-beams and 4 inch by 8 inch timbers that were driven into the earth. This maintained the integrity of the land around the house as the dirt next door was dug out for the parking ramp. A driveway leading to the back of the pink house also limited the length of the surface lot, which was initially designed to extend

along Sixth Street all the way from Maria Avenue to Bates Avenue.

In the midst of this, MnSCU directed Metro State to continue pursuing direct negotiations. Hambrock said that after exhausting this option, “We were given approval by MnSCU’s board of trustees to seek eminent domain, which we did with the Ramsey County District Court in late 2014. After a judge’s OK, we gained approval in October of 2015,

and three court-appointed commissioners were chosen to find a fair price to compensate the owners, which either party can appeal.”

Hambrock added, “We gave them until the end of November to move the house. When they failed to do so, we had no other option but to take it down.” And so the saga ended on an overcast day in late February, with a large yellow excavator culminating the demise of the small, peculiar pink house.

With all properties now acquired and prepped for development, future plans are for some leveling off of the uphill slope in order to extend the surface lot, as initially intended. This will eventually replace the existing surface lot on the corner of Maria Avenue and Sixth Street, which will become a nursing and Allied Health building, with classrooms and labs. In turn, the remaining surface lot, which is yet to be constructed on the corner of Bates and Sixth Street, will later be converted to multi-level parking, an attached addition to the existing ramp.

Photo courtesy of Dan Hambrock.



## Academics

# Metro State's first university-wide research colloquium

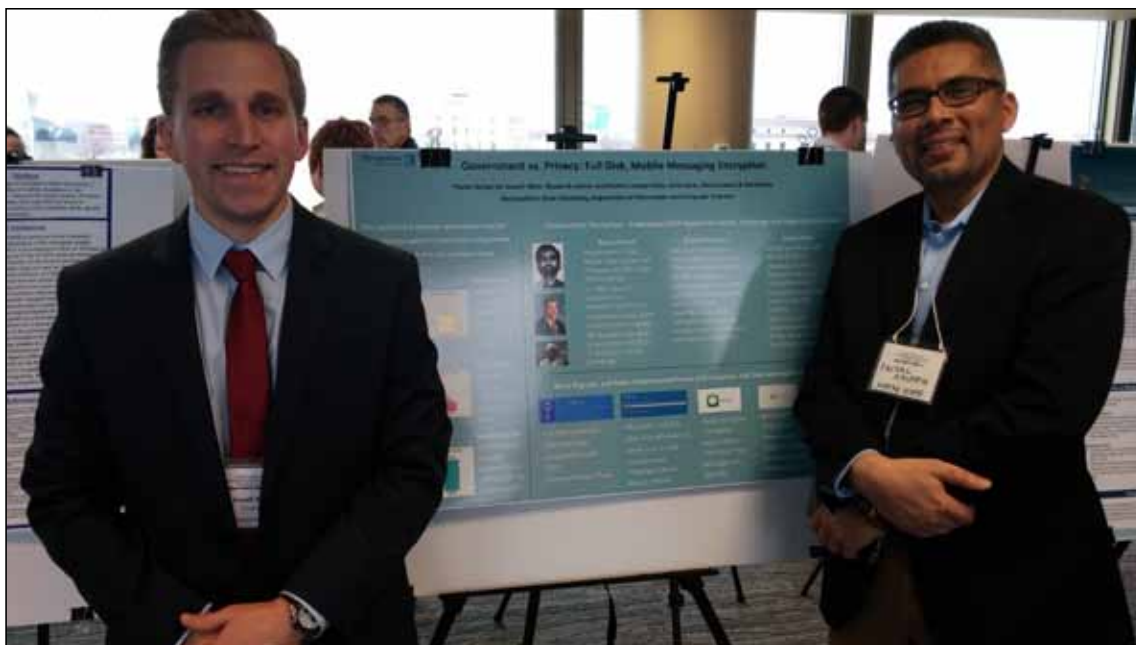
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Are you tired of listening to your younger siblings one-up you at the dinner table with their inconsequential academic accomplishments? Or does your resume need a little padding? If so, consider proposing your papers, posters or other creative projects for presentation at Metropolitan State University's first Student Research Colloquium.

Dr. Alex Layne, assistant professor of technical communication and professional writing at Metro State, is organizing the event. I caught up with her to discuss the details of the colloquium.

### What made you want to organize this colloquium?

When I was an undergrad, one of my instructors nominated me for a paper I was writing to present at our student research colloquium. I was terrified. The colloquium was university wide and set up like an academic conference, which I had never been to. At the same time, I never felt like my work was any good until I was nominated, so I was very flattered. I presented the paper, and even my family came to watch. They never really understood what I did as an English major, so it was a



Computer science student Joseph Klein (left) and faculty mentor Faisal Kaleem in front of Klein's research about mobile encryption issues at a different research event on March 17.

cool thing to invite them to. This is why I wanted to start a SRC here at Metro: to give students a chance to feel proud of their work, to show it off to friends, family, other students, the community, to everyone.

### Has there been a colloquium like this at Metro State in the past?

While I don't believe there has been a university-wide event, several departments hold departmental events that are very popular. Psychology, for one, holds several incredible events for their students that are set up like academic conferences and poster sessions. They

have been instrumental in getting this university-wide event off the ground.

### Why should students get involved and present?

There are many reasons students should present. First, every student I've had in my classes for the last two years has something to add to our community, whether it be research, a creative voice, a design ability, whatever. I've taught at several different places, and the sheer skill and ability Metro students has is second to none. Students here have things to say, brilliant things, and this is a venue for it. Second, presenting

your ideas and work outside of the classroom is a crucial skill. When your only audience is your instructor, work can stop feeling real. But as students go find jobs and engage in scholarship, the audience is much wider. This is a nice first step in that process. Third, it can be a fantastic resume builder. Many fields reward engagement on this level, so being able to say you have presented at a real colloquium can show your ability to be a leader, whatever your field may be. Finally, there will be food and prizes that may take the form of goods and/or gift cards.

### What sort of projects do you expect to see?

I know my MDST 381: The Culture of Video Game students will be presenting posters there. Their work deals with the impact of video games on our culture and society. One is even going to be demo-ing a video game he has been working on as part of a class project. I anticipate seeing a lot of posters, as the Psychology Lab has generously offered to print posters for free. I hope to see some creative work, perhaps music, videos, or paintings. I also hope that I see a lot of projects that are engaged in the community and in activism in some way.

### Do you plan to make this a regular annual event?

As long as I'm still breathing I will be pushing for this to be a yearly event. Everyone, including top administrators, has been overwhelmingly supportive of the idea, so I don't imagine this will disappear any time soon — fingers crossed, knock on wood.

The Student Research Colloquium will take place 6 p.m., April 25, 2016, Metro State. Attendance is open and free for everyone. Proposals must be submitted by April 11, at [bit.ly/1TOKC2T](http://bit.ly/1TOKC2T).

## Focus on Faculty

# In Memoriam: Donna Blacker

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**Note:** Donna Blacker, a longtime adviser at Metropolitan State University who also taught English composition, died Feb. 15. She touched the lives of many in her 35 years here. Suzanne Nielsen, tutor coordinator in the Center for Academic Excellence, was a longtime friend and colleague. She shared these words at the funeral in Chicago.

Donna and I met more than two decades ago through Hamline University's graduate program in liberal studies. As a poet and fiction writer, I was drawn to her vast reading history, far-reaching intelligence and her ability to compose lyrical memoir. We would talk endlessly about writing, although we quickly realized that we had much more in common than that of being writers. Some of those colloquies were focused on academia; others were focused on more personal issues such as our connection to life and the vice of depression.

Over the years Donna and I supported one another through good and not so good relationships, episodes of mania and depression and

unending revisions of life in general, or to put it simply: the good the bad and the ugly. In 1997, I started working as a writing tutor at Metropolitan State University, where Donna worked for over 30 years as adviser extraordinaire. We formed a writer's group with other Metro State friends and writers and met for several years once a month often at 59 Hilltop enjoying crab salad with black olives provided by Mom.

Donna would often say to me, "I love how clearly I know your characters through what they say." Often times that's the best part about inventing characters; you can have them say things you have always wanted to say but haven't. I relished Donna's comments because it sent me back to writing and talking to my characters to reach their level of honesty.

When Donna was stricken with kidney failure and found herself unable to work, the university suffered a huge loss. Students and staff along with faculty looked to Donna for answers to complex questions, and some of those questions had life-long consequences that Donna thought deeply about. Donna knew everyone throughout the university

and everyone knew Donna not just by name, but by a well-earned reputation. Donna found the good in everyone. I bent her ear several times

Donna taught me patience and the warmth of a smile. I will miss her gentle laughter and her endless ability to debate almost anything.

over the phone complaining about my newest and most frightful enemy and by the time we were done talking I was filled with compassion and a sense of feeling lucky that enemy was really my friend. Donna made me a better person in many ways.

During Donna's last week of life, she kept repeating how tired she was, but in-between being tired she would reach out to comfort her mother or her sister. "Don't cry," she'd say and her penetrating stare followed you home. Because her body was giving out, Donna con-

served what energy she had to let her family know just how important they were and always had been to her. Toward the end of her life, she knew she was dying and she mentioned how scared she was. I kept telling her it was a scary transition because we don't really know what's there on the other side, if anything. Donna and I talked at great lengths in her last two weeks about the possibility of life beyond this realm. We agreed that our energy most likely resonated in plants and the earth's organic substances and so one could say that there is life beyond.

I will miss Donna forever. I will miss our hearty conversations. Donna taught me patience and understanding and the warmth of a smile. I will miss her deep dark eyes reading my unspoken thoughts. I will miss her gentle laughter and her endless ability to debate anything. Most of all, I will miss knowing that Donna is thinking of me as I always knew I was important to her. I never doubted her loyalty to me as a friend and a confidant. Every time my characters speak, I know on some level Donna is listening and prodding them on. I love you Donna.



# Tech Check

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## Smartphone security: Easier than your computer

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Got a new phone lately? I did. It's nice to set things up and play with the new features. Perhaps you're waiting to upgrade and you've still got an older phone.

Old or new, we tend to focus on the physical. You don't want a cracked screen or a broken button, so you get a rubber bumper case and a plastic screen protector to save it from falls. Maybe you even buy an insurance policy. But what are you doing to protect the information stored on your phone?

In this column, we've covered many ways to improve your personal security, from using password management to securing your home Wi-Fi. Yet, every day I see people being careless with phones packed full of sensitive data such as email and Facebook accounts. These are all an identity thief

needs to make a copy of your life.

You can stop them. At the very least, lock your screen; use a PIN, pattern, password, whatever, just turn it on. Otherwise, you're leaving your whole life wide open.

**Theft is not the problem**

Smartphone thefts are dropping. Pickpockets just want to flip them for a quick buck, which is hard thanks to built-in "kill switches" that let you wipe your phone from your computer and make it about as useful as a brick. Apple introduced this with iOS 7 and turned it on by default in 8, while Google brought it to Android 5 (Lollipop) and beyond. When you turn this on, the phone cannot be "factory reset" by a thief to make it like new and easy to sell again.

Obviously, phones still get stolen — the anti-theft warning signs in Metro's own library are not a joke.

Kill switches reduce theft because most don't know how to bypass them, so few are willing to take the risk and end up with a device they can't sell. More ambitious thieves will strip a

**Each new smart-phone operating system is more secure than the last.**

phone for parts to sell them as "repair kits," but this is difficult because the insides are so delicate, and few stores offer repairs even if you have the right pieces.

You have more options than ever for tracking a stolen phone! They can send GPS location, snap pictures, or just ring loudly and show a message on the screen. Users of iPhone should open iCloud settings and make sure Find My iPhone

is turned on and set up. Android users can do the same using Device Manager, and Microsoft offers a Find My Phone system for Windows Phones. The steps vary, but none are complicated, and you'll be glad you took the time. If your phone is an older model that doesn't support any of these options, you might look into third-party apps like Prey Anti-Theft.

**Updates are important**

Each new smartphone operating system (OS) version is more secure than the last, but many people never upgrade. Almost 20 percent of iPhone users have not updated to iOS 9 yet, and very few Android users are on version 6 (Marshmallow) today. You can check for updates by looking in your settings app.

Sometimes you can't update. Most iPhones get left behind after a couple generations, when the update

becomes too big for their old hardware to handle. Android users are at the mercy of both manufacturers (like Samsung) and carriers (like AT&T); if they don't push an update, your phone stays behind. There are ways around this, but most are too involved for the average person, and may introduce more vulnerabilities if done incorrectly — don't attempt to "jailbreak" your phone on a whim. It's not easy.

Even if you can't update the OS, update your apps. Many people turn off automatic updates to save data, but you can open your app store settings and tell it "update only on Wi-Fi" to prevent this.

**Viruses? Unlikely**

Sometimes malicious apps slip into the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. Never download an app without checking feedback. Scroll through user

SEE TECH CHECK ON PAGE 8

# Dr. Kev's Love Advice

KEVIN MILLER  
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Dear Dr. Kev,

A very good friend of mine recently set me up with her friend (I'll call her Bre) a smart, funny, beautiful young woman. However, I was hesitant to start dating her as I got out of a serious relationship a couple of months ago and right now I'm just looking to party and have fun for a while. My friend said I should talk to Bre anyways and that we could just start as friends. Well that went out the window after we started flirting and have now gone on a number of dates. So I'm asking for your help for a number of reasons. 1. I do like this girl, but I think she wants something more serious than I do. 2. I'm kind of in "slut mode" right now and want to date lots of people but don't want Bre's feelings to get hurt. 3. I don't think she's the right body type for me. She's very skinny and I go for thick women... like I have more

booty than this chick, and that is a problem. What's a confused, superficial guy to do?

Sincerely, I'maJerk

Dear I'maJerk,

You sound like the type of guy who's upset that Metro State doesn't have a frat house where you could crush Busch Light with your bros as though it were real beer. The type of dude who mixes his protein shakes with skim milk because its leg day and you're trying to watch your fat intake. When Spike TV (or whoever) quit airing "The Man Show," it felt like you lost a both relative and an internal organ.

Clearly there are other aspects of your life that need addressing. Real beer is brewed by hipsters with neck tattoos and comes in a growler, not a 30 pack suitcase. Added bonus: you can tell if it's cold by touching it-

no visual cues needed. And The Man Show was stupid. Most Xtreme Challenge was the only thing worth watching on Spike.

Now that we've got that out of the way, you're situation doesn't look awfully complicated. If you don't want something serious, tell Bre. And stop it with the slut shaming business.

**Serious?**

Have you tried asking Bre what she is looking for in your relationship? If she's talking promise rings, a white picket fence, two and a half kids, a dog, and a weird custody battle after your midlife crisis when you buy a sports car to compensate for your Trump-esque manhood, I would end the relationship now.

That said, maybe she's just looking for a little short term fun. In that case, make it clear you're in the same boat.

It sounds like you aren't ready for another relation-

ship right now. Consider taking some time to get over your last serious relationship before tossing your hat in the dating ring.

I'm not sure why you say you're in "slut mode," as though there is something wrong with having sex. It's, like, a fourth of what we are programed to do as humans. Slut shaming is a bad call, even if it's directed at yourself. Stop it.

**Body Issues**

You describe Bre as smart, funny and beautiful. You're gonna cut homegirl out over the booty? That ain't a good look bro. Real recognize real, and you're looking pretty unfamiliar right now.

But, if you're not physically attracted to her, you might as push the big red button on the whole business. Even if the two of you don't want anything too serious, relationships without mutual attraction have one foot in the grave and the other on a ba-

nana peel.

You say you don't want to hurt Bre's feelings. A booty-related breakup is absolutely going to hurt her feelings.

If and when you end things, let her down easy. Don't cite your downstairs disappointment as the main reason for the split.

In short, only YOU can prevent booty-related breakups.

Until next time, I remain:  
Your Friend,  
Dr. Kev

Need love advice? Ask Dr.

Kev! He has an advanced degree in love-ology. Email him at TheMetropolitan@metrostate.edu.

## Editor's Quote of the Month

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"I don't believe in being serious about anything. I think life is too serious to be taken seriously."

— Ray Bradbury

# Opinion

## We really need to talk about our communication

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As constituents of Metro State, we are incredibly lucky to have an expedient, versatile and, above all else, relevant means of mass communication between the administration, the various departments and students. That’s why OrgSync is such an effective tool and our email system is a defining model in Minnesota academia.

*\*Note: The above statement is not true.*

It’s honestly a little too easy to make fun of the mass communication models Metro State has adopted

in recent years. The university isn’t like other schools in the Twin Cities; we have no centralized campus or on-site residency. There isn’t even necessarily an accessible mode of communication throughout the University. For some, this issue is merely annoying. For others, it’s a deal breaker. “I’ll get emails from the university on a weekly basis,” said Allison Chalmers, a student from Brooklyn Park. “But, if I don’t check it on a daily basis, I’ll miss day-of news.”

“A lot of times, the school will send me information that just doesn’t pertain to me,” said Jonathan Hues, a student from St. Paul. Talk to any student, and they prob-

ably share the sentiment.

The University’s success is ultimately a student-driven endeavor. It is the students that create change on campus, and, in this case, the students can and should strive to be heard on what information is important to them.

Amidst jokes of a stagnant OrgSync, and complaints of an email system that is too often leaned upon, is an undoubted truth: this college is most effective when making job and internship opportunities available. The often callous banter overlooks that education philosophy.

After all, Fred Carpenter, head of the Technical Com-

munication and Professional Writing program, sends a more-than-healthy number of emails every week. Carpenter typically sends internship opportunities to those who are a part of her college. This is just one example of a necessary service.

But it’s understandable why students often feel frustrated or annoyed at Metro State’s communication system. OrgSync is a closed environment, many students don’t know what it is until months after enrollment. The email system, while it is often the source of valuable information, can seem ham-handed in its approach. The means of communication

need to be opened up for improvement.

This is a challenge to the departments, administration and students of Metro State to begin a conversation about finding a more effective means of communication. While having this conversation, we should keep in mind the unique culture Metro State possesses and the unique issues with which the school is presented. One of the many things Kevin Franken’s recent “History of Metro” series in The Metropolitan has shown is that Metro State has an unconventional and indomitable spirit of determination to progress, grow and improve.

# Satire

## Five-hour Student Senate debate over food not self-interested, asinine

KEVIN MILLER  
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According to sources, Student Senate had its constituents in mind when it spent five hours debating what sort of food they ought to order for their meetings, and

which caterers are worth Metro’s money. “It was a totally necessary conversation, and couldn’t have been handled in a committee or at any other time,” said a source close to the Senate. “It was wildly appropriate to devote five hours to the ever-pressing issue of shov-

eling grub into our empty stomachs.”

Moreover, it was not the smallest bit asinine that this governing body (which approved the cutting of student organization budgets in half and has stressed the need for student organiza-

tions to cut back on food at their meetings and events) should go to such lengths to ensure the proper pizza toppings are selected for future meetings. Nope. Not even the smallest bit ridiculous.

A motion to purchase feed bags for all Metro State

student organizations narrowly passed, after Senate members cited the potential savings on paper plates.

There was not a reporter retching in the gallery during the entire discussion, according to sources.

# Danyale’s Corner

## Underutilized but amazing student services

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Earlier this year, I wrote about an expensive but underutilized resource called OrgSync that few students take advantage of. Writing that article got me thinking, “What other great resources does the school provide that we students may not know about?” After a little bit of research and a short talk with CWA professor Fred Carpenter, I compiled the following list of underutilized and underpublicized but nonetheless amazing student resources.

Also, they’re all FREE!

### Microsoft Office 365

That’s right! As a Metro State student, you are entitled to free Microsoft Office software on your Mac or PC. I’m sure I speak for all of us when I say that this is a nearly invaluable

resource for students. The suite of programs includes the ever-popular Word, Excel and PowerPoint, which would typically run you \$100 or more. And it’s super easy to download. Just use the web address below and select the device you want to download the software to. You will then see download instructions that include signing into Microsoft with your StarID credentials.

[https://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/resources/depts\\_services/it/new/365.html](https://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/resources/depts_services/it/new/365.html)

Oh! It gets better. You can download the software on up to five computers, five tablets and five smartphones. It doesn’t get much better than that, am I right?

### Lynda.com

Chances are that at some point during your time as a Metro State student, you’ve heard one or more of

your professors mention Lynda, the online tool that provides thousands of tutorials on a very wide range of topics. Unfortunately, it’s very likely that you’ve never actually used the resource. Well, you didn’t hear it from me, but whether you need help with a class or are just blowing off schoolwork with a new hobby, Lynda likely has a tutorial for you.

Want to learn the fundamentals of video game design? How about technical writing? Small business finance? No matter what it is, Lynda.com probably has something to help expand your skill set. Just look up “Lynda” using the search tool on the university website and follow the prompts to create your free account. Then you can sit back and let the learning happen.

### Food For Thought Pantry

Food for Thought is the food shelf sponsored by Metro State’s Student

Parent Center in partnership with local nonprofit Good in the Hood. This is the organization’s second year at Metro State. It provides donated nonperishable food items to students free of charge Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. It’s also important to note that poor nutrition has been linked to poor academic achievement, so whether you need groceries in your fridge or something to fill your belly between classes, Food For Thought is a great resource to take advantage of.

That’s all for this month, but look out for future updates on free and low-cost student resources in future installments of my column. Your education isn’t cheap, so it’s important to take advantage of every resource that your tuition affords you. Besides, you work hard, and you deserve the perks.



# Three fundamental principles of growth and greatness

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Many people spend their time thinking about their current situation without trying to change it. They find a comfortable space to park in their lives. They want to turn things around, but they are stuck. They know what they want in their lives, but do not know how to go about achieving their dream. Below are three steps I have used to change my life for the better.

**The first step: Go above and beyond your thoughts**

Our thinking often focuses on our own experiences. Some experiences do not help you because they only take you back to your past. Therefore, it can be difficult to think outside of these limited memories. That is why imagination is so powerful. You have to visualize yourself achieving whatever you want to accomplish. And you must have a mental picture in your head of how your life

will look after you achieve your aspiration.

In business, this is called “Top of Mind.” This is where an individual or business asks the question, “Who do I want to be seen as? What do I want people to think of when they think of me or my product?” Imagination is often a catalyst for change. When you visualize yourself being what you want to be or achieving that which you want to achieve, whatever you envision should inspire you.

**Second step: Embrace the change**

The second step is to embrace the change. Now that you have a mental picture of yourself achieving that goal, you have to remember that every individual is given the gift of imagination, but not all individuals are capable of bringing what they envision to reality. To embrace the change is to take that which you envision, the life you imagine having, the person you visualize yourself be-

coming, and bring it to your life. In other words, raise your standards and start living it. Fulton Sheen once said, “If you do not live what you believe, you will end up believing what you live.”

If you want to change your life for the better, you must be determined to do anything in your power to make it happen. That does not mean you are not going to have struggles and doubts. In fact, some people are going to discourage you, because they might not like the changes you are going to be making. However, if you are tenaciously trying to become the best version of yourself, doors begin to open and opportunities start flowing.

Nothing in life should hurt you as much as it should motivate you to make the rest of your life the best of your life. Try to persist and persevere because you are passionate about your life and the change you wish to make. At this stage, it is no longer about hype, it’s about heart. How bad you want it?

You must have motive and passion that are strong enough to make you say, “I don’t care how hard this is going to be. I will get through this!” Believe me, this is the stage where most of us fail, give in or quit. This is the area in your life where if you wake up without enough passion, you create it!

**Third step: Keep the discipline**

The last step, which is the most difficult of all, is to keep the discipline. It is one thing to get inspired and be at your best for one month, but it is another to be at your best for the rest of the year. It is one thing to make goals, but it is another to follow them.

Everything is not going to go perfectly. We all make mistakes, and I believe mistakes are lessons we should

learn from and then choose to move on.

How do you keep the discipline? You probably have heard the old saying “You cannot eat an elephant in one bite.” To keep the discipline, you make small goals to accomplish each and every day. Your goals should keep you motivated and hungry. They should take you closer to your milestone.

Today, I still use the three steps. These steps are my shield, and I use them to get the results I want in my life. They took me from the despair I encountered during the years of poverty and displacement, to the hope I was able to imagine and envision. I am reminded of the African proverb, “If there is no enemy within, the enemy outside can do us no harm.”

## Smartphone features can run 24/7 but should be turned off when out

TECH CHECK FROM PAGE 6

reviews, and sort them by “Most Recent” for real people. Malicious app developers might put a bunch of fake 5-star reviews up when they launch.

As long as you’re on a newer version of iOS or Android, you should get prompted for permission when an app asks for something, like a pop-up for using your contacts. This can be a red flag; a simple flashlight app shouldn’t need to see your contacts! On an older phone without these warnings, you can review permissions from the app’s page in the store.

Some phone features shouldn’t run 24/7. Maybe

you use a Bluetooth speaker at home, but you should turn that off on the go. Near Field Communication (NFC) is handy for tap-to-pay apps, but there are ways to exploit this from a range up to several feet, so toggle that off too. Even Wi-Fi should be toggled on an off. I keep mine off when not at home, only turning it on to save data on networks I trust, like a local coffee shop. Letting it automatically connect to random networks is risky.

Finally, you might be wondering about antivirus. Apple forbids antivirus apps, so iPhone users can skip this. Android users have options, but you might as well avoid them. An antivirus app can’t control

your whole device to keep it safe like it could on a PC. Most are just checking your phone for other apps that have been reported to be unsafe. This is unnecessary as long as you use common sense when installing them in the first place. Otherwise, antivirus apps are probably just draining your battery with background scans.

In the end, smartphones are both easier and harder to secure than a computer. They’re more locked-down to start, but their portability makes them risky. Keep a handle on your personal data by following these guidelines, and you’ll be a step ahead.

EOD OFFICE FROM PAGE 2

dividuals are unique. Acceptance does not happen by filling out forms, numbers, going to rallies and seminars, or even kind gestures. How we do this is by embracing each other as equals. While we accept ourselves and others for what we are. Human. That simple philosophy has always made Metro State so great, our ability to

look past everything and accept people for who they are.

This is coming from a man that has literally fought wars and lost friends against people with a different faith, background, ethnicity and way of thinking. However, I still able to look past all the wrong the few people did and look at people for who they are. Remember we all are here to learn and make our communities better for

everyone. Students, staff and faculty alike.

Our regular office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We are located on the St. Paul Campus in Founders Hall, Room 315. ALL are welcome and we have an open door policy.

## The Metropolitan is hiring

The Metropolitan is looking for new staff members and writers.

The following positions may be open in May 2016: editor, associate editor, copy editor, layout editor, online adminsitator. These are paid positions.

The Metropolitan pays non-staff member contributors \$45 per article.

Please contact editor Kevin Miller at lg0074tj@metrostate.edu if you are interested.