Nearly 65 percent of the 11,375 people enrolled in Metropolitan State University are students of color, low-income (Pell-eligible) students, and/or first-generation students, with an average age of 31-years-old. The university is ranked in the top six percent nationally in CollegeNET’s Social Mobility Index, rating how effectively it educates students coming from lower income strata, enabling them to enter higher strata after graduation. Those numbers help to shape and inform the significant cumulative impact Metropolitan State is making in and beyond its urban footprint.

In all of the academic programs at Metropolitan State, students experience a high-quality, dynamic, and encouraging learning environment. Student experiences are shaped by a 17:1 student to faculty ratio, individualized academic supports, career planning, learning activities that engage students in and out of the classroom, and average course size of 25. At its four main sites and other teaching locations, Metropolitan State offers 63 majors, 16 master’s degrees, and 2 doctoral degrees, all of which help convey its impact. A deeper dive reveals a gem in the Metropolitan State chest of academic treasures. Its original degree program, and the one students still choose most frequently, is the bachelor of arts in individualized studies. The degree reflects the university’s individual approach to education and success. Metropolitan State allows students to design degrees, with faculty direction, to create the emphases they wish to master, while optimizing the use of the credits they have transferred to the university. And two individually-designed master’s degrees are on the way.

Students just out of high school, veterans and active-duty military, new Americans, and mid-career students wishing to elevate their current careers or pursue and create unique niches for which conventional university programs do not exist, all find a place at Metropolitan State. This flexible, whole-person approach to learning ensures flourishing communities and helps under-resourced students succeed beyond college, supporting Minnesota’s current and future economy.

Contributing to the Minnesota Economy

- Metropolitan State has a combined economic contribution of $393.9 million. This includes a direct impact of $201.2 million and an indirect/induced impact of $192.7 million.
- Operational and capital spending in the State of Minnesota generates $173.4 million of the total impact and $220.5 million from student and visitor spending.

Supporting and Sustaining Jobs in the State

- Metropolitan State directly employs 1,218 people.
- Overall, Metropolitan State supports more than 3,600 Minnesota jobs (2,316 direct and 1,284 indirect/induced).
Students and Alumni in the State Generate Additional Impact

In academic year 2017–2018, Metropolitan State awarded a total of 2,319 certificates and degrees (16 undergraduate certificates, 2,039 bachelor degrees, 15 graduate certificates, 182 master’s degrees, and 12 doctoral degrees). Based upon the assumption that college graduates will earn additional income over those with high school degrees, the 33,035 Metropolitan State alumni living and working in Minnesota will have contributed $23.0 billion during the span of their careers.

Reflecting the Metropolitan State civic-minded approach to equality, social mobility, and service, its alumni are giving back. Many have earned senior leadership positions or launched their own innovative nonprofits serving minority and low-income people. Still others pursue careers in the public sector, including 19 alumni who have been elected to the state legislature, others who sit on county boards, and still others who have served as, for example, Minnesota’s Commissioner of Public Safety, as chief of the National Guard Bureau and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as police chiefs or sheriffs, or as a long-term Secretary of the Minnesota Senate.

Making a Difference in the Community and State

Metropolitan State was founded in the 1970s to bring higher education to people, including working adults, who were not being reached by traditional institutions. It has held true to its calling and is making an impact in the Minnesota economy through its outside-the-box approach to programming and partnering in support of the future workforce.

In response to a workforce shortage in the domestic cybersecurity field, Metropolitan State sparked the launch of an undergraduate minor in cybersecurity and the development of a future bachelor’s degree major and a master’s degree. Plans are under way for construction of a state-of-the-art, 24/7 Secure Operations Center cyber facility that will provide a supervised, live practice setting for advanced students and cybersecurity professionals. Metropolitan State is extending its impact by collaboratively developing curriculum and working with community colleges throughout the state to meet market demands, while preparing new workers at a critical time.

Annually, an estimated $3.3 million in charitable donations and volunteer services are generated by Metropolitan State faculty, staff, and students.

• $797,964 donated to local charitable organizations by Metropolitan State staff, faculty, and students.

• $2.5 million of volunteer time by Metropolitan State faculty, staff, and students.

“Considering the relative number of students we serve from low-income communities historically under-represented in or not well served by higher education, our success in moving under-resourced students into sustainable middle-class lives has a significant cumulative impact on the state’s economy and civic vibrancy.”

- Virginia Arthur, President
Metropolitan State University

A member of Minnesota State