

METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE *of* DENVER
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Special Board Meeting

March 9, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
St. Cajetan's

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ACTION ITEM

- **Update and discussion relating to the Strategic Name Change**
 - **PPT Presentation by Stacy Lewis and Chuck Gross**
 - **Board discussion**

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA ITEM: Overview of Status of Strategic Name Initiative

BACKGROUND:

The following is a brief recap of recent insights and data gathered related to the Metropolitan State College of Denver Strategic Name Initiative, which began in February 2010 with a Board resolution to study Metro State's name. This report on recent findings was prepared by Sector Brands, Stacy Lewis and Chuck Gross, Partners.

METHODOLOGY

A variety of forums and settings were used to gain insights from key audiences for the institution over the past year. A combination of Town Hall meetings, stakeholder presentations, focus groups, one-on-one meetings and electronic surveys were used to conduct outreach to alumni, faculty, staff, administration, current students, donors, business leaders, the Hispanic community, the African-American community and the community at large. More than 300 people participated in group meetings or one-on-one sessions. In an e-survey launched during the month of February 2011, more than 8800 people voted in either the English or Spanish-language version of the e-survey.

ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

1. There is strong support for a name change

More than 80% of people surveyed voted to change the name from Metropolitan State College of Denver. In the electronic survey, the current name accounted for only 17.7% of votes, finishing in a virtual tie for last place.

2. Two names—Denver State University and Metropolitan State University—emerged as the clear front runners among the four names submitted for a vote.

Denver State University received the most votes as the top choice in both the English and Spanish language versions of the electronic survey. It received 36.1% of the vote for top choice in the English survey (8777 respondents), followed by **Metropolitan State University of Denver** with 32% of the vote. The University of Central Colorado name elicited only 16.7% of the vote. In the Spanish language version (74 respondents), Denver State garnered 43.3% of first place votes, and Metropolitan State University of Denver received 27.9% of the vote.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Denver State University emerged as the top choice among:

Administration	41.6%
Current students	40.5%
Donors	36.1%
Community members	34.1%

Its strengths were that it was seen as reflecting a higher quality institution, that it was shorter and easier to say, that it highlighted the word Denver with appealing acronyms of Denver State and DSU and that the name eliminated confusion with community college. Concerns about the name were that it sounds illogical because Denver is not a state, it lacks any legacy reference to the current name and it may sound too similar to DU and CSU.

Metropolitan¹ State University of Denver was the #1 choice among:

Classified staff	38.8%
Faculty	38.6%
Alumni	36.7%

Its strengths were that it retained the history and tradition of Metro State, that it was a natural progression from the current name and that it retained its distinctiveness from other colleges. Concerns about the name were that it would be even longer than the current name, that it did not highlight Denver enough, that it would still be called Metro or Metro State, and that it may not fully remove stigmas associated with the current name.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Qualitative Data Insights Are Important**
In smaller meetings and one-on-one interviews (roughly 100 people total) where information was presented and there was more time for discussion, Denver State University was a more prominent first choice. In these settings, it received 78.5% of the votes as the number one choice, compared to 15.4% for Metropolitan State University of Denver.
- **Key Words and Additional Name Options**
A strong majority felt that the institution would be well served by adding the word **University** to its name. This word would better reflect what the institution has become, add prestige and eliminate confusion with community college.
A significant minority of people felt strongly about retaining the word **Metropolitan** in the name. This group felt the Metropolitan word was instrumental in retaining the College's heritage, its distinctiveness from other institutions and its core identity.

Some respondents felt there were not enough name options and suggested names that better combined Denver and Metropolitan in a shorter name: *Denver Metro State University, Denver Metropolitan University, Metropolitan University of Denver and University of Metropolitan Denver.*

- **Further Considerations Regarding the Top Two Potential Names**
Changing the institution's name to Denver State University represents a more dramatic change for the College. The DSU name would cause more initial confusion about the name and more emotional angst from key constituents such as alumni and classified staff. It would require a more comprehensive communications effort and more time and resources to implement it.

Choosing the Metropolitan State University of Denver name would be much less disruptive and would be seen by many as a natural progression of the institution. However, because it represents only a slight name modification, it may not be a strong enough departure from the current name to address some of the existing name challenges including length of name, memorability and geographic location.

RECOMMENDATION:

¹ There are 10 institutions nationally that have Metropolitan and College in their name, and 1 institution called Metropolitan State University in Minnesota.