

# College of Liberal Arts Newsletter, February 2025

Student Spotlight:

## Don't Discount My Life



**Katrina Barnett**, a senior Studio Arts major at Metropolitan State from Plymouth, Minnesota, worked with her daughter, Catrielle Barnett, on a grant project for the Association for Non-smokers

Minnesota (ANSR). The grant is a multi-media project titled *Don't Discount My Life*. ANSR will use the artwork at in person events to help promote awareness of the harmful ways big tobacco companies target individuals with mailer coupons.

The project encapsulates a coat, poster, and film. The garment is compiled with over a thousand big tobacco coupons, reimagining the ubiquitous promotional tactics employed by tobacco companies. *The Don't Discount My Life* coat was designed to create an ominous presence that morphs the wearer by concealing their face, and the tobacco coupons appear to overtake the person.

Katrina took printmaking classes at Metro under Professor Amy Sands, and she applied the skills she learned in Amy's class to a poster for the grant project. The poster's use of transparency, mono printing, and a collage of tobacco-related flyers builds a complex backdrop, symbolizing the layers of manipulation behind the glossy image projected by tobacco companies. Each piece in the project works together to unravel the contrast between the polished advertising campaigns and the health risks associated with tobacco use. The film portion of the *Don't Discount My Life* project is a narrative compilation showing tobacco companies' environmental and social impact. Katrina's son, Liam, filmed the segment.

Katrina and Catrielle used their collaborative artistic talents to craft an aesthetically engaging work and start a conversation about the tobacco industry's unethical practices and their effects on public health. Through this work, Katrina and Catrielle urge viewers to examine how tobacco is marketed critically and recognize the severe toll it takes on individuals and society.

## **POL 312 Students Meet with Senator Oumou Verbeten at the Capitol**



On January 28, POL 312 students had the opportunity to visit the Minnesota State Capitol and meet with Senator Oumou Verbeten. Led by Dr. Kathleen Cole, the visit provided students with firsthand insight into state government, policy-making, and legislative processes.

## Events:

# History & Environmental Justice in Palestine

### **When?**

(Today) Wednesday, Feb. 5  
6.30pm - 8.00pm

### **Where?**

Online or  
Founders Hall  
700 E. 7th Street  
Saint Paul, MN

## **Summary of Event**

In this gathering, we focus on Palestinian liberation from the perspective of land and water rights. Speakers weave personal journeys with an exploration of settler colonialism, civil disobedience, and the boycott/divestment movement.

Through storytelling, speakers highlight the role of environmental justice in the struggle for Palestinian liberation. The talk connects environmental justice to the project of Zionism, and offers a space for story, dialogue, and solidarity.

Speakers

### **Ashraf Akar**

Ashraf is a Palestinian native who discusses growing up under occupation in the West Bank. Through personal stories and deep experience, Ashraf discusses how power relations and the total lack of Palestinian rights under apartheid led him to student organizing, civil disobedience, and working on water management in the West Bank. He has worked with UN on water rights, and Ashraf will speak first-hand about how the control of water is a central pillar of environmental injustice in Palestine.

### **Bob Goonin**

Bob, a Metro State Alum, shares his journey from being raised in a family and community devoted to Israel to coming to terms with the ethnic cleansing upon which the state of Israel was based. He tells the history of Israel as a Zionist project from its origins to today. In 2019, Bob went to Palestine with an environmental justice delegation where he witnessed the struggle and resilience of Palestinian farmers to stay on their land despite Israel's system of environmental injustice.

Attend Online Instead?

<http://professorcarlson.net/en/events/>

Sponsor/Support

Sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, TCID 575

Environmental Communication, and MDST 487 Podcasting

# CLA Café: Caffeine with the Dean, Feb 12<sup>th</sup> , 1:00-2:00 p.m., SJH 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Students, faculty, staff, and alumni are invited to join CLA Dean Kristen Lillvis for an informal chat on **Wednesday, Feb 12<sup>th</sup>** :

- **1:00–1:30 PM (Virtual):** Join via Zoom: <https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/99804919269?from=addon>
- **1:30–2:00 PM (In-person):** Meet in the CLA Reference Library (Saint John's Hall, 3rd Floor).

Please contact [Marim Al-hajiby](#) with any questions. We look forward to seeing you there!

## **Special One-Day-Only Theater Event at Metro State**



Theater Underground is excited to host a special performance by the acclaimed Ten Thousand Things Theater from Minneapolis, MN! Known for their innovative and powerful productions, Ten Thousand Things brings stories to life in a truly unique and engaging way.

This event will feature the incredible talents of Metro State alum Joy Dolo and community faculty member Marisa B. Tejada. Whether you're a theater enthusiast or simply looking for a memorable experience, this is an event you won't want to miss!

Event Details

**Date:** Thursday, February 13, 2025

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Location:** Metro State – St. Paul Campus, Student Center – Room 101 (across from the Bookstore)

**Admission:** Free! No tickets or registration required.

## Student Worker Spotlight

**Meet Phenli, Thao!**

This month, we're featuring Phenhli Thao, a dedicated CLA student worker who has been gaining valuable administrative experience for nearly six months!

Phenhli transferred from North Hennepin Community College last semester and now works at the CLA department reception, assisting faculty, directing visitors, and supporting staff on third floor of St. John Hall. Currently studying Business Administration and Accounting, Phenhli is building skills in marketing research, organization, and communication. His long-term career goal? Becoming an executive director or CEO!

Beyond work and academics, Phenhli loves football and Korean dramas. He encourages fellow students to explore on-campus job opportunities through the Metro State website, emphasizing the value of gaining professional experience.

Looking ahead, Phenhli plans to graduate in 2026 and is grateful for the supportive faculty and rewarding experiences at Metro State. We're excited to see where his journey takes him!

Favorite study spot? The third floor of SJH—his workplace!

Advice for students? Check Metro's job listings and apply for administrative support roles!

## This Month's Pet: Meet Calogero!



**Calogero**, or as we like to call him, **C.!** This lovable pet is cared for by **Lisa Ann, McMahon!**

Stay tuned for more featured pets next month! Want your pet to be featured? Let us know!

**Metro State Mission and Vision**



Our mission: Metro State University empowers learners to transform their lives and communities through relevant, student-centered education in an inclusive, anti-racist, and supportive learning environment. Our vision: Metro State University will deliver the transformative power of higher education to all. As a national leader, we will innovate to meet emerging challenges, remove barriers to access and success, and propel the social and economic mobility of diverse learners and their communities.

If you have something you'd like to share in our next newsletter, please submit your content using [this link](#).

