



THE MANY FACES OF METRO STATE GRADUATES

December 13th Commencement Showcases Over 1000 Success Stories

Background:

On December 13, 2009, at 2 p.m., [Metropolitan State College of Denver](http://www.mscd.edu) conducts its Fall 2009 graduation ceremony at the Colorado Convention Center.

The Fall 2009 Class is unique in several ways:

- 1066 graduates – **The largest-ever Fall class** and a 17% increase over Fall 2008
 - 58% (620) are female; 42% (446) are male
 - 21% (222) are of color; with 12% of all grads (126) Hispanic or Latino/a
- 13% (139) will graduate with honors
- Age breakdown:
 - 20 to 24 – 38%
 - 25 to 29 – 32%
 - Over 30 – 30%
- The top 10 majors are management, behavioral science, criminal justice and criminology, English, accounting, biology, art, human performance and sport, history, and psychology.

But more importantly, the stories of these graduates are tales of triumph and achievement; often in the face of obstacles and challenges. Meet one such graduate:

Adesola (Ad-dee-sola) Owolabi's (O-wo-la-bee) husband thought she was crazy when she decided to switch her Metro State studies from computer information systems to art with an emphasis in ceramics. It started in 2006 with a simple glance into a ceramics class. From that point, she was hooked. Now, on December 13, 2009, the 35 year-old Nigerian born art major graduates from Metro State College.

Her road to this point has been a passionate journey. Though her husband Bola, a 2001 Metro State grad in Engineering Technology, questioned her decision at first, he supported her. He went to the store with her to get all of the supplies she would need to fulfill this passion. When he took a software engineer job in Kansas City, Missouri in 2007, they created a plan where she could remain in Denver to finish the program at Metro State. She stayed in Denver with their son, Justin, who was 3 at the time. Bola moved to Kansas City and they visited each other often.

Then they had another son, Jordan. He stays with Bola and Justin still stays with Adesola. It has worked, but Adesola is looking forward to all being in the same household.

Now, not only is Ms. Owolabi graduating, but she is exhibiting her work, along with other students at the BFA Thesis Exhibitions that run through Dec. 10 at the [Center for Visual Art](http://www.mscd.edu/center-for-visual-art), the College's off-campus art gallery at 1734 Wazee Street in LoDo.

Owolabi's exhibit "Ikoko Ibile" features a series of vessels — averaging two feet tall — which take a critical view of decoration within her cultural identity. The hand-built vessels incorporate visual symbols of the Yoruba culture, beliefs, and values of one's role within the socio-cultural system. The vessels are adorned with symbols of nature, such as snakes, snail shells, and fish. Each adornment has its own meaning. For example fish symbolizes "life and prosperity" and turtles symbolize "a liar and a deceiver."

Adesola says the sacrifices were worth it, but she still keeps track of the time; saying it's been "two years and a month" that they have had this arrangement. Her husband arrives in Denver on December 11 for graduation and the next steps for Adesola Owolabi include heading to Kansas City and applying for graduate school.

Commencement Specifics

Date:

Sunday December 13, 2009

Time:

2 p.m.

Place:

Colorado Convention Center

Commencement Keynote Speaker

[Bernard Franklin, Ph. D](#)

Executive Vice President

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Dr. Franklin oversees the largest administrative area of the NCAA, a voluntary association of more than 1,000 member-institutions with a national staff of nearly 400. He previously served as president of Virginia Union University in Richmond, VA, Livingston College and Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, NC and Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh, NC.

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About Metropolitan State College of Denver

Metro State is Colorado's leader in educating in-state undergraduates and is one of the largest four-year public colleges in the nation. The College enrolls the highest number of students of color among four-year colleges in the state. With current enrollment at 23,000, Metro State boasts 64,400 alumni, with the bulk of them remaining in Colorado after graduation. www.mscd.edu

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