



Janine Davidson, Ph.D.

President, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Janine Davidson, Ph.D. is president of Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado's third-largest and most diverse public university. Since her appointment in 2017, Davidson has been a fierce advocate for equity and access in public education, championing the role public universities play in "holding the line on the American dream."

Davidson is a national thought leader in higher education and on topics such as public service, U.S. foreign policy and national security. She has taught at George Mason University, Georgetown University, Davidson College and various professional military schools, and was an aviation and aerobatics flight instructor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. She recently returned to the classroom at MSU Denver, co-teaching a course on the philosophical and legal origins of freedom of speech in the United States.

Prior to joining the MSU Denver, Dr. Davidson served in various senior civilian Pentagon positions, most recently as the 32nd undersecretary of the United States Navy. Previously she served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Plans and was also a senior civil servant in the stability operations office in the office of the Secretary of Defense. Davidson began her career as an Air Force officer and cargo pilot. She was a distinguished graduate of the Air Force Squadron Officer School and was the first woman to fly the Air Force's tactical C-130.

Davidson's various honors include: HillVets Top 100 Most Influential Veterans; University of South Carolina Distinguished Alumna; Secretary of the Navy Medal for Distinguished Public Service; Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service; Girl Scouts of Colorado 2018 Woman of Distinction; the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce 2019 Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Business, and a Denver Business Journal "Most Admired CEO" of 2021.

Davidson is a National Association of Public Administrators fellow and a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She served as a presidentially appointed commissioner for the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service, 2017-2020 and for the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, 2013. She is a Director for UMB Financial Corp, serves on the steering committee of the Leadership Council for Women in National Security and on the non-profit boards of the Downtown Denver Partnership, the Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation, Colorado Concern, and the Rose Community Foundation.

Davidson earned her bachelor's degree in architectural engineering from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and her masters and doctorate in international studies from the University of South Carolina.