

Athletic Council

Election Slate

University Committee on Academic Governance

February 7, 2025



Michael Callahan (Page 1 of 5)

Unit: College of Music

Academic Appointment & Rank: Associate Professor - Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 2010

Previous Academic Governance Service: University Committee on Faculty Affairs, University Committee on Faculty Tenure, University Committee on Graduate Studies, University Committee on Undergraduate Education

Also Applied To:



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

I am currently on the Athletic Council, with my term ending in 2025 and eligible for renewal for another term. I really appreciate the opportunity to participate in meetings, ask questions, and support the work of the MSU Athletics department. In particular, I find it very rewarding to learn about and provide input on the ways in which MSU supports student-athletes as whole persons: academically, socially, in terms of their physical and mental health, and of course on the field/rink/court/etc. I would be very grateful to continue serving on the MSU Athletic Council for the 2025-27 term. Especially now that I have enough experience to know how the group operates, I feel I could contribute valuable input going forward. (And, of course, I am a big fan of Spartan Athletics, so it's a good fit for me in terms of contributing to university-level academic governance.).

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

As chair of the music theory area since 2014, I have learned a lot about leadership and become passionate about it. I especially love that it gives me chances to empower the great work of my colleagues and our students, to create equitable opportunities for students to learn and grow, and to align our resources, our curriculum, and our policies with our values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. I elaborate below on how DEIB have informed my approach to leadership, while also acknowledging that this work is never finished, and that I am forever a listener and a learner.



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One facet of this work has been through values-based budgeting: aligning our area's expenditures with our values of advancing equity and inclusion. For example, we now dedicate our recurring guest-scholars budget explicitly to amplifying scholarship that is done by and about Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and female scholars and musicians, all of whom have been historically marginalized in our discipline. During those residencies, the area pays for meals with the guest and students (rather than faculty) so that graduate students can be mentored regardless of whether they would have been able to afford the meal. Since 2018, we allocate part of our budget to closing an opportunity gap: some graduate students lacked access to the huge professional-development benefits of scholarly conferences because they could not afford to travel there, so we now identify needs and provide them with funding. Last year, I realized that our teaching assistants who cannot afford laptops or tablets were forced to postpone grading and lesson planning to when they got home to their old desktop computers—often late at night, forcing a choice between the prompt work that we asked of them or the sleep that they needed. So, we purchased a theory-area loaner laptop to make digital work available to our graduate students more equitably. Finally, each year, we purchase subscriptions to educational software and maintain an equipment library so that the quality of undergraduate students' learning in tech-assisted, hands-on courses does not depend inequitably upon their financial means. A second facet of this work has been through curriculum and community initiatives that actively create (rather than just talk about) belonging and inclusion in the theory area's interactions with graduate and undergraduate students. I've led 4 revisions to our MM Theory curriculum and guided the creation of 12 new graduate courses that push beyond the entirely canonic, white-European-male-dominated curriculum that we had in 2014: courses on popular music, on film music, on identity in art song, on theories of African American musics, and on targeted repertoire that has been excluded from the inherited canon, such as symphonies by women composers. Right now, I am leading a collaborative revision of our entire undergraduate core, to be proposed to the full college faculty by the end of spring 2023. Our reimagined curriculum will teach musics beyond European and European-diasporic classical music—and especially musician identities, genres, and types of music-making that have been excluded from the classical canon—meaningfully and centrally, and offer students considerably more choice.



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Since 2018, the theory area has built a physical library of scores, anthologies, and lead sheets by Black women, women generally, composers of color generally, and other minoritized composers, and assigned TA time to building a similar digital library, so that our area's faculty and graduate-student teachers have immediate access not just to the music of (mostly) white European men that can be found on IMSLP. Following the recommendation of Sequoia Snyder and Jeremiah Flack in ColorMeMusic, we purchased a copy of the book *Jazzology* for each theory faculty member so that we can all better understand, build upon, and create bridges to and from the ways in which jazz musicians think about music theory. We also regularly feature DEIB-oriented guest workshops and conversations in our theory colloquia and at each annual TA orientation: topics have included implicit bias disruption (related, in our case, to grading), disability and accessibility through Universal Design for Learning, trauma-informed teaching practices, equity in online/pandemic-era teaching, and mental-health-affirming teaching practices. A third facet of this work has been through interrogating our policies and practices and seeking to make them more equitable. As of 2019, we no longer require in-person interviews as part of our graduate admissions process in music theory, to ensure that we are not disadvantaging applicants who cannot afford to travel to East Lansing. In 2015, I realized that the old format of the DMA comprehensive exam—a multiple-choice, general-knowledge test—was really testing the quality of the educational backgrounds that graduate students had access to before coming to MSU, which were inequitable for a variety of intersectional reasons. The text-heavy test was also a barrier to graduate students who were learning in their second or third language. So, we jettisoned the multiple-choice format and re-designed a more equitable exam with much more choice, which our coursework actually prepares students to complete successfully. Pass rates went from below 50% to above 90%—not because we made the exam easier, but because we made it fairer—and graduate students are now free to make real choices among our course offerings rather than trying to gather enough facts to pass the old exam. In 2018, I led an initiative to ensure that the first year of our undergraduate theory curriculum is not a “gatekeeper” or “barrier” course that privileges the students who had access, for example, to many years of private lessons and music reading experience prior to entering college.



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The revised procedure, now in its fifth year, assesses students' background knowledge through a brief diagnostic exam, identifies students with less prior familiarity with music theory and notation, and invests in their success in three ways: an additional contact hour of classroom instruction with faculty during their first semester (in MUS 180E), regular individual work with graduate and peer undergraduate tutors in the community-oriented Music Theory Learning Center, and a free summer tutoring program started in 2020. The summer tutoring targets the success of two groups of undergraduates who had previously been left out of our resource offerings: entering undergraduates wanting to prepare to succeed throughout our curriculum, and returning undergraduates who had failed or just barely passed theory courses—often for physical and mental health reasons—and wanted to invest in their success the second time around. In my own teaching, I aim to show students that I value them as individuals, root for their success, and am here to support it. I have implemented practices that I learned from studying trauma-informed pedagogy—such as transparency, student choice, and language of consent—as well as ones that support students' mental health and normalize intellectual challenge and growth in shame-free ways, such as allowing revision and resubmission and crafting more flexible, more equitable attendance policies (so that students never need to choose between their mental or physical health and their grade in my course). In my aural skills courses, I no longer require that students sing in a specific register; doing so used to be unwelcoming and inequitable to trans and nonbinary students. More broadly, I try to use the privilege and power that I wield as a white, cis-male faculty member to ensure that all of my students, and particularly students of color, women, and LGBTQIA+ students, can see themselves, their identities, and their ways of making music represented in what, how, and whose music I teach. For example, in my first-semester music theory course last fall, fewer than 20% of the pieces of music that students encountered were composed by white men. DEIB has also been at the center of my scholarly work in recent years. I'm currently completing a rewrite of an undergraduate textbook and two associated workbooks (totaling about 2,000 pages) that fundamentally rethink whose music counts in the teaching of classical music; the new book features more than 500 passages by Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and female-identifying composers, all of which we recorded here at MSU this fall with student musicians performing.



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Before that project, my own chapter in a book that I edited with Gordon Sly considered race and enslavement in Black playwright Sandra Seaton's song cycle about Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson. Coming up, the monograph that I will write during my research leave next semester, provisionally titled Music Theory and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, considers how research on teaching and learning in higher education generally—especially on issues of equity, student support, and student success—ought to inform teaching and pedagogy-oriented research within my discipline.



Patricia A Edwards (Page 1 of 5)

Unit: College of Education

Academic Appointment & Rank: Professor - Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 1989

Previous Academic Governance Service:

Also Applied To:



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

I am writing to express my deep interest in serving on the Michigan State University (MSU) Athletic Council. My passion for MSU athletics, my understanding of the student-athlete experience, and my unique ability to connect academic excellence with athletic achievement position me to contribute significantly to this important role. In January 2014, I had the privilege of being invited by Coach Mark Dantonio to speak to prospective football recruits and their families. This opportunity arose after Coach Jim Tressel, a former football coach at The Ohio State University and the Athletic Director at the University of Akron, heard me speak and recommended me for this role. Coach Tressel's endorsement, relayed through his nephew on Coach Dantonio's staff, underscores my ability to communicate effectively and inspire diverse audiences. I gladly accepted Coach Dantonio's invitation, and the experience remains one of the highlights of my connection to MSU athletics. During the recruitment session, I emphasized the unparalleled combination of athletic and academic excellence that defines Michigan State University. My message resonated with the recruits and their families, resulting in successful recruitment efforts, including the commitment of one of Coach Dantonio's top players, Malik McDowell. In my speech, I celebrated MSU's athletic legacy, including our 2014 Rose Bowl victory, while showcasing the university's strong academic tradition. I emphasized MSU's unique culture of team spirit and fan loyalty, which permeates not only the campus but also the state, the nation, and the world. I believe this deep understanding of MSU's values and my ability to articulate them effectively qualify me to serve as a bridge between athletics, academics, and the broader Spartan community. My approach to recruitment and support for student-athletes reflects MSU's commitment to holistic development.

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I highlighted the resources available through the Clara Bell Smith Center and the importance of hard work and teamwork in achieving success both on and off the field. This dual focus on academic and athletic growth aligns perfectly with the Athletic Council's mission to support student-athletes in realizing their full potential. What sets me apart as a candidate for the Athletic Council is my ability to inspire and connect. Drawing on the wisdom of leaders like Nelson Mandela and Maya Angelou, I reminded recruits that education is a powerful tool for change and growth. My message encouraged them to see MSU not just as a place to play sports but as an institution that would prepare them for success in all aspects of life. I have a long-standing passion for MSU athletics and a deep appreciation for the hard work, dedication, and perseverance that define our student-athletes. Serving on the Athletic Council would allow me to bring my unique perspective and experience to support the ongoing success of MSU's athletic programs. I am confident that my ability to communicate effectively, my understanding of the challenges faced by student-athletes, and my commitment to MSU's values make me an ideal candidate for this role. Thank you for considering my application. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the Athletic Council and help strengthen the connection between MSU's athletic and academic communities.

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are values that I have not only embraced in my professional life but also actively integrated into my teaching, research, community engagement, and mentorship. To me, diversity celebrates the richness of differences, whether in race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or other dimensions of identity. Equity is the pursuit of fairness by addressing systemic barriers and providing the resources individuals need to succeed. Inclusion ensures that all voices are not only heard but valued, fostering a culture where everyone feels they belong. These principles are integral to creating environments where individuals can thrive and fulfill their potential. Past Activities Teaching In my role as an educator, I have designed and implemented courses that center the experiences of historically marginalized groups, ensuring that my students are exposed to diverse perspectives. In courses on literacy, for example, I include texts by authors from underrepresented backgrounds, ensuring students learn to engage with voices that reflect the cultural richness of their future classrooms or communities.



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I emphasize critical pedagogy, encouraging students to question dominant narratives and reflect on how systemic inequalities impact educational outcomes. In addition to diversifying the curriculum, I employ inclusive teaching practices. I use multiple modalities in my instruction—lectures, discussions, group activities, and multimedia tools—to ensure accessibility for students with different learning styles and abilities. By fostering an open and respectful classroom environment, I encourage students to share their unique perspectives, contributing to a richer collective learning experience. Research My research agenda is deeply rooted in advancing equity and inclusion in education. One of my core research areas focuses on literacy development in diverse communities, particularly examining how systemic inequalities affect educational outcomes. For instance, I have studied how culturally responsive teaching practices can help bridge the gap between students' home lives and school environments. My work explores how leveraging students' "funds of knowledge"—the skills and knowledge rooted in their cultural and community experiences—can lead to more effective and empowering educational practices. Another strand of my research involves working with educators to develop liberationist pedagogies that reflect social justice principles. By exploring the journeys of teachers who integrate equity-focused teaching into their practices, I aim to provide insights into how educators can be better prepared to address inequities in their classrooms and schools. Mentorship Mentorship has been one of the most meaningful ways I have advanced DEI. I have mentored students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, recognizing that access to mentorship is often inequitable. For example, I have supported first-generation college students as they navigate academic and professional challenges, providing guidance on graduate school applications, scholarship opportunities, and career development. As a faculty member, I have also served as an advisor to student organizations that focus on promoting equity and inclusion. I have worked closely with these groups to create programming that highlights issues such as racial justice, gender equity, and accessibility. By providing resources and advocating for these initiatives, I aim to amplify student voices and support their leadership development. Community Engagement Beyond academia, I have actively engaged with the broader community to advance equity and inclusion. For example, I was invited by Coach Mark Dantonio to speak to football recruits and their families about the holistic experience at Michigan State University, emphasizing the importance of both academic and athletic success.



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My speech highlighted MSU's commitment to diversity and the ways the university supports students from all backgrounds, particularly through resources like the Clara Bell Smith Center. This experience allowed me to connect with families from diverse communities and demonstrate the university's dedication to fostering inclusive excellence. I have also collaborated with local organizations to promote literacy and educational equity. One such initiative involved organizing workshops for parents in underserved communities to equip them with strategies for supporting their children's literacy development. These workshops not only provided practical tools but also created spaces for parents to share their experiences and build networks of mutual support. Future Plans While I am proud of my past contributions, I am committed to deepening my efforts to advance DEI through intentional and sustained action. My future plans include initiatives in teaching, research, mentorship, and advocacy that align with my commitment to equity and inclusion. Innovative Teaching Practices Moving forward, I plan to expand the use of culturally sustaining pedagogy in my courses. This approach goes beyond recognizing diversity to actively preserving and valuing students' cultural identities. For example, I plan to develop assignments that allow students to explore their cultural heritage and connect it to the course material. I will also continue to update my curriculum to reflect emerging scholarship on DEI and ensure that students are equipped to address these issues in their future careers. In addition, I aim to incorporate universal design principles into my teaching. This means designing courses that are accessible to all students, regardless of ability, by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. For instance, I plan to use accessible technology, provide captions for all video materials, and offer alternative formats for assignments. Expanding Research Impact In my research, I plan to explore how teacher preparation programs can better prepare educators to work in diverse classrooms. Specifically, I want to investigate how programs can integrate equity-focused content into their curricula and assess its impact on teaching practices. I also intend to collaborate with school districts to develop professional development workshops for teachers that focus on culturally responsive teaching and equity-based interventions. Another area of interest is the intersection of DEI and family engagement. I hope to examine how schools can build stronger partnerships with families from diverse backgrounds, recognizing the valuable contributions they make to their children's education. This research will inform practical strategies for schools to create more inclusive environments that welcome and respect all families.



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Mentorship Initiatives I plan to formalize mentorship programs that provide targeted support for underrepresented students in academia. One idea is to create a peer mentoring network where advanced students mentor their junior peers, fostering a sense of community and shared success. I also hope to work with university leadership to develop funding opportunities for students from historically marginalized backgrounds, ensuring they have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Advocacy and Leadership I aspire to take on leadership roles that allow me to advocate for systemic change. For example, I would like to serve on committees focused on equity and inclusion, where I can contribute to developing policies that address systemic barriers. I also plan to work with campus organizations to create programming that raises awareness about DEI issues and promotes dialogue among students, faculty, and staff. In addition, I am interested in collaborating with community partners to address educational inequities. For instance, I hope to work with local schools to develop initiatives that close achievement gaps and create pathways for students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue higher education. These initiatives could include after-school programs, summer enrichment opportunities, and college readiness workshops.

Fostering Inclusive Environments Creating inclusive spaces where everyone feels valued and respected will remain a central focus of my work. Whether through my classroom, research collaborations, or community engagements, I am committed to fostering environments where diverse perspectives are welcomed and celebrated. This involves not only listening to and learning from others but also using my platform to advocate for those whose voices are often marginalized.

Conclusion Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion is not just a professional responsibility for me; it is a personal commitment to creating a more just and equitable society. Through my past activities, I have worked to address systemic inequities, amplify marginalized voices, and create opportunities for all individuals to thrive. My future plans build on this foundation, aiming to deepen and expand these efforts through innovative teaching, impactful research, meaningful mentorship, and dedicated advocacy. I am inspired by the progress we have made as a society, but I am acutely aware of the work that remains. By continuing to center DEI in all aspects of my professional life, I hope to contribute to a future where diversity is celebrated, equity is realized, and inclusion is a lived reality for all.



Sabrina Ford (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Human Medicine

Academic Appointment & Rank: Associate Professor – Fixed Term

Initial MSU Appointment: 2012

Previous Academic Governance Service: Athletic Council, University Student Appeals Board, Department of Police and Public Safety Oversight Committee

Also Applied To: Athletic Council



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to self-nominate for membership for the MSU Athletic Council. First and foremost, I have a deep dedication and commitment to making a developmental environment for all students at MSU. From my experience and personal experience of have two children who competed in DI athletics in the BIG. Thus, I know that the student-athlete experience particularly in a NCAA Division I-A institution is unique.

I am an Associate Professor (fixed-term) in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Biology, and the Director of Health Quality & Equity in the Institute for Health Policy in the College of Human Medicine. I have been at MSU for 12 years and have a strong commitment to doing my part to make our university a success. I work with medical students who also competitive in doing their best, not unlike athletes. My research pertains improving health disparities particularly for vulnerable African American women and children.

My past professional experience in athletics was at the University of Iowa Athletic Department serving as Director of Student Services for women's athletics. This required knowledge of institutional, BIG, and NCAA rules, regulations, and guidelines. It also involved administering the rules particularly for student-athletes' grades. I still follow changes to the rules as they often set a precedent for other forums of organized sport and competition.

On a personal note, both of my children were BIG track athletics at The University of Michigan and the University of Washington. I witness their experience as athletes balancing not only their sport and academics and pushing for success in both which requires resilience and determination that sometimes removed them from typical college experience.



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Student-athletes need strong support not only from the Athletic Department, but the university and the community as a whole.

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

Principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are woven throughout my career and research as lived experience as an African American woman and as part of my constant learning and training in racism, equity, power, stigma, and hatred. During my 12 years at the MSU, my activities have demonstrated my strong dedication, commitment and integration of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the classroom and among my faculty peers. I have created forums and research opportunities for students in health equity. I intentionally focus my work to integrate DEI as a speaker, teacher, and researcher. My research addresses health disparities, gaps in health care, and stigma in mental and physical health services for African Americans, using multilevel approaches to guide change.



Christopher Maxwell (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Social Science

Academic Appointment & Rank: Professor - Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 1998

Previous Academic Governance Service: University Committee on Academic Governance

Also Applied To: Tenured Faculty Dismissal For Cause Standing Panel



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

I am interested in serving on the Athletic Council because I offer a unique experience set. Before graduate school, I was a scholarship student-athlete at another Big 10 university, and as a criminal justice faculty member at MSU, I have taught and mentored student-athletes for over 25 years. My experience as a student-athlete in a nonrevenue sport, in particular, brings insights into the challenges and difficulties many student-athletes face in balancing the demands of participating at the highest levels of their sport while simultaneously excelling alongside other students in a high-ranking academic program. I believe these experiences will serve the University and particularly the student-athletes well.

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

For more than 35 years, my research program before and at MSU has focused on advancing the scientific evidence around how violence can disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Within this research program, I sought additional funding to recruit and support junior scholars who identified with marginal communities. As director of the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, I was also responsible for ensuring that everyone, regardless of what university they were appointed at, always had access to and the analytical tools available to analyze criminal justice and criminology data produced with the support of federal grants and federal agencies. This effort significantly democratized the field of criminology long before many other disciplines in the United States.



Christopher Maxwell (Page 2 of 2)

When I served the University as a college administrator, I sought to increase the diversity of our college's graduate student population and faculty ranks. When it was necessary and with the support of the Dean, I made recommendations to the University leadership to more actively retain and promote faculty within our college from marinated communities, even though their faculty colleagues had not voted to support them. Unfortunately, I later realized that while these difficult decisions were correct, many faculty and department administrators did not forget them.

(Optional) Use this space to add anything else you would like those considering your application to know, including whether you are willing to serve on multiple academic governance bodies and whether you would prefer to serve on certain academic governance bodies over others.

I have no preference for which committee I serve on, and I am willing to serve on multiple bodies if my experiences and insights can benefit them.



Erik Marcellus Shapiro (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Engineering, College of Human Medicine, and College of Osteopathic Medicine

Academic Appointment & Rank: Professor - Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 2012

Previous Academic Governance Service: Faculty Senate

Also Applied To:



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

I played college soccer all four years and experienced first-hand the challenges and joys of being a student athlete, culminating in an NCAA tournament experience my senior year at Binghamton University. In my role here at MSU as Assoc Chair for Research in Radiology, I have had the pleasure of working with athletes on concussion related imaging studies. I would bring unique perspectives from these two past experiences to serving our student-athletes, the Athletic Department, and the academic enterprise supporting them.

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

I am committed to working to build and sustain a diverse, equitable and inclusive work environment. Diverse working environments are well known to solve scientific problems faster, enrich our everyday experiences, and give opportunity to those individuals who have historically been marginalized. Throughout my career, I have sought out opportunities to provide research experiences for minority or other underrepresented populations, such as Yale BioSTEP (Biomedical Science Training and Enrichment Program) which provides intensive, short-term summer research training for undergraduates, especially students from groups underrepresented in biomedical sciences at research-intensive universities, MSU REPID program (Research Education Program to Increase Diversity in Health Researchers), and very recently PAIR-UP Program (Partnering to Advance Imaging Research for URM Scientists Program).



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I've spoken about DEI issues at an international conference, the World Molecular Imaging Congress in 2019, in Montreal, Canada, where I delivered a lecture entitled "Challenges in staffing a diverse molecular imaging laboratory". I care about this issue because providing opportunity for underprivileged and marginalized communities is important to me, and I've seen first-hand what can happen when equal opportunity is absent. For me, issues in education equity became instantly apparent when I participated in a number of elementary school science fairs before COVID. I talked to children and families about radiology, X-rays of broken bones, ultrasound of babies, and MRI of the brain. I gave out squishy brain toys and water bottles with MSU Radiology information. Yet, it was a completely different experience and environment when I did this in Okemos versus in Lansing. After the science fair in the Lansing school (Attwood Elementary), I felt completely dismayed. The school's facilities were inadequate, parents were missing or not engaged, and many of the children were unclean. These kids were 10 years old and already, they were years behind their Okemos counterparts. Among other complex reasons, access to equitable facilities was a major factor for why these kids had fallen behind. I hope to continue participating in science fairs in Lansing and other communities in which resources are limited, to help level the playing field, and inspire budding scientists. Lastly, I want to mention that inclusivity is important as well, and for me is deeply personal. I am Jewish and was raised in the New York City suburbs in New Jersey. Growing up, there was a lot of awareness of Jewish customs, holidays and idiosyncrasies. Bar Mitzvahs were common, there was never school on the Jewish New Year, and there were good bagels all around. We live in Okemos now, and life is different. A few months ago, it was our Jewish New Year, and only a single coworker wished me a Happy New Year. My son had a high school soccer game that day, which he was forced to miss. I sometimes don't feel very included in my work and home community when my kids have to choose between school and synagogue, when my celebrations are unnoticed, and when my identity is unseen. There must be so many people who feel the same way. So, with this mind set, I have vowed to learn when the holidays are for my co-workers, and to wish them well. I have offered pre-emptive accommodations so my trainees can be with family, rather than having to ask. And I have advocated for recognition of the diversity of our scientific community during holidays in my department and buildings. I know, first-hand, that simply seeing a Jewish candelabra during Hanukkah, next to the ensemble of Christmas decorations, is an affirmation that I matter and that I am seen. That I belong. And I hope it signals to others in my communities that simple acts of inclusion go a long way to make someone feel whole in a society.



Mary Kay Smith (Page 1 of 4)

Unit: College of Human Medicine, Nursing, Osteopathic Medicine, Veterinary Medicine

Academic Appointment & Rank: Associate Professor – Fixed Term

Initial MSU Appointment: 1990

Previous Academic Governance Service: University Committee on Curriculum, University Committee on Undergraduate Education, Athletic Council, University Military Education Advisory Committee


Also Applied To: Athletic Council



explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my interest in serving a second term on the MSU Athletic Council representing in the faculty role. During my first term over the past two years, I have contributed positively as Chair of the Student-Athlete Drug Education and Testing Program participating in the annual audit with MSU Risk and Compliance and MSU Athletics personnel to ensure adherence to MSU policies and NCAA guidelines. Given my unique background and experience, I believe I can continue to contribute to the collegiate-athlete experience at our great university during a period of tremendous change at the institutional, conference and national levels.

I would like to begin by outlining relevant credentials that make me eligible for this role. In my faculty and administrative position, I serve as Associate Professor and Executive Director of the MSU Learning and Assessment Center which is a clinical simulation center for the healthcare professional college academic programs (CHM, COM, CON and CVM) and practicing clinicians throughout the state. My ongoing commitment to health is exemplified by being a registered nurse in the State of Michigan with multiple years and types of clinical experiences (e.g., med/surg, ICU, ER). In addition, I completed my doctoral degree in Higher Adult and Lifelong Education Administration from MSU, which I draw from regularly in all aspects of my work and service to the university, including the role of athletics within the broader academic landscape and multiple variables that impact our student-athletes.



Mary Kay Smith (Page 2 of 4)

As I consider the convergence of the institution, student-athletes in addition to multiple stakeholders, the role of faculty as advisors to the decision-making on matters of policy, procedures and institution related to the intercollegiate program is critical. I am committed to impact positively during a period when there are so many variables affecting student-athletes such as balancing the demands of academics with the pressure of physical performance, evolving changes in NCAA standards, Name Image, and Likeness (NIL), transfer eligibility and degree completion. Given my background, I am most interested in how these variables impact physical and mental health and wellness of athletes in addition to how faculty may support them in their academic journeys.

On a more personal level, as MSU alumni myself (MSN and PhD) and parent of three MSU graduates (one a MSU athlete), I care deeply about both student and athlete success at MSU. Additional attributes I would continue to contribute to the Athletic Council include interprofessional team orientation, creative thinking, reliability, commitment, and leadership.

In closing, my hope is that from the above highlights, I have articulated my qualifications and interest for continued work on the Athletic Council. I welcome the opportunity to positively contribute to the diverse needs of faculty and students in this capacity and am grateful for your consideration. Go Green!

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

I believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is not simply a phrase or acronym. Each word has associated meaning and values. Diversity represents the uniqueness of individuals based upon identities, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives. Equity represents everyone having what they need to succeed in their personal, educational and/or professional journey. It means access, resources, and opportunities for all, particularly for those who are underrepresented or have unique circumstances. Inclusion represents a welcoming culture and environment where everyone is appreciated, valued, respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

As I reflect upon how DEI is exemplified within my professional career, I consider my experiences as a nurse, educator, and administrator. As a nurse, I have worked in a variety of settings which provided the opportunity to care for a diverse population of patients.



Mary Kay Smith (Page 3 of 4)

My every day goal was to appreciate the uniqueness of each patient, treat everyone equally and make them feel as though they were the only person I was caring for.

When I transitioned to academia, my professional experiences relative to DEI expanded from direct patient care to students, faculty, staff, and external “customers” of the university (e.g. practicing clinicians, industry partners, international contracts, etc.). As an administrative leader and faculty member of a department with over 250 employees serving over 5,000 learners per year, I apply DEI principles as I lead a very diverse team where all team members are valued and listened to. I invest in diverse simulation-based education methodologies including extended reality software programs, standardized patients to physical characteristics of simulators/manikins/task trainers ensuring they are representative of learners and global populations they will care for in the future.

I have also established a broad network of global experts with whom I collaborate which enhances my DEI orientation in so many ways. I have contracted with institutions in Peru, Mexico, Costa Rica, South Korea, Dominican Republic, and Egypt to develop simulation programs and curriculum. I have held many leadership positions in the international Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) and Sigma Theta Tau International which have provided opportunities to work with others throughout the world with similar goals yet different pathways to reach them. Whether it is developing curriculum, programs, professional standards, policies, procedures, methodologies, or engaging in collaborative research, my commitment to DEI is threaded throughout all I do.

On a personal level, I have travelled globally and been immersed a variety of cultures. I know what it feels like to be outside of what is considered the norm. I have felt the vulnerability of not speaking or understanding languages such as Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish. Navigating geographically and communicating with others to meet my basic needs has been challenging...and honestly frightful at times. I can use these opportunities professionally as a caring and compassionate nurse, interacting with colleagues and learners and most importantly, supporting a diverse and inclusive environment for everyone.



Mary Kay Smith (Page 4 of 4)

In closing, I reiterate that there is much more to DEI than simply the words or letters. It should be at the core of what we value and celebrate and at the forefront of decision-making. Within the context of the role of faculty on the Athletic Council, I draw from my multifaceted background as we consider a welcoming, inclusive experience where all student-athletes are supported and positioned for academic and athletic success at MSU.

(Optional) Use this space to add anything else you would like those considering your application to know, including whether you are willing to serve on multiple academic governance bodies and whether you would prefer to serve on certain academic governance bodies over others.

As I complete a first term on the Athletic Council, I feel that I have just "settled" into the role in my second year and feel there is so much more I can do. During a period of significant change (new FAR, NIL, NCAA drug testing), I would hope to contribute to stability during transitions, review of current policies, etc. As a healthcare provider, administrator, faculty and expert in higher education administration, I believe I have a lot to offer and welcome the opportunity to serve a second term.



Debra Stieve (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Nursing

Academic Appointment & Rank: Assistant Professor – Fixed-Term

Initial MSU Appointment: 2009–2014, 2021

Previous Academic Governance Service: Athletic Council

Also Applied To:



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

Athletics are a cornerstone of MSU's culture, fostering community cohesion through spirited games and competition. This collective spirit is deeply woven into the fabric of MSU, with sports serving as a unifying force. As the NCAA fortifies protections for student-athletes' name, image, and likeness (NIL), athletes stand at a critical crossroads. It's vital to approach each athlete with empathy, acknowledging the intricate balance they must strike between demanding academic schedules and rigorous sports commitments. Whether engaging in intramural, club, or collegiate sports, these students necessitate supervision to uphold inclusivity and foster a genuine sense of belonging. Drawing upon my extensive 40-year tenure as a nurse and two decades as a nursing faculty member, I bring a wealth of experience working with diverse populations to this council. Having taught courses with student-athletes among my students, I intimately understand the challenges they encounter and the paramount importance of offering unwavering support throughout their journey, both on and off the field..

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

Over the past few years, I have actively engaged in online courses focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Participating in Harvard's Implicit Bias test was particularly eye opening, as it underscored the reality that we all harbor biases, often unconsciously. Recognizing the significance of addressing these biases, I have pursued further training and obtained certification in initiatives like The Inclusive STEM Teaching Project and MSU's Academic Search Committee Education. Additionally, I was asked to help develop the new Diversity Council in the College of Nursing.



Debra Stieve (Page 2 of 2)

Through these experiences, I've come to understand that it is my responsibility to cultivate an inclusive environment for all students. If any student feels excluded or marginalized, then I have failed in fostering inclusivity. As I transition into the role of RN-BSN program coordinator in May, I'm committed to upholding DEI principles across all courses. This entails reviewing the Quality Matters for Higher Education rubric and making necessary updates to ensure that our curriculum reflects and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion effectively..

(Optional) Use this space to add anything else you would like those considering your application to know, including whether you are willing to serve on multiple academic governance bodies and whether you would prefer to serve on certain academic governance bodies over others.

Last week I was appointed to the Athletic Council to fill a faculty opening starting now until August 2025. I previously served on the Athletic Council for part of a term Fall 2013 and had to step out due to my family moving out of state in the Fall 2014. I would like to serve a full term on the council.



Gerald Urquhart (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Lyman Briggs College

Academic Appointment & Rank: Associate Professor - Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 1998

Previous Academic Governance Service: The Steering Committee, Faculty Senate, University Committee on Academic Governance, University Committee on Curriculum, University Committee on Faculty Tenure

Also Applied To:



Please explain why you are interested in serving on the Athletic Council and what qualifies you to do so.

I hold a strong belief that student athletes should have all the opportunities to succeed that non-athlete students have. This involves support by the faculty who teach the student athletes and accommodation of the special circumstances for these students. I understand that revenue sports play an important role in the University but also recognize that the majority of student athletes work tirelessly with little recognition of their efforts. It is my hope that student athletes leave the University feeling their involvement in athletics was a positive part of their MSU education.

I am very familiar with the NCAA's recruitment process and the student athlete experience in the 21st century due to my two sons' participation in NCAA D1 and D3 sports. They participated in football, track, and crew at their universities and found their experiences very rewarding.

Please provide a brief statement about your past activities and/or future plans that have advanced or will aim to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, using your own understanding of those terms.

A diverse, equitable, and inclusive university provides the best environment in which students of all backgrounds can succeed. This improves not only the experience of students who historically did not have equity or inclusion, but also the "majority" students whose worldviews can be broadened by experiencing a diverse university. In 2008, I developed a program in Lyman Briggs College aimed at improving retention of underrepresented students that eventually served as a model of the College of Natural Science's Dow Scholars program.



Gerald Urquhart (Page 2 of 2)

Since 2017, I have been involved on an NSF-funded project in College of Agriculture and Natural Resources aimed at improving pathways for majors in ag and natural resources for underrepresented students.

