

Athletic Council

Election Slate

University Committee on Academic Governance

February 11, 2026



Joseph Darda (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Arts and Letters

Academic Appointment & Rank: Professor - Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 2023

Previous Academic Governance Service: N/A

Also Applied To: N/A



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

I've been interested in the shared governance of intercollegiate athletics since my own career as a student-athlete. I competed in track and field and cross country for the University of Washington from 2005 to 2009. In my senior year, I also worked as a tutor for other student-athletes and for the athletic department's office of athletic communications, for which I wrote in-depth profiles of members of the tennis, softball, and volleyball squads. At the University of Connecticut, where I completed my MA and PhD, I regularly taught a summer composition course for incoming freshmen on the men's basketball team, which made me their first college instructor--a consequential role in their college life, I discovered. At my previous institution, Texas Christian University, where I taught from 2015 to 2023, and at MSU, I have taught numerous courses on sports literature and culture. My sports literature course ("The Sports Cliché") and my Integrative Arts and Humanities course ("The Sporting Public") attract a lot of student-athletes, which has given me the opportunity to get to know the unique challenges facing our student-athletes in a rapidly evolving college sports landscape. There is an entirely different world than the one I encountered twenty years ago.

Please provide a brief statement about your past efforts and/or future plans to contribute to a collaborative, respectful work environment and to uphold the values of integrity and accountability that are central to shared governance.

In his 2000 book "Intercollegiate Athletics and the University," former University of Michigan president James Duderstadt observed that, over the course of his long career, "faculty has largely abdicated its responsibility" for intercollegiate athletics, a domain of student life that it had once had an equal part in governing.



Joseph Darda (Page 2 of 2)

I'm interested in serving on the Athletic Council alongside administrators, alumni, students, and other faculty because I believe Duderstadt is right that classroom instructors are--for reasons not entirely within our control--among the least involved university employees in the governance of intercollegiate sports and should be among the most involved. (My wing of campus, the liberal arts, is perhaps the least involved of the least involved.) I'd like to do my small part to contribute to this collaborative, cross-campus effort to share accountability for one of the most visible aspects of our university.



Amanda Idema (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Engineering

Academic Appointment & Rank: Academic Specialist

Initial MSU Appointment: 2001

Previous Academic Governance Service: University Committee on Undergraduate Education

Also Applied To: N/A



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

I am currently serving my second year as the UCUE liaison to Athletic Council, so I have experience being on the committee. I have also been in academic advising (either as an advisor or administrator) since 2001. During my time on Athletic Council, I was able to see first hand how the faculty members serving on the committee care about the experience of our student athletes in the classroom. However, I also observed that the Council lacks the perspective of a student's academic life outside the classroom. My nearly 25 years of experience in academic advising gives me a perspective on the discussions about supporting our student athletes that faculty may not have. I have already been able to contribute to discussions and raise issues from the academic advising perspective and would like to continue doing so after my current term as UCUE liaison ends.

Please provide a brief statement about your past efforts and/or future plans to contribute to a collaborative, respectful work environment and to uphold the values of integrity and accountability that are central to shared governance.

I have served as an ex-officio member of the College of Engineering's Undergraduate Studies Committee (EUSC) since 2008. In this role, I support the academic governance process for our twelve undergraduate majors, and assist program faculty in preparing their curricular requests to move from the college into university governance committees. My academic advising experience has proven to be helpful in discussions, and faculty have often consulted with me as they develop courses and curriculum. I have developed a rapport with college faculty, and pride myself on creating a civil and inclusive environment on the committee. I firmly believe that every voice should be heard, and strive to make sure that happens when I am at the table.



Amanda Idema (Page 2 of 2)

(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 thoroughly enjoyed my time serving on university governance committees. I enjoy engaging in discussions with faculty from across campus, and very much strive to uphold the importance of academic governance.



Rebecca Malouin (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Osteopathic Medicine, Other

Academic Appointment & Rank: Professor – Fixed Term

Initial MSU Appointment: 2002

Previous Academic Governance Service: Steering Committee

Also Applied To: At-Large Member of the Steering Committee



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

I currently serve on the Athletic Council in the role of chair. I, along with several colleagues, have worked to improve the Council through new university bylaws, working rules, and a new orientation for Council members. I look forward to additional improvements by working with the FAR to identify best practices at other Big 10 and like universities. Given the tremendous change in collegiate athletics over the past decade, this Council is increasingly important in ensuring that student athletes are able to access academically in a safe and healthy environment. As a graduate program director, I have known many student athletes in our programs. This Council provides an additional support for these amazing athlete scholars.

Please provide a brief statement about your past efforts and/or future plans to contribute to a collaborative, respectful work environment and to uphold the values of integrity and accountability that are central to shared governance.

Having served on several areas of shared governance including as a member of the Athletic Council, as an at-large member of the Steering Committee, and as a member of the University Committee on International Studies and Programs, I feel that my service is collaborative, respectful and accountable. I currently serve as chair of the Athletic Council and previously served as vice chair of the Steering Committee. I believe that being elected to these roles by peers within these communities is a reflection of my collaborative, team-based approach to shared governance. I look forward to working with peers to identify areas for continuous quality improvement in the university in service to our faculty, staff, and students.



Rebecca Malouin (Page 2 of 2)

(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 would be happy to serve on multiple bodies – and really have no preference in either of the academic bodies I have selected. I thank you for this opportunity and appreciate the work done by the committee in reviewing these applications.



Kevin McGraw (Page 1 of 4)

Unit: College of Natural Science

Academic Appointment & Rank: Professor – Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 2024

Previous Academic Governance Service: N/A

Also Applied To: N/A



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

I am a passionate life-long supporter of the student-athlete collegiate experience, and my previous, extensive academic leadership opportunities and service experience in university student-athletics prepare me well to serve on the MSU Athletic Council. I was an NCAA student athlete, playing collegiate baseball at St. Lawrence University from 1993-1997. While earning my PhD in Behavioral Biology at Cornell University, I served as assistant coach of their Division I baseball team from 2001-2003. Soon after settling in as assistant professor in my first faculty position at Arizona State University, I demonstrated my professional commitment to student-athletics by beginning service on the Sun Devil Athletics Board (2009-2014) – the equivalent committee to the MSU Athletic Council. My devotion to and leadership work with this group then afforded me the opportunity to be named as Chair of the Sun Devil Athletics Board for 10 years (2014-2024). I stayed in this Chair role until I moved to my new position as professor and department chairperson in the Department of Integrative Biology at Michigan State University in summer 2024.

As Sun Devil Athletics Board Chair, I launched and led many initiatives centered around student-athlete success and well-being. To our monthly board meetings, I regularly invited key supporters of student-athletics at the institution, ranging from mental-health experts (e.g. Aaron Krasnow, Director of ASU Counseling Services) to leaders of the “Championship Life Program”, to generate dialogues between university leaders, board members, and athletics staff on vital, holistic mechanisms for supporting student-athletes in all they do (e.g. sport, academics, university representatives).



Kevin McGraw (Page 2 of 4)

Our board members and I also made semesterly visits to meetings of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, in order to hear about and discuss emerging issues from the student-athlete's perspectives and partner on projects such as revisions to missed-class/attendance policies and student fees paid towards athletics. In 2017, I created a new academic-support program called Faculty Athletics Ambassadors (design document available upon request), which provided faculty-level, discipline-specific expertise and guidance to prospective student-athletes for the men's football team. I also served annually since 2014 on the student-athlete scholarship committee in Sun Devil Athletics, which permitted me to work closely with the Faculty Athletics Representative to nominate, support, and reward high-performing student-athletes, both during their years of competitive eligibility (e.g. ASU Kajikawa Award Winners) and in their post-graduate pursuits. Also, since early 2022, we hosted at our board meetings an annual discussion of rapid changes to NIL and transfer-portal policies, which permitted our university and athletics department leaders to stay both compliant with these new approaches as well as informed on the opportunities for our student-athletes to benefit in this new era in intercollegiate athletics (including policy development for Alston funding for academic performance). Last, on the academic side, I led annual exit surveys of student-athletes who had exhausted their eligibility, to provide critical, direct, external feedback to the athletic director, sport administrators, and head coaches for future program/development improvements.

In sum, I hope, from the above highlights, that I have sufficiently conveyed the depths of my experiences in university leadership and Division I athletics, which have prepared me for this opportunity to serve on the MSU Athletic Council. I am excited to work with this group on emerging student-athlete issues at MSU, in the Big 10 Conference, and across the NCAA at large. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Please provide a brief statement about your past efforts and/or future plans to contribute to a collaborative, respectful work environment and to uphold the values of integrity and accountability that are central to shared governance.

In my department chair position at MSU (in Integrative Biology), we use a central guiding code of ethics and conduct (<https://integrativebiology.natsci.msu.edu/about/code-of-ethics-professional-conduct.aspx>) to foster a shared, respectful work environment among all colleagues in the department.



Kevin McGraw (Page 3 of 4)

We highly value our department's Culture and Community Committee, as a bylaws-mandated standing committee in our department - and regularly deploy this group to review procedures and develop guidelines, whether in research labs, classroom settings, or regarding our everyday interactions.

Integrity and accountability are inherent features of the 6 core values we share in our department (Principled, Considerate, Respectful, Collaborative, Aware, Informed; <https://integrativebiology.natsci.msu.edu/about/culture.aspx>). As our first core value (Principled), we are committed to scientific integrity in all aspects of our work, exemplified by conducting well-documented, replicable research, and ensuring the humane treatment of research animals. And in our second core value (Considerate), accountability is featured, in our assertion that "We are committed to considering the needs of others, exemplified by kindness and professionalism, such as respecting deadlines".

I have long demonstrated my commitment to academic integrity, both in my research, instructional, and service work as a tenure-track faculty member since 2004 and as chair of the Sun Devil Athletics Board at Arizona State University for 10 years. In my professor role, for example, I have served on committees (e.g. Institutional Animal Care and Use for 3 years) and led programs (e.g. SOLUR Undergraduate Research Program for 6 years) where academic ethics were at the core of the protocol reviews and core curriculum, respectively. Importantly, as SDAB chair, I was voting member (one of five) on the university's Student Athlete Code of Conduct Committee, which involved monthly oversight of student-athlete compliance (e.g. code-violation review, sanction recommendations). As part of these activities, from 2020-2021, I, in close consultation with the FAR, led the committee in a full revision of ASU's Student Athlete Code of Conduct Manual, which gave me intimate familiarity with conference and NCAA policies and procedures. On this committee, I also annually participated in rules-education training for new head coaches and at new student-athlete orientation.

I am also a strong proponent of shared governance and live this out in my role as department chair at MSU, where I involve my many leadership groups (e.g. Leadership Team, Faculty Affairs Committee) in decision-making and idea-generating opportunities and routinely include our faculty body at large in votes on key department initiatives.



Kevin McGraw (Page 4 of 4)

Thus, as I did in my prior decade and a half of work on the athletics council at Arizona State University, I will carry these principles of collaboration, respect, integrity, and accountability with me in all work on the MSU Athletic Council.



Dean Rehberger (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Arts and Letters, College of Social Science

Academic Appointment & Rank: Associate Professor – Tenured

Initial MSU Appointment: 1991

Previous Academic Governance Service: University Committee on Academic Governance

Also Applied To: N/A



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

As a former college athlete at the University of Michigan (wrestling), I have long been committed to supporting the well-being and mental health of student-athletes. Today, these challenges are more complex than ever. Balancing academics and athletics, students must navigate NIL agreements, personal branding, transfer portals, and the demands of social media. All factors that intensify time pressures and mental health strain. Unequal access to resources across sports, gender, and athlete profiles further creates significant intra-team and inter-team pressures.

My experience as chair of UCAG has uniquely positioned me to understand the needs of the Athletic Council (AC) and Faculty Athletics Representatives (FARs). During my tenure, I helped revise AC bylaws and conducted an extensive study of ACs and FARs across Big Ten and R1 institutions, focusing on effective reporting models and job descriptions. This work included conversations with an AC chair and FAR at a similar R1 university and a thorough review of resources such as dozens of reports from other Big Ten universities and the NCAA FAR Handbook. While I am committed to supporting all sports, I have a particular interest in Olympic sports.

As a member of the AC, my goal would be to leverage this experience to promote equitable, supportive environments that enable student-athletes to thrive both on and off the field.



Dean Rehberger (Page 2 of 2)

Please provide a brief statement about your past efforts and/or future plans to contribute to a collaborative, respectful work environment and to uphold the values of integrity and accountability that are central to shared governance.

I am fully committed to academic governance. During my time as Chair of the University Committee on Academic Governance, I was placed in an interesting position when the Secretary for Academic Governance stepped down unexpectedly. I with the Chair of the Senate and a remarkable graduate student (serving as interim SAG), took over the position and not only prepared the way for hiring a new SAG, but reorganized the office of the SAG, did a complete review of bylaws, revised committee reporting processes, and did an extended study of Academic Governance at other Big Ten schools. I greatly enjoyed my time in the position and worked well with the Board, Senate, and Provost's Office.

(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.

At this particular juncture and given my experience and background, the AC seems the most appropriate, but I would help out as needed.



Jake Rowan (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Osteopathic Medicine

Academic Appointment & Rank: Associate Professor – Fixed Term

Initial MSU Appointment: 2004

Previous Academic Governance Service: N/A

Also Applied To: N/A



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 to assist the student athletes, athletic department, and university administration in ensuring that the welfare and competitiveness of our student athletes remains a top priority while maintaining the academic integrity of our institution. I recognize that our athletic programs promote school pride, beautify our campus, and open avenues for communication with many of our stakeholders. As a university physician and associate professor involved in treating patients, teaching, research, and administrative work, I have experience balancing individual welfare concerns and the academic needs of our institution. I will provide my knowledge, skills and abilities, to create a positive and successful learning experience for all students including our student athletes. We should strive to offer a balanced educational experience with high expectations that challenge and motivate each student athlete within a safe and caring environment.

Please provide a brief statement about your past efforts and/or future plans to contribute to a collaborative, respectful work environment and to uphold the values of integrity and accountability that are central to shared governance.

Accepting, hiring, and supporting people from a wide variety of backgrounds that are willing to work together in a respectful environment focused on integrity and accountability is not only the right thing to do, but it also makes our university stronger. When we unite our shared values with our individual differences and perspectives, we create an educational community that is dynamic and responsive to any challenge. As a military veteran and physician whose medical specialty area is physical medicine and rehabilitation, I am very comfortable with contributing to and advancing a collaborative and respectful working and learning environment based on integrity and accountability.



Jake Rowan (Page 2 of 2)

I believe we should strive to bring in and support students, staff, and faculty from a wide variety of backgrounds who share these ideals. During my time in the military and as an MSU faculty member my family has lived and worked abroad, experiencing new languages and cultures. This opened my mind and heart to the importance of a supportive environment based on respect, integrity, and accountability. My family has also worked with MSU's international students and faculty through MSU's Community Volunteers for International Programs organization (CVIP). This program is a wonderful resource that has provided me with insight into how students and faculty from other countries and cultures see our university and the community.

(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 a physician at MSU I have a very public facing job. This allows me to share in the experiences, thoughts, and perspectives that the community outside of MSU has about our university. I hope to bring that knowledge to the Athletic Council.

