

# **University Military Education Advisory Committee**

Election Slate

University Committee on Academic Governance

February 11, 2026



## **Douglas Bessette (Page 1 of 1)**

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**Unit:** College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Associate Professor – Tenured

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2017

**Previous Academic Governance Service:** University Military Education Advisory Committee

**Also Applied To:**



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

I am a US Army veteran, having served 4 years as a M1A1 armor crew-member between 1997 and 2001. I also served on the UMEAC previously, with my last term ending in 2022. I enjoyed serving on the committee and believe I provided and would again provide fair and honest judgement of candidates and curricular changes.

**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 on my department's Faculty Advisory Committee, the first non-tenured Assistant Professor to serve on that committee in my department. I was elected because people know I have integrity and am transparent and honest. I've also served on numerous search committees, and have always taken great care to meaningfully contribute and go above and beyond what is required.

**(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 am willing to serve on multiple academic governance bodies and would like the opportunity to do so.



## **Robert Cermak (Page 1 of 1)**

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**Unit:** College of Osteopathic Medicine

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Assistant Professor – Fixed Term Faculty

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2024

**Previous Academic Governance Service:**

**Also Applied To:**



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

Prior to joining Michigan State University, I taught in the Master Educator Course (MEC) at the University of Louisville. MEC was a collaboration with U.S. Army Cadet Command to train active duty commissioned and non-commissioned officers to teach in ROTC programs around the country. From 2021-2023, I advised and taught more than 100 current and future military science professors and instructors stationed at dozens of colleges and universities. I would be thrilled to support military service members again on the University Military Education Advisory Committee.

**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.**

While I haven't served on any committees in the two years since joining MSU, I served on several department- and college-level committees in my prior role at the University of Louisville. I believe that shared governance, interdisciplinary collaboration, and mutual accountability are core strengths of public higher education. I look forward to engaging in this important work once again



## **Nate J. Clason (Page 1 of 1)**

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**Unit:** Office of Teaching and Learning Innovation

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Academic Specialist

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2015

**Previous Academic Governance Service:**

**Also Applied To:** University Appeals Board



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

In my previous role in the Office of Undergraduate Education, I was charged with supporting the departments of Military Science and Aerospace Studies. I supported these departments primarily in regard to curriculum, university policies and procedures, and leadership and personnel transitions. I recognize the importance of this longstanding partnership between the U.S. military and MSU and would be happy to apply my education, background, and experience in support of the flourishing of the programs and opportunities they offer to MSU students.

**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 had the privilege of working closely with colleagues at MSU who demonstrate strong work ethic, integrity, selflessness, care for others, and a healthy commitment to work-life balance. Their example has shaped how I approach my own work—whether collaborating with departments, colleges, and governance bodies to review and revise university policies or leading a working group to implement a new university-wide system. From them, I've learned that our best results often come from (a) building diverse collaboratives, (b) setting meaningful goals, (c) achieving tangible outcomes, (d) within a reasonable timeframe, and (e) holding one another accountable for follow-through. Although I am not faultless –especially on the days of great disappointment and frustration- I intend for my work to be marked with these types of qualities that make our university great.



## **Patrick D. Huck MD, MBA, FACS (Page 1 of 2)**

**Unit:** College of Osteopathic Medicine

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Assistant Professor - Fixed-Term Faculty

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2025

**Previous Academic Governance Service:**

**Also Applied To:** At-Large Members of Steering Committee, Academic Hearing Pool, Student Faculty Staff Hearing Board, University Appeals Board



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

I am currently a civilian general surgeon assistant professor within MSU COM. I had served in the US Air Force as an active duty, academic general surgeon at the Uniformed Services University at the rank of Major from 2012-2016. Prior to that, from 2002-2012, I served as an officer in an Inactive Ready Reserve capacity as a medical student and general surgery resident. During my time, I have experienced both military education in the military setting, as well as collaboration between civilian education institutions and the military. I look forward to supporting service members, both active and prior, through educational opportunities. The challenging political climate means that the university has increased responsibilities to ensure that service members are adequately prepared for both military service and civilian life.

**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.**

At my previous institutions, I have led cross-department, interdisciplinary collaboration to create accredited programs in cancer care, developed a trauma center as a Trauma Medical Director, and oversaw multiple quality programs as a Medical Director of Quality within the Military Health System and Chair of Surgery Quality within civilian hospitals. I advocate and share communication skills within the health care setting, including TeamSTEPPS and PCCCI, that are used to allow individuals at any level communicate concern and perform service recovery. I plan to implement these communication tools within MSU Healthcare clinics and encourage medical students to feel comfortable utilizing these tools for collaboration and maintaining a respectful work environment.



## **Patrick D. Huck MD, MBA, FACS (Page 2 of 2)**

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Changes within the federal government have been challenging the integrity and accountability of many universities, which means we must be hypervigilant in protecting our students and the image of 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.**

I am willing to serve on multiple committees, as long as they do not conflict with each other. My preferences are to serve where the university would find me to be the most valuable.



## **Kristin Janka (Page 1 of 2)**

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**Unit:** Honors College

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Academic Specialist

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2006

**Previous Academic Governance Service:**

**Also Applied To:** At-Large Members of Steering Committee, Athletic Council, University Advisory Committee on the Naming of Buildings and Facilities



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

As Assistant Dean for the Honors College, I am very interested in understanding programming and challenges for MSU military students. I would like to increase the number of military students applying for awards through the Distinguished Student Awards Office (DSAO) especially the Voyager, Goldwater, Truman and Rhodes scholarships which allow MSU additional spaces for military vets. Patrick Forystek with the Student Veteran Resource Center is on my DSAO Advisory Council. I have experience serving on national committees and for the past two years I have served on the National Association of Fellowship Directors (NAFA) Governance Committee and am currently the Chair of the Bylaws Subcommittee. I really enjoy the details and procedures of governance and that is one of the reasons I am applying for this position. My schedule is flexible and I am available for the monthly meetings. I served on MSU's Academic Specialists Advisory Committee from 2015-2018 and was the Secretary from 2016-2017.

**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 an extremely collaborative person and committed to a respectful work environment and the values of integrity and accountability. I feel many perspectives and opinions are important and valuable.



## **Kristin Janka (Page 2 of 2)**

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These values are evident through my roles as Co-Chair of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Fellowship Advisors Group (since 2017) with Melissa Vert from University of Michigan; Co-Chair of the NAFA Great Lakes Region Fellowship Directors Group with Kevin Doherty from University of Chicago and Melissa Vert from U-M, and Co-Chair and Organizer of the NAFA New Advisor Workshop, a 3-day national conference in Chicago at the BTAA Center, and my role as Chair of the NAFA Bylaws Subcommittee.

**(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.**

If possible, I would prefer to serve as an At-Large Member of Steering Committee but I am open to other positions.



## **Leo Kempel (Page 1 of 1)**

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**Unit:** College of Engineering

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Professor - Tenured

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 1998

**Previous Academic Governance Service:** University Committee on Graduate Studies

**Also Applied To:**



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

I have has a long history of collaboration with US military agencies. In particular, I have been a member of the Department of Air Force Scientific Advisory Committee since 2011 (with some breaks). I have has cadets in my courses and mentored two cadets through MS degree after their commissioning.

**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 was a long time administrator in the College of Engineering (2006-2024). During that time I worked with college- and university-level academic governance on many projects. I required and expected a respectful work environment in the college and when employees did create an adverse environment, I took administrative steps to correct the issue.

**(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 think my experiences will make a positive contribution to the committee since I can bring the perspective of faculty member as well as former administrator.



## Tianyi Kou-Herrema (Page 1 of 2)

**Unit:** Arts and Letters

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Academic Specialist

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2025

**Previous Academic Governance Service:**

**Also Applied To:** Academic Hearing Pool, Student Faculty Staff Hearing Board, Police and Public Safety Oversight Committee, University Appeals Board



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

I would like to serve on the University Military Education Advisory Committee because I believe in ensuring that the academic experience reflects the needs and perspectives of all students, including those who have served in the military. While I do not have direct military experience, I have taught student veterans in my courses and have observed the challenges they face in my classrooms. During the curriculum design process, many educators on campus focus primarily on students who have gone through the traditional schooling routes. Educators try to make the teaching materials more relatable to students' lives while sometimes ignoring the fact that not all students share the same learning routes or life experiences. Beyond the classroom, I have also practiced sports alongside veteran teammates at MSU. Hearing their stories outside of the classroom settings motivated me to advocate for stronger support for a stronger support system. Serving on this committee would allow me to first learn more about what is happening behind the scenes when it comes to military staff appointment within higher education, and potentially offer recommendations that help military-affiliated students succeed and feel valued within our Spartan community.

**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 work at MSU, I have always valued collaboration and respect, whether co-designing training materials for incoming graduate teaching assistants or working with colleagues to support student success. I believe in active listening and clear, direct communication, which is reflected in my current role as a research coordinator, where I listen to researchers' needs and clearly communicate what can and cannot be achieved.



## Tianyi Kou-Herrema (Page 2 of 2)

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As I navigate shared governance practices within higher education, I am learning to follow established policies. Looking ahead, I hope to help build spaces where all voices are heard and decisions reflect our shared values as Spartans.

**(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 hope to be selected for at least one committee and would be happy to serve on up to three. I have listed my preferences below (from most preferred to least):

1. Student-Faculty-Staff Hearing Board
2. Department of Police and Public Safety Oversight Committee
3. University Student Appeals Board
4. University Military Education Advisory Committee
5. Academic Hearing Pool



## **Sheng-mei Ma (Page 1 of 2)**

**Unit:** College of Arts and Letters

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Professor - Tenured

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 1995

**Previous Academic Governance Service:** University Committee on Undergraduate Education

**Also Applied To:** Academic Hearing Pool



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

I don't think many of my colleagues in Arts & Letters have ever served in the military, unlike me. I served two years of compulsory military service in Taiwan before coming to the US for graduate studies in Anglo-American Lit. Among other pieces, I wrote about the military experience in "Forgotten Taiwanese Veteran's Memory of Compulsory Service." *Journal of Veteran Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2020, pp. 23–29. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i3.210> or

<https://journal-veterans-studies.org/articles/10.21061/jvs.v6i3.210/>

or <https://journal-veterans-studies.org/14/volume/6/issue/3/>

The postwar Taiwanese military is modeled exactly on the US military, from uniform to discipline. In addition, education in Taiwan was based on the military paradigm, with traces of the Japanese colonization and the US neocolonialism. The military is also a pivotal symbol of US supremacy, increasingly challenged by the PLA. The Taiwan strait is a potential flashpoint.

**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 on the hearing committees numerous times and have worked well with colleagues and student representatives.



## **Sheng-mei Ma (Page 2 of 2)**

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**(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.**

### **Short Bio**

Sheng-mei Ma is Professor of English at Michigan State University in Michigan, USA, specializing in Asian Diaspora culture and East-West comparative studies. He is the author of over a dozen books, including Chinese Serial (2026); Cultural Bifocals (2025); China Pop! (2024); The Tao of S (2022); Off-White (2020); Sinophone-Anglophone Cultural Duet (2017); The Last Isle (2015); Alienglish (2014); Asian Diaspora and East-West Modernity (2012); Diaspora Literature and Visual Culture (2011); East-West Montage (2007); The Deathly Embrace (2000); Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literatures (1998). Co-editor of five books and special issues, Transnational Narratives (2018) and Doing English in Asia (2016) among them, he also published a collection of poetry in Chinese, Thirty Left and Right (三十左右). For his public-facing causerie of late, search on medium.com.



## **Kathleen Oberst (Page 1 of 1)**

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**Unit:** College of Human Medicine

**Academic Appointment & Rank:** Academic Specialist

**Initial MSU Appointment:** 2008

**Previous Academic Governance Service:** University Committee for the Library

**Also Applied To:**



**Please explain why you are interested in serving on the University Military Education Advisory Committee and what qualifies you to do so.**

I am a current member and would be willing to continue serving on this committee.

**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.**

As Director of IHP, I hold our team responsible for respectful and collegial interactions. We maintain unit mission and vision statements and remind all team members of this through regular communications.

**(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 currently serve as Secretary to the Committee of Libraries.

