

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

8 July 2026

Hello MSU Faculty,

I hope you are all well. I am sorry for disturbing your summer, especially if you are not on contract now. However, as the Chair of Faculty Senate, I need to borrow a bit of your time to update you on a few important events at MSU this summer and to ask you to vote on two resolutions since you are a member of the Academic Congress. The Academic Congress, per our bylaws, consists of all tenure system faculty, librarians, fixed-term faculty, health professions faculty, FRIB faculty, and academic specialists—the complete body of MSU faculty. The Academic Congress is the direct democracy body that serves “as a forum for the dissemination and exchange of ideas and information between the faculty and the administration.”

As outlined in our bylaws, the elected faculty members of the Steering Committee have elected to call an asynchronous meeting of the Academic Congress, so that we may conduct an electronic vote on two resolutions. Before I ask you to vote on these resolutions, I wanted to bring you up to date on events that you might have missed.



Office of Academic Governance

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Many of us have been here since 2016 when the revelations about former MSU physician Larry Nassar started to come out. From this came a succession of presidents, disagreement between members of the Board of Trustees about how to best address this scandal, and an institutional reckoning that is still not yet complete. This history is relevant because when President Kevin Guskiewicz took over in March 2024, he became the seventh president MSU had in just over six years. This list included the only permanent president during that time, Samuel Stanley, who stayed a little over three years, but left claiming he was stymied in his agenda by Board of Trustees infighting and conflict.

A little over two years after President Guskiewicz took the job, on May 17th, 2026, the MSU Board of Trustees scheduled a special meeting. At this meeting, they both offered a large raise to President Guskiewicz and voted to change their own Code of Ethics and Conduct in an effort to end some of the public squabbling that had been notable in recent years. Both measures were designed, at least in part, to keep President Guskiewicz in East Lansing.

Even with these actions, on May 27th, President Guskiewicz was introduced as the 16th president of Clemson University. In his farewell letter to the MSU community, he noted that “effective university leadership requires a shared commitment to collaboration, trust and a forward-looking vision,” but claimed that the MSU Board of Trustees had created an “unsustainable situation” for him. In subsequent days, he recorded messages to Clemson constituencies from his Hannah Administrative Building office and was quoted as saying he has “known for many years how special Clemson University is” and was “honored by the opportunity to build on the extraordinary

tradition of excellence and to help lead the University into the future.” MSU seemed to be headed for yet another leadership transition, especially when President Guskiewicz’s announcement was quickly followed by the news that Athletic Director J Batt was departing for the University of Kentucky.

Meanwhile, the Board put out a statement on June 2nd, saying they would “develop criteria and expectations for interim leadership.” After this statement, there were no further public announcements about the status of the presidency until on July 6th, 2026, everyone on the MSU email list received a communication from President Guskiewicz where he stated he had “decided to remain at Michigan State University and continue serving as your president.” In the email, President Guskiewicz noted that “some members of our community may have questions about my commitment” especially since, he also noted, “Stability matters. Trust matters. Collaboration matters.”

Following this email, the Board of Trustees put out a press release, also on July 6th. In it, Board Chair Brianna Scott was quoted as saying that she “always knew that [President Guskiewicz’s] heart was with MSU.” The release also noted that the president would receive a 55% raise to a salary of \$1.5 million per year.

That is a recap of some of the distant and recent history involving the Board and our office of the president. For too long now, the outside perception of MSU is that we are a mis- managed institution and the record of Board infighting and seven presidents since 2018 suggests that there is some truth to that claim. However, we, the faculty, know that MSU as an institution is well-managed in many ways. Our colleges, departments, and programs are well run, highly regarded nationally and internationally, and continue to faithfully carry out our core academic mission. Students love their Spartan experience because of the wonderful folks teaching in our classrooms, leading world-class research operations, and supporting experiential learning on campus, across the state, and around the world. We have improved the campus climate in the last decade and while there is still work to be done, the welcoming Spartan spirit here on campus is because WE, the faculty (and our staff colleagues) have pulled together and carried on DESPITE the administrative, political, and pandemic headwinds we have faced.

However, the outside perception of MSU matters. As does trust WITHIN the institution between faculty and the administration and between faculty and the Board of Trustees.

Should we, the faculty, trust a president who turned down a large raise to stay at our institution, only to change his mind weeks later after declaring his allegiance to a new university? Can we trust a Board of Trustees that would not only have this president back, but offered him a large raise despite his public acceptance of another job? Can we REALLY afford to have another national news story about MSU’s misgovernance?

The two resolutions you will be voting on as a member of the Academic Congress ask you to weigh these issues of trust and confidence. One will ask about the president. The other will ask about the Board.

The Academic Congress is only called in extraordinary times, and the events of the summer of 2026 certainly qualify. I hope you will join me in carefully considering the resolutions that the Steering Committee have put forward.

Through this all, I anticipate a great 2026-27 academic year because my faith is in the individual and collective greatness of the MSU faculty (and our amazing and similarly excellent students and staff).

In solidarity. Go Green!

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