

At-Large Members of The Steering Committee

Application Packet

University Committee on Academic Governance

April 8, 2021



Background

The Michigan State University faculty elects five faculty members to serve as representatives on the Steering Committee, which also includes the chairpersons of the University-Level Standing Committees, the President, the Provost, and students. At-Large Members also serve on Faculty Senate and University Council.

At-Large Members identify challenges faculty face, explore potential solutions to those challenges, voice them to the Steering Committee, and help enact Steering Committee decisions. They also provide oversight for the Office of Academic Governance and leadership for university-level academic governance as a whole. The role is time-intensive but influential.

At-Large Members serve two-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. There are three vacancies for the 2021-2023 term.

The Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the Steering Committee and the Faculty Senate are elected by the Faculty Senate from among the five At-Large Members. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson hold those roles for one year.

Per Section 3.4.1.2.2.1. of the *Bylaws for Academic Governance*, the University Committee on Academic Governance solicits recommendations from all faculty and develops a slate of nominees for Faculty Senate to endorse or reject. Following Faculty Senate's endorsement, the ballot is sent to all voting-eligible faculty. This packet contains the applications the Office of Academic Governance received.

Current At-Large Members

1. Jennifer Johnson | College of Human Medicine | Professor – Tenured | 2018–2020, 2020–2022
2. Andrea Kepsel | Libraries | Librarian II – Continuing | 2020–2022
3. Stephanie Anthony^{*†} | University Outreach and Engagement (Office of College Access Initiatives) | Specialist (Outreach) – Fixed-Term | 2019–2021
4. Megan Donahue^{*†} | College of Natural Science (Physics & Astronomy) | Professor – Tenured | 2019-2021
5. Anna Pegler-Gordon^{*} | James Madison College | Professor – Tenured | 2019-2021

* Term expired

† Applied and eligible for re-election



Slate of Nominees

The University Committee on Academic Governance has nominated the following six individuals (presented in random order) to fill the three open positions:

1. Megan Donahue | College of Natural Science (Physics and Astronomy) | Professor - Tenured
2. Jack Lipton | College of Human Medicine (Translational Neuroscience) | Professor - Tenured
3. Karen Kelly-Blake | College of Human Medicine (Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences; Department of Medicine) | Associate Professor - Fixed-Term
4. Nicolas Gisholt | College of Social Science (Center for Integrative Studies) | Specialist - Continuing
5. Stephanie Anthony | University Outreach and Engagement (Office of College Access Initiatives) | Specialist (Outreach) – Fixed-Term
6. d'Ann de Simone | College of Arts and Letters (Art, Art History, and Design) | Associate Professor – Tenured

Action Required

The Faculty Senate must endorse or reject this slate of nominees. If endorsed, the slate will be presented to all voting-eligible faculty and academic staff for election. If rejected, the slate will be returned to the University Committee on Academic Governance for re-submission.

All nominees have agreed to serve if elected. The nominees' responses appear verbatim on the pages that follow.



Megan Donahue (Page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Natural Science

Department: Physics and Astronomy

Academic Appointment/Rank: University Distinguished Professor - Tenured

Year of Initial MSU Appointment: 2003

Previous Academic Governance Service: The Steering Committee, Faculty Senate



Why do you want to serve as an At-Large Member?

I am just now completing my first term as an At-Large Member of the Steering Committee. It took me a little time to get up to speed on how MSU governance worked at the university level, so I feel like a small investment has been made by MSU and my colleagues on the Steering Committee that can be paid off with a second term of service. I do believe it is important to include new people, so in addition to thinking it's a good idea to serve one more term, I also think a second term should be my last term, and I plan to step aside at that point. I am still deeply involved in teaching students. I teach large lecture classes regularly, in addition to advanced classes for majors and graduate students. I have an active astronomy research program at MSU, and so I bring forward the concerns of instructors, staff, and researchers. My service work for national and international organizations such as the American Astronomical Society and the National Academy of Science provide outside perspectives. I believe that MSU faculty governance is working to improve itself and to improve MSU, towards taking real and substantive actions towards improving inclusion and belonging, and giving opportunity to share the voices for everyone in our MSU community. I know we have a long road ahead, to address the inequities made more stark by the pandemic, inequities that have been there the whole time. I feel like we are making progress, but there is a lot to do.

Describe any special qualifications, experiences, or leadership roles that support your nomination.

I have served my professional organization, the American Astronomical Society, as President-elect (2017), President (2018-2020), past-President (2021), and elected Councilor/Trustee (2006-2009). I regularly served on national science advisory committees in the capacity of advising NASA, NSF, Carnegie Foundation, and the Dept. of Energy and on international advisory committees for the International Astronomical Union and ESA. At MSU, I was previously a member of the Dean's Faculty Advisory Committee for the College of Natural Sciences, and of ad-hoc committees for that College. I am and have been the Principal Investigator for NASA research grants. I regularly teach large-lecture courses in astronomy, and I am committed to public outreach of the science we do at MSU to the state of Michigan and beyond.

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Megan Donahue (page 2 of 2)

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 coordinated a national astronomical meeting of the AAS in January 2020, and coordinated events with indigenous Hawaiians who opposed the construction of a new telescope on Maunakea observatory together with local Hawaiian astronomers. I am proud of that only because I was discouraged from attempting to do it, but opted to use my leadership position and whatever credibility I had to make it happen. That the meeting was at all successful was the result of many people coming together to make it happen, including the participants, many of them young people, meeting and hearing the perspectives of many people, not mine to credit. But that awakened me to the sheer effort, the emotional work required to make even incremental progress, and the resistance that one encounters even trying to do what seems so obviously right. My future plans are to continue to use my position to stand in there, when that is the right thing to do, to become more aware of the built-in systemic biases that are invisible to many of us who have passed through the system. We as faculty are a privileged set, we are here because somehow the system let us through, and it is crucial for us to take a look back at that same system and ask some very hard questions and be prepared to hear some very difficult answers.

(Optional) Use this space to add anything else you would like those considering your application to know.

I am also a parent, of now college-age children, who grew up in Michigan and attended the local school system. I have found that my children and my students together have taught me a lot about what it is like to be an 18 year old in the 21st century, and I am grateful to them. My own beginnings were on a farm in Nebraska, sharing a party line (!), and an educational path that took me from that farm to MIT, University of Colorado/Boulder, and jobs both West/East Coast before landing for good here at MSU. I'm glad to have found a long-time home here, and I look forward to paying a little something back to this community at this stage.



Jack Lipton (page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Human Medicine

Department: Translational Neuroscience

Academic Appointment/Rank: Professor - Tenured

Year of Initial MSU Appointment: 2009

Previous Academic Governance Service: Faculty Senate, University Committee on Academic Governance



Why do you want to serve as an At-Large Member?

Academic governance at MSU, regardless of the great intentions and efforts of our elected representatives, does not translate often enough to the practical benefit of faculty. This is a problem of governance bodies adhering to accepted practice over written processes, and a long tradition of the administration using shared governance to backfill and endorse decisions already made. This results in a weakened shared governance apparatus running parallel to university administration, disconnected from actual decision making. This drives apathy among faculty who do not see academic governance as a vehicle for true progress.

Academic governance is the tool whereby we operationalize faculty priorities within the university. As an at-large member I will focus on the Steering Committee's ability to drive agendas for the University Council, Faculty Senate, and standing committees to address priority issues regarding job security, benefits, tenure, the growth of fixed-term faculty that are afforded fewer protections, caregiver challenges, and meaningful structural changes to support diversification of faculty. We need to collectively transform academic governance bodies into places of action, rather than places where we passively listen to reports. We also need to take responsibility for our collective futures as informed activists to improve this great institution.

Describe any special qualifications, experiences, or leadership roles that support your nomination.

Over the past year, I have contributed to enacting process reform in our College Advisory Council. It was a representative body that operated on precedent rather than its governing charge and did not assert its rights, and responsibilities under the college and university bylaws. It is now an engaged, activist council and true partner with the college administration.

Through my role as vice-chair for the University Committee on Academic Governance, I worked to operationalize a new review process to speed college bylaws reviews and break the years-long backlog of reviews that will empower colleges to improve academic governance.

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Jack Lipton (page 2 of 2)

I am the founding chair of the Department of Translational Neuroscience which was established in 2009. I have worked with my faculty colleagues to develop a robust, transparent system of governance, and acted as an advocate for my unit at the college and university level. Our unit faculty have high satisfaction and morale that is a product of our shared success.

Finally, I lead the scientific team that conceived of, developed, advocated for, and operationalized the Spartan Spit Program (Covid-19 Early Detection Program) for MSU. This program has become a national model for innovative, cost-effective, faculty-led solutions in response to the covid-19 pandemic. This demonstrates my track record of successfully working with the administration to quickly scale an initiative critical to the collective well-being and safety of our university community.

Collectively, these accomplishments from just the last year demonstrate that I know how to take aspirational concepts and turn them into results. I would bring the same level of passion, and accountability as an at-large member.

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.

We all need to consider ourselves lifelong learners with respect to identifying, calling out and addressing systemic issues that underrepresented and marginalized people face. As a department chair, I have wrestled with communicating and resolving differences among those experiencing the sting of implicit bias and microaggressions and those who appear wholly unaware of their own transgressions. I have seen the added pressure of the university service burden of those from underrepresented backgrounds layered on the greater professional and personal challenges that many of us never personally experience.

Nationally, I serve as chair of the NIH panel that reviews the F99 diversity fellowship awards in the neurosciences. The program is designed to promote the academic career pathway and increase the likelihood that a diverse, qualified cohort of scientists will join the professoriate, thereby strengthening the academy. In this role, I also work on refining the award criteria, advocating for the award's expansion, and improving the process for selecting recipients.

As an at-large member, I will continue my commitment to advocating for marginalized and underrepresented people. I will seek their counsel and make their causes all our causes.



Karen Kelly-Blake (page 1 of 2)


Unit: College of Human Medicine

Department: Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences; Department of Medicine

Academic Appointment/Rank: Associate Professor - Fixed-Term

Year of Initial MSU Appointment: 2014

Previous Academic Governance Service: Faculty Senate, University Committee for the Library



Why do you want to serve as an At-Large Member?

I currently serve as the CHM representative to the Faculty Senate. I want to serve as an At-Large Member because academic governance is a verb—it is what we do. As a Black woman, Associate Professor, and Assistant Director in the Center for Ethics, I want to do the good and necessary work to advance the University's mission.


Describe any special qualifications, experiences, or leadership roles that support your nomination.

I am currently the Assistant Director in the Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences in the College of Human Medicine. I have served on multiple college committees including Admissions, RPT, Conflict of Interest, and College Advisory Council. I am also a Faculty Senator for the College of Human Medicine, and the CHM rep for the University Committee for the Library. I believe my record indicates service attributes that will serve me well as an At-Large Member. Academic Governance is a verb--it is what we do. I have and I continue to step up to do the work.

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 a Black woman faculty member at MSU, and an alum, I advance diversity, equity, and inclusion by showing up and doing the work. I am an associate professor in a community-based medical school where I work and teach with international faculty and students, faculty and students in rural and urban geographic areas, first generation, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ and transgendered faculty and students, older non-traditional students, disadvantaged, students across the SES spectrum, and students who have been historically underrepresented in medicine. I am the co-chair of the Committee on Admissions for the College of Human Medicine and as such, I lead a diverse faculty committee responsible for a holistic admissions process. I am the past Vice-Chair of the College RPT committee where I reviewed promotion and tenure portfolios for clinical and research faculty.

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Karen Kelly-Blake (page 2 of 2)

Additionally, although I did not lead, I was a member of a recent search for the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Cultural Initiatives, which demanded a broadly representative committee. I have been a member of our Council on Diversity Education (CODE), which works to increase patient population representation in the medical school curriculum. My current research interests include medication adherence in patients with diabetes in federally qualified health centers, colorectal cancer screening in rural populations, and critically assessing the expectation of a diverse medical workforce that is just, fair, equitable, and meets the needs of all of us. I am the newly promoted Assistant Director in the Center for Ethics where we have clearly identified the future path for the Center's work, which surpasses and supersedes DEI with a focus on justice. DEI initiatives occurring in an ahistorical vacuum, without substantive weight or consequences, without redress and reparation is intellectually, ethically, and morally bankrupt. Justice work is hard because hard things are hard. My aim is to advance justice and democratization because I know what side of the fence I am on. My past, current, and future activities clearly demonstrate my commitment to doing the hard work.



Nicolas Gisholt (page 1 of 2)

Unit: College of Social Science

Department: Center for Integrative Studies

Academic Appointment/Rank: Specialist - Continuing

Year of Initial MSU Appointment: 2006

Previous Academic Governance Service: None


Why do you want to serve as an At-Large Member?

I am applying to be an At – Large member of the Steering Committee representing the needs and concerns of members of the MSU community, rarely heard by this committee and Academic Governance as a whole. With 15 years of experience as an Academic Advisor, I can provide a different perspective for this Committee. It comes from thousands of hours of listening to students' stories, challenges, goals, achievements and frustrations first hand. As a Specialist, we advocate for 500 plus professionals in every decision we take, constantly needing to justify our institutional importance and income equality. And as a Latino Faculty member, I understand the richness of a multiracial society and I promote policies that benefit minoritized groups at MSU and our local community. My responsibilities and interests include: teaching a seminar course; curriculum development; extracurricular committee work related to: DEI, Latinx studies, and most recently, the OCR Report with Faculty Senate. I am confident that by working with Faculty in the Committee we can make a difference on issues I care deeply like student mental health; tuition cost; efficient distribution of student resources; equity and diversity in University committees' representation. What I can bring is a catalyst for change with my background and experience. Let's work together for an inclusive Committee that celebrates the great diversity of the MSU community.


Describe any special qualifications, experiences, or leadership roles that support your nomination.

Academic Specialist Advisory Committee - Academic Governance representative; Chicano Latinx Specialist Representative. Various committees as an Academic Specialist organizing and managing students' initiatives; 10 years as an instructor, for lower and upper classmen.

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.

Chicano Latino Studies committee. As an Advisor I am in charge of different minors: Chicano Latino Studies; Asian Studies; African Studies; Latin American Studies. I've done presentations to promote student success for students of minoritized groups as well as issues like student success. Worked with APUE in a committee of improving the experience of transfer students.

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Nicolas Gisholt (page 2 of 2)

(Optional) Use this space to add anything else you would like those considering your application to know.

I've continuously advocated for the representation of Specialists at university level committees, not only as part of ASAC, but also at the College of Social Science, in which the By-Laws do not include them as voting members. I'm very interested in the work of Academic Governance in general and have participated in committees on a volunteer basis.



Stephanie Anthony (page 1 of 2)

Unit: University Outreach and Engagement

Department: Office of College Access Initiatives

Academic Appointment/Rank: Fixed-Term

Year of Initial MSU Appointment: 2015

Previous Academic Governance Service: At-Large Member of the Steering Committee, Faculty Senate

Why do you want to serve as an At-Large Member?

I believe that the faculty member is “the driving force” behind a student’s educational experience. When faculty is supported, students benefit, hence my desire to represent and improve the lives of MSU faculty members. When faculty is engaged, able to concentrate, feels supported and can focus, students can learn in a more progressive and supportive environment. It brings to mind the example of the passenger on the airplane who must make sure that their oxygen mask is properly placed before caring for other passengers. As to other reasons I want to serve, I am knowledgeable in academic governance, particularly with the duties of At-Large Members and of the Steering committee. In establishing the agenda, as an At-Large and Steering Committee Member, it allows me an opportunity to be involved at the start of the governance process (or near the start) and follow the process and the progress of the matter through completion. Additionally, I am collegial, I respect others, I am able to work well with those of differing viewpoints, yet willing to speak my truth and advocate for others as it becomes necessary.

Describe any special qualifications, experiences, or leadership roles that support your nomination.

I am currently an At-Large member. I have been a part of Michigan State University’s Faculty Senate, Steering Committee and University Council. I am honored to have worked on various committees and projects during my tenure as an ALM member. These initiatives have ranged from University Policing, to agenda planning meetings, to Faculty Newsletter compositions etc. Indeed, I believe that the past two years have prepared me for an even more effective and well informed term as I run again. Should you support my second term, you will find an experienced At-Large-Member with a continuing commitment to academic governance and to the MSU community. During the past two years, my goals have been simple; to make a positive difference, to advocate for and support MSU faculty, and to work to develop a better MSU Community in any way that I can. My previous governance experience in a higher education setting includes my past tenure as Student Government Chair and Vice Chair while pursuing my doctoral studies. I participated in academic governance then for four years. I also participated briefly in ASMSU as an undergraduate student. I am a true believer in the shared

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Stephanie Anthony (page 2 of 2)

governance model for academic governance in higher education. When it's operated with mutual respect, a spirit of collegiality and a steadfast commitment to the process, everyone wins. I am a former elected school board member for the Flint Community Schools. I served my initial term, and was reelected, to serve a total of two terms from 2005-2011. During that time working for the community, I served as President of the Board, Board Treasurer and Secretary of the Board. As a school board member, I became a Certified Board Member and received a Board Member of Merit award among others. I also obtained a certification in parliamentary procedure. As a Flint School Board member, I successfully chaired various committees including the Executive Committee, Academics Committee, Finance Committee and Community Relations.

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 a woman and a woman of color. I am proud of each of these titles as the experience of living with them and owning them has taught me a great deal about myself and about life. I have learned that: Everyone wants to be included and to be a part of something meaningful. (Inclusion) That it's a beautiful thing when different people bring together varying ideas and perspectives to create something unique. (Diversity) That I could never feel good about ME if I allow myself to sit next to a homeless man on a park bench and enjoy a five course meal when I have just learned that he has not eaten in days. (Equity) I am always mindful of diversity, equity and inclusivity. I couldn't forget those three concepts if I tried to. Nor would I want to. There is great value in taking the time to work with, laugh with, learn with and talk with others who are different from me. They learn and so do I. Diversity, equity and inclusion are extremely important to me and in this world we live in, I have made a commitment to fight for these principles every single day. I have also made a commitment to work on my own intellectual growth each day, taking the steps to learn about others and to treat people that I meet with understanding and care. DEI is not a concept for me, it's a lifestyle.



d'Ann de Simone (page 1 of 2)


Unit: College of Arts and Letters

Department: Art, Art History, and Design

Academic Appointment/Rank: Professor - Tenured

Year of Initial MSU Appointment: 1989

Previous Academic Governance Service: University Committee on Student Affairs, Presidential Advisory Committee on Disability Issues

**Why do you want to serve as an At-Large Member?**

The current political climate and issues surrounding the covid pandemic has increased the pressures and expectations on all of us at Michigan State. The country and the University face a crisis which is both financial and moral as we look to remove the structural inequities within our institution and the greater community. The importance of effective governance is critical as we work towards the future of our campus. What we do in this regard is of the utmost importance to the future of our society. The steering committee plays a seminal role in that process and I would be honored to be a part of that group.

Describe any special qualifications, experiences, or leadership roles that support your nomination.


Over my 30-year career at MSU I have a sustained record of service at all levels within the University, sitting on the Anti-Discrimination Judicial Board at the University level, the Dean's Adversity Council in CAL, the Advisory Board for the Center for Integrated Studies in the Arts and Humanities, the University Committee for Student Affairs for four years (previous to my current stint), where I helped to complete a major re-write of the Student Rights and Responsibilities code. I have served on student adjudication panels, as well as faculty panels at the grievance office.

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 grew up in a small town in Rhode Island listening to the travails of parents who were southern Italian immigrants and who grew up in a lower middle-class neighborhood behind the railroad tracks (along with the few African American families) nicely named "Guinea Gulch." The beach clubs did not accept Italians or Jews or Blacks.

I feel that I can relate to the discrimination people of color are forced to endure. Please note that I am not equating my experience with that of people of color, but rather that I do feel I have insight into the feelings of insecurity and anger that may accompany this kind of experience. (The faculty in my department includes no black people and there are very few black students.)

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d'Ann de Simone (page 2 of 2)

I am also visually disabled, but have an invisible disability, without the usual tip-off signs of a white cane or service dog. I am sensitive to the social stigma - feeling that one has to "prove" they are disabled and the embarrassment of having to have everyone stare at me when I get up in a meeting to approach the screen so I can see it, or when I don't get up and pretend I can see it. Or better still when I tell someone I am visually disabled and they laugh and say, I am "blind," too. These experiences make me always remember that understanding, acceptance and embracing other individuals for who they are and for their own experiences should determine my thinking. Should I become a member of the Steering Committee, I would try to facilitate concrete action to fundamentally make the University do a better job in empowering and accepting difference: in race, gender, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, religion, ideological outlooks.

