

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**  
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES  
(Final; Action)

CC.21.15 Faculty Nominations to the Athletic Board

**BACKGROUND**

The Athletic Board serves as an advisory committee to the Chancellor and the Athletic Director on the financial management, personnel, and other operational aspects of the intercollegiate athletics program in the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. The Athletic Board consists of seven faculty members, appointed by the Chancellor from nominations by the Senate.

Terms of faculty ordinarily shall be four years and faculty may be reappointed to a second term but are then ineligible for reappointment until a period equaling the length of their second term has passed. Continuing faculty members of the Athletic Board and the expiration of their terms are as follows:

<i>James Anderson</i>	<i>EDUC</i>	<i>2021</i>
Neha Gothe	AHS	2023
<i>Paul Heald</i>	<i>LAW</i>	<i>2021</i>
Barry Houser	FAA2	2023
Michael LeRoy	LER	2022
Brenda Lindsey	SSW	2024
Endalyn Taylor	FAA	2022

**NOMINATIONS**

The Committee on Committees recommends approval of the following slate of nominees. Submitted interest statements from nominees are attached.

The following faculty members are nominated to fill two faculty vacancies, with terms ending in 2025. If no additional nominations are made, the nominees below will be forwarded to the Chancellor for selection of two.

Salvatore Callesano	LAS
Kiel Christensen	EDUC
Caitlin Clarke	AHS
Steven Hall	MDA
Nikki Usher	MDA

Creen Ahmad  
Rummana Alam  
Laura Christianson  
John Dallesasse  
Abby Fogarty  
Laura Garrett  
Jeffrey Eric Jenkins  
Sudarshana Rao  
Jenny Roether, *ex officio*

*Nominations from the floor must be accompanied by the nominee's signed statement of willingness to serve if elected. The statement shall be dated and include the name of the position to be filled. If present, the nominee's oral statement will suffice. All nominations must be in accordance with Senate Bylaws.*

## **FACULTY STATEMENTS OF INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE**

### **Salvatore Callesano (LAS: Spanish and Portuguese)**

I believe in the benefits that athletics can bring to academics and vice-versa. From 2015 to 2020, I organized and participated in the men's club gymnastics program at the University of Texas at Austin. During those years I served as the men's gymnastics captain, club president, club treasurer, and public relations representative. As such, I have five years of experience serving as the link between university and athletic programs, working in recruitment and retention, as well as promoting funding for athletic programs (through external and self-funding options). I am also dedicated to creating stronger links between varsity and club level athletic programming, which is just one of the ways we can promote minority participation in athletics. Here at UIUC, I am already connected with the club gymnastics program and I hope to serve the larger athletic community in order to ensure our student-athletes continue to unify, inspire, and achieve.

### **Kiel Christenson (EDUC: Educational Psychology)**

Dr. Christianson has been a professional golf & travel journalist for over 20 years, including over a decade writing for the Golf Channel websites, where he still regularly blogs. He has started his own collection of golf & travel websites, including LandOfLincolnGolf.com and MidwesternGolf.com. Soon after he began at Illinois, he interviewed Mike Small, in fact. His golf publications have also appeared in several print publications, too. He appeared on ESPN SportsCenter twice in connection with "deflate gate." As a HS athlete himself, and chair of the EPSY Department, Christianson values education as an integral part of college athletics.

**Caitlin Clarke (AHS: Kinesiology and Community Health)**

Growing up in Champaign-Urbana, Dr. Caitlin Clarke was interested in sports and athletics from as early as she can recall. She was a multisport athlete throughout her childhood and has 12 years of professional figure skating coaching experience. Over the past decade, Dr. Clarke has taught thousands of Illini (including hundreds of student athletes) and established a record of student engagement and positive interaction with student athletes, demonstrating her commitment to their success and wellbeing. Her research focuses on the sociology of sport and health, which includes a recent systematic review of mental health policies for the NCAA Power 5. She also collaborates with Athlete Ally, an organization concerned with global policy advocacy for LGBTQ+ athletes. Dr. Clarke believes student athletes need strong mental health advocates who understand the stresses facing contemporary college students as well as the unique social and academic struggles of student athletes.

**Steven Hall (MDA: Advertising)**

Steve Hall is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Advertising who teaches, mentors, advises and provides professional development to hundreds of University of Illinois students. He's received the University of Illinois Campus-wide Excellence in Teaching Award, Charles H. Sandage Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award and nationally recognized as a Distinguished Advertising Educator by the American Advertising Federation. Steve has made the "Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Students" list 14 straight years, with numerous "outstanding ratings". He is a Faculty Senator and Public Engagement Committee Member. His campus committee service includes the Teaching Advancement Board, Campus-wide Career Services Council Chair, Illinois Leadership Coordinating Committee and Senate Subcommittee on Undergraduate Student Conduct. He's also an AAF National Education Executive Committee member. Steve is an alumnus of the Gies College of Business and College of Media. He hopes to bring his experience, leadership, innovative thinking and strategic insights to the Athletic Board.

**Nikki Usher (MDA: Journalism)**

Nikki Usher, PhD, is an associate professor in journalism with affiliations in communication and political science. Although relatively new to Illinois, Usher has extensive experience teaching and mentoring Division 1 student athletes at the University of Southern California and George Washington University. Usher is currently a member of the Senate Committee for Student Life. Usher was part of a living and learning community, residing for two years from 2016 to 2018 in a dorm with her family. As part of this experience, Usher had extensive training in student affairs concerns, including those concerning varsity athletes, veterans, and historically underrepresented groups. Prior to COVID, Usher frequently attended Illinois revenue and non-revenue sports as well as club sports such as hockey. An avid tennis player, Usher has spent considerable time at the Atkins Tennis Center, engaging with players and coaches and celebrates the women's team's fall 2020 3.77 GPA.