

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

CC.26.30 Faculty Nominations to the 2026-2027 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. Two nominees for membership on the Board shall be elected by the Senate for each faculty position to be filled from 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. Christopher Kempf and Eric Larson have terms ending 2026. Faculty members of the Athletic Board and the expiration of their terms are as follows:

Caitlin Clarke	AHS	2029
Randall Green	LAW	2027
Jon Hale	EDUC	2028
Steven Hall	MDA	2029
<i>Christopher Kempf</i>	<i>LAS</i>	<i>2026</i>
<i>Eric Larson</i>	<i>BUS</i>	<i>2026</i>
Linda Moorhouse	FAA	2027

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 annual faculty vacancies, with terms ending in 2030. If no additional nominations are made, the nominees listed below in random order will be forwarded to the Chancellor for the appointment of two.

Marcello Rubessa	ACES	Yannick Kluch	AHS
Eric Larson	BUS	Eric Chitambar	ENGR

The Committee on Committees also recommends approval of the following faculty member to continue serving as Academic Progress and Eligibility Committee Chair.

Caitlin Clarke

AHS

2027

Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Whether from the Committee on Committees or from the floor, each nomination shall have the consent of the nominee. (*Bylaws* Part B.5)

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

Chaya Sandler, Chair

Kent Choquette

Linda Herrera

Gal Hochman

Myles Johnson

Tania Ionin

Bernhard Scully

Gavriel Campbell, *ex officio*

Jenny Roether, *ex officio*

FACULTY STATEMENTS OF INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE

Marcello Rubessa (Associate Director, ACES)

Dr. Rubessa, in the past, has mentored men and women athletes on campus. He has always supported the athletes/students in their academic journey. Professor Rubessa believes athletes perform better in a healthy environment and consequently he believes it is important to be proactive in their welfare and limit as much as possible any issue that can impact the mental and physical health of them. Finally, Dr. Rubessa can bring in the Board his business knowledge accumulated during his experience in a multinational corporation and in his actual main job as Associate Director for the strategic operation in the Carver Biotechnology Center on campus. Finally, Professor Rubessa, with his work experience around the world develop skills that allows him to interphase positively with different cultures.

Eric Larson (Teaching Professor, BUS)

Eric C. Larson is a passionate teacher and sports fan, with a special interest in Illini Athletics. A three-time Academic All-Conference golfer at Colorado State, he proved to be a better student than athlete. Eric worked in industry and technology consulting for fourteen years and then earned a PhD in Information Systems from the University of Minnesota before joining the Gies College of Business in 2012. Eric is a demanding, award-winning, and compassionate professor for all of his students. He has taught students from diverse backgrounds including every Illini sport and has been recognized with the Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Poets & Quants Top 50 Undergraduate Business Professors. Eric has volunteered at four NCAA Golf Championships (men's and women's), seeks to connect the academic and athletic aspects of our university, mentors student-athletes in his courses, and advocates generally for an exceptional experience for all students.

Yannick Kluch (Assistant Professor, AHS)

Dr. Yannick Kluch (Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism) is an assistant professor of sport management and a nationally recognized expert on intercollegiate sport governance, diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI), and the experiences of minority groups in athletics. He has advised organizations such as the NCAA Office of Inclusion, USA Diving, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, and various athletic departments across the U.S. on matters related to inclusive sport governance. Drawing from more than 10 years of experience advocating for student-athletes within campus communities and having served on committees such as the AHS Accessibility, Belonging & Community Committee, he will bring to the Athletic Board a strong understanding of the educational mission of the university, robust knowledge of business and financial management in NCAA athletics, and demonstrated commitment to addressing welfare issues affecting student-athletes, with a particular focus on how matters of DEI affect intercollegiate athletics and the student-athlete experience.

Eric Chitambar (Professor, ENGR)

The nominee has longstanding interest and knowledge of intercollegiate athletics. As an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, he served as an official NCAA academic tutor, working one-on-one with student-athletes in football, soccer, and lacrosse. This experience gave him direct insight into the academic pressures and support needs of student-athletes. Since that time, he has remained an informed and passionate follower of men and women's college sports. While fully aware of the rapidly evolving landscape of college athletics—from the transfer portal to lucrative NIL and sponsorship deals—the nominee continues to view intercollegiate sports as an important complement to the University's primary educational mission. The nominee is eager to collaborate with fellow committee members to ensure that the excitement and revenue-generating potential of college sports are leveraged in ways that support the academic and physical development of student-athletes, while advancing the University's broader goals in research, education, and service.