

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Application for Student Speaker
Spring and Summer Commencement, 2026
Application Deadline February 25, 2026

Name: Matilynn Daughtry

Email Address: daughtr1@msu.edu

Major: Music Education

Instrument/Voice: Clarinet

Extra-curricular activities/volunteer work/community service:

Sigma Alpha Iota

Vice President of Membership (2024-25)

President (2025-26)

Local Volunteering/ Community Service:

Planned & Ran Activities at "Arts Night" at Whitehills Elementary

Organized Music & Performed at "Books N' Bites" event at East Lansing Public Library

Instrument Show and Tell Visits at Red Cedar Elementary and Ralya Elementary

Helped plan & perform at Covington Woods Senior Living Home

Initiatives or Cooperation with fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the MSU Community:

As Vice President of Membership and later President of SAI, I helped lead initiatives to recruit female musicians across campus. Our fraternity is not limited to music majors, but it is often hard to recruit outside of the College of Music, as that is what most of us are students in. We have added several non-music major women to our chapter, and I anticipate that number will continue to grow after I graduate. Any of our sisters will say that their reason to join SAI was to find a community of women that enjoy music just as much as they do. To foster and enhance our sisterhood, and continue to have a space where females feel safe and comfortable, we plan a variety of "sisterhood" events throughout the fall semester. Events can include a sip and chat, painting, game night, or even karaoke. My goal with creating a diverse set of events was to appeal to any and all personalities so that anyone feel comfortable joining us. Lastly, I am currently on a committee in Sigma Alpha Iota that is in the early stages of planning a Drag Queen Bingo event on campus. We understand Drag shows can be difficult to get to, especially if someone cannot have a car with them at school. We are excited to use our resources to support a queer artist and bring an opportunity for everyone to see Drag on campus.

Future goals upon graduation:

I would love to find a job teaching middle school band. At a deeper level, though, my goal is to bring accessible music to students and communities that may not have had the opportunity otherwise. While we all love music as an art form, or else we would not have pursued a degree in it, I am sure that for many, that love begins with a love for everything else that comes with it. It teaches us time management, accountability, how to be apart of something bigger than ourselves. Music can provide a community and an emotional outlet for children. That is my broader goal, to bring these opportunities to low-income or under privileged communities, and hopefully inspire a respect and love for the art, as well.

As a graduate, what do you think you will most value about your experience in the college of music?

Aside from the amazing faculty and endless opportunities that were presented to me at MSU, I will value the alumni network the most. I already see those connections being made when I go to the Michigan Music Conference every year. People approach me, include me in meaningful conversations, simply because my nametag says Michigan State on it. For the rest of our lives, being an alumni of MSU makes us have one thing in common with over 550,000 people. Who knows what MSU alum will help get you a job in ten years? Maybe you'll discover your Physical Therapist went to Michigan State for grad school. I have been apart of and witnessed these connections more times than I could count, and that is what I believe I will value most post-grad.

What qualities do you believe are desirable in a student speaker and how do you exemplify them?

All of my friends graduated in successional semesters, so I have been to four Michigan State graduations in the last two years. With that, I have listened to four student speakers across three different career paths and degrees. The most impactful speakers, both for myself and the graduates I spoke to, were the ones that were well spoken. The art of public speaking is one I've thought about, studied, and practiced since high school. There are aspects of speeches that are universal across subjects: cadence, pauses, and confidence. I have spoken to crowds of over four hundred people through various marching band opportunities, and everywhere between that and ten people. Being exposed to these experiences, and a lot of trial and error, I believe I understand and can portray what makes a clear and efficient speaker. In addition to the literal act of speaking, the best student speakers I have seen also had a sense of relatability. They crack jokes here and there, share universal experiences throughout the college (getting through music theory, hours in the practice room, etc). There is also a sense of likeness in their voice, how they present themselves. They are professional, yes, but they're also the same age as everyone else graduating. I think keeping this in mind is extremely important in delivering an effective and impactful message.

Provide a theme and/or brief outline of your intended speech

A common theme throughout this application is my love of connections. I spoke on the value of the MSU alumni network and the community that music brings us. Especially since this being the end of an important era for myself and my fellow graduates, I think it would be really beautiful to speak on the human connections we have, and will continue to, experience. I would start my speech by introducing myself and bringing in that sense of humor, authenticity and relatability. I think it's important to start with this to create a relationship and trust between the speaker and audience. Using relatability, like a story, I would segue into the theme of friendship and connections we made in college. I would use connections as a way to connect different musical career pathways (education, performance, composition, further education). The one thing we all have in common in music. It not only connects us to each other, it connects us to our future students, the audience we are performing for, the people listening to our music. I would end my speech with encouraging my peers to remember that music is, at its core, interaction, emotion, and connection.

Please attach a copy of your resume/vita.

Matilynn Daughtry

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EDUCATION

Michigan State University, College of Music, East Lansing, MI

Dec. 2026

Bachelor of Music Education

- Major GPA: 4.00/4.00; Cumulative GPA: 3.94/4.00
- Dean's List: 4 Semesters
- Longo/Billman Music Award Recipient (for academic success)

EXPERIENCE

Community Music School, East Lansing, MI

Sep. 2024 – Dec. 2024

Children's Choir Intern

- Coordinated with mentor teacher to plan and execute efficient rehearsal plans
- Developed meaningful relationships and cultivated a welcoming classroom community with 22 students from diverse racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Discussed technical and musical ideas through a program of diverse repertoire

Anchor Bay High School, Ira Township, MI

Jul. 2022 – Present

Woodwind and Marching Staff

- Lead woodwind sectionals with 18 students focusing on instrument-specific techniques, tone production, and developing musical phrases
- Provided 170 member full-band instruction as needed, reinforcing rehearsal techniques and musical accuracy
- Taught marching fundamentals and assisted students with drill and field performance
- Collaborated with 8-person staff to support cohesive instruction and performance preparation

Richmond High School, Richmond, MI

Aug. 2023 – Present

Music and Marching Technician

- Lead woodwind and brass sectionals with 6 students focusing on instrument-specific techniques, tone production, and developing musical phrases
- Provided 65 member full-band instruction as needed, reinforcing rehearsal techniques and musical accuracy
- Taught marching fundamentals and assisted students with drill and field performance
- Collaborated with 5-person staff to support cohesive instruction and performance preparation

ACTIVITIES & ENSEMBLES

Spartan Marching Band, *Alto Saxophone*

Aug. 2025 – Present

MSU Symphony Band, *Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet*

Sep. 2024 – May 2025

Sigma Alpha Iota Professional Women's Music Fraternity, *President*

Mar. 2023 – Present

MSU Concert Band, *Principal Clarinet*

Sep. 2023 – Present

National Association for Music Education, *Member*

Sep. 2021 – Present