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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to inform you of my strong interest in the online Masters of Arts degree in Education at Michigan State University. I know with the education I will receive through such a highly ranked university that I will be well prepared to instruct and function as a valuable resource at the university level, one of my professional goals.

By trade, I am an allied health care professional -- an athletic trainer. I am certified by a national governing board and licensed by the state of Wisconsin. I have had extensive training in my line of work including professional continuing education on various sports medicine related topics. In the few years since I have graduated with a Bachelors of Science degree, I've worked in a variety of settings. While each setting has its rewards, I've come to really enjoy those when I've had the opportunity to take students of athletic training under my wing. I find it gratifying to teach a student a new clinical skill or introduce them to an idea and then see them succeed in these skills or broaden their way of thinking. I look forward to being able to stimulate the students' minds and encourage learning by asking critical thinking questions. This is something that I eagerly anticipate doing on a full-time basis.

In order to work as an athletic trainer and instruct at the collegiate level, a master's degree is a prerequisite. While I am free to choose a variety of subjects to pursue, I am choosing education as my main focus. With a background in education, as well as continuing education specific to athletic training, I know I will be equipped to excel as a professor of athletic training. I plan on also completing dual concentrations to compliment my main focus area. The concentration in post-secondary leadership will further improve my understanding of program planning, evaluation and organizational development as well as various needs of the administration. In most university settings the athletic training education programs are housed within the athletic department. Considering this, I believe a concentration in sport leadership and coaching will give me a better understanding of the administrative needs within the department as well as helping me to better identify with the viewpoints of the coaches I would be working closely with.

During my undergraduate studies as an athletic training student, I was required to participate in 20-30 hours a week of clinical hours outside of a full-time class schedule. While challenging at times, I successfully completed all clinical hours in addition to graduating Cum Laude. I am currently employed part-time and know I will be able to handle the workload and time required to complete a master's degree. Without a master's degree in an online format, I would have to put my career on hold as I live in a rural area where going to a classroom daily is not feasible alongside my variable work schedule. I do not wish to sacrifice professional work experience in exchange for education as both are invaluable.

I consider myself an active and opportunistic learner. For example, research is a large part of my profession and when I am unsure of something I take it upon myself to find a logical explanation. I

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search through books and journal articles, compare and contrast findings and sometimes go as far to find the original source of information cited within these resources. In order for me to best retain what I learn I need to read the information and consider its practical application. Then, when an opportunity presents itself, I apply it. While staff is available when needed, I know I will still have to take control over my learning. This is why I feel being an independent and self-motivated learner is an advantage when taking classes in an online format.

Michigan State University has ranked in the top 100 universities in 2012 and 2013 in both *Times Higher Education* and *US News and World Report* rankings. This is the type of education I want behind my name and profession. Nowhere else can I find dual concentration areas that will help to make me as well rounded for my professional goals as I have found through Michigan State. I have proven that I can handle the challenges of a busy schedule and successfully complete rigorous coursework. Through my post-graduate experiences, my professional goals have taken shape and I need Michigan State University to help me fulfill them.

I thank you for your time and consideration for admission to the online Master of Arts degree in Education.

Sincerely,

Alicia Belant