

Leilani Akiyama
USA Judo Athlete Director

I am interested in serving as a member of the USA Judo Board as Athlete Director. I have been practicing and competing in judo since I was seven years old. Ever since I stepped on the mat, I fell in love with the sport. I was on the IJF World Tour for ten years, which included four World Championship teams and six Pan American teams (three Pan American medals). During this time, I graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor's in political science. Although I have retired from competitive judo, I want judo to continue being a big part of my life. To this end, I have transitioned to coaching and am now pursuing a behind-the-scenes involvement with USA Judo.

I understand the challenges that athletes face, including financial, physical and mental readiness, etc. As Athlete Director, I want to make sure that athletes' voices are heard. I will be an advocate for athletes as they continue pursuing their dreams. I will act and vote independently without outside influence and with the athletes' best interests in mind. During my athletic career, I have gained the knowledge and experience necessary to help our current and future athletes. I hope that I can serve in this capacity and help make USA Judo better for everyone.