



# The Drake Group

Realizing the Promise of College Athletics

## 2022 Student Journalism Prize for Investigative Reporting on Intercollegiate Athletics

### JESSICA JURCEK

University of Minnesota – Twin Cities  
Professional Journalism/Environmental Science,  
Policy & Management Major

*for*

“The consequences of cutting indoor track -- Although the University of Minnesota will move forward with outdoor track, its Black student-athletes question the security of their sport.”

May 16, 2021 *AccessU: Black on Campus* ([accessu.sjmc.umn.edu](https://accessu.sjmc.umn.edu))  
University of Minnesota Twin Cities

The Drake Group Student Journalism Prize recognizes the print, video, or multimedia work of a graduate or undergraduate college student journalist for exceptional substantive investigative reporting on intercollegiate athletics. The work must address an issue related to the protection of college athletes, financial excess, academic integrity, ethical conduct, racist or sexist practices, treatment of a whistleblower, or similar significant concern.

Ms. Jurcek’s reporting on the University of Minnesota’s announcement that the men’s indoor track program would be eliminated, revealed the importance of track and field to Black athletes who don’t play football or basketball and that track and field is a low-cost sport that provides a major avenue to college for minority athletes. The story takes a ‘deep dive’ into the subject and raises questions the university must answer: How does eliminating a low-cost program that offers advantages to so many help erase a deficit that may reach \$75 million? Is it equitable?