

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

February 12, 2010

Search Committee, Senior Director Bailey Scholars Program  
65 Agricultural Hall  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824

Dear BSP Search Committee:

In a recent discussion in my Engaged Teaching and Learning (ESA 335) course, my students and I were discussing the history of land-grant universities including its origins, mission, and legislation. I shared with my students how land-grant universities have been central in my academic training and career, having received my bachelors and masters degrees from Virginia Tech and my Ph.D. from Cornell. As part of this, I described how Liberty Hyde Bailey founded the College of Agriculture at Cornell University. To this comment, one of my students remarked, "Oh, you mean like the same Bailey from the Bailey Scholars Program". I appreciated the connection the student made between a prominent figure of the land-grant system and a specialization within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at MSU. I made a similar connection when I was a college student linking the three main principles of the land-grant mission – learning, discovery, and service – to my philosophical beliefs of teaching and learning, a thread that I continue to explore.

The main principles of the land-grant mission led to the development of liberal university instruction, experiment stations, and cooperative extension. Liberty Hyde Bailey was a key leader in the extension formative period. His beliefs were not to provide this knowledge for productivity, but rather to advance ideas with farmers to have them remain self-sustainable overtime. I mention this because I believe a main goal of the BSP is to promote individual and community sustainability overtime. The BSP promotes a philosophy of connected learning, an educational philosophy that moves beyond more traditional forms of learning such as models driven by a top-down hierarchical system where the teacher is the disseminator of new knowledge. I find that my main goal as an educator is to assist my students in developing the decision-making skills that they need to be sustainable in their careers. I find that this is a major component of the BSP, assisting community with learning and assessment based on values, worldviews, and prior knowledge.

I have been involved with the BSP since my second year here at MSU. I was interested in BSP because of my background and scholarly pursuits in teaching and learning. As part of this I seek to bring cutting-edge research into my BSP courses and service activities such co-convening courses, leading convener discussions, and serving as a member of various BSP committees. What I have experienced in these roles has directly influenced my research, teaching and outreach outside of the BSP. In my other CARRS and TE courses or in my community programs, I often refer to assessment models or readings conducted in the BSP.

I am fortunate to have part of my current appointment assigned to convening a BSP course. However, the opportunity to provide more leadership within the BSP through the director position is one that is tailored to my scholarly and professional interests. Most of my research ties to an aspect of the BSP curriculum model—student-centered curriculum design, authentic assessment, reflective practice, SoTL, mentorship and service-learning.



## CARRS

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As director, I would continue to integrate these areas of scholarship to inform BSP curriculum and the development of assessment strategies. I also would promote involvement of the BSP community in actively pursuing research and scholarly inquiry in these educational areas based on the latest research and diversification of the community.

Please accept the following documents: (a) Curriculum vita, (b) letter of recommendation, and (c) statement of teaching and scholarly interest as my application for the Senior Director Position in the Bailey Scholars Programs. If you have any further questions, please contact me at jeno@msu.edu or 5-6456.

Thank you,

Jennifer "Jeno" E. Rivera  
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Michigan State University