

Robbie J. Steward, Ph.D.
Michigan State University
Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology
& Special Education
438 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-355-8502 (Office)
devine@msu.edu
February 15, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

My interest in this position of **Senior Director of Bailey Scholars** is tweaked because the responsibilities seem to parallel those of a multidisciplinary research/scholarship consortium for which I developed, coordinated and participated on a smaller scale within Counseling and Counseling Psychology programs for a number of years now. Since 1993, under my leadership of research team activities, a forum has been created within which undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level students have had opportunity to forge together different areas of interests and varying bodies of literature into publishable papers. Well-developed critiques of the literature and empirical research toward professional presentations and publications are the products, which make meaningful contributions to the literature. As a consequence, increased self-awareness occurs due to the structure of the experience and nature of the feedback; knowledge of stages of research/manuscript development increases; professional resumes are more competitive' and understanding of respective fields of study is enhanced. Careful review of my professional resume provides evidence of my long-standing oversight of and collaborative efforts with novice researcher/scholars. If these outcomes are the overarching goals that this Office aspires for student participants, I write to submit materials in application for the on-campus position of **Senior Director of Bailey Scholars**.

My professional experiences meet the qualifications noted in the position responsibilities: **doctorate in Counseling Psychology, a field that will significantly contribute to my ability to problem-solve and effectively respond to difficult situations; sustained scholarship** (i.e., Full Professor at a highly nationally ranked, tier-one research, land-grant institution); **teaching excellence** (i.e., undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level instruction); **efficacy in developing cohesive and collaborative work teams** (i.e., Professional Development School leadership that integrated service delivery and research, and facilitated collaboration between teachers and school counselors; Vice President of the Michigan State Board of Counseling and Chair of Administrative Rules sub-committee; Director of Master's Counseling Program); **administrative leadership in building academic programs and moving them toward accreditation** (i.e., Director of Master's Counseling program and sole developer and author of program-evaluation process and application that led to accreditation by the Council of Accredited Counseling Related Educational Programs--CACREP); **national leadership within my field of study** (i.e., American Psychological Association Fellow status, Editorial Board member and invited reviewer of numerous APA and ACA refereed journals, invited book proposal reviewer, invited external reviewer for promotion and tenure decisions at other universities); **experience as a state-wide leader associated with my professional discipline** (i.e., Governor-appointed member of the Michigan Board of Counseling; elected Michigan School Counseling Association

Executive Board/President of Post-secondary Education; Michigan Counseling Association and the MSU Diversity Award recipient); **experience preparing course schedules, budgetary management, and day-to-day functioning of an academic unit** (i.e., Director of Master's Counseling Program—recruitment, seeking funding); **participation in campus governance** (i.e., University, College, and departmental Faculty Advisory Committees, numerous activities as search committee chair and member, president-appointed University Dismissal for Cause Review Officer Panel, college and departmental Promotion, Tenure, & Re-appointment Committees); **community outreach and involvement** (i.e., Professional Development School leadership—building coordinator in an urban high school and 9th grade team leader; developing program advisory board consisting of professionals within the surrounding university community; consultation related to minority recruitment and retention in community college setting); **commitment to mentoring faculty and students in scholarship and professional involvement** (i.e., research team activities that provide a structure for scholarship and research for students and faculty; development of programmatic research that fosters ongoing program evaluation and provides data for faculty and students' scholarship endeavors; **chair and member of thesis and dissertation committees** in Counseling Psychology, Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling, Clinical Psychology, Educational Administration, Communication, African and African American Studies; and **numerous presentations and publications** co-authored with students and faculty.

In addition to meeting the minimum qualifications, I have knowledge and experience in **multicultural counseling and training**. This expertise influences my program development activities and the manner in which I successfully mobilize others toward positive outcomes and goal attainment. My **Fellow status in the American Psychological Association is associated with Division 45, the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues**. This professional honor is bestowed upon APA Members who have shown evidence of unusual and outstanding contributions or performance in the field of psychology. Fellow status requires that a person's work has had a national impact on the field of psychology beyond a local, state, or regional level. National impact must be demonstrated. Being the recipient of the **Michigan Counseling Association and the Michigan State University Diversity Awards** also documents the national, state-wide, and local relevance and utility of my scholarship/research, teaching, and service. All are indicators of my long-standing support of human, cultural, and intellectual diversity within higher education, in K-12 student, and other potential client populations.

For example, my **sensitivity and respect of differences** in background and perspective are consistently evident in my productive leadership activities. I established links between student affairs staff and undergraduate education (i.e., University of Kansas), which resulted in a course that **increased the persistence rate ($p < .05$) of racial/ethnic minority, undergraduate honors students**. As MSU faculty in Counseling Psychology, I forged relationships between school counselors, teachers, parents, and students in an urban school setting, which resulted in **statistically significant increases in GPA and attendance for the highest risk, 9th grade students**. As the Director of the MA Counseling program, I **developed a program Advisory Board that connects faculty and students with a diverse body of leading practitioners in the community**. All such activities have enhanced the program's reputations as being multicultural in perspective and increased the degree of diversity represented in each application pool and incoming cohorts.

In terms of the academic unit for which I am responsible, I have **written job descriptions that successfully attracted researcher-scholar-practitioners who are competent as teachers and have proven to be committed mentors.** I implemented **integrated curriculum within graduate education** that nurtured collaboration of all faculty in instruction of coursework, and creatively designed a **model of programmatic research** to fuel program faculty members' scholarship and research and serve as a basis of longitudinal program evaluation. I **introduced 'research team' activities** that involve merging faculty and students' interests into products that result in professional presentations and publications. This year **two research teams, under my supervision, were recipients of American Psychological Association's Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) Research Awards** at the annual Conference in Toronto; I was the **recipient of the Research Mentor Award**; and, another faculty member was the recipient of the New Professional Award in Vocational Psychology.

My **leadership style**, being strongly influenced by my counseling background and cognitive behavioral theoretical orientation, is somewhat eclectic in nature. I believe strongly that cognitive and behavioral flexibility is required of all effective practitioner and leaders, who must be prepared to make the necessary interpersonal adjustments to fit situations that occur within organizations/systems. Initially, I adopt a **Situational Leadership Style**, which considers pre-existing characteristics and experiences of team members, the goals and related tasks required, and the organizational culture/climate. Once careful assessment of the team has occurred and group norms have been identified and accepted, my natural style reflects a combination of the **Participative (Democratic) and Transformational Leadership Styles**. My overarching objective is to efficiently achieve well-defined organizational goals as a result of others' contribution to the decision-making process and personal/professional investment in the successful outcomes. I assume responsibility for final decisions and supervisor/monitor of the process, but am committed to inspiring the team to have a shared vision of what will be best for them individually and collectively.

My **management style** is one that is strongly influenced by the researcher/practitioner model and my training in Counseling Psychology, which highlights the importance of prevention and making the best use of clearly identified strengths in organizational systems and individual functioning. In my work as the Director of an academic unit, I have effectively implemented a modified version of **William Edward Deming's Continuous Improvement Process, which is internationally respected for resulting in outcomes of improved efficiency, effectiveness, and flexibility in organizational systems.** As indicated in this circular model, as the leader of the unit, I learn, I plan, I do, and I measure, which leads again to learning, planning, etc. The use of my own concept of 'programmatic research' provides the feedback from students, program faculty, clients served, alumni, and alumni's employers, as well as the most current recommendations in the literature, influence the development of the most effective training policies and practices within the academic units under my leadership. This practice, which is exceptionally rare within academic settings, serves as the crux for the numerous extraordinary outcomes that I have achieved as the Professional Development School Building Coordinator (i.e., urban high school) and Director of this MA School and Community Counseling program.

Consequently, **greater student and program national and international visibility, enhanced professional networks and job placement, increased applications for admission, and, increased success in doctoral program application**, ensued. Academically competitive applicants from around the world seek admission to this training site, which under my leadership has become known as one that significantly exceeds the minimum standards of accreditation guidelines. In last year's CACREP accreditation site visit, the experienced team of leaders in the field of Counseling commented on the efficacy of our training and the unique, comprehensive nature of our practices and policies, and deemed the academic unit worthy of accreditation with numerous commendations. Under my leadership, my academic unit has evolved into a reputable training site, which was highlighted as a model training environment in the Handbook of School Counseling (Coleman & Yeh, 2008). (A comprehensive overview of the MA Counseling School and Community Counseling programs, including annual reports, is available at <http://www.educ.msu.edu/cepse/Counseling/default.asp>.)

In summary, if you believe that my way of being, experience, and knowledge would be beneficial to your university, I look forward to future contact.

Sincerely,

Robbie J. Steward, Ph.D., L.P.C.
American Psychological Association Fellow (Division 45)
Professor
Director
MA Counseling program
Michigan State University