

12 March 2025

Dear Dr. Boroujerdi and members of the search committee,

I am submitting my packet for consideration for the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education. I am excited about this position as I believe I could be impactful in facilitating, developing and planning academic programs, engaging student concerns, and supporting existing programs. I have served as the director of the Ozark Research Field Station (50% administrative appointment) since my arrival at Missouri S&T in 2018. I also led development of and now direct the interdisciplinary Environmental Science B.S. degree program. Working in these capacities, I have familiarized myself with the university and its internal administrative processes and honed my understanding of the strategic priorities that guide the vision and mission of CASE and our campus.

In my time as a faculty member, I have collaboratively been awarded over \$1.9 million in grants and contracts (\$939,099 my share) from federal, state, non-profit, and international organizations. My research in wildland fire ecology and environmental health presents me with the opportunity to do highly transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborative work with researchers across campus and industry partners: My current work is a collaborative project between computer scientists, linguists, statisticians, neurologists, behavioral scientists, and wildland fire scientists that is funded by the Department of Defense (Army Research Laboratory, Thimgan et al., 2022). One of my strongest skills is my ability to bring together scholars from disparate fields and to encourage and facilitate connections between people. In an Associate Dean position, I believe I can use my interdisciplinary perspective to encourage new and innovative connections among CASE faculty and across campus.

In addition, through my work at the field station, I have had unique opportunities to develop a mission, vision and strategic plan from the ground up; work with external partners; and engage in collaboration with a variety of stakeholder across the state and community. I routinely interact with federal (Department of Defense, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service) and state (Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri State Parks) agencies as well as local civic organizations (Master Naturalists, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts) as part of my responsibilities at the field station. My work at the field station has engaged prospective donors in relevant programming and expanded our reach and positive relationships through events such as public lectures and open houses. I also serve on the Missouri Prescribed Fire Council (elected position) and was previously a member of the Texas Prescribed Burn Board (legislatively appointed position): In these positions, I worked with teams to write and propose new legislation, define and adopt state standards, and create and clarify rules related to prescribed burning and wildland fire training at the state level. Balancing the interests and needs of the multitude of individuals and interests impacted by these decisions and actions was a challenge that required excellent communication and active listening. I believe these skills can transfer to and benefit an Associate Dean position directly, and I am excited about the potential opportunity to facilitate investment in CASE and to cultivate new stakeholder relationships in the role.

As a faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences, I have a diversity of experiences related to planning and developing curriculum, including courses, study abroad programs, certificates, and undergraduate and graduate degrees. I recently lead-authored a successful proposal for a new interdisciplinary B.S. degree in Environmental Science which officially launched in August 2022. This degree is housed in the Biological Sciences Department, but the curriculum draws evenly from five departments (Bio Sci, GGPE, Env Eng, Econ, and Hist/Pol Sci) across all three colleges. The program currently has 56 majors, including a freshman class of 11 students. I also recently created a new undergraduate certificate in environmental policy and have created new five courses to support students in these areas. As former co-chair of the Biological Sciences graduate committee, I worked to implement our graduate track pathway program. In my previous appointment at Texas Tech University, I wrote the departmental program plan for a non-thesis M.S. degree, created three new courses (including a successful social science-biological science fusion environmental science course that enrolled an average 120 students per semester), and served on the College curriculum committee. In short, I am well-equipped to work on issues related to CASE's academic affairs and highly committed to developing, improving, and sustaining programs.

Finally, but with greatest conviction, I believe deeply in fostering an environment that is supportive of and actively promotes the well-being of all CASE students, staff, and faculty. In collaboration with two colleagues, I recently led symposia and workshops on field science safety, and I lead-authored two papers on the same topic for a special issue of the *Journal of Integrative and Comparative Biology*. I am currently translating much of that work into a university-level training system and grant submission template for the NSF-mandated Safe and Inclusive Fieldwork Plans associated with relevant proposals. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to pursue initiatives that promote and elevate diverse people within CASE.

In summary, I bring an interdisciplinary and collaborative academic background, solid work in stakeholder and external relationships, ample curricular and programming experience, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of diverse students, faculty and staff to these positions. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

Best,



Robin M. Verble, Ph.D.

Professor of Biological Sciences

Director, Ozark Research Field Station

Director, Environmental Science Program

=