



BAYLOR

UNIVERSITY

December 9, 2015

Dr. Provost
Provost and Chief Operating Officer
Greenville College
315 East College Avenue
Greenville, IL 62246-0159

Dear Provost Xyz and Members of the Search Committee,

Please accept my application for Greenville College's posted opening for an Assistant Professor of English, which was recently advertised on the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities website. I am a PhD candidate in English at Baylor University with a primary concentration in English Renaissance literature and a secondary focus in Medieval literature. Currently writing the last of my dissertation's five chapters, I am on schedule to complete my PhD by May of 2016.

During my time in Baylor University's Department of English, I have been privileged to combine my scholarly pursuits in early British literature with extensive teaching experience, a quality that particularly prepares me for a position at a Christian liberal arts institution like Greenville College. Now in my fifth year of university-level teaching, I have taught first-year composition, argumentative writing, British literature, and writing-intensive first year seminars based around the theme of creativity. These experiences have given me ample opportunity to allow my own teaching philosophy to develop gradually, aided by several years of reflection among the community of teacher-scholars at Baylor. My conviction has been that the end of education is to combine the quest for professional sustainability with the pursuit of living richly, and that the study of literature is a gateway for deciphering that richness. To accomplish this goal, I like to structure my classes around meaningful course questions that accentuate how our work together helps us understand an aspect of human flourishing. When I teach literature courses, for instance, I encourage students to articulate their own defense of imaginative literature (following the example of Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*) by questioning what qualities of literary texts respond to humankind's fundamental desires. This approach to teaching, which grounds itself in the notion that literature can help us live more richly, has its roots in the liberal arts tradition, and I would welcome the chance to participate actively in that tradition at Greenville College.

I have received a great deal of affirmation in my development as a teacher in the past few years. In 2014 alone, I earned two teaching awards: one from Baylor's Department of English and one from the Baylor Graduate School at-large. Such praise has honored and humbled me, and I work diligently to demonstrate that teaching is one of my greatest privileges. These recognitions have resulted in invitations to serve on various committees at Baylor, including the Freshman Composition Committee, the Women in the Academy Conference Steering Committee, and the university-wide Master Teacher Selection Committee. Although I have committed significant energy to formal service commitments at Baylor, my chief interest is in serving students individually or in small groups, something I look forward to doing more of (and with much more impact) at a university with a significantly smaller student body than Baylor.

Learning how to lead students toward meaningful questions that expose the richness of imaginative literature has paralleled my doctoral research, which explores how close-readings of Shakespeare's female characters can offer us clues about the nuanced dramaturgical situation of Renaissance England. My dissertation project, *'If I were a woman': Gendered Artifice on the Shakespearean Stage*, is a reassessment of the original cross-dressed performance of female characters that categorizes cross-dressing along a spectrum of theatrical artifice. I offer a new claim that we cannot treat

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

One Bear Place #97404 • Waco, TX 76798-7404 • (254) 710-1768

all female characters the same with respect to onstage cross-dressing during the English Renaissance, and we must account for these differences in artificial femaleness with the play text as our guide. Because I also have a strong secondary concentration in Medieval English literature, I have recently combined my theoretical interest in performance studies with theses about the oral-aural tradition of Chaucer. This past academic year, I attended several conferences, including the Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, as both a performer in a Chaucerian Readers' Theatre and a traditional conference presenter. These experiences of travelling around the country to perform Middle English, as well as my dissertation's focus on original performances of Shakespeare, confirm my own essential assumptions about literary texts: that they are often amphibious, plural, and capable of transforming radically when "performed," whether they were intended for the stage or not. And, perhaps more importantly, my interests confirm my position as a British literature generalist with strong teaching and research capabilities that span the Medieval-Renaissance divide, a quality that prepares me to teach a wide range of British literature courses within an English department.

My chief interest in this position at Greenville College is the opportunity to connect my own spiritual identity as a Christian with my vocational identity as a teacher-scholar. As someone who completed her BA in English at a Baptist-affiliated university, and then went on to pursue graduate studies at a Christian research institution, I believe I am a strong applicant for a position at a university that openly values the intersection of faith and learning. Pedagogically, I have found that my own personal interest in the Judeo-Christian tradition coincides with a broader pursuit of recognizing how religious phenomena enhance our close readings of literary texts, especially within the spiritually volatile world of Renaissance England. Outside of the classroom, my enthusiasm for the study of religion and literature has resulted in publications and presentations, both within my major historical period and beyond. Recently, I published a short article on Medieval Eucharistic miracle stories and their imagistic connection to moments in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a piece that connects my interest in Shakespeare with a contiguous focus in Medieval literature and culture. I have also published on the significance of women preaching and offering spiritual advice to their male counterparts in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Apart from Renaissance studies, my article, "The Spiritual Connection: Honoring Faith Traditions and 'Spiritual Literacies' in the Writing Conference," speaks to my own priorities in serving students who wish to write effectively about matters of faith. Overall, my personal and academic interests in Christianity are rooted in a desire to read literary texts and connect with mainstream society from a position of charity, a posture I feel is difficult to accomplish if one is not mindful of a culture's general desire (or lack thereof) for divine transcendence.

My graduate training has prepared me to teach a range of courses in Greenville College's oeuvre, including freshman composition, Introduction to Literary Study (ENG 201), Basics of Literary Theory (ENG 220), Theatre History and Literature I and II (ENG 309 and 310), general British literature courses (ENG 344), and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare (ENG 358). This past year, I had the opportunity to teach a Freshman Academic Seminar on "Writing and the Creative Life," a themed course comparable to Greenville's COR 101. I am also well equipped to teach courses specifically on the English Renaissance, as well as courses on dramatic literature from the Middle Ages to the present. Indeed, I am confident that my background in the study of dramatic literature and history of theatre performance would make me a strong potential liaison between Greenville's English and Communication majors. Since the English Department already has more than a few courses shared with Communication majors (ENG/COM 321, 309, 310, and 358), I would be delighted to generate more dramatic literature/performance studies courses that could be cross-listed between the two programs themselves or within the Center for Visual Culture and Media Studies at-large.

All in all, my time spent in Christian higher education has only affirmed my commitment to investing in that same tradition for my professional pursuits. Along with this letter, I have sent my CV, faith statements, and a list of references to the e-mail addressed indicated on Greenville's HR website. My personal website, www.firstnamelastname.com, offers a bit fuller picture of who I am than my CV, and I hope that it is helpful to you as you evaluate my credentials. You can contact me to schedule an interview by email (first_last@baylor.edu) or by phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx). I do plan to attend the 2016 MLA Convention in Austin and would be happy to connect with Greenville's English Department there.

Thank you for the generosity of your time and consideration.

With all sincerity,
First Last

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

One Bear Place #97404 • Waco, TX 76798-7404 • (254) 710-1768