



The Rev. Dr. Javier A. Viera was named president of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary on January 1, 2021. Along with the right mix of skills, education, and faith, President Viera brings extensive experience in church leadership, rigorous academic study, and community building to his work as president. A native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, this historical appointment marks the first time a person of color and a Latino has held the Office of President in the seminary's 168-year history.

President Viera also serves on faculty at Garrett-Evangelical as Professor of Education and Leadership. His varied scholarly interests center on three key, yet distinct areas: inter-religious dialogue and how learning takes place across religious and ideological differences; adult learning and development, particularly Freirean dialectics and pedagogy; and the history of Latin America, particularly revolutionary and anti-colonial movements in the Hispanic Caribbean.

Prior to joining Garrett-Evangelical, President Viera served as the 14th Dean of the Theological School at Drew University, where he also served as the university's Vice Provost and as Professor of Pastoral Theology. At Drew he led the transformation of the school's curriculum, launched new degree programs and initiatives, and led efforts that increased enrollment and fundraising.

As a minister, President Viera served in university campus ministry and congregational ministry for two decades, leading rural, suburban, and urban congregations, most recently serving as Executive Minister at Christ Church, New York City. He is an ordained elder in the New York Conference of The United Methodist Church and has served the denomination in leadership at the general, jurisdictional, and annual conference levels.

Viera holds a bachelor of arts from Florida Southern College, a master of divinity from Duke University's divinity school, a master of sacred theology from Yale University's divinity school, and a doctor of education from Columbia University. He is also completing a doctor of philosophy dissertation in Latin American studies/history of Latin America from the Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico.

A sought-after speaker, Viera has preached, lectured, and presented throughout the nation and around the world. He has written for various publications on ministry and

education, with three articles and a book chapter soon forthcoming. Other professional activities include the Wabash Center Advisory Committee, the University Senate and Commission on Theological Education of The United Methodist Church, the Religious Education Association, and the American Academy of Religion.



Viera serves on the board of directors of several Latinx educational, cultural, and advocacy organizations, as well as chaired his local community Human Rights Commission which works for criminal justice reform and police accountability, immigrant protections and solidarity with local indigenous peoples, food justice, fair housing practices, climate justice, and raises awareness on the impact of ecological racism on Black and Brown communities. Throughout his career he has been a strong advocate for the poor, having co-founded two not-for-profit organizations that focused on economic empowerment and opportunity in communities of color.