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Nathaniel Goldberg
Department of Philosophy
Washington and Lee University
204 W. Washington St.
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Dear Nathaniel Goldberg and members of the search committee,

I am delighted to apply for the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Washington and Lee University. I am currently a Philosophy PhD candidate at the University of Michigan, where I will defend my dissertation "Integrity, or Something Like It" in the spring. I have enclosed my CV, writing sample, research statement, and teaching portfolio. I have also arranged for letters of reference from Sarah Buss, James Joyce, and Jamie Tappenden to be forwarded to you via Interfolio. I believe that my research and teaching background in ethics and social philosophy, as well as my mentorship experience and history of service work, would allow me to make a valuable contribution to Washington and Lee.

My research is primarily in ethics, philosophy of action, and aesthetics. My dissertation is about what it means for agency to be *unified* or *integrated*, both at a time and over time. The three papers in my dissertation consider how we ought to understand integrity—a concept central to so much of ethics and agency—given that even the most put together of us experience disunity and incoherence in our commitments, desires, and intentions. In the enclosed writing sample, I argue that the experience agents have when they compromise their deepest commitments—an experience that I call *practical death*—suggests that an agent can have integrity only if she abides by the requirements of her commitments, even if it means dying for her commitments. But because for many of us living a fulfilling life involves having multifarious commitments with incompatible requirements, our integrity turns out to be contingent in a way that we might struggle to accept. The central insight of my dissertation is that, as much as we (are right to) strive to integrate our agency, integrity comes at a cost. A lot of what it means to be an agent—to be good at being a person—is finding ways to cope with these costs.

My research is humanistic: I regard literature and history as important sources of knowledge and regularly turn to them to motivate my research. However, I also strive to research in a way that is empirically-informed. In my work, I frequently cite studies in psychology and sociology, grounding my arguments in or bolstering them with scientific findings. So many theoretical and empirical approaches have the potential to inform our thinking about how we should live

and why our commitments matter. My research, which I elaborate on in my research statement, seeks to bring these approaches together.

My grounding in both the humanities and the sciences informs my teaching, which spans ethics, social philosophy (including philosophy of race), and formal methods. As a graduate of Wellesley College, I have a deep appreciation for interdisciplinary, liberal arts education. I believe that philosophical thinking complements every student's education, no matter their academic interests. My students are often surprised to learn that philosophical research often consists simply in *thinking*. I strive to show my students that the careful, systematic thinking characteristic of philosophy can yield remarkable insights into questions worth asking in every discipline. My enclosed teaching portfolio includes a thorough description of my approach to teaching.

A big and especially rewarding part of my graduate student experience has been my service to my department and to the profession. I am committed to dismantling structural barriers facing minoritized philosophers. From 2019-2021, I was on the central organizing team of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP), an organization with over 170 chapters in philosophy departments around the world; from 2020-2021, I was MAP's Co-Director. At Michigan, I have organized a number of diversity institutes, conferences, and outreach programs, including Michigan COMPASS (a three-day philosophy workshop for undergraduates from underrepresented backgrounds in the discipline), the Michigan High School Ethics Bowl (a program for high school students to analyze and discuss ethical case studies in a collaborative setting), and the Biannual Michigan Alumni Conference. I would be thrilled to continue organizing for social justice at Washington and Lee and to be a source of academic and emotional support for minoritized philosophers there.

A position at Washington and Lee—a liberal arts college with inquisitive students and strong faculty who would support my thinking and research—is my dream job. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Angela Sun