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Faculty Search Committee
Grinnell College Department of Computer Science
Noyce Science Center
1116 Eighth Ave
Grinnell, IA 50112

Dear Search Committee:

My name is Leah Perlmutter (she/her) and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Washington applying for the position of tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at Grinnell College.

My teaching philosophy features engagement through active learning, fostering a more supportive and less defensive climate, and offering creative work and sociotechnical content as part of the curriculum, with special consideration toward inclusivity. My experiences as an undergraduate student at Colby College and as a predoctoral instructor, curriculum developer, and TA at UW all shape my approach to teaching.

At Grinnell, I'm excited to teach a wide variety of courses. As some of my first courses, I'd be well prepared and enthusiastic to teach introductory courses including CSC 105, 161, and 207. I'm especially excited about 105 because of the attention toward social implications of CS. Some other courses I might teach right away include 324, and 326, leveraging my experience as a professional software developer. In the medium term, I'd like to expand my teaching repertory into courses that cover functional programming and systems, including CSC 151, 211, and 213. I'm also excited about CSC 232 and 395-01, given my research background in HCI.

I have a lot to contribute to the Grinnell computer science course catalog. I am interested in developing a course about identity computing, using as inspiration Nicki Washington's *Race, Gender, and Class in Computing.*[1] I have a deep passion for the arts and a need to always be

[1] https://courses.cs.duke.edu//spring21/compsci190/index.html

creating something, with experience in several artistic disciplines including ceramics, technical theater, and aerial circus. Accordingly, I would be excited to develop an interdisciplinary course combining computer science with arts. Inspired by Colby CS 267, *Interactive Digital Media,*[2] the course would center on the creation of interactive art installation projects and I would encourage students to explore their cultural identities and showcase their cultural assets as digital art.

My research revolves around themes of access, inclusion, and support, covering a wide breadth of computer science fields, including HCI, Robotics, Accessibility, and CS Education. My approach to undergraduate research is shaped by my experience as an undergraduate researcher at Colby and my experiences mentoring and coordinating undergraduate researchers at UW. Building on this solid background, I will work to grow into a strong research mentor to undergraduates at Grinnell. In my future research, I want to measure the impacts of sociotechnical curriculum on CS culture, qualitatively investigate students' development of CS identity across institutional boundaries, and design apps to support CS students. My goal in this research is to build a widespread CS culture more hospitable to students from historically marginalized groups, including by identifying small college practices that are transferable to large universities.

Principles and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion are core to my teaching, research and service. I educate my colleagues about DEI issues, for example, in the anti-racism workshop series that I co-organized for members of my research area. When teaching students, I aim to offer opportunities for open-ended, creative work where students can learn about and express their cultural identities. And I teach about sociotechnical topics such as race and gender in technology within the context of core CS courses. In my CS Education research, I aim to produce research findings that will benefit marginalized groups in CS, which requires problem posing, research design, and analysis by researchers who identify as members of those groups; hence, a diverse group of undergraduate research mentees is vital to this work.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Leah Perlmutter

[2] https://cs.colby.edu/courses/J19/cs267/