David V. Beckwitt (he/his), PhD Candidate
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Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I write to apply for the Adjunct Lecturer—Physics position. I am a 6th-year PhD candidate in condensed-matter physics at the University of Missouri, graduating December 2025. I am excited by SUNY Cortland's student-centered program and its mission to foster the community through teaching and service. I bring six years of experience in experimental design and computational modelling, paired with practice in **compassionate teaching** that supports your department's goals.

My research focuses on the structural characterisation of van der Waals thin films using grazing-incidence X-ray and neutron scattering. I have developed Monte Carlo simulations to extract occupancies, defect densities, and anisotropic Debye–Waller factors; built convolutional neural networks for automated structure analysis; and grown phase-controlled 2D films via chemical vapour deposition. I have served **as an instructor** and teaching assistant for both algebra and calculus-based mechanics. **I have taught courses** comparable to those in your curriculum and received the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and student-driven Green Chalk Teaching Awards in addition to student reviews on rate my professors. These experiences demonstrate my ability to communicate concepts clearly, connect with students, and create an engaging classroom environment. I recognize that research might seem distant from introductory courses, yet I have found that sharing authentic examples from personal experiences inspires students and helps form connections.

My teaching philosophy centers on compassionate, student-centered instruction. In small classes and one-on-one tutoring, I focus on building rapport by understanding that meaningful relationships are essential for lasting learning. In large lectures I scale this approach by actively learning students' names, using think-pair-share, anonymous polling, and active-learning strategies, and by maintaining approachable office hours. I adopt flipped-classroom and inquiry-based models, providing preparatory materials so class time can focus on problem-solving and laboratory explorations. These methods demand intentional planning, but they encourage deeper engagement and retention. Outside the classroom I have organised demonstration days for local schools, volunteered at observatories, and directed a graduate-student mental-health program. Such service reflects my belief that teaching extends beyond the syllabus and that outreach builds community and student retention.

SUNY Cortland's Physics Department offers the type of learning environment in which I thrive: smaller class sizes, hands-on experimentation, personalised advising, community outreach through the planetarium, and undergraduate research. It would be a thrill to integrate my expertise into your introductory courses and to be a part of your department. I hope to collaborate with faculty to support the Physics and Engineering Club and would be excited if given the chance to participate in your campus planetarium under Dr. Nolan. Relocating from Missouri to Cortland, NY is already a given for me as my partner was recently hired as a faculty member.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of working with your department.

Very Best,