Dear Meng and Jian,

It was such a great feeling to meet you again, with Nandini especially seeing you both in person after two decades! Externally many things have progressed, but inside it felt like the old days at CMU and Pittsburgh again.

You both made us feel so much at home with such a wonderful welcome, and arranged such a personalized dinner get together for us that it was really the best! I knew after the last visit that VT and Pamplin would be a truly special opportunity for me to establish the next direction and focus of my career.

During this visit, we both got to experience the special social bonds in the VT community, really genuine people that care about one another, and can now see why the university and community is such a great place to be at. It was great that Anderson and Anthony were so welcoming of Anant, and the parents even had to pull the kids out when they did not want to leave.

It was also great to learn about the excellent schools, the easy access to everything especially for kids, and the amazing housing options that we experienced both at your house and during the realtor tour. Thank you so much for setting that up as well, it was very helpful to visualize the possibilities. In fact, during the tour, Anant saw a specific house that was shaped like an igloo and wanted me to promise that we would move there!

Thank you again for really everything. We can readily visualize a truly wonderful life ahead for all for us.

Best,

Nandini and Vineet

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Dear Rajesh,

Thank you so much for having Nandini and me visit along with our son Anant.

It was delightful to meet Amy and you, and learn from your long experience with VT, including raising children in the area. Thank you for sharing all that, in addition to the culture at VT. I think given such capable leadership of the school, I can understand why you are able to grow and expand even in this difficult and challenging landscape for universities.

We enjoyed the truly wonderful hospitality and social connections and warmth you all have at VT, creating a strong local community. I was already very impressed with the intellectual environment during my last visit. The second visit highlighted the really nice genuine friendships, where people really enjoy the interactions beyond work. You shared so much about the community and how our life could be so rich and fulfilling in the VT community, with convenient high-quality sports and other activities for both adults and kids. Great to know you play racquetball too :)

From what we’ve learned, everything seems so accessible, easy and straightforward, especially related to raising kids.

I also had a wonderful meeting with Reza, and we ended up discussing research and potential collaborations too. I also learned about the bike paths and trails that would be really nice to explore. The real estate tour also gave us a very nice appreciation for the possible neighborhoods, I certainly did not realize the variety of architectural styles and available options in the area.

Overall, we were truly positively surprised by the whole experience, and felt so welcomed that we can clearly imagine life at VT would be very fulfilling both personally and professionally.

Best,

(Nandini &) Vineet

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Dear Shane,

Nandini and I really enjoyed meeting you during our visit to DC. Thanks for for the wonderful hospitality, meeting over the weekend and spending time away from your family, please thank Coco for us (hope I got the spelling!). We would definitely love to meet her as well next time.

I also appreciate you for being a genuine friend and colleague, I will always remember your thoughtful and kind words about me during this time of transition, with both challenges and possibilities. It was great to learn about your experiences in Canada, as well your academic life at VT now. We both see such great potential with VT, which is now on a platform for the next phase of growth.

The more we spend time with you all, we feel even more that this would be such a great academic environment as well as community to start the next chapter of both work and life for us.

Looking forward to talking more with you about all this and more, over time!

Best,

Vineet

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Senior Associate Dean for Faculty.

Dear Reza,

It was really my great pleasure to meet you yesterday. I think you exemplify the wonderful academic culture at Pamplin and VT, focusing on the things that truly matter from an academic viewpoint.

After our meeting, and the really wonderful opportunity to meet with the department and Pamplin faculty and leadership, I truly feel even more confident that Pamplin would be a welcoming academic home for me, and one that would provide me the opportunity to both take my research to much broader audiences, including crossing disciplinary boundaries. I would also very much welcome the possibility to help contribute to the school in the multiple ways we discussed.

We also experienced such warmth and genuine connection with all of you in the Pamplin community that it feels like I would fit in perfectly on day one, and thrive in the years ahead.

Best,

vineet

p.s. I’ll send you a separate note with the explainability / interpretability paper. Really enjoyed our discussion of that too.