LAMONT-DOHERTY EARTH OBSERVATORY
COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL

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Dear Search Committee,

I am a postdoctoral research scientist at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, part of the Columbia University Climate School, writing to apply for the position of Faculty Chair of Natural Science.

I first learned of Deep Springs in March of 2015 during a field trip for petrology. We drove past a lone ranch on route 168 and our professor described the unique education offered at the college. It was my first time in the American West, and I recall the awe I felt imagining life in the desert. Since then, I have led numerous fieldwork campaigns and field trips to California, Nevada, eastern Washington, and Oregon. That initial awe has never faded.

My science is predicated on a love of observation. Earth science is rare in that one can go out into the field and view the mechanisms that have shaped our world. With little more than a notebook, one can piece together a piece of Earth history and its inner workings. My research focuses on the weathering, deposition, and ultimate recycling of minerals, particularly as a tectonic control over long-term climate. I combine field work, geochemistry, statistical inference, and biogeochemical models to anchor these tectonic processes to our proxy record of climate.

In addition, I have had the opportunity to serve as teaching assistant for numerous classes, during which time I have been recognised with multiple awards. My teaching has given me experience lecturing on a broad range of topics, leading lab exercises, and organising domestic and international field trips. I care deeply about delivering the meaningful and inspiring courses that shaped my love for the field.

I believe that my work is well suited to teaching at Deep Springs. There is no better located college from which to derive an appreciation for the natural world. Within a couple of hours drive lie spectacular examples of volcanic processes, structural complexity, active tectonics, and sedimentary records of Earth's climatic changes. I would use my interdisciplinary Earth science background to showcase the landscape and the histories it preserves.

In 2014 I left England for the expressed purpose of a liberal arts education. I resist being siloed by 'pure' science and instead champion our scientific curiosity as just one facet of the human condition. I maintain a hobbyist's love for poetry, photography, painting, literature, cooking, sports, and music. I believe that these forms of expression are as necessary to understanding the world around us as scientific observation.

During my time in academic institutions, I have been heavily involved in organised community spaces. I am the only college graduate in my family and felt a desire to give back to the university. I have since found that the more I invest in the community around me, the more I take from the experience. At Princeton I forwent the eating clubs or dining halls and instead joined a co-op where we cooked for thirty people every night. We divided chores, elected leadership positions, and talked late into the night. As a senior I served as a residential college advisor, living alongside first-year students and fostering conversations, often challenging conversations, as they learned to live with people from vastly different backgrounds. I captained and coached the ultimate frisbee teams at Princeton and MIT, respectively, learning to ask more of myself and of my teammates. While none of these experiences are a direct analogue to Deep Springs, they have given me an appreciation for an education that is all consuming and extends far beyond the classroom.

I have attached my CV, a statement on education, and a statement on research.

Yours sincerely,
Joshua Murray