

Mr. Pumphrey,

In March of 2021, I braved the ten hour drive from Atlanta to Gambier. The long country roads made me nauseous and the remnants of a bitter cold irked me. Needless to say, I wasn't expecting to like Kenyon. But upon walking the length of Middle Path, I changed my mind. As a naturally anxious person, peace is a rarity in my life. The whistle of Kenyon's merciless wind and the bud of Gambier's first spring flower brought me more peace than I had ever experienced. I remember sitting across from my parents in an Alcove booth and telling my parents: "I am applying Early Decision I." Few people have such compelling feelings during the college decision process. Without the Pumphrey Family Scholarship Fund I would be unable to experience the certainty of belonging that defines my Kenyon day-to-day.

Arriving on Campus for my Freshman year, the prospect of a course in religious studies piqued my interest. Having grown up in the Presbyterian church, the academic rather than theological study of religion was foreign to me. But at the conclusion of the course, I knew I wanted to become a major. Now, as a sophomore, I have declared a double major in political science and religious studies.

People often ask me if I have a favorite major. While I would never tell my political science professor dad this, I must admit that yes, I do have a favorite major. It's religious studies. My religious studies courses are engaging and discussion based. They bring out my creative side through hands-on activities while honing my analytical skills in detailed papers. The department's diversity of students and courses provides me with a nuanced understanding of world religions that I am unlikely to receive elsewhere.

I like to keep busy outside of the classroom as well. As a Senior Writer and Social Media Manager for the College's Office of Communications, I foster my love for creative writing through [articles for the website](#). I am also consistently covering events for the Instagram. So, if you see a Kenyon Instagram story, there is a good chance that I am the face behind the screen. I also work as the Bicentennial Intern for the Office of Advancement. In honor of the College's 200 years, Shawn Dailey, the AVP of Alumni and Parent Engagement and Annual Giving, and I are working to plan a memorable and enjoyable Reunion Weekend (We hope to see you there!). Lastly, I am a Student Associate at the Center for the Study of American Democracy. In this role, I facilitate events aimed at instilling democracy as a Kenyon ideal. I work closely with Professor Nancy Powers '83, who I figure you may know.

It has likely become obvious to you that I am considering careers in either politics or advancement, but there is a third path I envision myself taking. For several years now, I have seriously thought about attending seminary school after my Kenyon graduation. My best friend

Renee and I have attended Sunday services at Harcourt Episcopal Parish since the first week of our Freshman year. As I share my Sunday morning plans with friends and acquaintances, new faces begin to tag along. The joy I feel in sharing the pew combined with the knowledge gained from my religious studies courses solidifies seminary as a serious possibility.

My love of Kenyon grows knowing that there are those like Rev. David W. Pumphrey and Rev. Thomas C. Pumphrey who also saw God present in Gambier. I am incredibly thankful to them and to you for providing me the opportunity to attend Kenyon and for supporting me in my religious studies.

Sincerely,
Emilie Hankla