Dear members of the selection committee,

I write to nominate Dr. Eduardo Villanueva Chigne, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCE), for the 2020 Prize for Excellence in Philosophy Teaching.

Eduardo is an outstanding teacher. His efforts in pedagogy have impacted a whole generation of students, and have reshaped academic philosophy within PUCE and nationwide. Since his arrival in 2012, Eduardo has worked tirelessly to establish a community of philosophers, and has fostered within this community the development of philosophical work guided by high standards of clarity and precision. During his time at PUCE, he has designed new courses and substantially improved previously existing courses, by infusing them with up-to-date research topics and creating resources in Spanish that would otherwise be inaccessible to his students. Additionally, he has organized multiple events that have brought world-class philosophers to Lima, shining a spotlight on the new Peruvian philosophical community while simultaneously providing an invaluable channel through which its members can engage directly in cutting-edge philosophical debates. His contributions to the profession are enormous: through his unflinching mentorship of countless students, many of them are now pursuing postgraduate degrees in top philosophy programs and more are readying their materials to apply. Eduardo’s accomplishments render him a perfect candidate to receive the APA’s appreciation through receipt of this award.

Before 2012, the philosophical landscape in PUCE was dominated by historical and continental approaches. Students had to choose between the interpretation of celebrated texts and the limited range of topics covered by approaches such as phenomenology and critical theory. Despite the efforts of the interdisciplinary research group Mente y Lenguaje, which specialized in empirically-oriented philosophy of mind and language, and had organized important events that led to publications, analytic philosophy was relegated to occasional mention in contemporary philosophy courses and was portrayed as an early 20th-century positivistic, single-minded approach to matters of logic and language. Students with an interest in metaphysics, philosophical logic, epistemology or metaethics were not able to find an environment where to pursue their interests. Eduardo’s work during subsequent years changed the scene dramatically. “His expertise in analytic philosophy has enriched students’ education at PUCE. Thanks to Eduardo’s generosity and his ability to help others see the complexities of philosophical arguments, students now have a more varied approach to philosophy,” says Pablo Quintanilla, director of Mente y Lenguaje, and Eduardo’s colleague and former professor.

When Eduardo joined the department, he was assigned three courses. The first was a lower-level course on logic and epistemology, an awkward combination of both topics that did not allow either to be adequately discussed. Eduardo transformed it into an introductory logic course that combined formal and informal logic. Besides changing the content, he required his TAs to attend lectures, a crucial but uncommon practice in Peru. The two others were upper-level classes: a logic course for philosophy majors and a portion of the contemporary philosophy course devoted to the analytic tradition. Previous iterations of the logic course had failed to teach students the philosophical relevance of formal tools. Eduardo changed that, while enriching the course and discussing the connection between logic and philosophical notions such as modality and identity. “Although I had already taken the course, I audited Eduardo’s version of it. That course was the turning point of my academic life. He is one of the greatest teachers I’ve ever had,” says Erik Alvarado, Eduardo’s TA and
M.A. thesis advisee. Eduardo’s new approach motivated students to gather signatures to request that he open a modal logic course, which had not been offered in more than 10 years. In fact, signature-gatherings have taken place on multiple occasions. Eduardo has always been glad to accept these requests, even when the courses lied outside his area of expertise. Besides his usual courses, he has taught upper-level classes on metaethics, philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of language, and graduate seminars covering topics in language, metaphysics and philosophical logic.

Eduardo’s teaching style sets a high bar. His ability to make the best out of any question, and his generous feedback in and outside class are uncommon features in our philosophical community. Unlike most professors, Eduardo is always available and willing to discuss philosophy. He is also known for his succinct handouts, which manage to engage newcomers and more experienced peers. Ranging from analyses of technical terms to illuminating examples in Spanish, they are crucial tools for students whose first language can otherwise pose a barrier to their engagement with philosophical works.

During the pandemic, his pedagogical efforts have gone further. Peru’s poor internet service hampers synchronic online lessons. In response, Eduardo has posted carefully crafted logic presentations in his YouTube channel, so students can access a significant portion of his introductory logic course anytime. Lectures were accompanied by self-assessment multiple-choice questionnaires in Moodle, which addressed common difficulties and offered detailed feedback, allowing students to understand, not just memorize, the correct answers. Such resources will be the basis of the virtual companion of a logic textbook to be launched in 2021. It is hard to overstate the importance of this contribution to the Spanish-speaking community, which currently lacks a philosophically relevant introduction to logic.

His greatest innovation during the pandemic happened in his metaethics course, itself the result of signature-gathering. Students were asked to collaborate to produce the first entries of a new online encyclopedia of philosophy written in Spanish. Eduardo paired students up and assigned them topics about which they wrote short pieces. Each week, he switched the topic, so each pair could improve upon their classmates’ work. Besides learning metaethics, students are contributing to the Spanish-speaking philosophical community. Rodrigo Garro, the top student of the course, says: “before meeting Eduardo, I didn’t think someone like me, who came from outside the capital and wasn’t fluent in English, could pursue a philosophy degree abroad. Now, thanks to him, not only am I working towards that dream, but I’ve also found myself contributing to a project that will allow others to be inspired too.”¹

Eduardo’s contributions go beyond the classroom. Due to his relationships with institutions in the English-speaking world, he has been able to invite world-class philosophers. One year after Eduardo’s arrival, Scott Soames offered a version of his Hempel lectures. This was the first of a series of events that have given our community access to cutting-edge research. Soames subsequently returned twice, and we have additionally benefited from presentations by Agustín Rayo, Mark Schroeder, Åsta, Jeff King, Michael Glanzberg, Sally Haslanger, Stephen Yablo, Alexis Wellwood, among others. In several occasions, Eduardo organized activities to familiarize students with the events’ topics, which

¹ The site is under construction and available for reviewing purposes only.
ranged from philosophy of language to epistemology and feminist philosophy. For instance, he imparted multiple-session workshops for Schroeder’s and Soames’ presentations, and dedicated his graduate seminar to the main themes of Rayo’s *The Construction of Logical Space*.

Two events deserve special mention. In 2015, Eduardo co-taught a seminar with Scott Soames, based on *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy, vol 1*, which covered Frege, Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein. The seminar allowed students to receive feedback from one of the leading historians of analytic philosophy. The seminar’s good reception inspired Eduardo to translate Soames’ lectures, which he used in his portion of the contemporary philosophy course. In 2017, Eduardo and Dilip Ninan co-organized the first edition of *Philosophy of Language in Lima*, an event that brought together 9 philosophers who presented and discussed original research during 3 days. This enriching experience gave us the opportunity to see our university as a space of high-level philosophical discussion. It also inspired me to co-organize the **second edition** of that event with Alexis Wellwood in 2019.

Another of Eduardo’s community-building efforts was the creation in 2015 of *Círculo de Investigación en Filosofía Analítica* (CIFA)\(^2\), a PUCP-sponsored research group that draws together students who want to pursue research in analytic philosophy. The group has been meeting weekly since then. At first, the meetings were primarily devoted to the discussion of classic and contemporary readings. In recent years, however, members have begun to present original research and to lead workshops that introduce new students to core philosophical topics. Said research has turned in several cases into undergraduate and graduate theses, many of which have won university-wide awards. Eduardo has advised such projects with remarkable dedication. So far 7 students have defended their theses and 4 are in the process of doing so. As Nurit Matuk, one of his advisees, says: “a year of Eduardo’s detailed feedback and encouragement in weekly hours-long meetings developed my thesis into a writing sample that granted me admission to NIU’s M.A. program. His selfless devotion to pedagogy and community-building is contagious: my dream now is to return to Peru as a scholar and continue his legacy.” While most PUCP philosophy theses excelled in interpreting works by well-known authors, these projects were novel in that they attempted to rigorously articulate solutions to problems within philosophy of language, metaethics and philosophy of mind. Eduardo and the members of CIFA also participate regularly in philosophical events at PUCP and other Peruvian universities, and have been in charge of philosophical outreach activities, such as general audience workshops and the production of a **public philosophy video**.

Eduardo’s pedagogical efforts have begun to have effects abroad. In 2017, I was admitted to USC’s PhD program. The same year, another member of CIFA was admitted with funding to Central European University’s M.A. program and this year he was offered admission to the PhD programs of Pittsburgh, Cambridge and Cornell, ultimately opting for the latter. In 2018, another student started his PhD at Northwestern, after completing an M.A. at Virginia Tech. In 2019, a student was admitted to CEU’s M.A. and another to the University of Tartu’s M.A. (both with funding). In 2020, a student was admitted to Rutgers’ PhD program and another was admitted with funding to Northern Illinois University’s M.A. program. Moreover, these and other students have been accepted in undergraduate events (Rutgers-Columbia Undergraduate Conference, PIKSI-Boston

\(^2\) Analytic Philosophy Research Circle.
Undergraduate Program, Pittsburgh Summer Program), graduate conferences (Arché, Texas Austin, UNAM) and professional conferences (SADAF, University of Genoa). Notably, three of the students who are pursuing graduate degrees do not have a Philosophy B.A. “I met Eduardo when I was pursuing my B.A. in Math. Through Eduardo’s courses and workshops, and my deep involvement in CIFA, I became passionate about philosophy. Without him and the philosophers he introduced me to, I wouldn’t have had the resources to apply to a PhD program”, says Diego Arana, who was recently admitted to Rutgers’ PhD program. Recently, a group of these philosophers, including myself, created Theorema, a nationwide philosophical organization in Peru that seeks to establish a wider-reaching network of students and institutions.

There are many excellent educators, but few can take credit for having created a philosophical community from scratch. “During my 44 years as a professor, I have supervised lots of PhD students,” says Scott Soames. “Many of them have gone on to make important contributions to philosophy at leading universities around the world. Eduardo stands high in this illustrious group. In addition to opening up the largely English-speaking world of analytic philosophy to students, he has put PUCP on the philosophical map.” Eduardo’s consistent commitment to student learning, his dedicated mentorship and diligence in carrying out endeavors in favor of the Peruvian philosophical community make him worthy of this award. According to Agustín Rayo, “Eduardo’s students have the philosophical sophistication of someone who has been trained in a department devoted to analytic philosophy and yet it is Eduardo who has seen them through. With superlative pedagogy and an uncanny gift for building a vibrant academic community, he is surely the most important teacher in Latin American analytic philosophy today”.

I cannot overstate the magnitude of Eduardo’s dedication to students, or its unparalleled reach. The 2020 Prize for Excellence in Philosophy Teaching could not be awarded to a more deserving candidate.

Sincerely,
Jaime Castillo-Gamboa
PhD Student
University of Southern California