

To: Emmanuel Christian Seminary

From: Christopher J. Frisina

RE: Dr. Christopher Rollston

In the Spring Semester of 2008, I had two choices for my graduate education. Lincoln Christian Seminary had offered me a full-tuition scholarship for the duration of my studies, and Emmanuel School of Religion had accepted my application. After comparing the two schools, Emmanuel's reputation for academic rigor led me to reject Lincoln's gracious offer so that I may matriculate at Emmanuel, which I did in Fall 2008.

Emmanuel's academic rigor did not disappoint. My first semester classes were taxing – Hebrew with Dr. Jason Bembry, The Body in Christian Thought with Dr. Miriam Perkins, and Old Testament Introduction with Dr. Christopher Rollston. Writing assignments in both Drs. Perkins' and Rollston's classes forced my writing to become crisper, cleaner and more concise. Moreover, Dr. Rollston's exams pushed me to work harder than anticipated, forcing me to become intimately enveloped in the depths of the assigned texts. At the end of my first semester, I did not receive the "A" I was used to from Dr. Rollston, but the grade I did received communicated to me that Dr. Rollston's demands for rigor, knowledge, comprehension, and synthesis shaped me into a better student and (hopefully) scholar, and that there was still work to be done.

Outside of the classroom, I found Dr. Rollston extremely approachable, though a bit intimidating, understandably. During my first semester, Dr. Rollston was almost constantly available in his office, if even for a few moments every day. I attended his office hours frequently, whether to ask a question concerning our assigned topics or to address issues in my personal study and research. Though I am sure that I was a bit of an annoyance my first semester, Dr. Rollston was always happy to help guide me to find the answers to questions posed. He pointed me to resources and authors that have broadened both my knowledge base and my understanding.

Because of my experiences with Dr. Rollston in my first and second semesters, I filled my subsequent semesters with his classes as much as possible, often postponing required classes to enroll in his. Dr. Rollston consistently offered classes of great interest to my peers and me. Upon graduating in 2011, not only had I completed both semesters of Old Testament Introduction with Dr. Rollston, but also Biblical Aramaic, Second Temple Jewish Literature, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls, all of which cross-listed to complete my New Testament focus. Notably, because I was unable to attend the scheduled class for Septuagint due to conflicts, Dr. Rollston recorded the class so that I could hear the lectures and met with me personally each week to administer quizzes and exams, as well as to review the assigned readings for the week. Undoubtedly, those hours in his office were the most rigorous times of my Emmanuel career.

Dr. Rollston's influence and dedication even extended to my post-Emmanuel plans. When I considered pursuing a Ph.D., Dr. Rollston helped me approach prospective programs and professors in a professional and persuasive manner. On more than one occasion, Dr. Rollston took time from his schedule to "grease the wheel," as he would say, for me. He helped me embrace my ambitions despite some colleagues suggesting, "You'll never get him into [that school]." When I ultimately decided that I would not pursue a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies, Dr. Rollston did not express disappointment, but encouraged me to pursue new endeavors and assured me that he would help me in whatever I needed. Upon completing the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), Dr. Rollston wrote many letters of recommendation as I pushed through the application process. Because of Dr. Rollston's encouragement and personal engagement, and my own hard work, I am currently a J.D. candidate at American University's Washington College of Law focusing on International Politics, while pursuing a second Master of Arts (International Affairs). Though only a few weeks into my first semester, I have already received compliments from my professors concerning my work ethic and writing style, aspects with which Dr. Rollston had assisted me in my three years at Emmanuel.

Personally, I know that my relationship with Dr. Rollston exceeds that experienced by most students. In Dr. Rollston, I found a fast friend. While always willing to aid me academically, Dr. Rollston also assisted me in personal matters, be it family, relationships, or work. He pushed me as my philosophical and theological views changed, constantly forcing me to ask hard questions. Although many points of disagreement arose, Dr. Rollston always encouraged me to draw my own well-reasoned conclusions. Nearly four years since I first met Dr. Rollston and over a year since graduating from Emmanuel, Dr. Rollston is still a confidant, inspiration, and friend. I can assuredly say that I would not be as confident in myself or as joyful in my current situation if I did not have Dr. Christopher Rollston as a mentor and friend.

Thank you,

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