

July 1, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Dr. Clyde Booker's abilities as a member of Carroll's history faculty. I should state from the outset that Carroll hired Dr. Booker on a one-year visiting contract, asking him to teach a number of survey courses while the History Program reassessed its staffing needs. This past winter, we were given approval to hire for a tenure-track position, but not in U.S. History. In short, Carroll's decision to not renew Dr. Booker's contract is in no way a reflection on him or his performance as a member of Carroll's history faculty.

We originally selected Dr. Booker from a broad pool of applicants for this 4:4 teaching position largely because of his teaching experience. We were not disappointed. From his first day on campus, Dr. Booker asked astute questions about Carroll students, proactively adapted syllabi and assignments, and moved seamlessly into the classroom. Early in the fall semester, I overheard students commenting that "Dr. Booker knows his stuff," and "Booker can get really fired up sometimes." Student evaluations, and my own discussions with Dr. Booker confirmed those informal observations, and also spoke to his expectations of students. The history program is considered one of the more rigorous majors on campus in terms of critical thinking and writing, and Dr. Booker fit in very well in that regard. He does not cater to students, but does bend over backwards to help them develop the skills they need to succeed—if they make an effort.

Although he had a contract that did not include a service requirement, Dr. Booker did contribute to the history program outside the classroom. He participated actively in department meetings, joined faculty and students for social events, and even reached out to a local community group interested in the Civil War centennial. Behind Dr. Booker's soft-spoken manner (which our shyer students appreciate, as do I), you will find a thoughtful mind, a quick humor, and an open-minded colleague.

Finally, I should mention that Dr. Booker is more willing than many academics to develop new areas of expertise, and takes such challenges very seriously. With only a couple months' notice, he volunteered to teach Carroll's survey course in Chinese history. He revised the existing syllabus, read extensively in the field, and has subsequently brought to the classroom a revamped course that explicitly explores the roots of China's current position in the world. In short, Dr. Booker modeled Carroll's commitment to life-long learning for both students and colleagues.

Please know that if we had been funded to convert this one-year contract into a long-term position, I would have argued long and hard for Clyde Booker. I do encourage you to give his application your closest attention, particularly if you are seeking an experienced instructor who is not simply demanding, but also willing and able to work one-on-one with students to facilitate their learning.

Sincerely,



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