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CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

May 23, 2011

Scott C. Smith



Dear Mr. Smith,

Pax Christi! I received your letter to me dated May 16, 2011, concerning your daughter Adele. Its contents pain me exceedingly. To begin, let me say that I understand the anguish you and your family are feeling. Your daughter has accused a fellow student of a serious crime, and I understand your desire for a swift resolution of the matter. Because of that desire for a swift resolution, I certainly understand how families can perceive an investigation as proceeding too slowly.

However, I am sure you understand that because of the serious nature of the charge, Christendom College must make a complete and careful investigation of your daughter's allegations before rendering a decision which will impact both the life of the accused and the accuser. In order to assure you that the College is proceeding in a prudent and orderly manner, I want to give you a brief update on our investigation.

As I am sure you are aware, your daughter Adele provided multiple names of persons with whom the Dean of Students should speak about her allegations. Dean Dorman has been meeting with these persons and is in the process of completing his investigation into this matter. In fact, Adele recently spoke with Dean Dorman about his progress. I know that Dean Dorman would like to speak with Dr. DiVietri; unfortunately, I do not know whether Adele has yet provided a written release to Dr. DiVietri which would allow him to legally speak with Dean Dorman. I hope that such release has been provided. I expect to discuss the Dean's findings with him soon.

Next, I noticed in your letter that you made frequent use of the phrase "*in loco parentis*" to describe Christendom College's responsibility to its students. In fact, you indicated that you heard me use the phrase in a commencement

address. Respectfully, I must disagree with your recollection, as I did not use this phrase in the commencement address you mentioned. In fact, it is not a phrase that I use with any frequency. But more importantly, I think that you might be using the term more broadly than is appropriate in this matter. In speaking with our counsel, it is my understanding that under Virginia law, the doctrine of *in loco parentis* as applied to colleges and universities simply means that Christendom has a responsibility to provide a safe campus for its students. Christendom College is very diligent in making sure that it provides a safe campus for the education of our students. Indeed, as you correctly point out, the alleged assault of Adele did not take place on campus. Rather, the incident apparently occurred in a national park several miles away from Christendom's campus. Moreover, both Adele and Mr. [REDACTED] are adults – meaning that Christendom faculty and staff have inherently limited options for enforcing standards of appropriate (or even prudent) conduct, especially when students leave the confines of campus.

In summary, while I sympathize with your frustration with the pace of the investigation of this incident, rest assured that a deliberate and careful investigation serves the best interests of all, including Adele. Moreover, it is my understanding that Dean Dorman is close to finishing his investigation, and I expect to discuss the matter with him in the near future. Next, in regards to Christendom's responsibilities concerning student safety, we act diligently in maintaining a safe campus. Unfortunately, Christendom cannot ensure the safety of its adult students once they leave campus. Let me end this letter by saying that I am praying fervently for all the people affected by this incident, as well as praying that Christendom College's efforts will play a role in beginning the process of healing the wounds brought about by this tragic incident.

Sincerely in the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timothy O'Donnell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Timothy T. O'Donnell, STD, KGCHS