

February 15th, 2021

Tara Farkouh

Digital Scholarship Support Team | Center for the Study of Law and Religion

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to nominate Tara Farkouh as a candidate for the Emory Student Employee of the Year. Tara has been a member of our Digital Scholarship Support Team under my supervision since January 2020. During her time here, Tara has demonstrated outstanding enthusiasm for her work and an exceptional ability to learn and communicate new things. Her curiosity and initiative consistently result in high-quality work that reliably exceeds expectations. Tara's accomplishments are too numerous to mention in their entirety, but even an abbreviated list conveys the scope and expertise that she brings to our Center.

First, Tara has been a leading member of our *Canopy Forum* editorial team. This includes editing and preparing scholarly articles for online publication, including formatting in WordPress, finding appropriate images to augment each article, and promoting on social media after publication. This work involves a complex mix of scholarly and technical expertise, while also coordinating with other members of our student team, all of which Tara handles beautifully. Going beyond these daily tasks, Tara has also been involved in the overall design and organization of the website. As evidence of her initiative, she has taken multiple online courses in WordPress and CSS in order to better understand and customize our website. Similarly, Tara has led our use of Google Analytics at the Center. Over the course of a summer, she took an online course and developed professional training documents and video lessons to bring the team up to speed. Each week, Tara creates a custom traffic report delivered to the team leaders as a data-driven guide for future decision-making. As a recent example of her ability to respond to new and ambiguous situations, Tara identified an anomaly in our traffic data, and after some online research, learned that it was part of a larger spam attack that affected many other sites. Digging deeper in the issue, she identified two solutions that would fix this problem now and in the future and implemented them in Google Analytics.

Second, Tara has led our efforts to organize and present our scholarly work on Scholarly Commons, Emory Law's new Open Access initiative. Working in collaboration with full-time staff at the Law Library, Tara collected citation information for over 130 books, formatted, and uploaded this information as part of our CSLR Book Gallery. Not only was Tara's work lauded among our colleagues, but it was singled-out and circulated as a "Staff Pick" by the BePress consultants on their internal listserv. Here is a quote from the BePress email:

"This book gallery at Emory University School of Law is everything we look for in a great collection of books. The collection has a good banner, descriptive introductory text, and the books represent some of the best scholarship coming from the Center for the Study of Law and Religion. Usually we don't judge books by their covers, but in this case we'll make an exception. The Center takes books on law *but make it fashion*."

Lastly, Tara has led our team's effort to caption existing and archival video content. Working in collaboration with senior scholars at the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship, she learned about YouTube's auto-captioning feature, its unique VTT file formats, and how to edit and upload these in the service of accessibility. Not content to keep this information to herself, Tara again created multiple training documents and checklists so that other team members could assist with this project. This effort ultimately led to our transcription-searchable archive on the Emory Aviary Platform.



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Needless to say, Tara's work has been an invaluable part of the mission and vision of the CSLR. In the last year she has developed both technical skills and subject expertise, all while working remotely from her home country of Jordan (a seven-hour time difference with Atlanta) during the pandemic. She brings a unique set of skills and experiences, that – when paired with her enthusiasm and ability to learn – make her an outstanding candidate for Emory Student Employee of the Year. Please reach out if you would like additional information, as I would be happy to elaborate on Tara's qualifications.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John".

John A. Bernau, PhD

Digital Scholarship Fellow

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