January 24, 1988

Professor Ellis W. Hawley,
Chair
Department of History
205 Schaeffer Hall
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Dear Ellis:

I am writing to you in relation to my academic appointment at the university. I am in the last year of my current contract. Under the terms of that contract, unless new information is provided that would necessitate a reevaluation of my file, my relationship with the university will terminate at the end of this academic year.

The specific information that would encourage a reevaluation of my file is receipt of a contract to publish my manuscript contrasting race relations in Ontario and the United States.

I have not obtained a contract to publish the manuscript. Nonetheless, I want the department of History and the African-American World Studies Program to reevaluate my file. I want the two units to grant me an extension of two years during which I would obtain a contract for my book and another tenure review could occur.

I make this request for two sets of reasons.

First, the University of North Carolina Press had my manuscript for sixteen months. During that period, at the request of their editor, I completely revised the original manuscript and shortened it by 180 pages. This was done following a very favorable review of the original work by an outside reviewer and prior to having it sent to a second outside person. To accomplish the necessary revisions, I received an unpaid leave-of-absence for 1986-87. On July 5, 1987, I forwarded the revised work to North Carolina. In October, 1987, I was notified that the second outside reviewer had submitted a "mixed review" in which it was recommended that the research and information in my piece be...
used to reorganize and ultimately rewrite the manuscript. The suggestions, if followed, would result in a very different work from the one I have completed. I decided that further interaction with North Carolina on this project would not be fruitful. Therefore, I have sent my manuscript to several other presses that have shown interest and are considering it presently. It is improbable, however, that a decision to publish will be forthcoming within the near future. The nature of this process means delays of up to six months can occur as part of the normal evaluative procedures. I need an extension, therefore, in order to have time to go through the entire review process again.

Second, to obtain less than a two-year extension would force me to enter the job market this fall (1988) because a one-year extension would mean a departmental recommendation would have to be sent to the Dean's office by mid-December. A one-year extension, then, becomes a six-month extension in practice. Since academic openings are advertised from September through February each year, I would have to begin applying for positions long before December in order to be competitive for good jobs unless I obtained a contract during the summer, which seems improbable.

One can ask, legitimately, why a two-year extension should be provided for me. My specific situation as a joint-appointment in two very different academic units, and my situation as one of only fifteen Afro-American faculty in the university are the reasons I think my request legitimate. I will elaborate. The faculty of the African-American World Studies Program (AAWSP) is small. When I began teaching here a decade ago, there were four full-time tenure-track faculty affiliated with the program; my arrival brought the total to five. Currently—including me—there are seven such faculty. The committee work, representation of the program with other units, advising, advocacy work relative to the program within the liberal arts college, and service as acting chair and as assistant chair have demanded a great deal of time in order to do them effectively.

As one of a small number of Afro-American faculty, I have been requested to do considerable committee work within the university but exclusive of the department and the program. The requests have usually been couched in terms of a need for greater diversity on the committees. As a result, I was on a search committee to select a director for
the Art Museum; I was chair of a committee to review the Special Support Services program; I was a member of the Graduate College Affirmative Action Awards Committee. Simultaneous with those kinds of activities, I have consistently responded to requests from various student groups. Therefore, every year I work on panels and projects with the Black Student Union, the Black Association of Law School Students, and the Association of Afro-American Graduate Students.

As the only faculty person teaching courses in Afro-American history, I offer a series of courses specifically designed for first year students--Introduction to Afro-American Society--or for more advanced undergraduates--the sequential survey in Afro-American history. Graduate students with an interest in Afro-American history are forced to take the survey courses. While such work may be useful, it is inadequate as preparation for comprehensive examinations or for individuals whose dissertations will focus primarily upon the experiences of blacks in the United States. For such individuals, I must do independent studies in order to assist in their preparations. During the academic year 1987-88, I am working with five graduate students who are completing their dissertations. One was completed in December, 1987, in Anthropology; for it, I was an outside reader. One is being completed in the College of Education: each committee member must read, evaluate, and advise for all of the chapters and each draft given the nature of the students' thesis and research. Three are being completed in the American Studies program. I am currently reading drafts of all three. One student will defend by the end of February, a second by the end of May, and the third by summer's end given their rates of progress at present. I am the dissertation director for one of the three. Certainly, the circumstance of me being on so many dissertation committees at one time is unusual. My point, however, is that in addition to reading their dissertations currently, I served on comprehensive examinations' committees in which three of the five students did areas in Afro-American history. I had to work with each of those students in independent studies in order to assist them properly in preparing for their examinations.

A two year extension will enable me to complete the process of negotiating a book contract, complete work on four writing projects that are at various stages, and continue to provide a consistent level of quality and time to my teaching responsibilities and my work with graduate students.
Should you desire further discussion or clarification regarding this matter, of course I will be pleased to pursue them with you.

Sincerely,

Jonathan

Jonathan Walton

cc: Darwin T. Turner