Letter of William Cole Asking for His Appointment to Be Withdrawn

Commission for Blacks

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September 30, 1976

Dr. Betty J. Cleckley  
Chairperson, The Commission on Blacks  
School of Social Work  
CAMPUS

Dear Dr. Cleckley:

Thank you for your letter of September 27 expressing pleasure at my re-appointment to the Commission on Blacks. I had received the Chancellor's letter of appointment a few days earlier and I want you to know that I consider it an honor.

I must say, however, that the second topic of your letter reactivated a twinge of conscience that has surfaced intermittently in recent months. Certainly you are correct in observing that I missed a number of meetings during the past year. It is unfortunate that the very factors responsible for that record are likely to be present during the coming year. I am, of course, referring to the volume of service and administrative assignments which last Spring accounted for from twenty to twenty-five percent of my total effort. In addition to membership in the Faculty Senate, I am a member of committees of the Senate, College of Liberal Arts and College of Business. I also received released time for a major effort at restructuring the undergraduate curriculum of the department. Given additional subcommittee and working group assignments, this has meant innumerable meetings with inevitable conflicts. Also of importance, I am usually away from the campus and out of the city most of the summer whereas the Commission works throughout that period.

The horns of my dilemma are therefore clear. On the one hand, I may accept the appointment with the foreknowledge that my commitment will be strong in spirit but likely diluted by circumstance; or, on the other hand, I may decline earning all of the stigma that such a seemingly rash action might generate. In the absence of your letter, I am sure that I would take the path of least resistance and accept the appointment. Your letter, however, calls to memory your own clear and strong dedication to the goals of the Commission, attitudes which you justifiably hope to be reflected in each member. Given my situation as I anticipate it, I am forced to conclude that as much as I would desire the honor of appointment, I very likely would be unable to live up to those expectations, and equally important, to my own.
I am for those reasons reluctantly asking Chancellor Reese to withdraw my name from the list of Commission appointees.

Again, I thank you very much for your thoughtful and forthright letter. I wish the Commission Godspeed in all its endeavors.

Sincerely,

William E. Cole  
Professor of Economics

cc: Chancellor Jack E. Reese  
WEC/rn