
Professor Adrian M. S. Piper to President Diana Chapman Walsh

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Wellesley College

SENT REGISTERED MAIL
Dear Diana:

I am writing this report to once again reopen with you the issue of my professional situation at Wellesley. I couch this report in the format of a personal letter to you first, because you are the person ultimately responsible for this situation; and second, because I hope thereby to enlist your active assistance in preventing it from deteriorating any further. I hope that the recommendations I make on pages 35-37 of this letter will serve this purpose. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of this report with you in person.

After having spent nine months at the Getty Research Institute in an environment supportive of my professional interests and respectful of the singularity of my professional needs, I am able to see anew Wellesley’s longstanding hostility to both. I now realize that my inability to extend under these circumstances the record of professional success and personal wellbeing I had established before I arrived here is not due to my own failings, moral dereliction, or lack of motivation. It is the consequence of the paralyzing and punitive limitations Wellesley has repeatedly imposed, since the first year I arrived, on the anti-racism work I have done both on and off campus. Having chosen to hire me as Wellesley’s only tenured black woman purportedly because of my high-profile anti-racism work in both art and philosophy, Wellesley has consistently refused me the institutional support necessitated by the high level of public visibility at which I am conducting these two careers. In consequence it has knowingly sabotaged both of them, by standing by and watching as I get buried in an unending avalanche of visibility-related demands that have made it virtually impossible to produce and publish the anti-racism work it purportedly brought me here to do. *Wellesley has used my public visibility to enhance its multicultural public image while in reality actively preventing me from doing the multicultural work it publicly claims to welcome.*

After almost a decade of doing my best to adapt to this situation, I now understand that there is simply no way for me to survive, let alone flourish, within it. I begin with the matter of my professional survival. With the sharp and marked decrease in my productivity since my arrival at Wellesley in 1990, I watch daily as both of my professional careers, so promising and productive when I arrived at Wellesley, inexorably slip away. I have produced no new body of artwork since 1992.¹ I have not finished the three-volume philosophy project that was three chapters short of completion in 1992.² My scholarly reputation as a productive member of the philosophical community and my professional and intellectual credibility have been damaged correspondingly by this failure to produce a project on which I have now been working for **eighteen years**. I have had to decline many, many invitations - in art, to create and exhibit new work in
major museum and gallery venues; and in philosophy, to contribute new papers to edited collections or present new material at conferences and symposia or publish new books in my research area. I have had to endure consistent and mounting pressure from colleagues in both fields to complete my longstanding projects, without being able to reveal to them the full story of why that has been impossible. I have lost almost a decade of productive work and high-visibility professional activity; and incalculable income from new artwork I have been unable to produce and therefore exhibit and sell. My ability to discharge my public role-modelling responsibilities as the first - and for fifteen years the only - tenured African-American woman philosopher, and the first African-American woman artist to achieve international recognition in the mainstream contemporary artworld, has been irrevocably damaged.3

Consider next my survival as a fully functioning and engaged member of the Wellesley College faculty. Since arriving at Wellesley I have had to reduce the number of writing assignments I give in my introductory classes by half.4 For the same reason I am unable to permit rewrites unless the class enrollment is under ten students. In observing these limitations I am acutely aware of effectively shirking my moral obligations toward my students. Their increasing immersion in visual electronic media culture, together with recent pedagogic trends in the teaching of writing and composition at the high school level, have left many of them without knowledge of such essentials as grammar, spelling, punctuation, and the composition and structure of a paragraph; and college teachers are morally obligated to fill in the gaps. To counteract these trends Wellesley students need much more practice and coaching in writing in every course than any one professor teaching a course alone - and certainly more than I alone - can give them. Moreover, in a community with a black faculty and staff as tiny as Wellesley's, I have been unable to do my fair share of the hands-on, daily work of fighting discrimination - writing letters and reports, making phone calls, communicating on e-mail, attending, convening, and leading meetings, researching and distributing information, etc. In consequence, I have had to expend a considerable portion of an unpaid leave of absence on this important work, for which I have received neither compensation nor acknowledgement (let alone thanks), but rather obstruction, character defamation, and punitive retaliation. I discuss this and related matters in greater detail below, pages 26-34.

Finally, I turn to the issue of my personal survival. My health has been irretrievably damaged by a stress-exacerbated congenital predisposition, first identified in late 1996, to ankylosing spondylitis, in which the spine gradually fuses into a solid mass.5 That stress is the direct consequence of my situation at Wellesley, and the symptoms it causes disappear when I absent myself from it. It is debatable whether this chronic illness would have manifested as fully as it has had Wellesley not reneged on the promises that led me to accept its offer. I now spend several hours of every day counteracting the debilitating effects of this illness. My personal and professional social life has been reduced to the most minimal contacts - by which I mean an occasional phone call - with longstanding friends, family or colleagues. I no longer celebrate or socialize on major holidays because this is the only time of year in which the avalanche of visibility-related correspondence and administrative paperwork abates enough for me to catch up
on it. I am unable to correspond with my colleagues via e-mail - now the clearly preferred and often the only available mode of communication - because the estimated volume is several times more than I can handle alone. Many collegial friendships have been strained or destroyed by my seemingly inexplicable and unexplained negligence: my two-year silences between letters; the seeming irrationality of my refusal to go on e-mail, answer my own telephone, return phone calls, accept most social invitations and speaking engagements; or my insistence on delegating most communications responsibilities to my assistant. My daily life has been reduced to the barest essentials: teaching, grading papers, committee work, practicing yoga, and discharging visibility-related administrative tasks (i.e. sorting, forwarding to my assistant, or filing letters, faxes, e-mail print-outs, and telephone calls; and talking on the telephone to my assistant in New York, my art handler - both of whom I pay entirely out of my own salary, and the editors, dealers and curators with whom I work directly).

Wellesley’s refusal to follow through on implementing the conditions under which I was hired have turned my years here into an unmitigated disaster. As you will see in this letter, the Wellesley College administration has allowed not one academic year to pass without finding some opportunity to remind me of its antagonism toward my contributions to the Wellesley community and the wider community more generally. It has used harassment tactics designed to force my resignation because it would be neither possible nor strategically intelligent to fire me. However, because Wellesley has made it virtually impossible for me to get my work out without shirking my professional responsibilities or damaging my health even further, I cannot negotiate offers from other institutions that would alleviate my situation and so rid Wellesley of my clearly undesirable presence. Wellesley’s repeated refusal of the administrative and research support appropriate to my professional circumstances has effectively isolated, gagged, and trapped me both professionally and personally. I have alerted you and your administration to this situation at every available opportunity. You have signaled your awareness of it, and yet have actively declined to rectify it.

Meanwhile, my past professional achievements generate a voluminous and continuing stream of national and international media publicity for Wellesley, favorable to its tradition of liberal arts and purported public commitment to multiculturalism. Wellesley has taken advantage of that favorable publicity to promote a public image that is completely at odds with the institutional reality of its continued and deliberate subversion of my work. This institution would never have dared to treat a white male of comparable professional profile in this disparaging and humiliating manner. Your decisions, and the policies and actions of your administration have effectively backed me into a corner in which I have no recourse but to now do whatever is necessary to defend my health, my wellbeing, and my future professional work in both fields. You need to understand that I will not allow my life, my life’s work, and my life’s purpose to be destroyed because of Wellesley’s change of heart about my desirability as a member of this community.
Therefore, I wish to alert you that *Wellesley will receive no further free favorable publicity from my off-campus anti-racism work*. The price of continuing favorable publicity for Wellesley from this work will be actual concrete, and adequate support for that work. Diana, I sincerely hope that I can enable you to grasp the larger picture, and the consistent pattern of sabotage, deceit, discrimination and harassment in which you and various members of the Wellesley administration and faculty have participated; and that I can thereby enlist your cooperation in reversing this pattern. To that end, I am now going to supply you with the full – and fully documented - account of the actions and decisions that have created it. I am going to describe in detail this pattern of systematic and institutionally sanctioned attempts, on the part of several members of the Wellesley College administration, as well as in the Philosophy Department, to sabotage both my outside artistic and philosophical anti-racism work, as well as that which I have done on campus on behalf of Wellesley’s minority communities. I think you will conclude, on reflection, that it is an uncommonly ugly, sordid, and tedious story, replete with a seemingly unending stream of petty, malicious, spiteful behavior. Some of what I say here will serve merely to refresh your memory of certain events in which you yourself have participated. And some of it will be new information that I have, up to now, thought it best to keep confidential. Those scruples are a luxury I can no longer afford.

I begin with Wellesley’s repeated attempts to sabotage my off-campus, art-related anti-racism work.

The effort to recruit me to Wellesley College in 1989 as its first "target of opportunity hire" was spearheaded by Professor Owen Flanagan, now of the Duke University Philosophy Department. Flanagan made his case to Dale Marshall, then Dean of the College, on the grounds of my prominence in both art and philosophy. His first and foremost argument concerned my national and international prominence as an artist, and the importance of the antiracist subject matter of my work. In this context he commented that "Adrian, quite independently of her minority status, is the sort of candidate we do not normally have a chance to hire."

Regarding my work in philosophy, Flanagan described me as "one of the top philosophers in her generation. ... [H]er book, *Rationality and the Structure of the Self*, is widely awaited." Similarly, in support of my hiring at the rank of tenured Full Professor, the Wellesley Philosophy Department R&P Committee wrote that "[w]e agree with Annette Baier, the current President of the American Philosophical Association, who writes that in bringing Professor Piper to Wellesley we ‘would be making a distinguished appointment.’" In comparing me to my peers in the field, the Committee quoted Professor Alan Donagan [deceased; past President of the American Philosophical Association and Professor at the California Institute of Technology] as predicting that my work "will be comparable with that of her senior, Onora O’Neill [of Cambridge University]. Among her contemporaries the comparison that springs to mind is with Christine Korsgaard [now of Harvard University] ... I would not put either above the other; both are outstanding, and I have the highest expectations of the future of both." About *Rationality and the Structure of the Self* the Committee
commented that "[t]he book is very close to being done. ... We have read most of it and what we have read is in very polished shape. It is our collective judgment that *Rationality and the Structure of the Self* will be received as a very important book in moral philosophy. ... By raising the standards of debate her book will undoubtedly advance discussion."  

The Philosophy Department R&P Committee also described me as "an outstanding philosopher and an accomplished artist," and added that my "work in both philosophy and art embodies the commitments to overcoming racism, sexism, and xenophobia to which this College has committed itself." They further noted that "since her art is an essential part of her identity, our students will have the valuable, and unusual experience of working with a scholar who has achieved distinction in two different fields. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that Professor Piper’s work as an artist is an essential part of a unified intellectual project." In conclusion, the Committee noted that "[i]t will be perceived as an incredible and completely unexpected coup if we make this appointment."  

Thus the Philosophy Department built the foundation of its case for hiring and tenuring me at Wellesley on my productivity and prominence as an artist as well as a philosopher. They explicitly recognized the interrelated and fundamental role of both areas in my professional life; and acknowledged as well the value and uniqueness of recruiting "a scholar who has achieved distinction in two different fields." Material recognition of the value and importance of this dual career was expressed in the form of a special summer stipend additional to my de jure eligibility for Faculty Awards, and underscored by then-President Nan Keohane’s letter to me expressing her appreciation for a favorable article on my work in *The New York Times*, during my first semester at Wellesley. A primary reason for my acceptance of Wellesley’s offer was that it was the first top-notch academic institution ever to try to recruit me on the explicit basis of my work in both art and in philosophy.

Regarding my ability to discharge my teaching and service responsibilities to the College, the R&P committee noted that "Professor Piper has ably served the institutions at which she has taught. ... [She] understands the important and visible role she would play at Wellesley as its only tenured black woman, and she understands that she will be called upon to serve both the department and the institution. ... [W]e discussed the fact that she should not think of coming here if she thought that the service and teaching demands of an institution such as ours would interfere with the professional life she desires. Professor Piper understands that we have no graduate students to assist in teaching. ... [She] looks forward to living and working in this community. Her art work and her philosophy work will be done here and will undoubtedly enrich this community. Her enthusiasm for exhibiting her work and giving philosophy talks can only serve to enhance Wellesley’s reputation. But Professor Piper fully understands and desires that these outside activities take place around her primary duties as a tenured professor of this College’s faculty." My agreement to Wellesley’s terms of teaching and service were therefore based on, and acknowledged by the College as being based on
(1) the prominence, quality, and productivity of my research in both art and philosophy;  
(2) my record of teaching and service at the five institutions at which I had previously taught (Harvard, Michigan, Stanford, Georgetown, and UCSD);  
(3) my understanding that Wellesley does not hire graduate students to assist with grading;  
(4) the stipulation that I schedule outside exhibitions and talks around my professional obligations to Wellesley College.

The administrative burden of managing two full-time careers, which were increasing even during the recruitment and negotiation process, were well-known both to the College and to the Philosophy Department and no objections to it were forthcoming. Indeed, Dale Marshall’s offer of a summer stipend was the College’s official response to it. This response expressed the College’s understanding of this burden and its willingness to provide targeted support for managing it.

However, two significant conditions were not stated in advance of my accepting Wellesley’s offer. First, to quote current Dean of the College Lee Cuba on a recent occasion, "Wellesley is not a research-oriented institution." Although my experience since arriving at Wellesley certainly confirms this, Wellesley’s public self-representation does not. On the contrary: during the recruitment process not only Owen Flanagan but in addition Philosophy Department Professors Kenneth Winkler and Ruth Anna Putnam, in addition to Dale Marshall all represented Wellesley to me as not only a "research college" in the tradition of Amherst, but as committed to becoming one of the highest calibre; and represented the Philosophy Department and the College as enthusiastically supportive of then-President Nan Keohane’s stated ambition to make Wellesley College fully competitive with other research institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Wesleyan, Dartmouth, and Princeton. Wellesley’s generous leave policy, reduction of the College-wide teaching load to two courses per semester, competitive faculty salaries, and above all its very attempt to recruit someone of my professional profile, were all cited as evidence of Wellesley’s deep-rooted commitment to this goal. Indeed, President Nan Keohane’s formal letter of appointment devoted an entire paragraph to praising my scholarship, and nowhere in the letter even mentioned teaching or service.

It would have been completely unthinkable to consider the possibilities that Wellesley merely represented itself in this way in order to attract high-profile, research-oriented faculty; and/or that having thus recruited and hired them, Wellesley would, once they arrived, then deny them the further resources - for example, research assistance, administrative assistance, teaching load reductions - required for promoting and maintaining the level of high-profile research activity it claimed to want to nurture. In order to commit publicly to competing with high-powered research institutions in the first place, Wellesley had to have known that a two-course per semester teaching load, competitive salary, and research-oriented leave policy are necessary but not always sufficient conditions for maintaining such activity. And indeed, Wellesley’s offer to me of the
summer research stipend over and above these conditions, which are standard practice in the research institutions it targeted, demonstrates quite clearly that it did know this.

Had I any idea that this commitment to research would - at least in my case - only barely outlast Nan Keohane's departure, I obviously would not have accepted Wellesley's offer. The widespread entrenchedness of Wellesley's culture as primarily a teaching and service institution is a fact that Flanagan, Winkler, Putnam, and Marshall had to have known. They also had to have known that, as I had had no prior experience teaching at a primarily teaching-and service-oriented institution, I could have had no inkling of the pervasive de facto valorization of service over research that Wellesley's public claims masked. Indeed, the above-quoted passages, summarized in points (2)-(4) above show that Wellesley itself evaluated my performance in teaching and service, and so the suitability of that performance to its standards, on the basis of my performance at the five previous institutions - all research institutions - at which I had worked. It therefore had no rational basis for extrapolating from that criterion a completely different and incompatible set of expectations and demands as to how I should perform at a predominantly teaching- and service-oriented institution. Flanagan et. al.'s decision to withhold Wellesley's own, predominantly teaching- and service-orientation from me in the negotiation process was therefore a deliberate and fraudulent misrepresentation of the facts.

A second, related condition about which I was not only not forewarned but actively deceived in advance of accepting Wellesley's offer - one that differentiates it from every other institution with which I am familiar - is Wellesley's ostensible policy of refusing to adapt to the changing circumstances of individuals whose academic productivity brings them increased prominence. Whereas other institutions empower and encourage such individuals to flourish professionally by providing research support, administrative support, and teaching load reductions as appropriate, Wellesley's ostensibly "egalitarian" policy is to provide only research support, only at the undergraduate student rate of $8.00/hour maximum, and only up to a yearly maximum of $2500.00 to every faculty member who requests it, regardless of productivity.19 Ostensibly, professional- or graduate-quality research and administrative support, at a professional salary scale, as well as graders and teaching load reductions, are strictly prohibited for everyone, regardless of circumstance.

I say "ostensibly" because, as you know, Diana, this policy is selectively applied, and varies according to the administrative staff person consulted.20 In fact exceptions have been made, privately, for certain individuals - including, as it turns out, me: I was initially led to believe that Dale Marshall's provision of a summer stipend was a considered and justified institutional response to the singularity and complexities of my professional situation at that time, not mere recruitment bait that violated College policy. This policy was not communicated to me, even implicitly, by anyone before I arrived. This narrative will show that my personal experience here has been that exceptions to Wellesley's ostensibly "egalitarian" policies are made as rewards, whereas applications of those policies are inflicted as punishments.
This brand of "egalitarianism" is not a policy that I could have anticipated based on my previous academic experience. When I accepted Wellesley's offer I had every reason to believe that my experience as a Wellesley College faculty member would be in all relevant respects similar to my experiences elsewhere, except that I would have no graduate students to help in grading papers. All of these previous experiences included the institution's recognition of the primary and foundational role of teaching. But they also included seeing senior professors who were highly prominent and productive in their fields of research obtain graders, secretaries, reduced teaching loads, and research assistants as needed so that they could manage the correspondingly larger administrative load consistently with maintaining both the quality of their teaching and their high research output.

Again it would have been completely unthinkable for me to accept Wellesley's offer had I known in advance of Wellesley's ostensible policy that, regardless of how professionally prominent or productive I became, I would receive no more institutional support than if I had not been professionally prominent or productive at all. Had I known that, on the contrary, as I became more and more publicly visible I would receive less and less institutional support - gradually dwindling to almost none at all, I would not have seriously considered Wellesley as a potential employer in the first place. Wellesley persuaded me to accept its offer by explicitly and fraudulently encouraging me to assume the applicability of certain familiar conventions governing most research institutions to which it in fact did not adhere, and - at least in my case - never had any intention of adhering.

I was first apprised of the second condition described above in the Spring of 1991, after I had collapsed from physical exhaustion for the second time that academic year midway through the second semester, and sat out the rest of the semester on medical leave. At that time the media frenzy around my art work, originally stoked by my twenty-year retrospective in 1987, was reaching its peak. Margaret Carroll's "Chronology of Adrian Piper's Public Engagements and Professional Activities while at Wellesley College, publications excluded" lists the large number of external professional activities in which I was engaged. I had scheduled these activities, as agreed, so as not to conflict with my obligations to the College, while teaching and serving as a full-time member of Wellesley's faculty. Because of the huge volume of publicity and its effects, my administrative load increased accordingly. I was at that time still trying to assign in my introductory courses the six writing assignments I felt the students needed. Eventually my primary care physician reached the conclusion that my collapse had been caused by exhaustion, and recommended a reduction of academic workload.

Initially, however, because she was unable to diagnose correctly the medical problem, she suggested that I enlist the help of an HCHP therapist. I did so and we settled on the strategy of my requesting a reduced teaching load of one course per semester in exchange for a list of special services I would be able to offer Wellesley in return. When I raised this possibility in conference with then-chair Owen Flanagan, he advised me that even to mention a reduced teaching load was strictly off-limits at Wellesley, and strongly advised me not
even to bring it up with Dale Marshall. It was then that he first explained to me Wellesley’s “egalitarian” policies. I agreed to drop the subject completely and solicited his suggested alternative solutions to the problem. He suggested that he, Ruth Anna Putnam, Kenneth Winkler, and Ifeanyi Menkiti arrange to speak with Dale on my behalf to explore the range of alternative sources of additional support that might be available. I agreed to this because I believed his promise that my colleagues would advocate on my behalf.

On May 9, 1991, immediately following my colleagues’ meeting with Dale Marshall, I received an antagonistic letter from her insinuating that I had fabricated my medical condition, stating her refusal to consider a reduced teaching load arrangement, and implying that I was trying to renege on my teaching obligations. When I tried to find out from my colleagues what they had said to Dale to elicit such a letter, I received only evasive and noncommittal replies to the effect that they, too, were surprised by its vehemence and “tone.” When I reminded Owen Flanagan of our agreement that the issue of a reduced teaching load would not be raised, he replied that it was bound to come up. I asked why, if it was bound to come up, he had warned me not to bring it up. He reacted by becoming agitated and hostile, and abruptly ending the conversation.

Unsure whether the issue of a reduced teaching load had been raised by my colleagues or by Dale, I simply wrote each of them, stating my previous understanding that the issue would not and should not be raised. I needed to believe that the same colleagues who had recruited me, with apparent enthusiasm, on the basis of my achievements in two fields would not now deliberately try to undermine me for my even greater success in one of them; and particularly that one explicitly and entirely devoted to fighting racism through art - a fight and a strategy they had claimed to support. So I inferred that Dale had raised the issue, and that the antagonism expressed in her letter came entirely from her.

After that exchange, my Philosophy Department colleagues and I adopted the convention that I would henceforth “do my best to enable everyone to assume that I’m fine.” This convention consisted in my not mentioning to or discussing with anyone in the Department my increasingly serious health problems, while I collapsed from exhaustion once or twice each academic year despite curtailing all of my professional activities and reducing the number of writing assignments I required more and more each year. Needless to say, this convention of deliberate and repressive dishonesty eliminated the possibility of establishing authentic collegial relations within the department. Our interactions were generally guarded, distant and polite.

Much later a member of this cohort admitted to me that in fact in their meeting with Dale Marshall, they had complained (1) about my having raised the issue of a reduced teaching load; (2) that I had fabricated my illness and was malingering; and (3) that I did this in order to shirk my teaching responsibilities. That is, they volunteered to advocate on my behalf and then did exactly the opposite. Rather than express any legitimate concerns directly to me, they had defamed me behind my back and enlisted Dale to reprimand me for supposed
infractions neither they nor she were willing to state forthrightly to my face. Their consistent underhandedness and hypocrisy attest to their fundamental distrust, suspicion, and lack of collegiality toward me. At no point has any member of the Philosophy Department ever dared to state these accusations to my face - although, as you know, they have been repeatedly raised anonymously and behind my back. I discuss these additional incidents below, pages 18-20.

Thus having initiated an opportunity to help me more ably to meet my responsibilities to both the Wellesley community and the outside black community conjointly - as I had been hired by Wellesley to do, my colleagues instead used that opportunity to covertly undermine my efforts to do this. I don't think there can be much doubt about their lack of support for my work on behalf of the outside black community. It is quite clear that even at this early date, despite their written statements to the contrary, none of these individuals took seriously my commitment to fighting racism through my artwork; nor regarded my artwork as the indispensible and "essential part of a unified intellectual project" they had claimed; nor believed this commitment was compatible with and an "essential part" of my role as a Wellesley College faculty member. Rather, they viewed my art-related anti-racism work as a superfluous and dispensable hobby I could be forced to drop on demand.

Ruth Anna Putnam made this view particularly clear in a memo to me in which she wrote, "you need to back out of some of your art-related commitments;" and also that she was "terribly sorry that you found the combination of your artistic life and your life as a Wellesley professor overwhelmingly stressful. I wish it were not that way. But you cannot expect this institution or this department to solve the problem for you." Thus after having justified explicitly and in writing my hiring and tenure at Wellesley on the grounds of my professional productivity and visibility as an artist as well as a philosopher; after having expressed in writing her recognition of the centrality and interrelatedness of both fields to my professional identity as well as to my collegial and pedagogic role at the College; and after having introduced me to the Committee on Faculty Appointments as someone whose "work in both philosophy and art embodies the commitments to overcoming racism, sexism, and xenophobia to which this College has committed itself," Putnam here distances my "artistic life" from my "life as a Wellesley professor;" suggests that I "back out of" some of the commitments attached to the former, completely ignoring its anti-racist - and therefore, for me, personally fundamental - significance; and concludes that any "overwhelming stress" I may suffer is neither the Department's nor the College's problem. But since the Department and the College explicitly invited me here to do both art and philosophy in the service of fighting racism, surely it is their problem if, after I accept that invitation, they then subvert my attempts to comply with it.

When the senior members of the Philosophy Department were later reminded of the above-quoted passages from their hiring and tenure letter, several stated to Ann Congleton that they had signed the letter without reading it. I find this preposterous. Neither they nor the Committee on Faculty Appointments could possibly have made a decision as serious and far-reaching as that to hire me as Wellesley College's only tenured black woman without reading
this letter - at least not without being vulnerable to the charge of professional irresponsibility and incompetence in the extreme.

The speed with which my colleagues’ and Dale’s attitude toward me shifted from collegiality to suspicion and condemnation was extremely painful. When I first arrived at Wellesley, and all through that first year up to my conference with Owen Flanagan, I had thought of my public role as that of a "good will ambassador" for the College; and that I had been hired, in part, for that purpose. I had thought that my high public profile entailed the special obligation of using the media attention I received to promote Wellesley’s public image as a special institution with progressive, liberal arts, multicultural values that other academic institutions would do well to emulate. Then-President Nan Keohane’s congratulatory letter during my first semester at Wellesley on the positive review of my work in The New York Times and its benefits for Wellesley’s public image underwrote this conception of my mission at Wellesley.32 I thought it was part of the mandate Wellesley had implicitly conferred on me to speak publicly on its behalf with an eye to enhancing its own public anti-racism profile and recruiting high-achieving young women students of color to apply there. I was actually in the midst of mentally composing an op-ed piece for the New York Times on this topic during my medical leave when I first conferred with Flanagan in the Spring of 1991. I implicitly assumed that, having hired me in the first place, Wellesley naturally would be willing to do what it could to help me carry out this implied mandate. Of course, after being defamed by my Philosophy Department colleagues and the Dean of the College conjointly with the insinuations of dishonesty, manipulation, and professional irresponsibility, I began to divest myself of these illusions. Artwork I produced between 1990 and 1992 struggles with the trauma of grasping that I am an object of racist and xenophobic suspicion, hostility, and denigration in the eyes of my Wellesley colleagues and the Wellesley administration.33

Later, at a professional meeting, my former Chair at UCSD’s Philosophy Department - and a competitor in Flanagan’s research specialty - told me of his conversation with him. Flanagan had bragged to him about having "end-run" around him to recruit me away from UCSD, by guilt-tripping his Wellesley colleagues. It seems that Flanagan’s statement in the passive voice that “[i]t will be perceived as an incredible and completely unexpected coup if we make this appointment”34 had a particular referent: it was one colleague in the field in particular whom he wanted to impress with his "incredible and completely unexpected coup."

I had been puzzled by the fact that, whereas during the recruitment process Flanagan had made much of our burgeoning friendship and shared philosophical interests, once I arrived at the College he immediately became professionally and socially unavailable. After my conversation with my former UCSD chair it became clear to me, first, that Flanagan had used my recruitment from UCSD to Wellesley to try to achieve collegial parity with him, a man who is considerably more influential and highly regarded in the field than Flanagan; and second, that my high public visibility and dual-career productivity were obstacles to my hiring that Flanagan had overcome by emphasizing my race. That
is, neither Wellesley’s Philosophy Department nor its administration would even have considered hiring someone of my professional profile had I not been a black woman. A white male with a comparable record of professional activity would have been immediately rejected as a "bad fit" with the "Wellesley way." Thus Wellesley’s recruitment of me exactly confirmed the racist assumption that the only black qualified to fill one position is someone who is overqualified in two. It became quite clear to me that none of the individuals directly involved in my recruitment to Wellesley actually wanted me - or anyone remotely like me - to be there. Since then my relations with the Wellesley administration as well as with my Philosophy Department colleagues have deteriorated accordingly. No senior administrative staff person has even questioned this trajectory, much less tried to reverse it.

As part of the funding package offered me in the recruitment process, Dale Marshall and Owen Flanagan both described the yearly Faculty Awards, and assured me that they were not competitive, i.e. that to receive one I need only apply for it. This has been recently confirmed this semester by Sharon Elkins’ announcement in Academic Council. And indeed in the Fall of 1990, I received, in addition to those funds, an enthusiastic letter from the Committee on Faculty Awards which stated, in part, that "[t]he Committee applauds your art activities and is amenable to funding clerical, supplies, and phone costs that are directly associated with it." But since 1990 that Committee, too, has repeatedly ignored the singularity of my situation and failed to adapt its guidelines to the specificity of my dual professional needs. As I will show below, each time I have applied for a Faculty Award, the Faculty Awards Committee has rejected my application for a different reason. For prudential as well as ethical reasons I have consistently refused to rewrite my applications for funding in ways that would misrepresent those needs in order adapt to those guidelines as they stand.

It seems obvious that if the College explicitly claims to hire a faculty member specifically because it values her singular and unusual professional activities, it is the College’s obligation to prepare and adapt its procedures in order to accommodate them, rather than her obligation to truncate or terminate those activities in order to adapt to the College’s procedures. If it does not value those activities enough to accommodate them, it is then the College’s obligation to state this clearly in advance of hiring her. No such statement - nor even the bare suggestion of such a statement- was ever made, since of course it would have caused me to reject Wellesley’s offer immediately. Wellesley wanted the public credit for hiring me for my antiracism work, but has been rigidly unwilling to make the adaptations necessary for me actually to do that work.

In the Fall of 1991, Dale Marshall arranged for the continuation of the standard amount of faculty research funding, but independently of the Faculty Awards Committee. In the Fall of 1992, newly elected Dean Nancy Kolodny also continued that funding but announced without explanation that she was rescinding my summer stipend. Because I did not want to continue the same unfriendly relations I had had with Dale Marshall, I accepted her decision without comment or question. A conversation I had with her much later both
expressed and explained her devaluation and disapproval of my external professional activities overall. I discuss that conversation below, pages 16-17.

My Spring 1993 Merit Review letter from President Nan Keohane contained no mention of my art-related professional activities at all. When I sought an explanation, I was told by both Sally Merry and Nancy Kolodny that the Advisory Committee on Merit had not evaluated my work in art because my work in philosophy had taken up all the available "room" for assignments of merit. The College's Committee on Faculty Appointments had accepted the Philosophy Department's hiring and tenure argument that my art is "an essential part" of my professional and pedagogic "identity," and that my "work as an artist is an essential part of a unified intellectual project," and that my "work in both philosophy and art embodies the commitments to overcoming racism, sexism, and xenophobia to which this College has committed itself." Yet that Committee's own Advisory Committee on Merit had made no corresponding effort to incorporate both of those aspects of my professional activity into its evaluation procedure. Indeed, it seems to have blatantly disregarded the arguments that convinced it to grant me tenure in the first place. Rather than address this challenge directly, they, the Committee on Faculty Awards, and Dean Kolodny chose to pretend my art-related work did not exist - or at least was not important enough to include in their evaluation of my merit as a faculty member of the College. This demonstrated to me that their support of anti-racist initiatives such as mine did not go very deep at all.

In early 1993 my mother began her long final decline from emphysema and I became her primary caretaker. In addition I continued to teach full time and try to manage my visibility-related administrative problems. In the Fall of 1993 I took a one-semester paid sabbatical leave and was advised verbally by Nancy Kolodny that I was not eligible for a Faculty Award while on paid sabbatical. This information did not appear in any written communication I received from her. I now know from talking with other faculty that it was not true. At the time, I simply resolved to seek funding for a permanent administrative assistant through other College channels. At a Philosophy Department meeting in early 1993 I obtained the verbal consent of the Department to such a future arrangement, with the explicit stipulation, made by Ifeanyi Menkiti, that the funds not come from the Department. However, I was trying to manage too much on other fronts to pursue the matter further at that time, so I simply continued trying to manage. During the Spring 1994 semester Professor Maud Chaplin and and Visiting Professor Kate Elgin generously agreed to cover one of my courses while I took care of my mother on Cape Cod. In November 1994 she died. In the Spring semester of 1995 I resumed teaching full time, and continued to try to manage my visibility-related problems.

In January 1995 I approached Associate Dean Jens Kruse for an exploratory discussion about my situation and the possibilities for obtaining an administrative assistant. His response was unsympathetic, to say the least. Although I made every effort to clarify my situation in detail, he twice deliberately misunderstood my situation, and finally rejected my request on the grounds that although "the budgets for internal faculty awards applications ... can include lines for research assistance, administrative assistance and other
ways to assist with your work[,] ... no funds are available (nor would I recommend expending funds if they were available) for the purpose of providing personal administrative assistants for individual faculty members." Thus he discounted my stated need for administrative assistance with my work as "personal administrative assistan[ce]."

That is, Kruse chose to disqualify my express need for administrative assistance so I would have time to do my work as different from administrative assistance with my work. This is a meaningless distinction. Typing manuscripts, photocopying articles, and finding library books - all fundable tasks by Wellesley’s standards - are all, just like filing correspondence or answering the phone - the tasks for which I requested assistance, activities a professor similarly could do herself. Delegating and funding these activities, just like delegating and funding someone to file correspondence and answer the phone, buys time for a professor to do her work. The tasks may be different, but the needs are the same in both cases. There are no relevant differences between them.

Kruse’s letter was described by one reader as “humiliating and hostile,” “confusing,” and “embarrassing to Wellesley as an institution.” I was shocked by the animosity of his response, since I had had no prior dealings with him of any kind. But again I was simply too overwhelmed with the responsibilities of teaching full time and dealing with my visibility-related problems to pursue the matter, nor did Kruse’s response encourage me to do so. In retrospect it now seems evident that the hostile attitude communicated originally by the Philosophy Department to Dean Dale Marshall then had been communicated by her to Dean Nancy Kolodny, and by her, in turn, to Associate Dean Jens Kruse.

Predictably, I again collapsed midway through the Spring 1995 semester and again ended the semester on medical leave. Again my primary care physician was unable to diagnose any medical problem and again recommended a therapist, who again concluded that the problem was administrative rather than psychological. I later learned from Margaret Carroll, then-Chair of the Art Department, that Kenneth Winkler and Ruth Anna Putnam had again complained - behind my back, of course - to then-Chair of the Philosophy Department Maud Chaplin that I was malingering and attempting to evade my teaching responsibilities. Winkler also warned Maud Chaplin that beneath the apparent collegial friendship she and I had formed in response to my gratitude for her help and support during this difficult period, I was in fact using her to shirk my obligations to the College. I was sickened and demoralized by these continuing and groundless accusations about my motives, anonymously expressed, from colleagues with whom I had believed myself to be on friendly terms. I saw that there was nothing I could do to gain their trust and good will because the object of their distrust was not only what I did but also who I was.

These charges found their way - anonymously, of course - into Margaret Carroll’s hesitations about advocating on my behalf to you and the Deans, into her letter requesting a conference with you and the Deans to discuss my situation, and into your 1996 Merit Review letter’s diplomatic but pointed reference to the "unexpected interruptions" that have "marred" my "fine record of
teaching." You did not even offer the courtesy or candor of naming these "interruptions" for what they were, namely bouts of illness triggered by the stress of an outsized and unmanageable professional workload for which the College and the Philosophy Department had disowned any responsibility, and which had been exacerbated by the hostility of the work environment that resulted. My Philosophy Department colleagues' slanderous remarks had successfully poisoned my relationships with you, with the Deans, and even with one of my most tenacious advocates.

In late 1994 Margaret Carroll had invited me to teach a course in the Art Department. I reiterated the position I had taken in conversation with the Art Department during my visit there in early 1990 before I had accepted Wellesley's offer, namely that I looked forward to doing so as soon as I had finished the current philosophy research project I had begun in 1982, *Rationality and the Structure of the Self*. I explained to Margaret the administrative conditions that had interfered with this goal since my arrival at Wellesley. In early 1995 she resolved to intervene with the administration on my behalf. I was both moved and grateful for her offer of help. But I also warned her that my relations with Deans Kruse and Kolodny were not particularly friendly, and asked her to consider carefully whether a potential run-in with them on my behalf might be too great a price to pay for having me teach a course in the Art Department. She was optimistic that something could be worked out, and insisted that past tensions had to have been the result of misunderstandings that could be cleared up.

In September 1995, Margaret Carroll convened a meeting with you, Associate Professor of Art History Pat Berman, Philosophy Department Chair Maud Chaplin, Associate Deans Jens Kruse and Lee Cuba, and Dean of the College Nancy Kolodny to discuss my need for administrative support. In preparation for this meeting Margaret expended a tremendous amount of time, energy and attention gathering, studying, compiling, preparing and distributing a very large volume of information about my personal situation in addition to both of my professional careers. Included with these documents were Owen Flanagan's recruitment letter, the Philosophy Department's Hiring and Tenure letter, Dale Marshall's stipend letter, and Nan Keohane's congratulatory letter, in addition to anonymous NEH referee reports attesting to the influence and importance of my work in philosophy. Margaret's goal was to share and analyze information she felt had to have been lacking in previous administration responses to my situation. Together with Pat Berman, she went to very great lengths to educate everyone present as to the conditions under which I was recruited to Wellesley and the variety of ways in which my current situation demanded even more support than I had been promised then. When I joined the meeting, I clearly stated to you and everyone else present that what I needed was not money, but rather fifteen hours a week of administrative help, an office, a computer, and a telephone. Your remarks reaffirmed the value of my work, my recruitment to Wellesley, and my membership in the Wellesley community. Margaret and I left the meeting with the sense that it had been constructive and promising.
In a follow-up discussion which I summarized in a letter to you, Dean Nancy Kolodny first asked me to justify my "artistic role" as to its position in my "life at Wellesley." She also conveyed to me her opinion that the positive press coverage Wellesley received through my media visibility was not as valuable as those services which "keep the institution running," and was in addition merely a by-product of the "public visibility and standing" of my "individual scholarship." That is, she did not view the anti-racist program of my artwork as self-evidently valuable to Wellesley's ostensibly anti-racist commitment; nor the anti-racist publicity I obtain for Wellesley as valuable for its public self-image. In these comments Dean Kolodny thus made clear her dissent from the arguments quoted at length above, that she had read in preparation for the meeting, and that you had reaffirmed in your own comments - that had led Wellesley College to recruit, hire, and tenure me in the first place. Together with her previous decision regarding my summer stipend, these comments led me to grasp that she did not regard the anti-racist services and activities that I was uniquely situated to offer Wellesley as worth taking any special measures to support, because they converged with my pursuit of my own professional interests, which she conceived as distinct from and external to the College's interests. She thereby communicated to me her view that first, fighting racism was peripheral to the College's central interests; second, that service to the College was only worth rewarding if it involved self-sacrifice; and third, therefore, that institutional reward should function as a compensation for loss rather than as a bonus for merit. I came away from our conversation with an understanding of why she had discontinued the summer stipend, and why she would not be favorably inclined toward any further support. This is why I summarized this conversation in writing in a letter to you.

(This interpretation was further confirmed by Nancy's and your responses, in the late Fall of 1997, to requests independently from Judith Rollins and then from me, that the College continue to pay benefits during the unpaid leaves of absence that Judith and I independently had planned to take in the Spring. You may remember that in the early Fall of 1997, I protested to you the College's failure to protect and defend Judith, who was then Chair of Africana Studies, from Tony Martin's verbal and emotional abuse, of which you and Nancy were fully aware and which she was enduring in miserable silence while contracting stress-related health problems because of it. After Nancy conferred with you, she granted forthrightly Judith's request for continued benefits during her unpaid leave. You may also recall that I, on the other hand, was deeply involved in the Committee on Racism and Discrimination's drive to obtain multi-group sponsorship for the document, Racism at Wellesley: Causes and Containment, of which you and Nancy disapproved (I discuss this matter below, pages 25-32). After conferring with you, Nancy offered me the option of forfeiting the benefits from my next paid sabbatical leave by using them now. It is to both of your credit that you both were so reluctant to put this "offer" in writing. Your and Nancy's decisions in each of our respective cases illustrated not only the College's valorization of self-sacrifice as the only valuable form of service; but also its conception of reward as compensation for loss rather than bonus for merit; the dispensability of the putative "egalitarian" principle; and finally, what we in the African-American community call the tactic of separating the Good
Negro from the Bad Negro. Clearly, I had joined Tony Martin on Nancy’s list of Bad Negroes.)

Following the administrative support meeting, Jens Kruse voiced to Maud Chaplin the worry that my colleagues in the Philosophy Department might object to my obtaining special administrative support. In my opinion this was none of his concern. But since I had already discussed that possibility with them and obtained their consent to it two years before, I simply sent each a memo reminding them of this and asking that each drop me a line confirming it.61 I cc’d a copy of this memo to the Deans in order to demonstrate to them that there was no need for intrigue or subterfuge on this matter. During the following week I received letters from Ifeanyi Menkiti, and junior colleagues David Galloway and Alison McIntyre.62 I had a hostile conversation with Ingrid Statler.63 My other senior colleagues avoided conversing with me, even when I requested it. When I wrote Kenneth Winkler for an explanation he denied avoiding me and claimed merely to have been busy.64 Immediately afterward I received the memo cc’d to you by Winkler, Ruth Anna Putnam, Ifeanyi Menkiti, and Ingrid Statler declining to reiterate their support for administrative assistance for me but admonishing me for “soliciting the support of [my] junior colleagues.”65 Maud Chaplin did not sign this memo but - after having purported to advocate for me at the conference with you - defended Winkler’s, Putnam’s, Menkiti’s, and Statler’s memo to me in their presence at that day’s departmental meeting.66 I then understood that my colleagues had avoided talking to me - and thus avoided the possibility of resolving with me any misunderstandings created by my memo - in order to seize the opportunity to once again conjointly and publicly condemn me to the Wellesley administration. For the second time they had tried to obstruct my attempt to manage my professional affairs responsibly, and the second time they had thereby sabotaged my public, art-related anti-racism work.

The day following my receipt of Winkler’s, Putnam’s, Menkiti’s, and Statler’s memo, I received, on cue, a phone call from Associate Dean Lee Cuba communicating to me your decision to deny special funding for administrative support for me; adding that the Dean’s office also would not provide any such support; that these decisions were final; and also commenting that I “really shouldn’t have asked the department junior faculty about this.” This concatenation of comments made it quite clear that your reason for rejecting Margaret Carroll’s case was my Philosophy Department colleagues’ evident ill will toward me, irrespective of the merits of the case or the best interests of the College as advocated by Margaret Carroll and Pat Berman.

I was astonished and disappointed by the rapidity with which you were willing to abdicate your role as an autonomous, rational, and authoritative decision-maker in this matter to the clearly illegitimate and underhanded pressure my Philosophy Department colleagues had successfully exerted on you. Even if I had been on the good terms with them I had previously supposed, this fact would in any case be irrelevant to the legitimacy of my need for administrative support. Your remarks during and after the meeting had given me every reason to feel confident that you understood the gravity of the situation
and were generally well-disposed to do what you could to support my anti-
racism work, in accordance with the conditions of my recruitment, hiring, and
tenure at Wellesley. Your reaction to my colleagues’ memo led me to rethink
these evaluations. Because the basis on which you decided to deny me funding
was so very flimsy and indefensible, it led me to feel that you had been looking
for an excuse to do so; and that any excuse, no matter how ill-considered, would
do. At that point it began to dawn on me that, although you were Wellesley’s
leader, you were not someone whom I could trust to adjudicate fairly and
impartially conflicts involving race-based harassment or discrimination. I saw
that I would have no recourse within this institution for defending my rights.

It was at this time that I learned from one of the participants what my
colleagues had actually said in their conference with Dale Marshall in 1991. I
told Lee that the ostensible issue involving junior faculty was a red herring that
expressed neither the true conventions that obtained between junior and senior
members of the Philosophy Department, nor the actual reasons my colleagues
had brought it up. In November I confronted my colleagues in the Philosophy
Department with those actual reasons in a letter that said, in part:

[Your memo to Diana] disingenuously ignores the actual conventions of
discourse that obtain between junior and senior faculty in this
department, where discussion on all topics is spirited, oppositional, and
often heated, regardless of professional rank or subject matter ... [It] is
insulting to [junior faculty and to me], since it insinuates that they would
refrain from speaking freely on this matter for fear of retaliation from me,
and that I would retaliate against them if they were to speak freely.

... your refusal to discuss [this matter] with me personally
express[es] a lack of collegiality and good will which is shocking and
hurtful. ... your decision to communicate this matter not only to me but
to the administration suggests that you think there is some reason why the
administration needs to be drawn into this issue, as though I were a
disciplinary problem that was beyond the department’s ability to handle.
... your decision to take this action as an individual collective bloc within
the department, without going through the proper channels of a
moderated departmental discussion - with or without my participation -
expresses a disregard for standard procedure that demonstrates that such
procedure was of no moment compared to your need to submit me to
your publicized expression of group disapproval. ...

Since neither the content nor the manner of your collective public
reprimand has any merit, I come, finally, to the mere fact of your need to
express publicly your disapproval of me under circumstances in which I
explicitly requested - and, since we had already discussed this issue, had
every reason to expect - your support. Clearly it was not sufficient, in
your eyes, simply to decline now to give that support. You needed to
communicate to the administration your active disapproval. You
succeeded in linking your collective disapproval with my attempts to get
administrative help, without having to defend explicitly your by now
obvious collective disapproval of my attempts to get administrative help.

... I have good reason to believe that this is the second time you
have actively and deliberately thwarted my attempts to get the help I need in order to manage my professional affairs responsibly and successfully ... this is also the second time you have chosen to draw the Wellesley administration into your punitive attempts to undermine my work in both art and in philosophy, after having recruited me here with ostensible enthusiasm and support for this work; and the second time you have chosen to go behind my back rather than express to me forthrightly whatever grievances you may have about it. That you then have the nerve to complain about my having gotten sick, for a second time, from physical exhaustion simply defies belief.

In response to this letter I received a written apology, a plant, a voicemail protestation of misunderstood motives, and a claim - made to a third party and relayed to me - not to have read the memo before signing it. Not one of them had the nerve to face me. To my suggestion that they retract their public reprimand in a second memo to you I received no reply. Kenneth Winkler claimed to Ann Congleton that he did not remember the 1993 department meeting at which I had obtained their consent to administrative support, nor the content of the discussion he and the others had with Dale Marshall in 1991. Since that time I have declined to interact with these individuals unless absolutely necessary, and spelled out my reasons in a memo to Ann Congleton. Once again they had, behind my back, conspired to use the Wellesley administration - this time with the collusion of its highest-ranking member - to sabotage my attempts to conduct my professional activities in a rational and healthy manner. By allowing their covert opposition to determine your decision to deny me administrative support, you collaborated with them in perpetuating a hostile environment that effectively sabotaged the anti-racism work Wellesley College recruited me here to do.

Margaret Carroll immediately responded to your decision in a letter to Lee Cuba, in which she attempted to salvage the situation with a commitment to continue to seek funding for me. That September, following the meeting with you, I had submitted an application for a Faculty Award that included, upon Lee's request, a one-page statement justifying and explaining the relation between my art- and my philosophy-related work. Five years after having been hired with explicit acknowledgement of such a relation in my work, I was once again being required to explain and defend its legitimacy. Through Margaret's efforts, Lee provided a further critique of that application, and guidelines as to how I should reframe it in order to secure funding from the Committee. These included the criticisms that as it stood my application was "too personal ... too focussed on ... what the demands of [my] professional life are like ... not the work itself;" that it should not connect "funding either to teaching or departmental service, as in 'funding will allow me to keep teaching a full load and to discharge my responsibilities as a member of the Philosophy Dept.';" nor "to the fragility of your health. ... Otherwise, Lee feels that, whether rightly or wrongly, it will just tick off your faculty colleagues, who, as on the Faculty Awards Committee, are the ones who will pass judgment on your request. ... Better yet ... [p]ut it in positive terms, so they can feel as if they're contributing to, or even investing in work in which they can imagine the College, the scholarly community has a stake: e.g. your philosophy publications, your exhibitions and art criticism, your
work on racism, etc." In other words, through Margaret Lee was counseling me to suppress the actual facts that made this funding a necessity, and instead try to convince the Committee of what it should have presupposed, namely the worth of my anti-racist research, which the Committee had nevertheless already declined on several previous occasions to support. His counsel communicated quite clearly that, even after having been a tenured member of the Wellesley faculty for five years, I was still required to adapt myself, my work, and my creative process to the demands of a funding procedure that was neither intended for nor adequate to such a case.

A week later the Committee on Faculty Awards, with the participation of Associate Dean Kruse, rejected outright my application for the usual funding on the grounds that my application "did not distinguish between [my] primary research and [my] artwork," and expressed its willingness to consider a revised application "which specifically requests support for [my] primary research in philosophy." Despite having just confronted Dean Kolodny and Associate Deans Kruse and Cuba with the contractual obligations Wellesley undertook in recruiting and hiring me here, including the acknowledgment that my artwork was an "essential part" of my research, all three of your Deans deliberately worked to question and discredit the value of my art-related anti-racism work as legitimately fundable professional activity. Thus they, too, are culpable in colluding to undermine my off-campus anti-racism work. Their obstructive efforts constituted collaborative "passive resistance" to honoring those obligations, and to giving official support and recognition to that work. I therefore concluded that it would be futile to continue to apply for Faculty Awards, and notified Dean Kolodny accordingly. However, Associate Dean Kruse later forgot that he had officially disqualified my art-related work from being considered part of my primary research when he requested from me, as part of my sabbatical leave application, information on an art-related grant for which I had been externally invited to apply. After pointing out this inconsistency to him in writing, I was able to exact from him, Lee Cuba, and Nancy Kolodny an official letter that formally acknowledged my art-related work as part of my primary research, in accordance with the conditions of my recruitment, hiring and tenure at Wellesley. I intended to present it in all administrative contexts - e.g. merit reviews, sabbatical leave applications, future Faculty Award applications under a different administration - in which the legitimacy of my art-related work might again come into question.

In April of 1996 Ann Congleton generously extended herself by convincing you to restore my $3,000.00 summer stipend for a five-year period. By that time my visibility-related problems had grown to the point at which this amount could pay only a small fraction of the support I needed, as you were well aware. Your decision was a symbolic gesture of good will on your part that once again acknowledged and reaffirmed the official legitimacy of my art-related work to my professional role at the College. For this alone I was by that point abjectly grateful. However, I did not ask to have again reaffirmed the official legitimacy of the anti-racism work on the basis of which I was recruited and hired to Wellesley College in the first place, and which the Deans had already twice reaffirmed in
their letters to me of 11/27/96 and 1/2/97. What I asked for - and what Margaret Carroll had done her best to obtain - was a rational, clear-sighted, and healthy solution to the problem of administrative overload that was and is a byproduct of that work. Your well-intentioned symbolic gesture did nothing to address this problem - indeed, did not even acknowledge its existence.

In your letter you stated your hope that "this stipend will be of assistance in this period in which I understand you are hoping to complete work that might help to generate future supplementary funding from sources outside the College." That statement led me to wonder whether the import of Margaret Carroll’s presentation of my situation had been made fully clear to you. Then as now, in order to complete my outstanding art- and philosophy-related anti-racism projects, and thereby to generate external sources of income from outside fellowships or from the sale of art work that eventually may be sufficient to fund administrative support independently, I need enough administrative support to begin with so that I do not spend most of every day, or even half of every day, shuffling documents and talking on the phone. It really is a very simple point - which, apparently, cannot be repeated too often.

I then sent you "On Wearing Three Hats" in yet another attempt to bring home to you the myriad ways in which this problem was undercutting everything I was trying to do at Wellesley, everything that was important to me, and everything the College had claimed was important enough to it to make me worth hiring. I was equally grateful for your note of commiseration on the "personal costs" of my "creative process" in your follow-up letter. But I also noted its presupposition, shared with my Philosophy Department colleagues, that Wellesley College was in no way culpable for exacting these personal costs. I have therefore reached the conclusion that your steadfast and repeated refusal to acknowledge and address the practical implications of having hired a faculty member who has achieved international recognition and high-profile media visibility in two separate fields is a considered and deliberate decision on your part, reached with full knowledge of the damaging professional and personal consequences for me. Since your considered and deliberate choice has been - repeatedly - to take no action to ameliorate those consequences even though it would have been easy for you to do so, you are fully responsible, not only for the professional damage and personal distress your negligence has caused me, but for perpetuating and exacerbating the hostile work environment my Philosophy Department colleagues originally created.

At the Getty Research Institute this past year I received the quality - and, in manpower, more than the quantity - of support I need. During this period, all of my ankylosing spondylitis symptoms virtually disappeared. As I reported in my 1999 Merit Review Statement, this period of time was extremely productive. However, as I also explained in my 1999 Faculty Awards application, the majority of the philosophy project required extensive rewriting because it had not been reworked since 1989 when I held Guggenheim and Woodrow Wilson Research Fellowships conjointly. After eight years of having been repeatedly discredited, demoralized, and denied support by the Wellesley College administration and Philosophy Department, I had started to lose confidence in my ability to bring this project to completion. Indeed, I had started to doubt that
I still had any effective creative drive left at all. I also had started to think that there had to be something terribly wrong with me to have elicited all the animosity and venom I have from the Wellesley colleagues and administrators named in this letter. It took only nine months in a different environment to disabuse me of all of these doubts. I no longer believe that any individual could conduct the specific professional activities for which Wellesley recruited me under the hostile and inhumane conditions Wellesley has repeatedly seen fit to impose on me. It is now clear to me that you and your administration have imposed those hostile and inhumane conditions deliberately and with malice, in order to force me out of the institution.

When I returned from California to begin the Fall term of 1999, I was so close to actually finishing my project that I wanted to maintain my momentum by buying some more needed time to write. The change of administration inaugurated with your choice of Wellesley’s first gay Dean of the College encouraged me to think I might begin anew with a more constructive relationship to that administration. Accordingly, I again submitted an application for funding to the Faculty Awards Committee, which Margaret Carroll had joined, this past September. My application was once again denied, on the grounds that "release time from teaching is not available through Faculty Awards. We do fund student assistants, but not professional support staff. ... Please keep in mind that student assistants rarely have more than 5 hours a week during term time to devote to faculty projects and often are not available during vacations and summers." As I pointed out in my response to Associate Dean Andrea Levitt, the italicized assertions were false according to the Committee’s own guidelines. As for the Committee’s remarks on the availability of undergraduate student assistants, my application itself made clear that this would be totally inadequate to my needs.

In response to my letter protesting this decision, Associate Dean Andrea Levitt made a good-faith effort to find some funding loophole that would, in her mind, justify releasing the funds to me. Moreover, Margaret Carroll attempted to reverse the Committee’s decision by pointing out, in a memo, that there was adequate precedent for doing so. After the next meeting, of the Committee, I received a voicemail from her in which she described herself as "having just emerged, battered," from that meeting, and commented that she "didn't understand what's happened." But the bottom line is that nine years after Wellesley had hired me with full knowledge of the complexities of my dual-career professional life (indeed, hired me because of those complexities), four years after it had verbally reaffirmed the legitimacy and value of those complexities, and three years after it had reaffirmed them again in writing neither of these individuals should have had to scramble to patch together a makeshift solution to the "problem" of giving me institutional support, nor to "emerge battered" from any attacks on the legitimacy of my need for it. Wellesley should have put these arrangements in place when it hired me. And if not then, it should have made restitution by doing so following the September 1995 Administrative Support Meeting. If not then, it should have done so, at the very latest, following the joint letter from the Deans in November 1996 and January 1997. By repeatedly reacknowledging the professional and institutional
legitimacy of my art-related work, you and your senior administration have created several opportunities within the last few years for making the administrative arrangements necessary for me to actually do that work. You have rejected each and every one of them. Had I any idea that these arrangements could not be put in place without a pitched and bloody battle, I would never have taken Wellesley’s job offer seriously. Nevertheless, this is the battle I am now fully prepared to fight.

In this letter so far I have detailed the ways in which my Philosophy Department colleagues and certain specific senior administrative staff have acted repeatedly to sabotage and undermine my off-campus anti-racism work. I now turn to the ways in which some of these and certain other individuals, including you, have tried to thwart the anti-racism work I have done within the College community.

In early 1996 my friendship with Margaret Carroll had become strained for reasons that are unrelated to her role in this series of events; and I came to feel that it would be best for us to have no further contact. I bring this development to your attention here only because it is at the root of Margaret’s subsequent change of heart and public animadversions toward me, and her cooperation with Nancy Kolodny on actions that came near to sabotaging the anti-racism work I have done on behalf of the Wellesley College community since the Fall of 1995, when I joined the Minority Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Committee (the MRHR).

In the Fall of 1996, my second year on the MRHR, Margaret nominated herself and voluntarily joined the Committee. However - as often happens in one’s first year of service on a committee - she was not one of the more active members. During that year, the MRHR decided to do a longitudinal statistical study on minority faculty retention over a twenty-year period at the College. Dean Nancy Kolodny took several actions that had the effect of obstructing the Committee’s work on this study. These actions included her repeated assertion that no funds were available; that an extensive justification would have to be given in order to obtain them; her denial to us of the resources of the Office of Institutional Research; her obstruction of our attempts to gain access to archival documents; and her failure to communicate to the Committee important information and decisions reached in one-on-one conversations with then-Director of Multicultural Planning and Policy Joel Krieger. Together these actions compelled a sub-group of the senior members of the MRHR to meet or conference-call privately on several occasions in order to circumvent her and share information.

Margaret became Chair of the MRHR in the Fall of 1997, during my sabbatical leave. According to reports of continuing members of the Committee, Dean Kolodny became much more receptive to and supportive of this ongoing study after I left. Her behavior in this instance strongly suggested to me that her actions had been directed toward thwarting the effectiveness of my participation in particular in anti-racist initiatives, rather than the effectiveness of those initiatives themselves.
This is consistent with the view she communicated to me earlier, summarized above (page 17), i.e. that service that also promotes one's own self-interest is not valuable, whereas service that entails self-sacrifice is. It follows that since I am black, my participation in anti-racist initiatives would also serve my self-interest, and therefore is not valuable. The further implication of her view, of course, is that any black person committed to fighting racism is only out for themselves, therefore is not performing a valuable service to the community, and therefore is not deserving of support. So it would appear, then, that only white Wellesley faculty who fight racism perform a valuable service to the College. As I have already shown above (pages 18-19) and demonstrate in greater detail below (page 27-29), you support Dean Kolodny in these views. In fact I know of several white faculty who have been commended and rewarded enthusiastically for such service by both of you. This is good evidence that a white male with the same high-visibility professional profile of consistent, creative, intellectual and practical commitment to anti-racist work as I have (had he been hired, by some fluke, in the first place) would receive similar commendation and rewards, rather than the insults and punishments you and your administration has seen fit to mete out to me.

From May of 1997 to March of 1998 the MRHR report, Racism at Wellesley: Causes and Containment (RWCC) was drafted, critiqued, revised, and expanded several times. You may recall that I sent you the first draft of this report in May of 1997, that you invited me to discuss it with you that June, that we met to discuss it in July, and that immediately following that meeting you provided me with several useful bibliographic references and a previous report on the College environment that undergirded its main argument. I personally expended a significant portion of my Fall 1997 paid sabbatical leave, in addition to my Spring 1998 unpaid leave of absence, on the process of revising and completing this report. Since my overriding personal, professional, and political commitment is to fighting racism, I regarded the time and energy I spent on RWCC as a valuable and necessary personal investment in my own future wellbeing. I still have faith that this investment will bring important beneficial returns over the long term, both to Wellesley and to me, even though the short-term consequences of my involvement in this initiative have been exactly the opposite.

In the Fall of 1998, the Committee Against Racism and Discrimination (CARD) initiated a drive to obtain the joint sponsorship of RWCC by all of the other anti-discrimination groups on campus (i.e. those listed on the frontispiece of the report). During this period, Margaret's second year on the Committee and first year as Chair, she and Dean Kolodny together took actions that repeatedly obstructed and delayed the MRHR's own sponsorship of this report. These actions included delaying or postponing meetings at which sponsorship was scheduled to be discussed, circulating misleading information about the availability of various members to attend these meetings, and fabricating administrative obstacles to the distribution of RWCC to other anti-racism groups on campus (here I refer to Margaret's tale that Nancy Kolodny, whom Margaret falsely claimed was out of town for a month, had important corrections to contribute to the final draft of RWCC before it went out; as we now know, of course, no such corrections were ever forthcoming). Additional actions included
emotionally intimidating members of other groups who had voiced support for
sponsorship, and causing divisive tensions and conflicts within the MRHR
membership itself. One senior committee member reported that Margaret had
shouted at her, "Oh, shut up, ----," when the former attempted to speak in
support of sponsorship. Although RWCC had been originally generated within
the MRHR, the MRHR was the very last committee to vote for sponsorship, and
did so only at the last minute.

And now, Diana, I come - very reluctantly - to your own role in actively
participating with Nancy and Margaret in actions that created an extremely
hostile and intimidating environment in which I might be singled out and made
an object of retaliation for my role in producing RWCC. I find it extremely
painful to have to revisit these incidents; but not only because they were so
personally traumatizing. They also destroyed once and for all my belief that you
were the one person on this campus with sufficient outside experience,
reflectiveness and distance on internal Wellesley College matters to be able to
assess them judiciously, prudently, and constructively. This conviction had been
undergirded by the further one that, although we had not had much opportunity
to interact and you had made decisions in the past about my case that I regarded
as insensitive and ill-advised, we nevertheless were on friendly terms of mutual
respect. But after you publicly contradicted your original assessment of RWCC
which you had communicated to me privately, publicly denied your earlier
support of and contributions to it, and then proceeded to attack, threaten and
libel me behind my back to others, I was forced to abandon those illusions. I
need to say to you that I feel personally betrayed by your having turned on me
for no reason that you have ever seen fit to share with me (from which I infer that
none of your reasons are, in fact, fit to state to my face). I also feel that you have
betrayed and debased your role as Wellesley’s leader by stooping to these petty,
demeaning tactics of subterfuge and intimidation.

As you are well aware, a key point of contention between me and Nancy
and Margaret was on the issue of whether I should be listed as the sole author of
the report. My position on this issue was, and is, that I should not; first, because
I did not want to be the target of retaliation by politically conservative factions in
the Wellesley community; second, because the report gave voice to the views and
experiences of so many other members of the Wellesley community with whom I
discussed the issues; third, because I had promised those individuals anonymity
so that they could speak freely without fear of retaliation, and now claimed the
same protection for myself; and fourth, because my public visibility would divert
attention from those issues and direct reaction to the report toward speculation
about personalities rather than attention to the content and implications of the
issues it discussed.96

I made quite clear, repeatedly, that I was not sufficiently invested in the
sponsorship or circulation of RWCC to retract my stance on this subject.97 In a
voicemail to me, Margaret attempted to pressure me into accepting sole
authorship by suggesting that so doing would make the MRHR’s sponsorship
more likely.98 I forwarded this voicemail to other involved individuals at the
time. Her subsequent denial99 would seem to represent a failure of memory. She
and Nancy, with your tacit approval, also tried to discredit me among other committee and group members by circulating slanderous and defamatory remarks such as that RWCC expressed nothing more than my own "grudges" against the College; and that it was just a "self-serving" documentation of my "personal agenda" (of course these remarks got back to me, even though these charges, too, are such that not one individual has dared to make them to my face). When in my meeting with you at the beginning of April to resolve these conflicts, I responded to your praise for my work on RWCC by commenting that RWCC was simply my self-interested attempt to turn Wellesley into the kind of place at which I would want to remain, you did a double-take.

At the time I interpreted your reaction as surprise that I would admit such a vested self-interest. It seems not to have occurred to you - any more than it did to Nancy - that when one is the object of racism, fighting racism is a legitimately self-serving activity in which one's own self-interest and the public interest converge. Like Nancy, you seem to believe that service is only valuable if one loses rather than gains something by it; and that service from which the server also gains shows that the server is "only out for herself." The great irony, of course, is the fact that - as you can now see from reading this letter - I have so largely concealed my own issues and odyssey at Wellesley College up to this point.

In retrospect, however, I now believe your surprise had a different explanation. Your actions and decisions about my situation, and those of your administration up to that point, constituted a clear vote of no-confidence in me, my anti-racism work both on- and off-campus, and my presence at Wellesley College. It is clear that you wanted me out. With that agenda, you must have read my innocent comment about wanting to transform Wellesley into a place where I would want to remain as a direct challenge to it; as a message that I would fight your attempt to force me out by fighting racism at Wellesley more generally. Although that was not the message I intended, it is nevertheless true, Diana, that you will NOT force me to resign from Wellesley College and I will NOT stop fighting whatever manifestations of racism I find here.

For this reason, first of all, I have delayed delivery of this letter to you until after the successful completion of the Black Task Force review and legislative amendment process so that you will not be able to thwart it in order to retaliate against me for sending it. Second, in the event that you and I are unable to resolve the problem of my situation here within the constraints of the one-on-one dialogue I have initiated with you through this letter, I will immediately recuse myself from the position of co-chair of the Black Task Force and Black Task Force Representative to the Agenda Committee, so as to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest that might harm its upcoming anti-racism projects. Third, however, I can assure you that this eventuality will have no adverse effect on my commitment to do everything in my power to prevent Dean of Students Geneva Walker-Johnson from being forced out of Wellesley College herself, through tactics of intimidation that are by now very familiar to me: of scapegoating, ostracism, defamation, sabotage, or any other form of harassment inflicted by members of the Wellesley community.
Your participation in the internecine campaign of intimidation and pressure against the sponsorship of RWCC was most professionally damaging and personally devastating to me when you began to criticize me, my negotiations with the MRHR, and RWCC itself to others behind my back. You tried to pressure me to assume full authorship for the report, to undermine community support for me and for RWCC, and to prevent its joint committee sponsorship - i.e. its "public distribution with any official committee imprimatur" - by threatening to speak publicly against it if we went ahead with this. Even more emotionally distressing, damaging to my reputation and relations with my colleagues, and ethically incomprehensible to me was your subsequent e-mail - addressed to me, but sent instead to Margaret, then three and a half hours later retracted with orders to her to destroy it - in which you said that you "view [RWCC] as filled with half-truths, cheap shorts, flat-out false statements, and unsubstantiated rumors. ... important parts are reckless and irresponsible ... fails every test I know of careful and well substantiated scholarly argument ... naive and quixotic ... [contains] blatant defects etc." Upon reading these sentiments I was dumbfounded: they were the exact opposite of the sentiments you had expressed in your June 17th note to me thanking me for my "insights." In my response to you, I further pointed out to you that

1. You have voiced extremely disparaging judgments about the report - and me - essentially behind my back, without giving me the opportunity to rebut them.
2. You have effectively instructed my colleagues who have heard these disparaging judgments not to communicate or discuss them with me. Not only have you offered me no opportunity to defend RWCC to you against your very harsh criticisms. You also effectively created a situation in which I would have no opportunity to defend RWCC against your criticisms to my colleagues - nor would they have the opportunity to find out what my defense might be.
3. You effectively isolated me from my colleagues by supplying them with important information which you then instructed them to withhold from me. You deliberately warned them, and not me, what specific retaliatory consequences to expect should we all support the distribution of RWCC. Had I not obtained your e-mail despite your instructions, your failure to supply all of us with the same information could have reinforced exactly the fear, mistrust, divisiveness, misunderstanding, and mutual alienation among Wellesley faculty we are trying to overcome through this initiative. Your attitude toward "linking arms in solidarity" is indeed quite clear.

... at no time after you received the 8 September draft of RWCC did you provide any further factual corrections to it, even though you knew that I repeatedly solicited them and that the committee and I had established an initial deadline of 3 March for receiving them. Nor have you supplied any up through yesterday’s final deadline. ... you found time [in your extended e-mail letter of 17 March] to characterize RWCC in very generally unflattering terms ... yet found no time, either beforehand, during the three and
As for my being "naive and quixotic," Diana, what can I say? As you can see from this letter, I do hold on very tenaciously to my ideals in the face of the most virulent assaults on them, and do my best to carry out these ideals in action. But I also regard those assaults as important tests of the suitability of my ideals to the circumstances I am in. When those circumstances prove me conclusively wrong, I am fully prepared to jettison them in favor of a more survival-oriented approach.

For example, at the time I received your e-mail, I still was not yet ready to acknowledge fully that you personally were capable of these crude, thuggish, and ill- advised bullying tactics. I thought they had to have come from elsewhere, and that you had to have been taken in by the bad judgment and malicious counsel of others. That is why, shortly after sending you my response to your e-mail, I resolved to confront you directly with the facts and the consequences for Wellesley of your semi-public attacks on me and on RWCC. You may recall that, in our meeting, I shared with you the following thoughts, which I wrote up on 24 March 1998:

... despite the very unpleasant exchange of communications we have had this past month, I believe you are a thoughtful and reflective person; ... although you may not believe this, I have a very strong commitment to Wellesley College and I would like to help avert Wellesley’s next public relations disaster if it is in my power to do this.

I am writing to tell you that you are receiving very bad advice in this situation. It is the same bad advice you received in the Tony Martin case. There, too, ---- pressured you into taking a publicly denunciatory and oppositional stance - in that instance on Tony’s behavior. There, too, - --- thereby set you up publicly to appear overly partisan and involved to an undignified degree in a local internal skirmish - that one between Tony and Mary. There, too, by prominently involving the College’s leader and primary liason with the public in this local internal matter, ---- thereby ensured not only an escalation of the situation but the undivided attention of the national press, which by itself, in that case, would not have thought to legitimize Tony’s disgusting behavior as you did by publicly speaking out against him.

In most other academic institutions with which I am familiar, the President does not embroil herself or himself in such internal skirmishes. Where the views of the administration need to be represented on campus, the President delegates that job to some Vice-President or Dean. At Wellesley, by contrast, you have allowed ---- to manipulate you into that job; and --- is now doing it a second time. In this case, it is going to bring Wellesley even worse national publicity than before because I am not Tony Martin and RWCC is not "The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews" ...

... I of course understand that your appreciation of RWCC is not unqualified, nor, as I have said, would I expect it to be. Although I am
very unhappy about your having violated the confidentiality of RWCC, I would have given you my permission to circulate it to at least some of those individuals had you asked for it. In general you were right to encourage informal discussion of it among individuals whose opinions you value. As I also have said, I am not in favor of the public distribution of RWCC. But if there is no other way to damage-control the leakage problem (in which, in the worst-case scenario, Wellesley’s next race crisis incites minority students to turn on their favorite white, heterosexual woman and blame her for everything that’s wrong with their lives at Wellesley), I will support it. ... Strident denunciations and attempts to cover your tracks of the sort that appear in your retracted e-mail letter of 17 March do not do you, or me, or the College, any good - whether they are covert or public.

I hope you will take this letter in the constructive spirit in which I offer it. I think we have a couple of alternatives at this point. One would be to continue our semi-public boxing match of mutual discreditation and self-defense with the realistic understanding that eventually it will become public in every sense. Another would be to work together to deal with this matter as best we can from now on (we could, e.g., simply agree to disagree about the importance of your contribution to RWCC). My preference would be the latter, but the choice is up to you.

You, in turn, apologized for your e-mail to Margaret disparaging me, and said that you had had no idea that she would then circulate it to other people. At the time I believed you, and wanted to believe that you had simply made a serious mistake of judgment (since then I have revised this belief because it is no longer plausible to me that the public leader of this institution would suppose that nonconfidential statements she made in her official capacity as President of the College would not be circulated and discussed). During our conversation and thereafter in our follow-up correspondence, I believed that we had both extended ourselves and reached a viable rapprochement regarding the value and function of RWCC. The friendly personal note included in your salary increase notification letter of June 10, 1998 further reassured me on that score. I looked forward to returning to a newly friendly, humane, and mutually respectful Wellesley environment after my leave was over.

Your salary and merit review increase letter of June 16, 1999 was therefore a totally unexpected slap in the face. Since I had neither completed Rationality and the Structure of the Self as I had hoped, nor produced any new art work, nor taught for two out of the three preceding years, I did not question the meagerness of the merit award amount. But because of these circumstances, my service to the College before and during my sabbatical leave, and thereafter during my unpaid leave of absence was my most significant contribution described in my Merit Review Statement. This contribution comprised (1) the anti-racism work I did as a member of the MRHR on (a) the longitudinal minority retention study; and (b) the completion and sponsorship of RWCC; and (2) my work on the exhibition of my recent work at the Davis Museum from March to August 1998. To my surprise and disbelief, your letter of commendation did not even mention any of this service to the College, which had been more
extensive and demanding than ever before. Instead your letter listed my teaching, of which there had been only one year's worth; my two external fellowships; and two retrospectives of my artwork which had not yet even taken place.

I was, therefore, even more taken aback when, in the presence of three other members of the Black Task Force (Geneva Walker-Johnson, Linda Brothers, and Rachel Beverly) at our meeting of March 10, 2000 regarding Geneva's situation, you chose to complement me elaborately and extensively for my Davis Museum exhibition. Since then I have also learned of your flattering comments to other members of Wellesley's black community in my absence concerning the "perceptiveness," "acuity," and "honesty" of RWCC. So you have now established the pattern of passing over my community-wide anti-racism work in silence when acknowledging it would have made a difference to my material well-being, and of acknowledging it only when this would enhance your image in Wellesley's black community as a supporter of anti-racism efforts. It is difficult for me to avoid the inference that promoting your anti-racism image within Wellesley's black community is considerably higher on your list of priorities than promoting the actual anti-racism work which Wellesley recruited me here to do and of which you reaffirmed the importance at our September 1995 meeting.

Your silence when it counted on the issue of my service to the College was spiteful and completely gratuitous. It would have cost you nothing to acknowledge it, particularly since you have most enthusiastically and publicly acknowledged and rewarded the work other, white faculty have done under its initiative - for example, in the formation of the Alliance of Multicultural Organizations (AMO) recommended in Section VII.B.5 of RWCC. In thus deliberately passing over in silence the actual anti-racism work I had done both within the Wellesley community and outside of it, your letter communicated very clearly your complete disregard of and hostility to that work, and erased any remaining illusions I may have entertained about having achieved closure with you and being finally acknowledged as a valuable and productive member of this community with special skills to contribute.

But in the news release you made available in March in Academic Council, you have surpassed even this achievement. In this document, which you distributed to the entire assembled faculty, you reported on, among other things, external and research-related activities by Wellesley faculty without even mentioning my two retrospectives, both of which have opened and traveled to two venues with glowing national reviews, including a full-page article in The New York Times on Christmas Eve - which, so far as I can tell, virtually everyone has read. Not only have you felt the need to try to pressure, harass, and intimidate me into stopping my anti-racism work on the Wellesley campus. Not only have you systematically denigrated, marginalized and deliberately ignored both my contributions to Wellesley and my external achievements. You now have escalated your concerted campaign of harassment of me into the public sphere by publicly expressing, in writing, to the entire assembled Wellesley faculty your dismissive and derogatory opinion of me, my presence, my feelings and my work.
Section VI. of RWCC, "This Document Itself as an Experimental Test of the Theory," asks, "To what extent ... can we expect this analysis itself to be absorbed in the familiar ways - that is, in conformity with the pathological styles associated with traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture? ... To what extent, consequently, can we expect it to be the target of disapproval rather than discussion, repression and retaliation rather than reflection, silencing rather than self-examination, and amnesia rather than action?\textsuperscript{108} Your, Nancy's, and Margaret's - but, I regret to say, particularly your response to this document and to my involvement with it exactly fulfills these pessimistic predictions. You have vented your disapproval of it to others; attempted to repress its circulation within the Wellesley College community by threatening to speak publicly against it; effectively silenced some supporters of it by publicly attacking its anonymity condition; and retaliated against me for my work on it, both by seizing the further opportunity of the merit review letter to convey to me your attitude that, so far as you are concerned, it is beneath notice; as well as by publicly expressing to the assembled Wellesley faculty your fantasy that I, my work and my achievements in fighting racism do not exist. I am fully at peace with each of my actions and am quite clear in my own mind that I have done nothing to warrant being made the target of such unending and unmitigated hostility from a President of the College to whom I have repeatedly extended my respect and expressed my willingness to work cooperatively on fighting racism at Wellesley. Your sickening behavior toward me completely betrays and violates the principles you yourself expressed so eloquently in your recent published letter of defense of Dean of Students Geneva Walker-Johnson when you asked,

When one person draws this kind of fire in an organization - is singled out as a scapegoat in this relentless way - what does it say about the larger organization: its \emph{modus vivendi} and its values? What can we learn from this situation about how we respond to differences (real or imagined), how we deal with challenge and conflict, how we confront change? When we're called to examine our assumptions, do we feel free to ignore or reject that call if it comes in a form that we find unsettling? But, really, in what other form do meaningful calls for growth and change come?\textsuperscript{109}

Or perhaps my "perceived transgressions of the vaunted 'Wellesley way'"\textsuperscript{110} are just too monstrous to deserve the equal protection of such exalted principles.

Diana, I sincerely hope it is now clear to you that none of your attempts - nor any member of your administration's attempts, nor those of any other faculty or staff you have so blatantly tried to recruit - to demonize me, eradicate me, force me to leave, or undermine my anti-racism work on- or off-campus have succeeded in breaking my spirit, nor will they succeed. They have only strengthened my commitment to this work, strengthened my resolve to ensure my personal and professional survival at all costs, and strengthened my personal spiritual practices. There is nothing you can do to destroy the very resources which your relentless attacks on me and my work have forced me to develop; and nothing you can say or do in defense of those attacks that will not strengthen me and damage Wellesley's - and your - public image even more. As it is, you now stand an excellent chance of going down in the history of late twentieth century art in a very
unflattering light. From now on, I will defend myself against any further attacks from you in whatever ways your actions make necessary.

This letter has been extremely distressing to write. I should have committed this nightmarish narrative to paper a long time ago. But I could not bring myself to revisit the ugly and traumatizing history of my experience at Wellesley until your and your administration's actions made it unavoidably clear that unless I did so, my personal and professional future would be destroyed. Because I have not been able to handle dwelling on these nauseating events for more than a couple of hours a day at the most, this letter has further poisoned my existence for several months now. Therefore, it is going to have to fulfill any further demands for clarification or explanation of my situation that might be forthcoming from any quarter. This is the very last time I will ever again expend the precious energy and time I have remaining to me on this planet in defensively justifying myself, my work, or my situation to you or any other member of the Wellesley College community. I genuinely hope this effort has not been futile.

This narrative has tracked all of the many ways in which you have actively and personally collaborated in destroying the most important and productive decade of my professional life - in two fields. Those ten years, and the professional contributions I might have made, both in art and in philosophy, are lost for good. I can never recover them. But it is not too late for you to reverse your agenda of deliberate sabotage of my work. I am only 51, and still have the will and the drive to produce all the work you have worked so hard to thwart, and much more. You can either continue to try to prevent me from doing this work, or you can now begin to help me get it done. With the new information I have supplied to you in this letter, you now have what you need in order to grasp the larger picture and pervasive pattern of fraud, harassment, sabotage, and retaliation against me by various members of the Wellesley College faculty and administration that has poisoned my experience here. So you now have a firm basis and rationale for altering that pattern.

I believe we are once again at a crossroads - just as we were in March of 1998. One fork leads to an impasse, at which you and I continue this battle in the court of public opinion, and the continuing but contained problem I have been for the past ten years now unravels into a very big, ugly, expensive, public problem on a national scale from which Wellesley’s - and your - reputation will never fully recover. The other fork leads to a new direction for me, for you, and for Wellesley. I have already observed (page 4) that your and your administration’s concerted attempts to pressure me into resigning my position at Wellesley College cannot and will not succeed, so long as you make it impossible for me to produce my work, because without it I have no basis upon which to negotiate an offer that would improve my situation. Therefore in order to achieve your goal of getting rid of me, you need to enable me to get my work done. Moreover, this strategy remains optimal even if you should decide to abandon the goal of getting rid of me, in favor of a different and precedent-setting solution that opens up several creative possibilities for Wellesley in the area of faculty development, recruitment, and diversity; and, most importantly, in realizing Nan Keohane’s ambition to guide Wellesley into becoming as stellar a research institution as it
now is a teaching institution. In either case I hope you will take the rational, constructive and dignified path of working with me to continue to benefit Wellesley and enhance its external reputation, as I had hoped and expected to do - and as I had been invited to do - when I arrived here in 1990. I hope, that is, that you will try to see past your personal dislike of me and do what is in Wellesley’s long-term best interests. But once again, that choice will have to be up to you.

This is another instance in which my own professional self-interest converges with Wellesley’s best long-term interests. Because of the Christmas Eve article in *The New York Times*, the New York venue for both of my travelling retrospectives has been rescheduled for this coming fall. Two high-profile New York galleries will run additional exhibitions of my work concurrently with the retrospectives. These exhibitions will generate a very large volume of publicity in both print and electronic media. In the event that you and I are unable to resolve this matter through the dialogue I am initiating with you through this letter, I will take the following measures:

(1) First, I will seek a legal solution to this problem.

(2) Second, since Wellesley College chooses not to support my work, I will conclude that Wellesley does not, after all, wish the benefits of the publicity it generates. Therefore, I will have included on all press releases about my work the following statement: *Adrian Piper requests, as a personal favor from the press, that no mention be made of her association with Wellesley College.*

(3) I will respond to any and all queries about this request by stating that I am in the process of seeking a legal solution to the problem.

Therefore, your decision in this matter now will determine what all this publicity has to say about Wellesley College in the fall.

In the event that you should instead choose to work with me for Wellesley’s benefit as well as my own, rather than against me, I am now going to outline what I need to accomplish and what substantive support I need from Wellesley.

*My first goal* must be to bring swift and immediate closure to projects in philosophy and in art that were near to completion when I arrived and have languished ever since. *My second, interconnected goal* must be to immediately establish healthy and constructive work conditions that will support and enhance my ability simultaneously to teach effectively, serve on committees, produce professionally in both fields, manage the administrative aspects of my careers in both fields, and discharge my responsibilities to Wellesley, to the black community, and to the international intellectual community as a prominent African American woman academic philosopher and artist.
I. To achieve the first goal I need two years of paid leave with full benefits, beginning IMMEDIATELY, in the Fall of 2000. During this period I will complete You Humans and The Color Wheel Series, art projects which I began in 1992, as well as Rationality and the Structure of the Self, which was three chapters short of completion in 1992. IN ADDITION,

II. To achieve the second goal I need
(A) PERMANENT AND IMMEDIATE funding for professional-level administrative and research support at a minimum of sixty hours per week (forty hours for my research and administrative assistant, twenty for my art handler and registrar), fifty-two weeks per year, at a salary of $15.00 per hour plus standard annual cost of living increases;
(B) a PERMANENT teaching load of one course per semester; and
(C) One year’s paid sabbatical with full benefits after every three years of service, PERMANENTLY.

Note that (A) through (C) advance your goal of getting rid of me in two ways: first, by enabling me to do my work in both fields and thus increasing my bargaining power with other institutions; and second, by reducing my presence on the Wellesley campus as well as my participation in the ongoing life of the Wellesley community. Thus this arrangement would serve your interests in several respects.

If you should decide to grant these requests, I will need them in writing on official College stationery. I also believe you owe me an apology for the insulting and disrespectful way in which you and various members of your administrative staff and faculty have consistently conducted themselves toward me. But I realize that this may be too much to expect.

I wish to emphasize that these requests are not merely the opening gambit in a protracted negotiation process. In light of II.A I would obviously forego - with relief - any further applications to the Faculty Awards Committee for research or administrative funding. But otherwise I have, during this past decade of lost productivity, severed relationships, and damaged health, already given up everything I intend to give up. So I am now asking for no more and no less than what I need to both maintain my health and survive professionally with the two full-time, high-profile professional careers on the basis of which Wellesley College recruited me. Therefore I am not prepared to bargain, haggle over, or nickel-and-dime these requests. They are not negotiable. I understand that I. and II. constitute a major departure from traditional College practice as well as official College policy. But one conclusion of this narrative must surely be that in point of fact there is no well-defined official College policy; and that traditional College practice is malleable enough to be easily adapted to suit particular circumstances. Diana, we both know by now that if you want to put these arrangements in place, there is nothing to stop you from doing so.

Wellesley College made a major departure from traditional practice when it made the decision - collectively - to hire me. I know of many individuals in the
Wellesley community who joined this effort because they really did want to make the College a better place for everyone. You reaffirmed the value and legitimacy of that decision at our September 1995 meeting. I still believe it is not too late to reverse the trajectory of deceit, sabotage, and malice that has characterized my tenure at Wellesley so far. I believe we can not only reverse that trajectory, but accomplish a great deal both to Wellesley’s advantage and to my own, by cooperating for the sake of Wellesley’s long-term best interests. This would be the most constructive and least painful path. Regardless of your personal opinion of me, my work, my priorities, or the College’s judgment in hiring me, I feel sure you can, on reflection, find several long-term advantages to Wellesley in this.

There are several possibilities:

(1) First, you might simply put these arrangements in place, and thereby begin to change Wellesley’s culture of repressive conformity on an individualized, case-by-case basis. Or,

(2) second, in the event that you prefer to pursue a more public approach, you might create for me a permanent chair or humanities professorship

    (2.a) the general specifications of which describe in general terms the essentials of my situation as criteria for conferring it, i.e. a highly productive, high-profile woman academician of color who has achieved national and international prominence in two mutually independent, full-time academic fields and whose research addresses a pressing social issue etc.; and

    (2.b) that carries with it the permanent leave schedule, teaching arrangement, and administrative and research support described above.

I am indifferent between these two alternatives. Compared to more familiar, secretive strategies by which Wellesley has adapted to the special needs of particular individuals in the past, either would have the advantages of being relatively straightforward and above board. The second would also anticipate, confront head-on, and silence objections and requests for similar favors from individuals whose situations are in fact not similar to mine. Should you receive any objections to such an arrangement from my colleagues in the Philosophy Department or from other members of your administration, I would welcome the opportunity to review these objections and respond to them in writing.

I hope this letter has succeeded in eliciting your understanding of the seriousness and urgency of this matter; and of my full readiness for the regrettable possibility that, despite the considerable effort this letter represents, the matter may need to be resolved outside the bounds of this letter and the one-on-one dialogue with you I hope it will elicit. My choice would be the quieter and more civilized solution that also puts a conclusive end to the years of animosity, ill will and bad faith that have sullied my experience at Wellesley so far. Once again this will be your decision.
Can we not work effectively with others we ourselves may not have selected, others who have their own interpersonal styles or philosophies? Can't we work through our differences, learn from one another, pool our diverse gifts and skills, support and be accountable to one another for our best efforts to advance the common good? ... Wellesley, of all places, ought to be deeply committed to honing those indispensable skills, even - indeed especially (for they are not fair-weather skills) - when the going gets rough.111

I am asking you to study this extended report and reflect on it at length. I am asking you to consider carefully the very wide range of interests that are and can be affected by your decision, before you settle on a course of action in response. And I am expressing to you the sincere hope that your response will be an invitation to me to work with you collaboratively to actualize the promise that Wellesley saw in me, and made to me, when it invited me to join its faculty in 1990. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and by July 21 at the latest.

Sincerely,

Adrian M. S. Piper

cc: Thomas V. Sannicandro, Esq.
Pamela M. O'Sullivan, Esq.
Footnotes

5 Appendix 5: Letter from Dr. Jeffrey Wohlgethan, 4/10/97.
7 Appendix 7: Flanagan Recruitment Letter, 10/26/89.
8 Appendix 8: Philosophy Department Hiring and Tenure Letter, 2/18/90, page 5.
9 Appendix 9: Summer Research Stipend Correspondence, Dean Dale Marshall to Adrian Piper, 3/15/90, 3/19/90.
10 Appendix 10: 1990 Congratulatory Letter from President Nan Keohane, 11/7/90.
12 Appendix 12: Formal letter of appointment from President Nan Keohane, 3/12/90.
13 Appendix 13: Faculty Awards Guidelines, page 5.
14 Appendix 14: 1990 Medical Leave: Medical Correspondence, Dr. JoAnn Wilkinson, 7/23/91.
15 Appendix 15: 1991 Medical Leave: Philosophy Department Correspondence, journal page, 4/15/91.
17 Appendix 17: 1991 Medical Leave: Philosophy Department Correspondence, Adrian Piper to Owen Flanagan, 4/30/91.
20 Appendix 20: 1991 Medical Leave: Philosophy Department Correspondence, Adrian Piper to Ruth Anna Putnam, 5/14/91.
22 Appendix 22: 1995 Correspondence with Associate Dean Jens Kruse. While my funding applications remain basically the same in rationale each time I apply, the Committee finds creative new and different reasons for rejecting each one.
26 Appendix 26: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
29 Appendix 29: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
30 Appendix 30: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
31 Appendix 31: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
32 Appendix 32: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
33 Appendix 33: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
34 Appendix 34: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
35 Appendix 35: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
36 Appendix 36: 1995 Administrative Support Meeting: Material Distributed by Margaret Carroll, 9/5/95.
Appendix 16: Faculty Awards Committee Correspondence to Adrian Piper 1990-1999; planner notes on Margaret Carroll’s voicemail of 12/1/99.

Appendix 29: 1997 Sabbatical Leave Application Correspondence, Deans Kruse, Kolodny, and Cuba to Adrian Piper, 11/27/96 and 1/2/97.

Appendix 28: 1996 Personal Correspondence with Margaret Carroll.


Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, 5/23/97 (RWCC first draft in MRHR memo form plus undated post-it note from Adrian Piper to Diana Chapman Walsh).

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, 6/17/97 (e-mail print-out from Diana Chapman Walsh to Adrian Piper).

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, 7/17/97 (post-it note, Wellesley College Report plus three articles).

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, 3/4/88 Adrian Piper to Diana Chapman Walsh.

Appendix 35: RWCC Correspondence: Sponsorship Discussion; Adrian Piper to MRHR memo, 9/8/97; Adrian Piper to Margaret Carroll faxes 9/26/97 and 3/2/98.

Appendix 34: RWCC Authorship Exchanges with Margaret Carroll: Planner pages 2/25-2/28/98; Journal entry 2/28/98, e-mail, my memo.

Appendix 34: RWCC Authorship Exchanges with Margaret Carroll: Planner pages 2/25-2/28/98; Journal entry 2/28/98, e-mail, my memo, Margaret’s e-mail of 3/2/98.

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh; Diana Chapman Walsh’s e-mail to Margaret Carroll, 3/3/98.

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, Adrian Piper to Diana Chapman Walsh, 3/18/99.

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, Diana Chapman Walsh to Adrian Piper via Margaret Carroll, e-mail 3/17/98.

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, Adrian Piper to Diana Chapman Walsh, 3/21/98.

Appendix 33: RWCC Correspondence: Adrian Piper with Diana Chapman Walsh, Adrian Piper to Diana Chapman Walsh, 4/2/98; Diana Chapman Walsh to Adrian Piper, 4/9/98.

Appendix 37: 1998 Salary Increase Letter, Diana Chapman Walsh to Adrian Piper, 6/10/98.


Diana Chapman Walsh, “President questions student body,” The Wellesley News 99, 16 (February 16, 2000), page 11.

Ibid.

Ibid.