

To the Executive Council:

The members of the Search Committee for the new Editor of the *Journal of African American History (JAAH)* wish to respond to the misinformation that is being spread about how we conducted the interviews. Some have called into question our integrity, fairness, and professionalism. We all, as academics and professional historians, have invested deeply in our own careers and professional reputations and view this misinformation as disturbing and dangerous. Beyond our own reputations, we also value the reputation of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Thus, we also deem it necessary to offer the Council insight into how we conducted the interviews for the record.

The committee agreed, via email, on the advertisement that the Executive Director subsequently posted on ASALH's website and committee members circulated within their personal networks. During the search committee's January 27th meeting we discussed a range of expectations for a new *JAAH* editor. Beyond using V.P. Franklin's and Pero Dagbovie/LaShawn Harris' editorships as exemplary models—with, for example, timely issues (including special issues) and, institutional and ideological diversity among the authors—we did not establish a consensus on criteria for candidates.

From the beginning of the process, we all agreed that it would be difficult to find anyone who could fill the very large shoes of immediate past editors including V.P. Franklin, Pero Dagbovie (and LaShawn Harris). They are the standard bearers, without a doubt. So, please understand that that is the context and mindset from which we began this service.

We received very strong applications. As life members of ASALH and people who care deeply about the journal, we believed that nothing less than a serious approach to seeking a new editor was warranted. Admittedly, the interview process was rigorous, but it was fair. The applicants received the same five questions. Depending on how the applicants answered those questions, some members had follow-up questions. All of the questions and follow-up questions we asked were related to the applicants' qualifications or his/her ability to carry out the duties of the job as editor without any inherent self-interest. We asked no personal questions, as President Dulaney can affirm. In other words, it was not unlike a job interview at an elite school. It was rigorous because the *JAAH* deserves the same quality of editors as we have had in the past. A rigorous interview by people who care deeply about ASALH, and its journal need not result in false allegations of unfairness and discrimination. This is beneath the dignity of our storied organization.

Signed:

Sundiata Cha-Jua
Kenneth M. Hamilton
Stephanie Shaw
Nikki Taylor
Randal Jelks, Chair