



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

26 November 2022

Randal M. Jelks, Chairman  
Editor Search Committee  
*The Journal of African American History*  
rmjelks@ku.edu

Chairman Jelks:

Bertis D. English is my name. I am a tenured history professor as well as an erstwhile associate dean, acting dean, and history program coordinator at Alabama State University (ASU) in Montgomery. I also am a life member of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and the founding president of the Harper Councill Trenholm Sr. branch. Please, consider this letter an official application for consideration to succeed Pero G. Dagbovie as editor of the *Journal of African American History (JAAH)*.

I have written more than thirty-five scholarly articles, book reviews, and chapters. I also wrote an award-winning tome titled *Civil Wars, Civil Beings, and Civil Rights in Alabama's Black Belt* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2020) and coedited with R. Drew Smith and Stephanie C. Boddie *Racialized Health, Covid-19, and Religious Responses: Black Atlantic Contexts and Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2022). I am completing a book length manuscript about Oscar W. Adams Jr. and another manuscript about Alexander H. Curtis. Both men were trailblazing African Americans in Alabama, the South, and the United States, but no comprehensive biography exists about Adams or Curtis.

In addition to my scholarly endeavors, I have extensive experience as a journal editor. Presently, I am guest editing with James B. Stewart and Sharron Y. Herron-Williams a 2023 special issue of the *International Journal of Africana Studies (IJAS)* regarding the life, legacy, and literature of W. E. B. Du Bois. I recently ended a seven-year tenure as editor of *IJAS*; Stewart was associate editor and Herron-Williams was assistant editor. I am associate editor of the *Journal of Race and Policy*, which Michael L. Clemons founded and edits, and am former associate editor of the *Griot: The Journal of African American Studies*, edited by Tashia L. Bradley. Earlier

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during this year, 2022, I completed multi-year terms on the editorial boards of the *Griot* and the *Alabama Review*. I continue to serve on the editorial board of the *Journal of African American Studies*. Judson L. Jeffries is editor.

As letters by ASU provost and vice president for academic affairs Carl Pettis and ASU College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences dean Kathaleen Amende demonstrate, institutional support for my application to become editor of *JAAH* is strong. Department of History and Political Science chairman Derryn Moten and assistant professor of history Maurice Robinson agreed to serve as book review editors. Understanding the significance of producing a reputable scholarly journal at ASU, several other administrators, faculty members, staffers, and graduate students volunteered to assist with the production of *JAAH*. I, in particular, welcome the opportunity to work directly with Editor Dagbovie and his staff in 2023.

The editorial activities enumerated in the request for proposal are conventional, and I am confident in my abilities to perform the required tasks effectively. I recognize there might be challenges to overcome, and there will be hard decisions to make, but there also are significant opportunities to expand the prestige and the visibility of *JAAH*. For instance, I envision the journal raising its impact factor among both history and social science journals. According to Exaly, *JAAH* was 594th among 2,527 history journals and 9341st among 20,139 social science journals from the years 2017 to 2021.<sup>1</sup> I likewise foresee ASALH designing a three-year plan to increase student access to *JAAH* via grants, encouraging more senior faculty and emeriti to submit manuscripts, revamping the editorial board, and broadening the array of subjects explored in *JAAH* to include more contemporary and, in some instances, controversial topics than hitherto covered regularly in *JAAH*.

I provide my curriculum vita and two institutional letters of financial commitment under the same cover. The contact information of three references is below.

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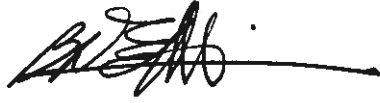
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<sup>1</sup> "Journal of African American History," *Exaly*, <https://exaly.com/journal/27401/journal-of-african-american-history/> (accessed November 20, 2022).

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I thank the committee for considering my application to become editor of *JAAH* and look forward to leaning about any future decision by the committee members.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. English', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bertis D. English  
Professor of History  
Alabama State University



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UNIVERSITY

**Office of the Provost and  
Vice President for Academic Affairs**

November 22, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of Professor Bertis English's application for editorship of the *Journal of African American History*. Professor English is a dedicated faculty member in our Department of History and Political which is housed in our College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. He has worked extensively with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) for many years and his commitment to excellence is unquestioned by students and faculty alike.

It is my humble opinion that Professor English has the skills, abilities and a high level of professional integrity which will be necessary traits for one to be successful as the editor for the journal. If selected, I will offer the support of the Office of Academic Affairs to ensure that all required in-kind contributions such as office space and needed equipment will be made available. Additionally, support in the form of student assistance will be assigned.

Academic scholarship and research are important pillars for a strong Academy. Professor English has shown that he understands that and his work is evidence thereof. I strongly support his application for editorship.

If any additional information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl S. Pettis".

Carl S. Pettis, Ph.D.  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs



DEAN, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

November 14, 2022

Dr. Randal Maurice Jelks  
*The Journal of African American History*

Dear Dr. Jelks

This letter is in support of Dr. Bertis English's application for the *JAAH* Editor position. I have known Dr. English for over a decade, and his dedication to ASALH and its scholarly journal is both clear and commendable. Not only is he a very good scholar and professor in his own right, he is also extremely dedicated to the discipline, serving, and having served, in editorial capacities and on review boards for multiple journals including the *International Journal of International Studies*, *Griot: The Journal of African American Studies*, *Race and Policy*, the *Alabama Review*, and *The Journal of African American Studies*. Part of what makes Dr. English such a strong and respected editor is that he is supportive of the scholarship of others, and even currently serves as a mentor for the editors of a collected volume of scholarship being put together by our college. Knowing that he has extensive experience editing, and hearing of the ways in which his expertise has helped guide our own project gives me great confidence that he will be a very fine editor for your journal.

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, of which I am the Dean, is happy to help by providing in-kind support including office space, assistants, a computer, dedicated telephone lines, and other material resources that may be needed to successfully navigate the position of editor.

As you know, Alabama State University has a history of supporting both the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and its premier journal. Our university has many scholars who have contributed volunteer work for the conference, as well as many who have contributed their scholarly work. I believe that a relationship between the university and the Association in the form of an Editorship for Dr. English can help further the connection between a very strong HBCU in a place ripe with historical significance and an organization that understands that significance and helps to share it with world.

If there is anything else I can provide for you, or any way I can help further Dr. English's candidacy, please do not hesitate to let me know. I can be reached at [kamende@alasu.edu](mailto:kamende@alasu.edu) or by phone at 334-604-8444.

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Sincerely,

Kathaleen E. Amende  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences  
Alabama State University