TO:    Mr. Henry Johnson  Dr. Charles Kidd
       Vice-President     Assistant Vice-President
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FROM:  Alex D. Hawkins
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RE:    Trotter House Report

DATE:  June 15, 1972

The William Monroe Trotter House began operation November 15, 1971. The House, located at 1020 South University on the corner of East University, served as a center for Black student activities. The Trotter House building, which was formerly a special projects house for the School of Education, had been partially remodelled, but several of the rooms needed additional painting as well as carpeting. A group of Black students volunteered to do the required painting. A coalition of interested staff, faculty, and students served as a Board of Directors during this period and gave overall direction to the activities at the house. The loosely-knit directorate group reached a consensus on the point that the Trotter House should serve a wide variety of needs instead of either the traditional students center approach or the adjunct classroom approach. In keeping with this philosophy, the House functioned as an educational facility, study area, provided meeting room for Black faculty, staff groups as well as a center for social activities with many scheduled parties, dances, and casual social activities. Formal classes in psychology and sociology were taught as well as informal classes geared towards providing and sharing of concerns, information, and insight. In addition, tutorial sessions geared towards
science, math, and languages were held as needed. A group of Black artists composed of both faculty members and students conducted workshops on Black art, and scheduled photography workshops to begin in the summer of 1972. Early in its operation Trotter House functioned as an orientation facility for Black high school students, primarily from Detroit, who were being introduced to the University of Michigan campus. The Coalition for the Use of Learning Skills, in charge of these orientation sessions, also scheduled seminars designed to acquaint incoming students with some of the problems to be faced and resolved on college campuses as well as acquainting faculty and staff personnel with particular problems and concerns of incoming Black students. Career Planning and Placement maintained offices in the House and ran seminars designed to help students in the job application process. In addition, they also scheduled interview sessions with groups concerned with minority recruitment - notable among these groups were the Chrysler Corporation, Polaroid Corporation, Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, General Motors and the Scott Paper Company. Career Planning and Placement also sponsored seminars with the U of M and Cornell Graduate Schools of Business and Public Administration which encouraged students to enter these fields.

The Ujamaa gatherings saw family oriented seminars and discussions designed and hosted by members of the staff of the Center for Afro-American Studies. It was the express purpose of these Sunday gatherings to build greater understanding and interaction between student and staff members from the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean. Ujamaa gatherings offered informative seminars, cultural functions, and, generally, an opportunity to familiarize the diverse Black elements on the campus with each other. Although highly successful, Ujamaa gatherings were hampered by a lack of facilities, such as room for large numbers of people, avail-
ability of audio-visual materials and accessibility to copy machinery.

The following groups: Black Information Counselling, Association of Black Social Work Students, Black Public Health Association, Black Matters Committee, Black Students Psychological Association, Black Medical Students, Black Law Students, Black Film Society, Minority Council and Markley Council used Trotter House facilities for meetings, dissemination of information, recruitment of participants fund raising and many special projects. A number of these groups held regularly scheduled office hours at the House. This proximity of organizations and diverse elements of the Black university community allowed for interaction between groups as well as individuals which fostered the growth of many inter-organizational and interdisciplinary programs such as the Ann Arbor Black Karate program, and the Sickle Cell Anemia Tests Program. This interaction also acted as a resource pool for individuals seeking Black expertise and information on Black matters and activities.

The Trotter House also provided a strong link with the Ann Arbor and surrounding minority community. Members of the Black Ann Arbor Church and community organizations such as the Model Cities Policy Board and the Ann Arbor Community Center all helped bridge the chasm between the Black community and Black students on the college campus. At the untimely closing of the Trotter House a number of concrete programs involving said organizations and Black University students were in the development stages. Trotter House provided a link with the community by offering a facility for junior high school students to pursue educational and cultural enrichment programs. Other special programs included a program offered by the Personal Achievement Institute of Detroit for interested students. At the time of its closing, the House had scheduled follow-up sessions with this group.
The House management and staff also offered programs which structur-
alized and lent continuity to the development of campus-community interchange, specifically, the weekly chess clinic and the daily lunch program. Proof of the lunch program's enormous acceptance by the Black university community is the fact that it was the only program which rivaled the weekend social functions in numbers of participation and regularity of success. Following the basic Trotter House tenet of providing an opportunity for the minority community to come together, the lunch program had as its constituents the most varied contingent of minority group members of any program on this campus.

The result of this fertile situation promoted the same kind of intensive interaction on an individual level as previously mentioned in the discussion of groups which used the Trotter House. The merit of the existence of this unique cultural situation for Black interaction cannot be overstated.

Prior to the existence of the Trotter House, the chance for minority members to break bread in an environment that approximated that from which they came was lacking in the campus surrounding. Indeed, the fact that the Trotter House provided this opportunity was most often cited as its most valuable contribution to the University community. It is unfortunate that such a positive and far-reaching program was discontinued due to the lack of funds, staff, and most importantly, the lack of centralized sources for food supply since we were unable to use the University food stores.

The establishment and maintenance of Trotter House was made possible by a grant of $15,000. from the Martin Luther King Fund. To date, $8,889.45 of these funds have been expended and includes costs of furnishings and supplies as well as staff salaries.

In considering another Trotter House facility, it should be borne in mind that the fire which destroyed the worthwhile and vitally needed center could have had much more disastrous consequences in terms of human
life and property damage if it had occurred a few hours earlier when the
house was hosting the Ujamaa gathering with from sixty to seventy five
people present. The age and condition of the house in terms of a potential
fire hazard had long been a concern of those connected with the house and
any new facility should of course be as fireproof as possible.

Also, in considering another Trotter House facility, the need for an
expanded staff of from four to six half-time people, and a full time
director should be a priority item. This would allow the house to operate
as a full coverage center on a seven day per week basis.