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## A Harvard Star In Black Studies Joins Princeton

By JACQUES STEINBERG  
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### Correction Appended

One of the stars of the Afro-American studies department at Harvard University resigned his professorship yesterday and accepted an offer to join the faculty of rival Princeton University, raising questions about whether other professors from the department would follow.

The professor, K. Anthony Appiah, resigned only weeks after another member of his department, Cornel West, said that he and other professors were considering offers from Princeton because of concerns that Harvard's new president was not fully committed to a strong department and to affirmative action.

After Dr. West's complaints became public, the Harvard president, Lawrence H. Summers, appeared to quell the dispute -- and to head off an immediate departure by Dr. West or other members of the department -- by professing support for diversity at Harvard.

But Professor Appiah's appointment to the Princeton faculty, which is to be formally voted on Saturday by the university's board of trustees, poses a fresh threat to Mr. Summers's efforts to hold Harvard's nationally known department together.

Professor Appiah, an expert on African philosophy, said in an interview yesterday that he was not leaving Harvard because he shared Dr. West's complaints about Mr. Summers. Instead, Professor Appiah said he had grown tired of commuting weekly to Cambridge, Mass., from New York City, where he has lived for seven years.

But Professor Appiah's departure raised immediate questions about whether Harvard could retain the department's chairman, Henry Louis Gates Jr., who has collaborated with Professor Appiah for two decades and who, along with Dr. West, was contacted by Princeton last year. Professors Gates and Appiah were graduate students together at Cambridge, and later worked alongside each other at Yale, Cornell and Duke before joining the Harvard faculty in 1991.

"Obviously, Anthony Appiah and I are very close," Professor Gates said. "His departure would be one of several factors that I would have to consider in arriving at a decision. But for the past decade I have been a devoted citizen of Harvard. My colleagues and I have worked diligently to create a great center of African-American studies, and it would be difficult for me to decide to leave."

Professor Gates was responsible for luring academic all-stars like William Julius Wilson and Lani Guinier to Harvard in recent years.

It was impossible to determine last night whether Professor Gates would seriously consider an offer from Princeton, or was merely seeking to gain additional leverage for his department with Mr. Summers. But by his departure, Professor Appiah has strengthened Professor Gates's hand.

At the same time, the hiring of Professor Appiah, 47, is a major lift to those at Princeton who have been seeking to transform its African-American studies program, which does not award undergraduate degrees, into a full-fledged department on par with Harvard's. In a world in which the comings and goings of top scholars are often tracked as if they were trades between Major League Baseball teams, Professor Appiah's move to Princeton represents a bit of payback for Dr. West's defection to Harvard from Princeton in 1994.

A native of Ghana, Professor Appiah has written several well-received books, including "In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture" (Oxford Press, 1992), which The Independent of London described as "an erudite and demanding work, engaging with debates

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in moral philosophy, anthropology and the politics of racial and national identity." With Professor Gates, Professor Appiah created a sprawling encyclopedia on CD-ROM that sought to document the breadth of the African experience from its earliest tracings to the present day.

But it was another collaborator, Amy Gutmann, now the provost of Princeton, who ultimately won Professor Appiah over. The two wrote "Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race" (Princeton University Press, 1998).

"I have no dissatisfaction with Larry Summers or anyone in the department at Harvard," Professor Appiah said yesterday. "I'm leaving because of the personal and intellectual opportunities at Princeton."

A Princeton spokeswoman, Marilyn Marks, said she would have no comment on Professor Appiah before Saturday. "The trustees are meeting tomorrow and faculty appointments are always on the agenda," she said yesterday. "When it happens, if it happens, when any appointment is made, at that point we would announce it. We haven't announced anything yet."

President Summers, who was traveling to Japan, said in a statement released through a Harvard spokesman that Professor Appiah had "made important contributions" at Harvard and "will be missed."

The Boston Globe first reported the rift between Mr. Summers and the Afro-American studies department in late December. The dispute was touched off during a meeting earlier in the year in which Mr. Summers urged Dr. West, among others, to serve as a leader in tamping down grade inflation and encouraged Dr. West to embark on a new work of scholarship befitting his elite designation as University Professor at Harvard. While he has written several books in recent years, Dr. West also served as an adviser on the presidential campaign of Bill Bradley and recorded a rap album.

In early January, Mr. Summers met again with Dr. West, this time to make amends, and said afterward that any perception that he had insulted the professor was a "misunderstanding."

**Correction:** *January 29, 2002, Tuesday A front-page article on Saturday about a decision by Prof. K. Anthony Appiah to leave Harvard for Princeton misstated his birthplace. It was England; he moved to Ghana at age 1.*

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