PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

Santiago Colás, associate professor of comparative literature, with tenure, and associate professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of comparative literature, with tenure, and professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:
1991    Ph.D.    Duke University
1987    B.A.    University of Wisconsin, Madison

Professional Record:
2008 – present    Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Literature and the Residential College, University of Michigan
1996 – 2008    Associate Professor, Program in Comparative Literature (granted departmental status in 2007) and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
1992 – 1996    Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:
Teaching – Professor Colás has received high praise from his students for his undergraduate and graduate courses. He has developed a number of highly innovative courses that draw large and growing enrollments. His curricular contributions in Comparative Literature and the Residential College have been singularly successful, and he was recently awarded LSA’s individual award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. Professor Colás has mentored a significant number of graduate students in Comparative Literature and other humanities departments, where he has served on more than twenty doctoral committees.

Research – After working as a highly regarded specialist in Latin-American literature for many years, Professor Colás recently re-oriented his research and has emerged as a force in the emerging interdisciplinary field of sports culture studies. His forthcoming book, Ball Don’t Lie!, is expected to make a major impact, re-orienting the discourse and setting new research agendas. He is also the author of thirty articles. He regularly makes media appearances and is in the process of establishing himself as a highly visible practitioner of public humanities.

Recent and Significant Publications:
Ball Don’t Lie! Myth, Genealogy and Invention in the Cultures of Basketball, Temple University Press, in press.
Service – Professor Colás’ service contributions have been substantive. He has served as
director of Graduate Studies in two departments, is a member of the Advisory Board on
Intercollegiate Athletics (ABIA) and its Academic Performance Committee, and was named as
UM’s representative to the national Coalition of Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), where he has
been an outspoken advocate for student-athlete intellectual, physical, and emotion well-being.

External Reviewers:
Reviewer (A)
“...[Balls Don't Lie!] is the first book, to my knowledge, that applies techniques of literary
criticism to the history of basketball, even as it bridges disciplinary approaches and provides a
significant contribution to sport history. It provides a thoughtful and engaging way to approach a
sport that has come to occupy a central place in American culture, and it offers important food
for thought that will influence both sport historians and popular writers about basketball. The
book will further inject...[Professor Colás] into a national and international community of
historians, cementing him as one of the leading thinkers on the history and culture of basketball.”

Reviewer (B)
“...what Colas’ work seeks to accomplish in this phase of his career is to produce a language for
sport, a language of love and loss, a language that can give voice to victory, pain, politics, inter-
generational conflict (Jordan versus Lebron), defeat, joy, race, utter numbness ...To write of
sport as one would of a glorious sunset; to produce a poetice [sic] language worthy of the love
sport engenders in those who give their lives to it.”

Reviewer (C)
“...[Colás] strikes me [as] a terrific scholar who’s clearly deserving of promotion to full. His
level of productivity and visibility is very high with two books and a long list of articles and
chapter[s] in prominent journals and edited volumes. The quality of his work is just as
impressive. Colas works, in the best interdisciplinary tradition, at the intersection of ...
literature, history, philosophy, and cultural studies... All of his scholarship is marked by great
intelligence, originality, and strong sense of commitment to opening up new ways of seeing the
world.”

Reviewer (D)
“As a group, the essays on Cortazar and invention are interesting, even important in that they
amount to a clear articulation of a style of literary criticism that remains theoretical and political
without, however, falling into either the decolonial or the deconstructive camp. In short, Colas
appears to have been looking for a way out of that argument.”

Reviewer (E)
“...I predict that his forthcoming (2016, Temple University) book, will make unique
contributions to the sport studies literature. This book is among a handful of texts that assess the
narrative impact and cultural meanings of basketball. ... Structured around central ‘myths’ or the
commonsense ideological lore of basketball, Ball[s] Don’t Lie! offer[s] extended analysis of the
themes Dr. Colás introduces in several published articles... [T]he book combines cultural
criticism with phenomenological evaluation to counter these myths by providing numerous
genealogies including critical analyses of basketball desegregation, amateurism, ‘ghettocentric’
blackness, morals and resentment.”

Reviewer (F)
“Reading the Jordan dunk against the Jordan jump-shot for example or the careful description of
the 12 second play when Allen Iverson scores and foreshadows the end of the Jordan’s era...or the
court movement of Manu Ginobili’s style, offer[s] a unique way to understand and appreciate the
phenomenological, philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of sporting style and performance and the
affective dimensions of this on the spectator. ... Colás’s [sic] project is to produce new ways to think
and write the sporting body and his research is field leading in doing so.”

Reviewer (G)
“Dr. Colás can also be commended for ‘bringing the body back in’ to sport studies. For
whatever unfathomable reasons (given the nature of sport practice), much sport studies research
has avoided the critical cultural analysis of sport performance, preferring instead to focus on the
texts that help constitute the broader sport spectacle or event. As a result, the very embodied
nature of sport performance becomes strangely overlooked. ...Colás positions expressive
sporting embodiments at the center of his analysis; treating the sporting body as both a material
and symbolic manifestation of broader social values that frame individual identities and actions.”

Reviewer (H)
“To be sure, his training as a literary theorist and his interdisciplinary approach to his previous
work put him in good stead to critically examine sport narratives. But it is not often that we
academics make such significant changes in what we study, and it is simply remarkable that
despite his relative ‘newcomer’ status he has, in my view, made a major contribution to the
relevant sport study literature. He has clearly embarked upon a major research program and his
publications to date show significant intellectual acumen and progress. In short, from what I
have reviewed, the quality of his work is first rate and I anticipate that his new book will be
received as one of the most important book manuscripts of its critical kind.”

Summary of Recommendation:
Professor Colás is a pathbreaking scholar whose national and international visibility is on a steep
upward trajectory. His teaching and service contributions to the UM community and the larger
academic world are notable. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Santiago Colás be promoted to the rank
of professor of Comparative Literature, with tenure, and professor in the Residential College,
without tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

[Signature]
Andrew D. Martin, Dean
Professor of Political Science and Statistics
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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