

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Item for Information

**Subject:** Henry Russel Awards for 2017

I am pleased to inform you that the Henry Russel Awards Faculty Advisory Committee, chaired by Dean Carol A. Fierke, met recently and selected four faculty members to receive Henry Russel Awards for 2017. This award, which recognizes both exceptional scholarship and conspicuous ability as a teacher, is one of the highest honors the University bestows upon junior faculty members. The awards will be presented on the occasion of the Henry Russel Lecture, to be delivered in the Winter Term of 2017.

The faculty members selected to receive this award are:

**Robin A. Beck**, associate professor of anthropology and associate curator, Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

**Ashley N. Gearhardt**, assistant professor of psychology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

**Tung-Hui Hu**, assistant professor of English language and literature, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

**Sarah Veatch**, assistant professor of biophysics and assistant professor of physics, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Respectfully submitted:



Mark S. Schlissel  
President

Attachment

May 2016

## Robin A. Beck

Robin Beck received his B.A (1991) in Political Science from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, his M.A. (1997) in Anthropology from the University of Alabama, and his Ph.D. (2004) in Anthropology from Northwestern University. He was a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Archaeological Investigations at Southern Illinois University and Visiting Assistant Professor at Northwestern University before his appointment in 2006 as Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan. In 2014 he was promoted to Associate Professor and appointed Associate Curator of the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology. He is recognized nationally as an innovative archaeologist and scholar of the transition of Native American societies of the eastern woodlands before and after the arrival of Europeans.

Professor Beck is considered as one of the very best anthropological archaeologists of his generation. In 2006 he received the C.B. Moore Award for Excellence in Southeastern Archaeology, given to the most promising young archaeologist working in the U.S. southeast. He has more than lived up to these expectations. His impact as a scholar is evidenced by the quality of three impressive books, including *Chiefdoms, Collapse, and Coalescence in the Early American South*. This masterful study, hailed as a classic by scholars in anthropology, history, and Native American studies, traces the long-term processes and short-term events that transformed the lifeways of native populations over hundreds of years. His recently co-authored book, *Fort San Juan and the Limits of Empire: Colonialism and Household at the Berry Site*, is considered a milestone in understanding the rise and fall of Spain's imperial ambitions in North America. He reviews manuscripts for leading anthropological archaeology journals and regularly reviews proposals for the National Science Foundation and the National Geography Society.

He is a hands-on teacher whose classroom can be the excavation trench, the field school dining hall, or the Museum lab. Professor Beck's graduate students each have a research desk and access to thousands of artifacts. Already at this stage of his career he has chaired almost a dozen doctoral committees. He is a dynamic teacher whose lively undergraduate courses engage students in problem-oriented learning. He is galvanizing student interest in archaeology, reviving the undergraduate archaeology club and helping it produce a student-run journal.

Through his stellar achievements as a scholar and as a rising leader in his academic field, and by his extraordinary effectiveness as a teacher and mentor, Professor Beck has brought high distinction to the University of Michigan and the Department of Anthropology, and is exceptionally qualified to receive the Henry Russel Award.

### Ashley N. Gearhardt

Professor Gearhardt, who received her B.A. (2003) from the University of Michigan and her Ph.D. (2012) from Yale University, joined our faculty in 2012 as Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology. In this short time, she has rapidly established herself as an innovative scholar who has achieved wide national impact with the exceptional quality of her research, and has established a well-earned reputation as a generous and inspirational teacher.

Professor Gearhardt studies environmental risk factors that contribute to excess food consumption and disordered eating behaviors. Through her interdisciplinary research she has made novel and significant empirical and theoretical contributions to understanding the cognitive, behavioral, environmental, and neurobiological underpinnings of food addiction, obesity, and disordered eating habits. Her methodology crosses clinical, neurological and environmental fields to demonstrate that highly processed food activates the brain's reward center, and that increased marketing of highly-processed food coincides with increases in obesity weights. To understand the factors that contribute to the worldwide rise in body weight, her research has a remarkable reach that extends to food policies that contribute to health disparities, including economic policies and marketing practices. She already has published a remarkable 29 peer-reviewed articles (23 as first author) and 9 book chapters (8 as first author). Professor Gearhardt's research has had important public impact, receiving wide attention from national news media including *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *NBC News*.

Professor Gearhardt is an inspirational teacher who encourages students to unlock their own curiosity and develop their own thoughts. Students in her classes are challenged to confront beliefs about mental health with scientific evidence. She is an innovator in the classroom who has adapted interactive technology into large lectures to stimulate active participation. Professor Gearhardt is an exceptionally engaged and active member of her department. She has made important contributions to its clinical area, developing new practicums for graduate students and serving on the department's task force for planning the future of clinical training. As a measure of the regard held by her colleagues, she has been elected to Psychology's Executive Committee.

In every area of the University's mission—research, teaching, service, and public outreach—Professor Gearhardt has achieved a high level of accomplishment. The high distinction that she has brought to the University of Michigan and the Department of Psychology make her exceptionally qualified to receive the Henry Russel Award.

## Tung-Hui Hu

Professor Hu earned his A.B. (1998) at Princeton University, where he majored in Comparative Literature and Computer Science. He went on to earn his M.F.A in Creative Writing (2003) at the University of Michigan, and his Ph.D. (2009) in Rhetoric and Film Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He joined the University of Michigan in 2009 as Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature. Professor Hu has achieved distinction in two very different areas of academic and creative endeavor: he is both a cutting-edge scholar of digital media and a widely acclaimed poet who teaches in the Zell Writers' Program. His work in each area draws on the other, and both emerge from his fecund creativity.

He is one of the leading new scholars in digital studies, which brings interdisciplinary approaches to the study of digital culture, media, cultural expression, and information. His recent book, *A Prehistory of the Cloud*, is a major contribution to rethinking the contemporary digital environment which examines the gap between the real and the virtual in our understanding of the digital cloud. He explores the materiality and Cold War origins of the physical infrastructure of digital technologies, and the ways that cultural rhetoric and popular perceptions of these technologies mask their origins and purposes and re-imagines them as placeless, ethereal, and unmediated. Professor Hu's interdisciplinary scholarship has placed him among the intellectual leaders shaping this important new field. He is frequently invited to give talks across the country, and the quality of his multifaceted research has earned him appointments as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Michigan Society of Fellows and as Visiting Scholar at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.

Professor Hu divides his time as a faculty member in the Zell Writers' Program. He is a poet of distinction whose work has appeared in many literary publications and in three collections including, most recently, *Greenhouses, Lighthouses: poems*. In recognition of his excellence, he was awarded a coveted year-long fellowship for 2015-16 from the National Endowment for the Arts. He is often invited to give readings of his work and to take up writing residencies at leading centers that include the MacDowell Colony, the Ragdale Foundation, Yaddo, the Camargo Foundation, and elsewhere in the U.S., France, and Germany.

In addition to twice teaching the Poetry workshop—the central course of the M.F.A. Writing Program—Professor Hu demonstrates extraordinary versatility by teaching freshman seminars, creative writing courses for undergraduates and graduates, and courses in new media that attract students from across the University. His students praise him as generous, dedicated and open to genuine intellectual collaboration. Professor Hu superbly expresses Michigan's commitment to adventurous and creative interdisciplinary thinking, writing, and teaching. This high distinction that he brings to the University of Michigan and the Department of English Language and Literature makes him exceptionally qualified to receive the Henry Russel Award.

## **Sarah Veatch**

Professor Veatch received her B.S. (1998) in Physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and earned her Ph.D. (2004) in Physics from the University of Washington. Following appointments as a Research Associate in Biological Physics at the University of Washington, Postdoctoral Researcher in Microbiology and Immunology at the University of British Columbia, and as a Miller Independent Scientist Program Fellow at Cornell University, in 2010 she joined our faculty as an Assistant Professor of Biophysics and Assistant Professor of Physics.

Her research is opening new understandings of how the physical properties of lipid mixtures on the surface of mammalian cells and lipid-protein interactions influence complex biological processes within these cells. The long-term goal of her research is to develop deeper understanding of the behavior of the cell membrane that can open the way for new treatment strategies for diseases such as cancer. To do this, she has developed innovative super-resolution imaging techniques, now being adopted by others, that are capable of observing interactions between proteins in live cells. She already has 37 frequently-cited articles in leading journals, and has quickly established herself as a rising star in her field. The originality, impact and promise of Professor Veatch's research has been recognized by a number of prestigious awards, including an NSF CAREER Award, recognition by the National Academy of Sciences as a Kavli Fellow, and an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship for early-career scientists of outstanding promise. She also is a regular reviewer for the most prestigious journals in her field.

Professor Veatch is also an outstanding and creative teacher who has re-vamped the undergraduate and graduate teaching laboratories in Biophysics and developed a new course that introduces undergraduates to the power of new biotechnology and biophysical methods. She is an extraordinary mentor who works closely with students to give them hands-on experience as young scientists. She supports undergraduate researchers in the summer months and brings nearly all of them to the annual meetings of the Biophysical Society. A number of papers submitted for publication from her research group have undergraduates as first authors. An outstanding member of her department, she is committed to outreach and service. She has lectured in the Saturday Morning Physics series, and works with undergraduate and graduate students to bring Detroit area high school students to her department for day-long visits. She is active in establishing mentoring and networking support for LGBTQ people in STEM at the University and in the biophysics community nationally.

Every dimension of Professor Veatch's record gives ample evidence of her stellar scientific and professional accomplishments and promise for the future. The great distinction that she has brought to the University of Michigan and the Department of Biophysics and the Department of Physics makes her exceptionally qualified to receive the Henry Russel Award.