PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Robert J. Denver, associate professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology, with tenure, and associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology, with tenure, and professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. (Also holds an appointment as Research Assistant Professor, Reproductive Sciences Program.)

Academic Degrees:

1989	Ph.D.	University of California, Berkeley
1984	B.S.	Rutgers University

Professional Record:

2001 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (MCDB), University of Michigan
2000 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology (EEB), University of Michigan
1994 – 2000	Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, University of Michigan
1994	Postdoctoral Fellow, Laboratory of Molecular Embryology, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health
1990 – 1994	Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Integrative Biology and Cancer Research Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley
1989 – 1990	Izaak Walton Killam Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Zoology, University of Alberta

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching – Professor Denver is a dedicated and effective instructor. During the past five years, he has participated in two major undergraduate courses: animal physiology and endocrinology. Animal physiology is a particularly challenging course to teach, due to its large size and grade-conscious audience. In spite of this he has earned good evaluations for his efforts. Endocrinology has developed into one of the most popular advanced elective courses in the Cellular and Molecular Biology concentration. He has served as a mentor to many undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows in his research laboratory. He has also spent a considerable amount of time and effort as an academic advisor for students in the biology-related concentrations.

Research – Professor Denver studies how specific hormones influence key steps during animal development. His work is particularly impressive because of its multi-disciplinary nature; he integrates molecular, cellular, biochemical, evolutionary, and whole organism approaches. During his time in rank, he has been very productive, listed on 21 refereed research articles and seven book chapters or review articles. His impact on the subfield of comparative and molecular endocrinology has been significant, as evidenced by the large number of invited talks and symposia that he has been asked to present, by his extensive list of research collaborators, and by

the favorable comments of the external reviewers. Professor Denver has successfully attracted consistent extramural funding for his research.

Recent and Significant Publications:

"Urocortins from the South African clawed frog Xenopus laevis: Conservation of structure and function in tetrapod evolution," with G.C. Boorse, et al., *Endocrinology*, 146, 2005, pp. 4851-4860.

"Neuroanatomical distribution and stressor-induced activation of central corticotrophin-releasing hormone neurons in Xenopus laevis," with M. Yao and N. Westphal, *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*, 16, 2004, pp. 880-893.

"Regulation of pituitary thyrotropin gene expression during Xenopus metamorphosis: negative feedback is functional throughout metamorphosis," with R. Manzon, *Journal of Endocrinology*, 182, 2004, pp. 273-285.

"Biochemical characterization and expression analysis of the Xenopus laevis corticotrophin-releasing hormone binding protein," with R.A. Valverde, et al., *Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology*, 173, 2001, pp. 29-40.

Service – The level and quality of Professor Denver's service during his time in rank has been very strong. He has served admirably as MCDB's Associate Chair of Curriculum and has been a member of the Executive Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and numerous graduate student preliminary examination and thesis committees. At the University level, Professor Denver has been a member of a Dean's Advisory Committee, two Interdepartmental Concentration Committees, and the Biomedical Research Committee, among other activities. At the national level, he has organized or co-organized several scientific symposia and served on several grant review panels.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

"...Denver has turned his attention on the regulation of gene expression in the amphibian pituitary during metamorphosis. ... Through a genomic approach, he has very recently reconstructed the phylogenic history of the CRH/urocortin gene family in vertebrates, which from my point of view is a major achievement. ... His record of accomplishment is exceptional and very impressive."

Reviewer (B)

"Doctor Denver is generally considered among his peers as a very modest but very skilful [sic] and outstanding scientist, and an expert in his field."

Reviewer (C)

"I consider Robert Denver as one of the leading scientists of the world in the field of Comparative Endocrinology and am sure that his scientific work has a profound spin-off for his teaching (innovation) and education of several Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows."

Reviewer (D)
"Dr. Denver's group has made many critical contributions to amphibian neuroendocrine research. Dr. Denver is among the top few scientists working in these areas of amphibian development."

Reviewer (E)
"There is no one I know of who has a better and more comprehensive understanding of factors that influence amphibian metamorphosis than Robert Denver. What truly makes him a star in this area is that his work is consistently elegant; from the most synthetic level of community ecology down to the level of molecular genetics."

Reviewer (F)
"These exceptional intellectual and practical capacities are combined with fine human qualities that make him an inspiring teacher and scientific leader."

Reviewer (G)
"Robert Denver is without a doubt a leading international expert in the endocrinology of amphibian metamorphosis. ...Denver is an excellent speaker giving vivid, and clear talks that are always very stimulating."

Reviewer (H)
"I am not sure that I have ever worked alongside someone with quite the level-headedness and integrity of Bob. Everything that he does, he does with a commitment to excellence and out of respect for the people who work around him."

Reviewer (I)
"Bob Denver has a clear and consistent focus on excellence in his research. ... He clearly has been very successful in establishing his own independent research program."

Summary of Recommendation:
Professor Denver is a highly productive and effective researcher, a dedicated teacher, and a valued colleague. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Robert J. Denver be promoted to the rank of professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology, with tenure, and professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, without tenure.

Terrence J. McDonald, Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2006