

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

Penny M. Von Eschen, associate professor of history, with tenure, and associate professor of American culture, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, and professor of American culture, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

1994	Ph.D.	Columbia University
1987	M.A.	Columbia University
1982	B.A.	Northwestern University

Professional Record:

2004 – present	Associate Professor, Department of History and Program in American Culture, University of Michigan
1999 – 2004	Associate Professor, Department of History and the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS), University Michigan
1996 – 1999	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Texas, Austin
1994 – 1996	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Iowa

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching – Professor Von Eschen’s courses have ranged in American history from African-American studies to an innovative melding of cultural and diplomatic history. She teaches with equal dexterity about the Cold War and about the racial politics of jazz. She expended enormous energy in preparing and teaching the big modern American survey, doing yeoman service to the Department. Yet she also enlivened the curriculum of her three units with an impressive array of courses, including the history of slavery and the political culture of imperialism. She assigns a relatively heavy reading load, but students often confess themselves entranced by these readings.

Research – Professor Von Eschen’s scholarship makes path breaking contributions to fields ranging from foreign relations to cultural history to American and African American studies. Her *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* takes as its subject the government-sponsored jazz tours that sent musicians around the globe between the middle 1950s and the late 1970s. *Satchmo* builds on her field-defining book, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism*, which explored the relationship between anticolonial politics, early civil rights activism, and superpower rivalries between 1937 and 1957.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Enduring public diplomacy,” response essay in *American Quarterly* forum on public diplomacy, 57(2), 2005, pp. 335-343.

*Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, Harvard University Press, 2004.

“The Cold War seduction of Harold Cruse,” in *Harold Cruse’s The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered*, J. Watts (ed.), Routledge, 2004, pp. 169-182.

*Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*, Cornell University Press, 1997.

Service – In common with other jointly appointed faculty, Professor Von Eschen has taken on extremely demanding responsibilities. During the five years she was appointed in CAAS, she served continuously on their Curriculum Committee where her role in reshaping the undergraduate curriculum was decisive. In the Program in American Culture, she served as a Faculty Associate member of their Executive Committee for a term and on their Long Range Planning Committee for a term. In the Department of History she served as a Concentration Advisor, Fellowships Chair, Dissertation Convener, and Job Placement Officer. In addition, she has served on two tenure panels and four third-year and lecturer reviews.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“I write with the strongest possible endorsement of her promotion and have only the highest regard for her contributions to the fields of US history, American studies, and African-American studies.”

Reviewer (B)

“This is a scholar...whose research has made a significant impact... Her publications are widely read and eagerly anticipated by scholars in several fields.”

Reviewer (C)

“What is perhaps most striking about Professor Von Eschen at this point in her scholarly career is that she played a role in the development of an emerging field in American history at the very beginning of her career, and has held her own among a group of much more senior scholars. As her work develops, she maintains a distinct voice in the field.”

Reviewer (D)

“What I find most impressive about Von Eschen’s work is its compatibility with the best jazz scholarship by writers in Humanities programs. ... What really distinguishes her as a scholar, however, is her ability to see into the minds of historical figures and make them come to life...”

Reviewer (E)

“I am pleased to endorse your recommendation that Professor Penny Von Eschen be promoted... I am certain this is a conclusion that would be reached by any major university in the country, including my own, about work that is innovative, path-breaking, and already broadly influential.”

Reviewer (F)

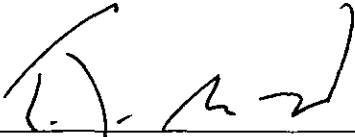
“Penny has been a pioneer in what is turning out to be one of the most important and trailblazing fields in U.S. history and American Culture: the busy intersection where the domestic meets the global. ...both of her books would be on my own list of the most significant books to appear recently in her discipline.”

Reviewer (G)

“...what strikes me most about *Satchmo Blows up the World* is its warmth and humanity—far too seldom the case with a book that is also so smart. ... Von Eschen has also told a story of great importance for broad, structural elements of U.S. history like ‘race,’ ‘nationalism,’ and ‘the state,’ but so has she painted it in vividly human colors.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Both the quantity and the quality of Von Eschen’s scholarship are singularly impressive. She is a dedicated and versatile teacher. With joint appointments in the Department of History, the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, and the Program in American Culture, she has been asked to play an unusually demanding service role. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Penny M. Von Eschen be promoted to the rank of professor of history, with tenure, and professor of American culture, with tenure.



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

May 2006