

May 17, 2007

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

Jennifer L. Bednar, assistant professor of political science, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of political science, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1998	Stanford University
A.M.	1992	Stanford University
B.A.	1990	University of Michigan

Professional Record:

2000 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan
2000 – present	Faculty Associate, Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan
2002	Visiting Professor, Law School, University of Michigan
1998 – 1999	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Iowa

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Bednar’s teaching record is very strong, both in formal instruction and in the informal and vital work of mentoring and advising. Her courses are rigorous and challenging. Evidence of the high quality of her teaching and students’ evaluations of it is provided by her being awarded the department’s Tronstein award in 2005. This honor is a consequence of strong student nominations and a recommendation by the undergraduate affairs committee.

Research – Professor Bednar’s research focuses primarily on federalism. The centerpiece of her scholarly production is her book manuscript, *The Robust Federation*, which will appear as part of the Political Economy of Institutions series at Cambridge University Press. The book provides a strikingly good and thorough account of the benefits and potential problems of federalism, as well as the strengths and limitations of the various safeguards that can serve to protect federal systems. Her analysis of the insufficiency and incomplete coverage of federal safeguards is particularly persuasive, and her finding of the complementarity of safeguards is groundbreaking.

Recent and Significant Publications:

*The Robust Federation*, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2007.

“Is full compliance possible? Conditions for shirking with imperfect monitoring and continuous action spaces,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 18(3), 2006, pp. 347-375.

“Can game(s) theory explain culture? The emergence of cultural behavior within multiple games,” with S. E. Page, *Rationality and Society*, 18(4), November 2006.

“Judicial predictability and federal stability: Strategic consequences of institutional imperfection,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 16(4), 2004, pp. 423-446.

Service – Professor Bednar has served on the departmental executive committee, the undergraduate and graduate affairs committees, a law and politics search committee, and has been a liaison for sexual and racial harassment. She also organized a seminar that brought about twenty outside speakers to the department. She has also served on the faculty advisory committee for the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. In service to the discipline, she organized panel sections for the American Political Science Association and Midwest Political Science Association annual meetings, served on several award committees for these organizations and for the National Science Foundation, and is on the editorial boards for the *Journal of Theoretical Politics* and a reviewer for a wide range of journals.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Most of the theoretical models of federalism in both law and political science are unrealistically simple... Bednar has produced a complicated model that captures the reality of the matter much better. ...[her] work is at a high level of theoretical sophistication, is highly relevant to systematic thought about federalism, and ought to be read by law professors...”

Reviewer (B)

“She manages, within the context of a tightly argued manuscript, to integrate a very wide range of approaches to federalism from American political science...Canadian politics, European politics, legal theory and empirical legal developments, and to do so in service of a powerful and complex thesis about robust federalism. It is an impressive achievement and will make a name for her in the discipline.”

Reviewer (C)

“Jenna is one of the most exciting and intellectually-challenging professors [of her generation] I know in the country, and I would be most pleased to be her colleague. This should be an easy case, and a cause for great institutional celebration. ... She is intellectually agile...and has interests that run in lots of directions.”

Reviewer (D)

“Were I to be acquiring a manuscript for an academic press or constructing a syllabus for a graduate seminar in comparative political-economic institutions, I would choose Dr. Bednar’s book. The choice would be easy. ... In my estimation, Dr. Bednar’s work pushes the discussion of political-economic institutions generally and federal institutions in particular onto entirely new intellectual terrain.”

Reviewer (E)

“...Bednar is a very thoughtful and creative social scientist. She has an impressive range of skills and knowledge that she brings to bear on a variety of questions, ranging from specific concerns about federalism and constitutional design to more general conceptual issues focused on the relationship between institutions and culture. She is one of a growing number of scholars in the social sciences who combine strong analytical skills (formal models, etc.) with first-rate empirical analysis. In her research on the political economy of institutions, Jenna has demonstrated that she is a scholar of the first rank in this group.”

Reviewer (F)

"Bednar...has made quite a name for herself at conferences and in her significant body of published work. Furthermore, she is intellectually versatile, has genuine scholarly energy, and shows a passion for tackling hard problems. ...the 'trajectory' is most impressive. The work currently in progress and forthcoming is clearly very strong, and is being recognized as such."

Reviewer (G)

"There is no question that she would be tenurable at any major Big 10 university. ... It is a pleasure to be able to comment on a file that is this strong. Sometimes promotion and tenure cases are much more difficult. This is an open and shut case."

Reviewer (H)

"...Bednar's book, when it appears, will be very well regarded. Indeed I do not know of a...scholar in her cohort who has produced such interesting work on institutional and historical analysis. Although there is much work to be done, I believe Jenna's research program will lead to innovative conceptualizations of the nature of the Federal bargain."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Bednar is an accomplished and well-recognized scholar. She is also an excellent teacher and a superb colleague. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Jennifer L. Bednar be promoted to the rank of associate professor of political science, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Terrence J. McDonald  
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,  
Professor of History, and Dean  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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