

May 17, 2007

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

Bambi L. Haggins, assistant professor of Screen Arts and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Screen Arts and Cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2000	University of California, Los Angeles
M.A.	1996	University of California, Los Angeles
M.A.	1985	Stanford University
B.A.	1983	Stanford University

Professional Record:

2005 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Screen Arts and Cultures, University of Michigan
2000 – 2005	Assistant Professor, Program in Film and Video Studies, University of Michigan
2000 – 2001	Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Haggins is a committed teacher at all levels. She has developed two team-taught courses with production people, demonstrating her deep commitment to sustaining the curricular integration of critical studies and production. One of these, “Television Sitcom,” was cited as a unique Michigan experience for undergraduates. She has been an excellent mentor, directing six independent studies, participating in five dissertation committees, and co-chairing another in a unit outside her department. She has also co-directed an honors thesis and advised another in her department. Overall, students rate her courses and her performance as a teacher very highly.

Research – Professor Haggins is gaining a national reputation as a television studies scholar whose work encompasses race and identity, television history, audience and performance studies, and the relationship of television to other media. She has published four essays and two book chapters, and she has presented five conference papers for major professional organizations and four invited lectures. Rutgers University Press will publish *Laughing Mad: The Black Comic Persona in Post Soul America* in 2007. This is a compelling study of the role of African American comedy on television and across different performance venues from the Civil Rights era to the present. External reviewers repeatedly testify that her work ranks with the best contemporary scholarship on race and media. Professor Haggins’s ambitious research agenda includes further television studies of Black comedic (and dramatic) representations as well as cultural formations of fandom.

Recent and Significant Publications:

*Laughing Mad: The Black Comic Persona in Post Soul America*, Rutgers University Press, forthcoming 2007.

“In another part of the cultural ghetto: A telephile’s notes,” *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, 45(2), 2004.

“Laughing mad: The Black comedian’s place in post Civil Rights era American comedy, in *Hollywood Comedians: The Film Reader*, F. Krutnik (ed.), Routledge, 2003.

“Apocrypha meets the Pentagon Papers: The ideological appeal of the X-Files to the X-Phile,” *University of Film and Video Studies Association Journal*, Winter 2001-2002.

Service – Professor Haggins has done work that is well beyond what is expected of junior faculty in serving her department during its past six years of unusual growth. She currently directs the graduate program and is mentoring the first cohort of students for a new doctoral degree program. She also serves on the search committee for a new department chair and has co-chaired two other search committees. She was a skillful and thoughtful member of the Strategic Planning Committee that crafted the document that proved crucial for the work of the 2003 External Review Committee. Outside of the University, she is co-chair of the Black Caucus in the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) and serves on the editorial board of a major professional journal.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“While Haggins[’] profile is largely that of a television scholar, the book [*Laughing Mad*] more ambitiously examines the comic personae of a range of black performers not only in their television work, but also their work in stand-up...and in cinema. The manuscript’s biggest strength is Haggins[’] sharp analytical skills and abilities to draw connections and contrasts between and among African American comics...exploring how these comics were (or were not) able to cross over to white and ‘mainstream’ audiences.”

Reviewer (B)

“What is most remarkable about this record, is that the candidate, while an assistant professor at UM, began, researched, wrote, and had published a completely original scholarly work, and did so in a mere 4-5 years. ... Haggins’ research in general, and the way she frames film and media scholarship in particular, has achieved the kinds of excellence, originality, and independence upon which the reward of tenure depends.”

Reviewer (C)

“Professor Haggins has produced a robust and high quality of work in the area [of] screen cultures... The real tour de-force in the dossier is the book length study of the comedic personas of black post-soul comedians. ...Haggins has produced a scrupulously researched, beautifully written, and well-argued account of the contemporary period where questions of identity and representation continue to matter. ...it is sure to be a major text for some time to come.”

Reviewer (D)

"The materials you sent me were nothing short of a revelation – this is really exciting work and shows to me all the hallmarks of an exceptional scholar at the very start of her career and already producing work which is going to generate a great deal of interest across a range of disciplines once it sees print."

Reviewer (E)

"...[*Laughing Mad*] constitutes the real claim to research of significance. I regard this manuscript as a helpful contribution to general knowledge of black TV comedy, as it covers terrain not engaged by other scholarly books. ... The book is well-written and well-organized. It deserves to be published..."

Reviewer (F)

"There is a substantial amount of scholarship in the file. The book manuscript is particularly noteworthy because it marks a new project that does not comprise any of her dissertation research. The book is forthcoming from Rutgers University Press, which I consider to be one of the most selective university presses committed to academic publishing in the area of television studies."

Reviewer (G)

"...I consider 'Laughing Mad' to be an extremely important book that is likely to make a major contribution to the fields of performance studies, television studies and cultural studies. The trajectory of her scholarship bodes well for the direction and quality of her future research and indicates that she is poised to become...a leading senior scholar in her field."

Reviewer (H)

"Like the overall body of her work, *Mad Laughter* is an exquisite look at the role of culture and comedy in American life. ... Her ability to move competently across different disciplines marks her analysis of black comedy and cultural performance as a wholly original and influential piece of scholarship."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Haggins is a very productive and imaginative scholar. She is an excellent teacher and mentor, and is committed to serving both the department and the discipline. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Bambi L. Haggins be promoted to the rank of associate professor of screen arts and cultures, 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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