

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

Approved by the Regents
May 20, 2010

Eileen K. Pollack, associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of English language and literature, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

M.F.A.	1983	University of Iowa
B.S.	1978	Yale University

Professional Record:

2007 – present	Director, MFA Program in Creative Writing, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
2004 – present	Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
1999 – 2004	Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
1994 – 1999	Senior Lecturer and Director of the Undergraduate Creative Writing Program, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
1993 – 1994	Visiting Assistant Professor, Division of Writing, Literature, and Publishing, Emerson College
1985 – 1994	Lecturer, Department of English, Tufts University
1989 - 1990	Preceptor, Expository Writing Program, Harvard University
1982 – 1983	Teaching-Writing Fellow, University of Iowa
1981 – 1982	Teaching Assistant, Department of English, University of Iowa

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching – Professor Pollack is a thoughtful, dedicated, and entirely successful teacher of undergraduate and graduate students. She has taught six undergraduate courses and six graduate courses, and served on some two dozen thesis committees since tenure. Her core classes are undergraduate and graduate creative writing workshops, but she has demonstrated her value to English majors in literature classes on the American Novel and the *Bildungsroman*. She has also offered innovative courses on False Documents, and Creative Nonfiction (the latter a workshop she pioneered and which has become a staple of the MFA program). Her rigorous and methodologically sophisticated classes are organized around sets of key, provocative questions about the craft of writing and readerly responses to it. Repeatedly, in written responses, students comment on her accessibility and supportiveness as well as her authority.

Research – Professor Pollack has published her fourth and fifth books: an award-winning collection of short fiction, *In the Mouth, Stories and Novellas*, and a groundbreaking new textbook, *Creative Nonfiction: A Guide to Form, Content, and Style, with Readings*, which is set to become a leading text in the field. Her growing national reputation is suggested by the recent selection of her story entitled ‘The Bris’ in *Best American Short Stories 2007*, and her invitation

to contribute three essays about the mood of Michigan voters in the run up to the last election to the Sunday *New York Times* op-ed pages. Professor Pollack has also completed two promising new novel manuscripts, one of which was accepted during the promotion process, and is circulating an exciting proposal for a memoir about her experiences as the first female physics major at Yale University in the 1970's.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Creative Nonfiction: A Guide to Form, Content, and Style, with Readings, Wadsworth/Cengage, 2009.

In the Mouth, Stories and Novellas, Four Way Books, 2008.

"Morning in Detroit," "The top banana," "President Ron Paul of Michigan," *New York Times* September through November, 2008.

"The bris," reprinted in *Best American Short Stories*, Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

Service - Professor Pollack has served the English Department and the MFA Program with great distinction. As Zell Director of the MFA Program she serves *ex officio* on the Department Executive Committee, mentors students and junior colleagues, supervises the assistant director of the program, oversees the reading of MFA applications and graduate student recruitment, and fund-raises actively in conjunction with LSA Development. Since tenure she has served on searches resulting in the recruitment of five faculty members, as well as on three tenure and promotion cases. In the wider University context she has proven of value to the Frankel Center, the Institute for the Humanities, the Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellows Program, the Provost's Office with reference to Rhodes/Marshall applicants, and the Museum of Art. In relation to the profession at large Professor Pollack has regularly attended the Associated Writing Programs conference as a representative of the MFA Program, acted as external tenure evaluator for candidates in other institutions, read manuscripts for UM Press and the University of Georgia Press, and coordinated visits from visiting writers and honorary degree candidates.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

"Eileen is one of the finest writers working today. ... Were I to compile a list of significant books or short stories that have appeared in the last ten years, I would most certainly include 'The Bris' and *In The Mouth*, the collection in which it appears. In these stories, Eileen is at the top of her form, showing herself not only to be a masterful storyteller but a writer of immense acuity and rigor."

Reviewer (B)

"She is becoming an essayist of the highest rank, with her work frequently appearing in the country's most prominent newspapers and literary magazines. ... I have no doubt that *Creative Nonfiction* will eventually be considered *the* textbook for nonfiction writing workshops... *Creative Nonfiction* is likely her most noteworthy achievement among many noteworthy achievements, incontrovertible evidence of her impressive national stature as a writer and teacher of *a range* of creative writing, an extraordinary and essential boon to any creative writing program."

Reviewer (C)

“Her last book, *In the Mouth*, was one of the strongest story collections I’ve read in years (the subject of raves from, of all people, Stephen King): lyrical, acute, funny, unsentimental, and consistently moving and surprising in both the prose and the substance.”

Reviewer (D)

“This is the work of a thoughtful, imaginative, searching and energetic mind with a strong sense of her own mission as a writer...”

Reviewer (E)

“Professor Pollack’s productivity since her last promotion is truly remarkable. And her collection of short stories has won an award and several other distinctions—among them, that one of the stories was reprinted in *Best American Short Stories 2007*.”

Reviewer (F)

“There are very few writers who have published in six genres...the novel, the short story, creative nonfiction, the novella, young adult fiction, and the creative writing textbook. Such versatility is a measure of Pollack’s creative ambition, but it is also a measure of her value to the department and the university beyond. As a result of her generic reach, Pollack is able to offer students, as a teacher and role model, a set of skills that would normally require at least two hires.”

Reviewer (G)

“This novel [*The Bible of Dirty Jokes*], exploring the nature of Jewish humor, with a shrewd eye on little-known American history, moves beyond Professor Pollack’s generally philosophical fiction, and is genuinely innovative in voice and style. Professor Pollack is not only productive as a writer, she is stretching herself, and her national reputation is secure...”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Pollack has remarkable productivity and considerable accomplishment. She is a dedicated and exacting teacher who has served the MFA program with distinction. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Eileen K. Pollack be promoted to the rank of professor of English language and literature, 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

May 2010