

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan-Dearborn  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters  
Department of Behavioral Sciences

Susana Maria Peciña, assistant professor of psychology, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees

Ph.D.	1998	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Biopsychology
M.A.	1993	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Biopsychology
B.S.	1991	Bowling Green State University, Biology

Professional Record

2007 – present	Assistant professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters
2004 – 2007	Adjunct lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
2002 – 2007	Research specialist, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
2000 – 2002	Post-doctoral fellow, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Peciña's teaching is rated excellent. Student evaluations of her courses are well above the department average, with overall instructor ratings ranging from 3.50 to 4.85 on the 5-point scale. The average instructor rating for all her undergraduate courses combined is 4.56 and the average instructor rating for the two times she has taught her graduate class is 4.00. On average, across all the courses she teaches, students rate her as highly organized and prepared, someone who sets high standards for achievement, effective in presenting course material, and willing to give help outside of class. She is particularly known for her high degree of enthusiasm and for her total willingness to take student questions during class. She constantly reflects upon her own teaching and searches for new ways to improve her classes and reach students of all ability levels. Professor Peciña's introductory psychology course thoroughly engages her students, and many report choosing to major or minor in psychology after taking this class. Additionally, she supports undergraduate research projects and nurtures these students to present their work at local and regional conferences. Her teaching also extends into the metropolitan community where she volunteered her time and expertise to teach a year-long introductory psychology course to inmates at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility.

Research: Professor Peciña's research is rated excellent. Her painstaking work concerns the neurobiology of motivation and pleasure, which she currently studies in rats. Her 2005 *Journal of Neuroscience* article introduced the idea of "hedonic hotspots," a concept that transformed the field of affective neuroscience. As the external reviewers attest, her cutting-edge research involves innovative perspectives and methodologies that have resulted in frequently cited publications in prestigious journals. Even at this early stage in her career, she was invited to present her work at the First Presidential Symposium at the Society for Ingestive Behaviors, as well as at the 10<sup>th</sup> Benjamin/Lafayette Seminar – a small, invitation-only conference. These invitations signify the

innovativeness and high impact of her scholarship. Along with her empirical articles, her review articles are of the highest quality and are widely cited. Her most recent publication has important ramifications for the health and medical fields, because it links the neurobiology of pleasure and motivation to obesity in humans.

#### Recent and Significant Publications

- Peciña, S., & Smith K.S. (2010). Hedonic and motivational roles of opioids in food reward: Implications for overeating disorders. *Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior*.
- Peciña, S. (2008). Opioid reward 'liking' and 'wanting' in the nucleus accumbens. *Physiology and Behavior*, 94(5), 675-680.
- Peciña, S., Smith, K., & Berridge, K.C. (2006). Hedonic hotspots in the brain. *Neuroscientist*, 12(6), 500-511.
- Peciña, S., Shulkin, J., & Berridge, K.C. (2006). Nucleus accumbens CRF increases cue- triggered motivation for sucrose reward: Paradoxical positive incentive effects in stress? *BMC Biology*, 4(1), 8.
- Peciña, S., & Berridge, K.C., (2005). Hedonic hotspot in nucleus accumbens shell: Where do opioids cause increased hedonic impact of sweetness? *Journal of Neuroscience*, 25(50), 1177-1186.

Service: Professor Peciña's service is rated significantly capable. As service to the discipline, she has served on a faculty search committee and co-chaired a second one. She also developed a comprehensive proposal for a Cognitive Science concentration within Psychology. Since 2008 she has represented the Behavioral Sciences Department on the Academic Standards Committee. She has served the College and University by chairing a session of the Meeting of Minds conference in 2009 and being a faculty representative at two commencement ceremonies. Serving the community as part of the University's Metropolitan Vision, Professor Peciña also volunteered her time and expertise from 2009 to 2010 to teach psychology to female inmates at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility. With regard to service to her profession, she is an ad hoc reviewer for ten neuroscience journals and has served as an external grant reviewer.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "Dr. Peciña's research is at the cutting edge of research on the biopsychology of motivation....These are well conducted studies and [are] being cited frequently already, which indicates [they are] having an impact in the field. All of Dr. Peciña's research is of very high quality."

Reviewer B: "She was first author on at least two landmark papers describing the role of the ventral pallidum in reward. Both papers were published in the prestigious Journal of Neuroscience, and both have already become classics....Her recent review papers are extremely insightful and beautifully illustrated. These are true scholarly works that will undoubtedly stand the test of time...."

Reviewer C: "[Her] manuscripts describe research of the highest quality in the field of behavioral neuroscience....The writings have already had substantial impact in the field of addiction assessed both by citations of her work and by how the work has influenced general thinking in the field....Given the innumerable questions that are left to pursue in this area, along with her strong track record, there is great promise for her continuing in this area of study."

Reviewer D: "The papers are sharply focused on an important current problem in brain research, neuroscience and behavior. They are on the cutting edge....The review papers are of equally high quality....Dr. Peciña stands solidly on the upper side of those in her peer group working in the same

field...[In terms of her showing promise for continuing development], based on her papers, and what I know about the field, I would have to say an unqualified YES.”

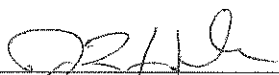
Reviewer E: “[She] is a very talented and enthusiastic scientist who contributed significantly to the understanding of brain systems of reward and motivation....Each [publication] represents extremely thorough and important work with high impact....I believe that her work shows promise for continuing development, in particular in the field of overeating behaviors.”

Reviewer F: “The research questions she tackles and the procedures and techniques she uses are quite extraordinary; and this is what truly sets her off from her peers in the neuroscience community....She publishes her work in very respectable journals, including the flagship journal of the field, *The Journal of Neuroscience*....By her work, she is positioning herself to be a real leader in the emerging field of Affective Neuroscience.”

Reviewer G: “Susana Peciña’s work in Behavioral Neuroscience has gained her both national and international recognition....Much of [her] work has been summarized in [her] outstanding review that appeared in the high impact (impact factor of 6.8) review journal, *The Neuroscientist*, in 2006....[She] will most certainly continue to make measurable and significant contributions to her field.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Peciña is an excellent teacher, a superb scholar, and an esteemed colleague. The Department of Behavioral Sciences has rated her excellent in teaching, excellent in research, and significantly capable in service. Not only is her research cutting edge, highly cited, and published in prestigious journals, but she is also an excellent teacher and mentor to students, both undergraduate and graduate. Her dedication and service extend not only to the department and college, but also to the metropolitan community. We are very pleased to recommend, with strong support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee, Susana Maria Peciña for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



Jerold L. Hale  
Dean  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



Daniel Little  
Chancellor  
University of Michigan-Dearborn

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