

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
School of Social Work

Trina R. Williams Shanks, assistant professor of social work, School of Social Work, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.

Academic Degrees:

B.S.	1992	Business Administration (summa cum laude), Washington University, St. Louis, John M. Olin School of Business
M. Phil.	1996	Comparative Social Research, University of Oxford, England
M.S.W.	2000	Washington University, St. Louis, George Warren Brown School of Social Work
Ph.D.	2003	Washington University, St. Louis, George Warren Brown School of Social Work

Professional Record:

2009- present	Faculty Associate, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research University of Michigan
2003- present	Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, and Faculty Affiliate, National Poverty Center, University of Michigan
1997-1998	Executive Director, Christian Community Services, Inc., Nashville, TN
1996-1997	Consultant, Stand for Children (Children's Defense Fund affiliate), Washington, DC
1992-1994	Micro-enterprise Consultant, U.S. Peace Corps, Carcelen, Ecuador
Summer 1992	Director, Minority Youth Entrepreneurship Program, John M. Olin School of Business, Washington University in St. Louis

Summary of Evaluation

Teaching: Professor Shanks is a dedicated and effective educator. Although she regularly teaches in the School of Social Work's (SSW) Master of Social Work (MSW) curriculum, she has shared responsibility for one doctoral course, and has been actively involved in mentoring of doctoral students in our Joint Social Work and Social Science Ph.D. Program and of graduate students at other institutions. Professor Shanks' teaching portfolio includes two courses in the M.S.W. program. Both courses build on her practice and research background. She has taught SW560 – Introduction to Community Organization, Management, and Policy/Evaluation Practice, eight times. This is a required foundation course. Professor Shanks received good to excellent ratings in student evaluations of the course. Of particular note are the very high scores related to her knowledge of the course material, treatment of students, fairness in grading, and preparation for class. It is also notable, but not surprising, that students evaluated these courses particularly highly for Professor Shanks' inclusion of content on disadvantaged populations. Professor Shanks has also taught SW633: Children and Youth Services and Social Policies, also a required course for M.S.W. students who choose a practice concentration focusing on Children and Youth in Families and Society. Professor Shanks' course evaluations are also excellent for this course. In Winter 2010, Professor Shanks taught a mini-course (1 credit) on Mindfulness as a Tool to Enhance Social Work Practice, in which she integrated practitioners to communicate practice application. Her course evaluations were positive. Finally she assisted in the pilot of a new doctoral course,—Historical and Contemporary Issues in Social Work and Social Welfare. She anticipates teaching this course independently in the future. Professor Shanks has mentored graduate students at the M.S.W. and doctoral level. Eleven of these were in the Joint Doctoral Program in Social Work and Social Science, a number of whom have needed special attention. She has co-authored manuscripts with three of these students and

has been sought out by graduate students at other institutions, an index of the recognition of her expertise and national stature.

Research/scholarship: Professor Shanks is an influential member of a distinguished group of intervention researchers who focus on asset building as a critical approach to ending intergenerational poverty and disadvantage. This is an innovative and relatively new strategy for achieving social justice through the targeted building of individual and/or family resources. Indeed, it represents a paradigm shift and has taken on prominence in the United States and internationally. Especially notable are Professor Shanks' contributions in three interrelated domains: 1) historical research on the impact of the Homestead Act as a national asset-building mechanism; 2) Individual Development Accounts (IDAs); and 3) Child Development Accounts (CDAs), particularly examining the impact of Individual Development Accounts and Child Development Accounts on child and family well-being. Her work in these domains has become nationally recognized. Professor Shanks researched and wrote a seminal article on the Homestead Act—a 19th century experiment in asset building—providing estimates of the impact of this legislation, and concluding that approximately a quarter of the current U.S. population has benefited from the land grants made under the Act. This article provides needed historical evidence of the multiplier effect over time of asset formation. As a doctoral student, Professor Shanks began as a junior member of a team of asset building researchers at Washington University in St. Louis. These researchers have systematically studied the impact of IDAs, through a project called the American Dream Demonstration (ADD). The ADD examined IDAs at 14 sites from 1999-2003, and spanned Professor Shanks' doctoral work and ended the year she completed her Ph.D. While at Washington University, Professor Shanks was an active member of the Growing Wealth Working Group, the planning team for Child Development Accounts, the planning team for IDAs in a St. Louis African-American community, the wealth building in rural America project, and Poor Finances: Assets and Low-Income Households. These are all part of the asset-building program, the Center for Social Development, at Washington University. Professor Shanks continues to collaborate on action-research with this group. Additionally, her interest in improving the outcomes for children and youth of color and poor children, has led her to advocate for and evaluate the impact of Child Development Accounts (CDAs), asset-building accounts intended for children's post-secondary education, major purchases, and entrepreneurial endeavors. She is presently a member of a multi-site project on CDAs. Professor Shanks' work is collaborative in nature. She works with communities, agencies and other community-based organizations, researchers, and foundations in multi-site endeavors related to asset building. In addition, she is an active member of a team involved in Detroit. This work is funded through a grant from the Skillman Foundation. Professor Shanks has also recently undertaken an exploration of asset-building among elderly Blacks, using data from the National Survey of American Life. Professor Shanks' research is recognized for its sophisticated use of mixed-method designs. She undertakes archival research, quantitative research—which includes work on large public data sets as well as experimental and quasi-experimental design—and qualitative research. Her knowledge development activities reflect a focus on theory, excellent methodological skills, a consideration of multiple hypotheses, and an appreciation of the need to examine issues from policy, institutional, community, family, and individual perspectives. While she clearly believes that asset building holds great promise for reducing poverty, she critically examines and honestly reports circumstances and conditions in which asset-building does not meet its promise. The innovations around which Professor Shanks' research is centered rely heavily on foundation support. In her specific case, this has included funding from the Ford Foundation, the Skillman Foundation, the Anne E. Casey Foundation, the Heron Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Danforth Foundation. She currently is funded by the Ford Foundation and the Skillman Foundation. She also has a diversity supplement on a National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) grant and funding from a NIH project, the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research.

Recent significant publications:

- Williams Shanks, T., Kim, Y., Loke, V. & Destin, M. (2010). Assets and child well-being in developed countries. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(11), p.1488-1496.
- Williams Shanks, T. R., Boddie, S. C., & Rice, S. (2010). Family-centered, community-based asset building: A strategic use of individual development accounts. *Journal of Community Practice*, 18(1), p. 94-117.
- Williams Shanks, T. (2007). The impacts of household wealth on child development. *Journal of Poverty*, 11(2), p. 93-116.
- Davis, L. E., Wallace, J. M., & Williams Shanks, T. R. (2008). "African Americans-Overview." In T. Mizrahi & L. E. Davis (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Williams Shanks, T. R. (2005). The Homestead Act: A major asset-building policy in American history. In M. Sherraden (Ed.), *Inclusion in the American dream: Assets, poverty, and public policy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Service: Professor Shanks' service contributions are at the international, national, state, professional, community, university, and school levels. She has consulted on Child Development Accounts in the United Kingdom and testified on this topic before the U.S. Congress. At the state and community levels, Professor Shanks is a member of the Asset Building Coalition of Michigan, is working to develop Child Development Accounts for Alternatives for Girls—a Detroit agency that serves homeless and disadvantaged girls—and is involved in community meetings and evaluation for the Good Neighborhoods Initiative in Detroit. Illustrative of the importance of her work is her recent appointment to the Michigan Governor's Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity. In terms of professional service, Professor Shanks is on the editorial board of four scholarly journals, conducts reviews for a number of others, and has served on the Presidential Task Force on Publications for the Society for Social Work and Research. At the University level, she is a member of the selection committee for Rhodes Scholars and participates in mock interviews for Marshall Scholar finalists. She also reviews Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates (GIEU) applications. In the School of Social Work, she has served and played pivotal roles on the Executive Committee, Student Services Committee (Graduation Chair), and the Doctoral Committee within the School of Social Work for the Joint Doctoral Program in Social Work and Social Science.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "Most impressively, she is accomplishing this with the highest caliber of scholarly quality, with impressive productivity, earning academic distinction in the process, and has become a well-known and respected scholar at the top of her field. Clearly, in my humble opinion, she has earned tenure at the University of Michigan, as I believe she would at [my] University and others with which I am familiar."

Reviewer B: "In sum, Professor Williams Shanks is a very strong social work scholar whose clearly-defined, theoretically-grounded, and practically-engaged research agenda addresses important issues in social policy. Based on her research record, I am very confident that she would be enthusiastically supported for promotion at [my] University; in my judgment she is clearly deserving of promotion to Associate Professor with tenure at any top school of social work."

Reviewer C: "Among my colleagues, Professor Shanks is considered one of the premier mid-career child welfare researchers. Professor Shanks's work is broad in scope and comprehensive in analysis. Her innovative and exhaustive concern with understanding the nature of child developmental needs and family dynamics and their implications for the child welfare system will, I believe, continue to influence our understanding of the public child welfare system and its possibilities for many years to come."

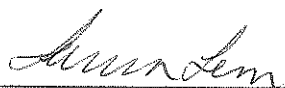
Reviewer D: "As to Professor Shanks' likelihood of being promoted to tenure [my] University, if she were to be reviewed for a comparable appointment here I have no doubt that she would be promoted. Her scholarship is outstanding, her community and professional service exemplary, and from what I can see, her teaching and mentoring is excellent. With a record like this, I would certainly recommend promotion and your challenge will be how you can retain her as the competing offers from top universities inevitably arrive."

Reviewer E: "The quality and strength of research and scholarship conducted and represented in Professor Williams Shanks' tenure review file is comparable to the senior scholars who conduct research in her field of study, several of whom she has collaborated with on research represented in the tenure file...If Professor Williams Shanks were under review for tenure consideration at my institution, I am fairly confident that she would be granted tenure and promoted to associate professor. I believe that both the quantity and quality of her scholarship to date would merit a favorable tenure response. To the extent that granting academic tenure reflects scholarly accomplishments to date and promise for further advancement, I believe that Professor Williams Shanks' research and scholarship more than meets the bar for approval. Based on her scholarly accomplishments to date, I anticipate that she will continue to be a productive scholar."

Reviewer F: "Of the many cases I have reviewed, I would say that Dr. Shanks' dossier is comparable to those cases who received promotion to the rank of tenured Associate Professor in Sociology and/or Social Work Departments at the institutions noted above. In fact, Dr. Shanks' record of innovative scholarly contributions far exceeds those of most who were promoted and received tenure...In closing, I once again submit my strongest support for the tenure and promotion of Dr. Shanks. She appears to be an excellent researcher and scholar and thus a credit to the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan."

Reviewer G: "...she possesses a clear and unequivocal Social Work focus and identity and incorporates social justice and economic marginalization concerns as bedrock principles in her work. She clearly demonstrates that effective social work research and practice requires a clear understanding of relevant theory, strong analytic and methodological skills, and a critical perspective with respect to issues of community and individual development and social equity."

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Trina Williams Shanks' contributions to asset building as a strategy for combating intergenerational poverty and disadvantage are on the cutting edge. She is considered a rising star by both those who have followed her career and those who have only recently learned of her work. Her teaching record is solid and her mentoring exemplary. Her contributions to service have reached out to multiple levels of international, community, and professional organizations. Accordingly, I join the Tenure and Promotion and Executive Committees' of the School of Social Work unanimous support in recommending Trina R. Williams Shanks for promotion to associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.



Laura Lein  
Katherine Reebel Collegiate Professor of Social Work,  
Professor of Anthropology, and Dean  
School of Social Work

May 2011