

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

Beverly I. Strassmann, associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1990	University of Michigan
M.S.	1983	Cornell University
M.S.	1979	University of Michigan
B.A.	1978	University of Michigan

Professional Record:

2003 – present	Faculty Associate, Research Center for Group Dynamics, University of Michigan
1999 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
1993 – 1999	Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
1992 – 1993	Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Biology, University of San Diego
1990 – 1993	NIH Postdoctoral Fellow, Reproductive Sciences Program, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Strassmann’s teaching includes everything from a first-year seminar on natural selection to an advanced graduate student seminar on human reproductive ecology. She is a serious and committed teacher who provides students with fundamental knowledge of evolutionary processes and the skills to critically evaluate scientific research and popular representations of evolutionary science. In addition to her eight different undergraduate and graduate level courses, Professor Strassmann has worked closely with undergraduate students in her laboratory and on her documentary film projects through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program and independent study projects. She has also supervised four honors theses and brought twelve students to her field site, providing them with a unique educational opportunity to participate in a sustained research project and interact with members of a culture very different than their own.

Research – Professor Strassmann has maintained an active and significant research trajectory in the field of human behavioral ecology, as manifest in her ongoing fieldwork, her four major research grants from the National Science Foundation, and a record of significant publications in the areas of life history theory, human genetics, the study of marriage and mating systems, health and disease, and religion and paternity. The distinctive strength of Professor Strassmann’s research is based in her remarkable record of nearly 30 years of sustained work among the Dogon of Mali, resulting in a unique longitudinal dataset on thousands of individuals from nine agricultural communities. Each phase of her research has led to the next, as manifest in her current multi-year fieldwork and data collection project exploring the developmental origins of disease, and in multiple collaborative research and writing projects that assure that Professor

Strassmann will continue making significant contributions to anthropology and evolutionary biology for years to come.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Biology within Culture: Behavioral Ecology of the Dogon, under contract with Harvard University Press, in preparation.

“Perspectives on human health and disease from evolutionary and behavioral ecology,” with R. Mace, in *Evolution in Health and Disease*, 2nd Edition, S. C. Stearns and J. C. Koella (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 109-119.

“How to measure reproductive success?” with B. Gillespie, *American Journal of Human Biology*, 15, 2003, pp. 1-9.

“Social monogamy in a human society: Marriage and reproductive success among the Dogon,” in *Monogamy: Mating Strategies and Partnerships in Birds, Mammals, and Humans*, U. H. Reichard and C. Boesch (eds.), Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 177-189.

Service – Since her last promotion, much of Professor Strassmann’s service has been outside of the Department of Anthropology. However, she did co-chair a search committee (2005-2006), serve on the Curriculum Committee (2004), and assisted in faculty recruitment for the HIV cluster hire (2009). At the university level, she has served on committees for the Research Center for Group Dynamics and the Population Studies Center. Nationally, Professor Strassmann reviews submissions for major journals and funding agencies and served as consulting editor for *Evolution and Human Behavior*. Her work is regularly cited in popular media, bringing University of Michigan biological anthropology to a global audience.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Beverly is without question ranked at the top of her field. She has an excellent international reputation for scholarship and innovative work ...almost no other anthropologist has spent as much time at one field site or collected the wealth of longitudinal biocultural data that she now has from the Dogon. What she has managed to do at her field site is truly extraordinary...”

Reviewer (B)

“...Beverly’s work is characterized by a firm grasp of theory in both evolutionary biology and more specifically Life History Theory, an unusually strong background in both reproductive physiology and demography, a strong grasp of statistics and appropriate research methodologies, and a very high degree of analytical rigor in her analyses—a very potent combination for someone actively engaged in ethnographic research... This highly critical, brilliantly incisive anthropologist refines the arguments of everyone she interacts with. I regard Beverly as a treasured asset to my field, and she certainly deserves promotion to full professor.”

Reviewer (C)

“She is a highly regarded and internationally recognized leader in the field of human behavioral ecology...having established and conducted one of the most important longitudinal field studies of human biology and reproductive behavior. In addition to collecting a prodigious body of unique data, she has significantly advanced theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of human adaptations.”

Reviewer (D)

“The sweep and care of her (continuing) Dogon work is unmatched. With her eye for important problems, her quantitative skill, and her appetite for meticulous data accumulation, she is an outstanding anthropologist.”

Reviewer (E)

“I am always impressed by her tenaciousness as a fieldworker, thinker and explorer of the evolutionary intellectual terrain. She has set a high standard for the rest of us in pursuing our research goals and always challenges us to go deeper and more critically into our work. I support her promotion without reservation.”

Reviewer (F)

“The breadth and depth of her research is awe inspiring. The way she is able to do this is two-fold: first of all, she has worked with the Dogon of Mali since the mid 1980s and has built a massive dataset on the total population and followed a cohort of 1700 children since 1998. Strassmann’s focus and consistence allow her to pose a wide variety of questions and her theoretical perspective, human evolutionary ecology/biology, informs their framing.”

Reviewer (G)

“In my view, Dr. Strassmann’s major scholarly contributions have come in three main areas: polygyny and child mortality, menstruation, and genetic relatedness among the Dogon. Like much of the rest of Dr. Strassmann’s work, her articles and book chapters on polygyny and child mortality are important for practical as well as theoretical reasons.”

Reviewer (H)

“The candidate has a strong and very central standing in the field of human behavioral ecology based on her successful fieldwork and publication record. This is evidenced by her inclusion in important published collections in the field...in addition to her sterling collection of peer-reviewed articles.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Beverly Strassmann is an international leader in research on human behavioral ecology with a substantial record of research and publication. She is an excellent teacher and has a very strong service record. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Beverly I. Strassmann be promoted to the rank of professor of anthropology, with tenure, 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 2011