

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

Brian M. McKenna, assistant professor of anthropology, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees

Ph.D.	1998	Michigan State University, Anthropology
M.A.	1986	Temple University, Anthropology
B.A.	1980	Temple University, Communication Arts

Professional Record

2005 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, University of Michigan-Dearborn
2004 – 2005	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor McKenna's teaching is rated excellent. Student evaluations of his courses are above department averages, with overall instructor ratings ranging from 4.0 to 4.8 on a 5 point scale (where 5 is the highest score). The overall course ratings are notable as well, ranging from 3.8 to 4.7. These impressive scores extend over a variety of courses—from large introductory classes to smaller specialized, upper-level classes. One of the values that underscores his teaching is the development of critical thinking. His students rate him well in this regard as evidenced both by numerical averages and frequent written comments about how he consistently encouraged them to “think outside the box.” Professor McKenna uses written assignments and projects as a primary method for accomplishing this—and successfully so, according to his students. He is rated very highly in terms of being knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and effective, and as setting high standards for achievement. As evidenced both by his teaching philosophy and student comments, his commitment to the growth of his students extends far beyond the classroom. He created a new course, Anthropology, Health, & the Environment, that has a strong civic engagement component. His students frequently comment on his willingness to help them with assignments outside of class. He has been instrumental in helping his students achieve summer field school scholarships and to submit conference papers and posters. He also taught a course at a local women's correctional facility that garnered high praise from his students.

Research: Professor McKenna's research is rated excellent. He has ten publications to his credit over the course of the probationary period: eight journal articles and two book chapters. In addition, he made 14 conference presentations during the same time period. He has made significant contributions to three areas: critical medical anthropology, applied anthropology, and critical pedagogy. The reviewers of his research state that he has made significant, cutting edge

contributions to these areas. They admire his sharp analytical skills, the breadth of his knowledge, and his writing capabilities that appeal both to academics and the general public. As evidence of the esteem in which he is held by his colleagues, he was elected as a fellow of the Society for Applied Anthropology in 2010.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- McKenna, Brian (2011). "Staging a Christopher Columbus Play in a Culture of Illusion: Public Pedagogy in a Theatre of Genocide," In Special Edition of *Policy Futures in Education*. McKenna, B. & Darder, A. Eds.
- McKenna, Brian (2010). "Take Back Medical Education, The Primary Care Shuffle," Invited Editorial for *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Illness and Health*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 6-14.
- McKenna, Brian (2010). "Exposing Environmental Health Deception as a Government Whistleblower: turning critical ethnography into public pedagogy." *Policy Futures in Education*, Vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 22-36.
- McKenna, Brian. (2010). "Anthropology Must Embrace Journalism, Public Pedagogy is Discipline's Challenge," *Tsantsa, the Journal of the Swiss Ethnological Society*, Vol. 15, pp. 47-60.
- McKenna, Brian (2008). "Melanoma Whitewash: Millions at Risk of injury or Death because of Sunscreen Deceptions." In Merrill Singer and Hans Baer (Eds.), *Killer Commodities: A Critical Anthropological Examination of the Corporate Production of Harm*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Service: Professor McKenna is rated significantly capable. He has served the campus community in several important ways. He was an active member of both the Health Policy Studies Advisory Committee and the Urban Studies Advisory Committee. He was also on two anthropology search committees that successfully hired two new colleagues. Perhaps his most significant service contributions have been to his profession. He served on the editorial boards of three journals—one for twelve years. He has played an active role as secretary for four years at the monthly meetings of American Indian Health and Family Services, Inc. His most visible and arguably, his most significant service contributions have been in the area of public anthropology. He has more than a dozen short "think pieces" in the Society for Applied Anthropology Newsletter. His contributions are means of sharing theoretical and practical insights for "doing anthropology" across a wide variety of contexts, in particular those related to health and medical education

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I have watched his development as a scholar over the past decade with great admiration. His work is original, cutting edge, and important....Professor McKenna is one of brightest scholars of his generation, a gifted thinker who has already made a significant mark in a number of fields."

Reviewer B: "Dr. McKenna has advanced anthropological knowledge and practice in the emerging field of public anthropology. These academic achievements, together with his 'scholarly engagement' on behalf of improving both the quality of life in the communities that he

studies and the quality of scholarly life within the discipline, place Dr. McKenna at the forefront of scholars in the critical anthropology of health, environmental justice, and education...”

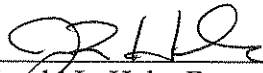
Reviewer C: “Over the years, he has demonstrated a level of intellectual courage and insight that have won him respect among his academic peers. . . . He has addressed an issue not tackled by many anthropologists, the relationship of the field to journalism. His work in this arena is particularly original and impressive.”

Reviewer D: “[His professional path] demonstrates high quality critical scholarship, practical relevance to sociopolitical problems and issues, and exceptional creativity and dedication that extends beyond academic into public arenas. It would be an honor and joy to have such a professional in any department as a colleague, researcher, and instructor.”

Reviewer E: “Taking the totality of his work into account, Dr. McKenna clearly has been making an important contribution to the fields [environmental health and anthropology of education]. ... It is obvious to me that Dr. McKenna is a fine researcher, an engaged scholar, and an innovative applied anthropologist who will be providing additional insights for the applied anthropology community in the coming years.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor McKenna is an excellent teacher and a superb scholar. The Department of Behavioral Sciences has rated him excellent in teaching, excellent in research, and significantly capable in service. His research is cutting edge and covers a wide breadth within anthropology and across discipline boundaries. His students and colleagues greatly value his teaching contributions both in the classroom and to the community at large not only to the department and college, but also to the metropolitan community. His substantial service contributions are unique and valuable not only to the university but especially to the field of anthropology. We are pleased to recommend Brian M. McKenna for promotion to associate professor of anthropology, 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

May 2012