

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

Stephanie D. Preston, assistant professor of psychology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2001	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	1998	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1994	University of Virginia

Professional Record:

2005 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan
2001 – 2005	Post-doctoral Fellow, University of Iowa College of Medicine

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Preston is an excellent teacher. She was hired to help lead the Decision Consortium and develop courses related to that program. She has broadened and increased the activity in the consortium, increased the number of enrolled graduate students, added an undergraduate course on decision making, and developed a novel course on emotion. Professor Preston has demonstrated a very thoughtful and rigorous approach to teaching graduate and undergraduate courses. Undergraduate students have a particularly high opinion of her as a teacher and research mentor. Graduate students also comment on her consistent and strong mentorship, which has helped them to produce excellent dissertations and publications.

Research – Professor Preston's research has focused on the interaction of cognition and emotion in decision making about helping others and what and when to acquire and store resources. She has combined theoretical insight with the development of new methodologies that allow her to rigorously test her behavioral hypotheses and determine the underlying neural mechanisms. She has formulated fertile theoretical models for these topics, and authored multiple theoretical reviews. She has published or has in press fifteen peer-reviewed publications, six book chapters, and two review/commentaries. Her publications have appeared in field specific and high impact journals. She also has a book under review and a second under contract. Professor Preston has acquired grant funding from a variety of sources, including the Templeton Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- “The empathic, physiological resonance of stress,” with T. W. Buchanan, et al., *Social Neuroscience*, 2011, pp. 1-11.
- “Investigating the mechanisms of hoarding from an experimental perspective,” with J. R. Muroff and S. M. Wengrovitz, *Depression and Anxiety*, 26, 2009, pp. 425-437.
- “The neural substrates of cognitive empathy,” with A. Bechara, et al., *Social Neuroscience*, 2, 2007, pp. 254-275.
- “Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases,” with F. B. M. de Waal, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 25, 2002, pp. 1-71.

Service – Professor Preston’s local and national service is of the highest caliber. Because of her cross-disciplinary interests, the quantity and diversity of her service is atypical for a faculty member at her rank. She has co-chaired the Decision Consortium, served on the steering committee for an interdisciplinary program in Evolution and Human Adaptation (EHAP), and is an active member of the Center for Culture and Neuroscience. She authored and hosted one of the first “Michigan Meetings” in 2010 on hoarding, bringing a diverse group of scientists to campus to interact with local researchers. She also arranged for public lectures on energy sustainability, a family-oriented Consumption Fair, and an ongoing website on consumption. A report of the meeting was published by the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, and an edited book is under contract that follows up on this topic. Professor Preston is a natural leader who is receiving wide recognition, including an invitation to be on the editorial board of a high impact journal.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...my first impression of Stephanie was of a broadminded, creative, integrator who is able to synthesize diverse perspectives and enrich understanding through triangulation. ... Stephanie is someone who has clearly emphasized quality over quantity. She certainly has a respectable number of publications and a good stream of on-going research...”

Reviewer (B)

“...she truly occupies an interdisciplinary ‘space’ in psychology from which she is able to examine a variety of interesting topics. ...when considering the full body of her recent work, I see a scholar [of her age group] who has an impressively high hit rate. ... I expect that she will continue to make major contributions for many years, and to become one of the best-known scholars in the field.”

Reviewer (C)

“The unique place Stephanie holds in behavioral science is by virtue of her ability to combine comparative approaches with work in human personality, social interaction and psychopathology, *each at their appropriate levels of complexity*. ...she is creative about it, gets funded, gets published and gets recognized for it. ... Essentially, she is in the process of creating a new field, and she will, but the time for true payoff will begin now and grow.”

Reviewer (D)

“Based on her research record, Preston would be promoted to associate professor with tenure in my department. The most basic factors that lead me to say this are her number of publications; the rate at which her publications are coming out (steadily, and with more in the pipeline); the fact that she is responsible for garnering one major grant and is a co-PI on another; and the fact that she is involving students in her work...”

Reviewer (E):

“Regardless of whether all of the facets of the Perception-Action Model ultimately prove to be accurate or not, the paper [in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*] has been extremely helpful and influential. It represents a contribution of great value... Many very successful academics never produce a paper that has the impact of Professor Preston’s 2002 paper on empathy.”

Reviewer (F)

“Dr. Preston is a rising star in cognitive and social neuroscience. Her research is strongly theory-driven as well as empirically rigorous and sophisticated. Her work addresses important and complex questions at the core of cognitive neuroscience research and is unusually broad and interdisciplinary... Dr. Preston does cutting-edge research and her work has the potential to revolutionize her field.”

Reviewer (G)

“Since being at Michigan, her academic output has been consistent... Her empirical contributions are solid in the domain of social-cognitive science...”

Reviewer (H)

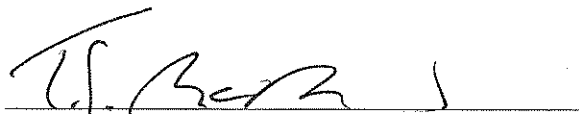
“...she has developed the Object Decision Task to examine acquisition and ownership of goods. ... This experimental work marks an important advance in our understanding of normal and disordered acquisition and provides a valuable research tool for future work in the area. ...Preston’s contribution to teaching and training at Michigan has been outstanding. ...I can attest that the 2010 Michigan meeting that she organized on the *Interdisciplinary Science of Consumption* brought together one of the most interesting, diverse, and intellectually stimulating group of speakers and participants that I have encountered in many years.”

Reviewer (I)

“I would place her work at the forefront of cross-disciplinary research on basic human emotion and behavior that is very central to the sustainability of human quality of life and sustainability in the current world. ...this is a solid record and shows a very promising trajectory of increasing collaborations, published products and funded grants. ... Dr. Preston’s record also indicates that she presents her work (and no doubt that of her students) nationally through regularly invited talks and at national conferences in her field.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Preston is doing path-breaking research in cognitive neuroscience. She is an excellent teacher and mentor, and has an important record of service. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Stephanie D. Preston be promoted to the rank of associate professor of psychology, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Terrence McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History, and Dean,
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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