

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

Sarah Buss, associate professor of philosophy, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of philosophy, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1989	Yale University
B.A.	1981	Yale University

Professional Record:

2007 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan
2007	Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Iowa
1999 – 2006	Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Iowa
1997 – 1999	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Iowa
1989 – 1997	Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Princeton University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Buss is an indispensable resource at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She has developed or resurrected courses that establish a much-appreciated upper-level undergraduate curriculum in post-Kantian philosophy. Since joining the faculty, she has directed or served on many undergraduate honors thesis committees. She is also a central advisor to graduate students, an official member of seven graduate committees, and a trusted advisor to many other graduate students.

Research – Professor Buss is a moral philosopher whose research explores the inter-related issues of autonomy, responsibility, agency, and normativity. She brings an original, powerful, distinctive, and fair philosophical vision to bear on the very frameworks philosophers are accustomed to deploy. Since coming to Michigan, Professor Buss has six articles published or forthcoming, all in top venues. She has two more substantial articles in the pipeline and another two in progress. Although inter-related, these ten pieces are pair-wise independent, and range widely across moral philosophy. The majority of them are considerably longer than the typical journal article in philosophy; all are densely argued.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“The possibility of action as the impossibility of certain forms of self-alienation,” *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility*, forthcoming.

“The value of humanity,” *Journal of Philosophy*, 109(5/6), 2012, pp. 1-39.

“Autonomous action: Self-determination in the passive mode,” *Ethics*, 122(4), 2012, pp. 647-691.

“Needs (someone else’s), projects (my own), and reasons,” *Journal of Philosophy*, 103(8), 2006, pp. 373-402.

Service – Professor Buss has compiled an impressive service record within the department and to the profession. She has served on important departmental committees and currently chairs the Undergraduate Studies committee. She discharges the delicate duties of departmental Ombudsman with sensitivity and tact. Professor Buss is also an associate editor of the journal *Ethics* (2008-present).

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“I strongly support Sarah Buss’s [sic] promotion to full professor. ...her published essays are of unusually high quality and...she is in high demand as a lecturer at the nation’s top philosophy departments. Her work is making a genuine and nationally recognized contribution to contemporary philosophical ethics and action theory. ... I regard her as one of the most interesting and insightful ethical theorists at work today.”

Reviewer (B)

“Buss’s [sic] work is highly impressive, and makes serious progress on several important, and related, fronts. ... I consider her to be one of the best moral philosophers in the world. She is highly perceptive, and has an excellent nose for what matters in philosophy. She is refreshingly unpartisan, and what she writes is *always* interesting, suggestive, and unpredictable.”

Reviewer (C)

“She has a remarkable combination of energy, humor, seriousness, feet-on-the[-]ground modesty, and concern and respect for others that must make her a virtually ideal teacher. I hope it is obvious that I think she is a superb philosopher and scholar.”

Reviewer (D)

“The articles recently published, under review, or currently in progress seem to me the most powerful of her work to date. ... I find her scholarly achievements extremely impressive and her research program outstanding. ... The work is fresh, insightful, powerful, and a pleasure to read. ... I am confident that the best is yet to come.”

Reviewer (E)

“Her research program on questions of autonomy and agency is indeed outstanding, and the two new pieces significantly strengthen and deepen this research program. Moreover, she has effectively broadened this program as well to include topics at the interface of agency and normativity. The new work on these topics is among the...best that is now being done anywhere by anyone. ...[Buss’ recent work] is not just good but truly great, work that doesn’t just contribute to the conversation, but alters and advances it in exciting ways.”

Reviewer (F)

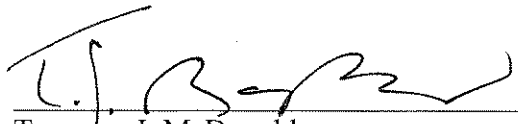
“...it has been a pleasure and a considerable benefit to me to pay attention to Sarah Buss’s [sic] work. ... It’s clear to me that Sarah is a philosopher whose philosophical input and influence extends well beyond her own published work and responses by others to it.”

Reviewer (G)

"...[Buss] is simply the philosopher's philosopher. ... her hallmark is not just smarts and careful argumentation. It is deep, deep probing philosophical thought. ... Sarah is a star in the philosophical world. Her work is most distinguished..."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Buss is an accomplished and original moral philosopher, an effective teacher who constantly works to expand her range, and an essential departmental citizen. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Sarah Buss be promoted to the rank of professor of philosophy, 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

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