

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

Melvin Stephens, Jr., associate professor of economics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and associate professor of public policy, without tenure, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, is recommended for promotion to professor of economics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of public policy, without tenure, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1998	University of Michigan
B.A.	1992	University of Maryland

Professional Record:

2009 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Economics, and Associate Professor (courtesy), Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan
2009 – present	Research Affiliate, Population Studies Center, and Faculty Associate, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan
2006 – 2009	Associate Professor, H. Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University
2000 – 2006	Assistant Professor, H. Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University
1998 – 2000	Post-doctoral Fellow, Population Studies Center, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Stephens is a successful teacher of undergraduate and graduate students. He has taught five different courses since his initial appointment in 2009 and received solid student evaluations. He has chaired or co-chaired three Ph.D. committees, served on seven others, and closely advised several other students, both undergraduate and graduate.

Research – Professor Stephens’ main research agendas have addressed labor market dynamics and consumption and asset accumulation, although he has made other significant contributions. He has compiled an impressive record of publishing in top economics journals. He has also received funding for his research from the National Institutes of Health and the Michigan Center on the Demography of Aging.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Compulsory education and the benefits of schooling,” with D.-Y. Yang, *American Economic Review*, forthcoming.

“Employment, wages, and voter turnout,” with K. Charles, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 5(4), 2013, pp. 111-143.

“The stability of measured time preferences,” with E. Krupka, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 85, 2013, pp. 11-19.

“The consumption response to seasonal income: Evidence from Japanese public pension benefits,” with T. Unayama, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 3(4), 2011, pp. 86-118.

Service – Professor Stephens has a strong service record. He has been a member of the Ph.D. Admissions Committee and was in charge of junior faculty recruiting for three academic years, 2010-2013. Within his profession, he served as referee for an impressive number of high-quality journals. Within the broader community, Professor Stephens served on the National Academy of Sciences Panel CNSTAT to assess future directions of the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CEX). This panel has had considerable impact on the direction of the CEX redesign.

#### External Reviewers:

##### Reviewer (A)

“I have long been a fan of Mel and his work. ... Mel has made a number of highly significant contributions in the Labor/Public Finance interface. ...[his] strong portfolio of applied papers makes the recommendation for promotion an easy one to make.”

##### Reviewer (B)

“Mel has an outstanding research record. ...[he] has published papers in the *American Economic Review*, *The Economic Journal*, two papers in the *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, four papers in the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, and several other papers in top field journals and general readership journals. He is generally regarded as the premier scholar [of his cohort] in household decision[-]making.”

##### Reviewer (C)

“These papers ought to be on any graduate course reading list in labor economics. ...his work on the response of consumption to income change show[s] a sustained research program that has established him as a leader on this fundamental topic in economics.”

##### Reviewer (D)

“Mel has established himself as one of the experts in the analysis of consumption... ...[his] work addresses issues at the heart of economic theory. At the same time, however, his empirical analyses tackle important policy issues such as consumption changes surrounding retirement and the arrival of Social Security checks - topics which are of growing importance as our population ages. These papers are well-crafted empirical analyses with a strong foundation in economic theory. They are well-known and have had an important impact on the profession.”

##### Reviewer (E)

“Mel’s strongest papers exemplify the best empirical work in economics. They contain careful measurement, clean identification, and thorough consideration of the theoretical and equilibrium issues at hand. Combined with a meticulous attention to detail, the papers convince, which is the highest praise. ...Mel is largely visible and having an impact nationally.”

##### Reviewer (F)

“I know he enjoys a strong reputation among applied economists, and his Google Scholar cites are certainly respectable (670 cites combined for his top-five cited papers). ...I expect an even

greater prominence in the profession. In sum, I am strongly in support of appointing Mel Stephens as full professor with tenure. I think Mel has tremendous ability...[and] a proven publication record..."

Reviewer (G)

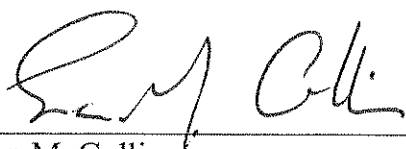
"...his achievements and trajectory make a strong case for promotion to the rank of (full) professor with tenure. ... The recently published papers on Japan show that Melvin remains on a strong trajectory. ... His work is well known in his fields, establishing him as one of the leading associate-level scholar[s] in those areas. His membership in the NBER and NAS Panel show that other senior researchers share this assessment."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Stephens has established a national reputation as a scholar in labor economics, while delivering well-received, rigorous classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The executive committees of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy and we recommend that Associate Professor Melvin Stephens, Jr. be promoted to the rank of professor of economics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of public policy, without tenure, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.



Susan A. Gelman  
Heinz Werner Distinguished University Professor,  
Professor of Psychology and Interim Dean,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts



Susan M. Collins  
Joan and Sanford Weill Dean of Public Policy  
Gerald R Ford School of Public Policy

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