

Approved by the
Regents
May 21, 2015

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

Kelly M. Askew, associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, and associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of anthropology, with tenure, and professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1997	Harvard University
M.A.	1992	Harvard University
B.A.	1988	Yale University

Professional Record:

2011 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
2008 – present	Director, African Studies Center, University of Michigan
2004 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
2004 – 2011	Associate Professor, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
1999 – 2004	Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology and Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
1997–1999	Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Indiana University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Askew is a serious and committed teacher of undergraduate and graduate students. She has chaired six and served as a member on 34 Ph.D. committees. Her classroom teaching has been wide ranging and includes ten different courses that range from large introductory courses in anthropology and Afroamerican and African studies to graduate seminars on media and African ethnology. Professor Askew has demonstrated her pedagogical commitment to the anthropology of expressive culture and to African studies by continuing to develop new courses, and by making her teaching more focused and thereby more accessible to her students.

Research – Professor Askew is a major figure in the study of socialism/post-socialism in Africa, the anthropology of performance and media, and in African studies with a particular focus on Swahili studies and East Africa. Her published work since promotion to associate professor includes six articles in peer-reviewed journals and seven book chapters. Professor Askew's articles on art and politics published in the mid-2000s analyze the prevalence of music and dance in political commentary at every level of Tanzanian society. Her more recent articles continue her interest in the post-socialist period in Tanzania and focus on land tenure and patron-client relations. These issues are portrayed in her film, The Chairman and the Lions, which examines legal conflicts over land in an Iparakuyo Maasai village in rural Tanzania. Her latest book manuscript, Postsocialist Poetics, is under contract with the University of Chicago Press. She has been the recipient of several distinguished grants and has a solid funding history.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Postsocialist Poetics: Articulating Politics in the United Republic of Tanzania, University of Chicago Press (under contract).

“Of land and legitimacy: A tale of two lawsuits,” with R. Odgaard and F. Maganga, *Africa*, 83(1), 1983, pp. 120-141.

“Musical images and imaginations: Tanzanian music videos,” in Media and Identity in Africa, K. Njogu and J. Middleton (eds.), Edinburgh University Press, 2009, pp. 208-217..

“Jack-of-all-arts or *ustadhi*? The poetics of cultural production in Tanzania,” In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissonance in Tanzania, G. Maddox and J. Giblin (eds.), Oxford: James Currey, 2005, pp. 304-327.

Service – Professor Askew has performed extraordinary service for the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, the Department of Anthropology, the African Studies Center, the visual and performing arts community, and for anthropological scholars and lay public alike. However, her primary service has been her inspired work for the African Studies Center, which she was asked to establish in 2008. As director, she has led the center in developing four exceptional initiatives and in hosting nine international conferences.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“Though she has such an unusually wide range of interests and talents, her work is all of a piece. She explores the aesthetic and political as a unified field... ..it is rare – perhaps even unprecedented in African anthropology – to combine musical, linguistic, and socio-political understanding at such a high level.”

Reviewer (B)

“...I am truly impressed by Kelly Askew’s academic performance: Honours and awards, grants and funding, her creative research as expressed in publications and films, her extraordinary capabilities as director of the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan, her committment [sic] towards her departments and colleagues, graduates/PhD candidates and students.”

Reviewer (C)

“What characterizes all this scholarly and practical work is a deep cultural understanding that only a long-term engagement with a country and a region can provide. The same strength has been instrumental to yet another aspect of Askew’s rich intellectual profile. It is her enthusiasm for film as a medium of scholarly work alongside her writing.”

Reviewer (D)

“Prof. Askew is counted among the leaders in the anthropology of Africa, and more generally the anthropology of media, music, and postsocialism. She is an impressive, ambitious, and well-respected scholar and intellectual leader.”

Reviewer (E)

“That she is a widely known and respected scholar is indicated by a variety of other involvements... She has received many grants for her own research, research jointly with colleagues, and for her institution... I find Dr. Askew’s scholarship a significant contribution to academia. ...my characterization of Dr. Askew’s scholarly record would be ‘very impressive.’”

Reviewer (F)

“...I think that Kelly is an outstanding scholar with a formidable range of accomplishments and contributions. For me, this admirable record is all the more remarkable given her impressive (and time-consuming) record of university and professional service, especially as the founding director of the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan, elected member of the African Studies Association, and Chair (and Vice-Chair and Past Chair) of the Association of African Studies Programs.”

Reviewer (G)

“Kelly Askew’s role in the study of Tanzania and Swahili culture as well as her achievements in her fields of expertise of nation-building, cultural politics, music and media as well as land rights are so outstanding that I had expected her to be a full professor long since.”

Reviewer (H)

“I would urge you to consider Dr. Askew as a pioneer in the scholarly world, as someone to be fully rewarded for the bold manner in which she has sought out international partnerships with Europeans, Americans, and Africans in her research, and equally in the way in which she has built the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan. She is a role model, and I plan to follow her lead in the way in which she has positioned the Africa Center on the model of intercontinental partnership.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Askew has played a key role in developing the African Studies Center while publishing across several disciplinary fields and teaching both large introductory courses and graduate seminars. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Kelly M. Askew be promoted to the rank of professor of anthropology, with tenure, and professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Andrew D. Martin
Dean, and Professor of Political Science
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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