

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Education

Approved by the
Regents
May 21, 2015

Donald Joseph Peurach, assistant professor of educational studies, School of Education, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of educational studies, with tenure, School of Education.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D. 2005 University of Michigan, Educational Foundations and Policy
M.P.P. 1987 University of Michigan, Educational Policy
B.A. 1983 Wayne State University, Computer Science, Detroit, MI

Professional Record:

2011 – present Assistant Professor, Educational Studies, School of Education, University of Michigan
2007 – 2011 Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, Michigan State University
2006 – 2007 Assistant Professor, Department of Leadership and Counseling, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University
2005 – 2006 Senior Research Area Specialist, School of Education, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Peurach is a skillful and reflective teacher who has provided crucial leadership, oversight, and instruction to the School of Education's redesigned master of arts program in educational leadership and policy. Since joining the University of Michigan in 2011, he has taught three separate courses (for a total of four sections) in that program: Analyzing School Organizations and the Policy Environment (one section), Instructional Leadership in Schools (two sections), and Research and Educational Practice (one section). Professor Peurach also has taught two sections of the doctoral course, Topics in Educational Leadership, and provided independent study courses for 18 students, most often to fill the need for a required course for the students' school administrator certification that was not available in the program at the time.

Professor Peurach's master's-level courses have scored well on student evaluations. Adjusted median scores for the question "Overall, this was an excellent course" ranged from 3.90 to 4.88, with only one course receiving a score below 4.00. Adjusted median scores for the question "Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher" ranged from 4.00 to 5.00, and scores for the question "I learned a great deal from this course" ranged from 4.25 to 4.88. These are highly respectable teaching scores, particularly in light of the fact that they include a required research methods course that historically is unpopular with students.

In his doctoral course, Professor Peurach demonstrated his ability to redesign a course from the first iteration to the second, adjusting it to students' needs and the realities of the program in which it is located. Student evaluation scores for the first iteration of the course were somewhat mixed, with the course receiving an adjusted median score of 3.25, the instructor receiving an

adjusted median score of 4.00, and a median score of 3.88 for students' self-reported learning (i.e., "I learned a great deal from this course"). In contrast, Professor Peurach's second iteration of this course in winter 2014 resulted in perfect scores of 5.00 for the course, the instructor, and students' self-reported learning, which is indicative of the success of Professor Peurach's redesign of this course.

Students report that Professor Peurach is generous with his time and effort, that his courses are intellectually stimulating, and that he provides careful scaffolding and strong support in his courses. His courses are thoughtfully designed and current with respect to research and topics. He skillfully supports student learning through the useful resources that he has developed for his courses, including a guide to reading primary sources, a guide for writing analytical memos, and a guide for structuring peer review conversations. Professor Peurach's students recognize and commend his commitment to, and high level of success in, his teaching.

In addition to his skillful teaching, Professor Peurach is a thoughtful and engaged mentor. He has served (or currently serves) as the chair or co-chair of two dissertations, as a member of eight other dissertation committees, and as the academic advisor for a total of 41 graduate students. This uncommonly large number of advisees reflects Professor Peurach's sizeable leadership role in both the pedagogy and the administration of the master's program in educational leadership and policy.

Research: Professor Peurach's research addresses the production, use, and management of knowledge in practice, with a particular focus on school improvement networks, which Professor Peurach defines as "novel educational systems in which a central 'hub' organization collaborates with large numbers of schools to enact a common, school-wide improvement model." Examples of school improvement networks include Success for All (Professor Peurach's primary focus), America's Choice, and Accelerated Schools. As Professor Peurach explains, such networks have become widespread in the past 25 years and have been the recipients of a substantial investment of public and private dollars, with the expansion and investment driven in part by widely held beliefs in the capacity of these organizations to quickly, efficiently, and successfully bring empirically-based educational practices to scale in large numbers of schools.

Using intensive case study methods, Professor Peurach's research seeks to understand the design, operation, management, and evolution of school improvement networks, to illuminate the process of generating and using knowledge within these organizations to improve educational practice, and to elaborate the relationships between the "hub" organizations and other actors in their environments, such as policymakers and funders. In addition to its clear and direct application to large-scale educational reform in the U.S., Professor Peurach's work also speaks strongly to the process of evaluating educational improvement, including erroneous assumptions about the linearity of educational improvement held by many funders of educational reform efforts.

Professor Peurach's work has resulted in two highly regarded peer-reviewed books (sole author on one and second author on the other). Both books were published by highly selective university presses (Oxford University and University of Chicago). Professor Peurach also has published five peer-reviewed journal articles (first author on four and second author on one).

Finally, Professor Peurach has disseminated his work in a number of other venues, including a chapter in an edited volume, an article in a practitioner-oriented journal, several technical reports, and two commentaries in popular news sources, among others.

Since arriving at the University of Michigan four years ago, Professor Peurach has secured a \$40,000 research grant from the Spencer Foundation for an evaluation of Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative, and a \$25,000 grant from the W. T. Grant Foundation for research on the i3 Learning Community. Earlier in his career, at Michigan State University, Professor Peurach was part of a team that secured a \$4.6 million grant for the operation of an educational leadership program.

Professor Peurach has been the recipient of two awards for his research. In 2011, his case study published in the *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership* was selected from a field of 17 such case studies for the Paula Silver Case Award for the most outstanding case published in the 2010 volume of the journal. In 2013, Professor Peurach was awarded the Evan G. and Helen G. Pattishall Junior Faculty Research Award from the University of Michigan School of Education.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Peurach, D. J., Glazer, J. L., & Lenhoff, S. W. (2014). The developmental evaluation of school improvement networks. *Educational Policy DOI: 1177/0895904814557592*.

Cohen, D. K., Peurach, D. J., Glazer, J. L., Gates, K., & Goldin, S. (2014). Improvement by design: The promise of better schools. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Glazer, J. L. & Peurach, D. P. (2013). School improvement networks as a strategy for large-scale education reform: The role of environments. *Educational Policy, 27*, 676-710.

Peurach, D. J. & Glazer, J. L. (2012). Reconsidering replication: New perspectives on large-scale school improvement. *Journal of Educational Change, 13*, 155-190.

Peurach, D. J. (2011). Seeing complexity in public education: Problems, possibilities, and Success for All. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

Service: Professor Peurach has provided exceptional, far-reaching, high-yield leadership and service to the School of Education's master's program in educational leadership and policy at a time when such leadership and service were sorely needed. At the point that Professor Peurach assumed leadership of this program, the School of Education's certification track for school administrators was on hold, requiring extensive redesign to meet the new requirements of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the national certifying body, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). Professor Peurach ably lead both processes, reviving and reconceptualizing the program according to national and state guidelines, providing curriculum leadership, co-chairing the search for a new clinical faculty position associated with the program, mentoring a new staff member in the program, and providing numerous independent study opportunities to students who were navigating the program in the midst of the redesign.

The result of Professor Peurach's work was MDE's reinstatement of the School of Education's certification authority for school administrators, full program recognition by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, the organization that succeeded TEAC as the national accrediting body), and program membership in the University Council for Educational

Administration (UCEA). Professor Peurach also coordinated the redesign of the program with the Ross School of Business as a part of a dual-degree (MA/MBA) program.

In addition to this key leadership in the master's program in educational leadership and policy, Professor Peurach continues to be responsible for (or collaborates with others in the responsibility of) recruiting and advising master's students in the program, creating internship opportunities for the school administrator certification program, and managing the school administrator certification process.

Beyond this unusually high level of service to his program, Professor Peurach has served the school and the university in a number of other capacities. He served on the school's Qualitative Research Methods Task Force, currently serves as a faculty affiliate of the university's Nonprofit and Public Management Center, and participated in an external program review of a new doctoral program at a peer institution on behalf of the Office of the Provost.

With respect to his professional and research communities, Professor Peurach has served as a member of the Annual Meeting Policies and Procedures Committee of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and as a section chair for AERA Division L (Educational Policy and Politics). He also has served as a plenary representative to the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), as an editorial board member of the journal *Educational Administration Quarterly*, and as a member of a peer review panel for a new grant program launched by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences. Recently, Professor Peurach was selected by the Council of Chief State School Officers to participate on a team charged with reviewing and revising national standards for educational leadership preparation and practice.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I find that Peurach's case for associate professor is strong and would warrant a tenured position in schools of education at leading institutions across the country. I recommend him for associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Michigan. Professor Peurach has been an excellent, productive scholar in important areas of school reform."

Reviewer B: "It is also challenging for me to come up with a reference group for him of pre-tenure or recently tenured individuals because I think of him and his work as being much further along. In my view, he is the undisputed leader of the new line of work that he is forging and is the most interesting researcher working on issues of scale in the country."

Reviewer C: "I know of no other researcher who has produced such in-depth work on school improvement networks/organizations, and the quality of his work is on par with his peers researching similar topics."

Reviewer D: "...I find him to be a thoughtful [junior] scholar who is on the cutting edge of scholarship and at the nexus of organizational analysis, policy, and practical school improvement."

Reviewer E: “At my institution, I expect that the clarity and depth of Dr. Peurach’s line of inquiry, the central importance of the problems of replication and knowledge-sharing he engages, and the sustained effort to explore practical as well as theoretical implications of the work would all make this a favorable case for tenure.”

Reviewer F: “*Seeing Complexity* is one of the best books I have read in recent years...In fact, as much as this can ever be said for an academic book, I found the narrative gripping.”

Reviewer G: “Dr. Peurach is one of the few scholars to understand and address the issue of networks in school improvement. His work here is very impressive and brings an important but under visualized figure to the school reform world. His historical analysis of scaling up reform is quite rare in the field. By following this pathway, Professor Peurach is able to see essential threads that too often remain hidden in the reform tapestry. Complexities are surfaced and made understandable. The overarching and nuanced share ground quite nicely in his work.”

Reviewer H: “I believe that his research on school reform networks is a substantial and important contribution to the field, and that his service to the field on practice-focused improvement research is worthy of the University of Michigan’s support.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Peurach is a leading and productive scholar who has developed a line of research that is of great value to educational reform in the U.S., that is recognized and respected by senior scholars in the field, and that forms a coherent whole in conjunction with his teaching and service. Furthermore, Professor Peurach has demonstrated excellence in his teaching and mentorship of graduate students, has provided critical service and leadership in the School of Education, and has worked tirelessly to expand and improve the master’s program in educational leadership and policy. It is with the support of the School of Education’s Executive Committee and Promotion and Tenure Committee that I recommend Donald Peurach for promotion to associate professor of educational studies, with tenure, School of Education.



Deborah Loewenberg Ball
William H. Payne Collegiate Professor of Education,
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, and Dean
School of Education

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