

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan-Dearborn
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Brenda R. Whitehead, assistant professor of psychology, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2013	University of Notre Dame, Developmental Psychology, South Bend, IN
M.S.	2011	University of Notre Dame, Developmental Psychology, South Bend, IN
B.S.	2008	Northwest Nazarene University, Psychology, Nampa, ID

Professional Record:

2013 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences, University of Michigan-Dearborn
2008 – 2013	Research Assistant, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Whitehead is rated excellent in teaching. She has taught a variety of classes including a large introductory class (PSYC 101), an upper level class focused on aging (PSYC 412), as well as an intensive lab class (PSYC 415) that fulfills a core requirement for majors. Her student evaluations are very positive with her overall instructor rating ranging from 3.90 to 4.78 (average = 4.37), and overall course ratings ranging from 3.57 to 4.56 (average = 4.12). She incorporates interesting and innovative activities throughout the curriculum, encourages student engagement through class discussion and reflection activities, and is very well respected by students. Professor Whitehead is dedicated to involving students in research. Since joining the university in 2013, she has supervised two independent study projects, served on two-master's thesis committees, and involved more than fifteen students in her research. Her students have been the lead authors on five posters presented at local and regional conferences.

Research: Professor Whitehead is rated excellent in her research. Professor Whitehead has continued to collaborate with colleagues from the University of Notre Dame and has developed an independent program of research at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Her research focuses on health and well-being for older adults, emphasizing the impact of stress and coping in later life, factors that influence well-being and the development of depressive symptomatology, ways to promote healthy behavior, as well as factors that are associated with functional decline in older adults. Professor Whitehead quickly worked to establish an independent research program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn using both start-up funds, as well as \$14,800 she received from Step 2 Grant for Faculty Research. Specifically, she has developed and implemented the multiphase five-year longitudinal Think Healthy, Live Healthy study which considers how various psychosocial factors influence health-related behaviors and health outcomes within the context of aging. Since coming to the University of Michigan-Dearborn,

Professor Whitehead has published seven journal articles, has one paper under review, and several in preparation. The quality of these papers is exceptional and all were published in highly rated journals. Although she has continued to collaborate with her dissertation advisor to complete ongoing projects utilizing a large longitudinal dataset, she has been able to develop a methodologically sophisticated and rigorous program of research at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and has also established several promising new collaborations.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- Whitehead, B.R. (2017). Investigating the function spiral in later life: Aging attitudes, physical activity, and gait. *Journal of Health Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Whitehead, B.R., & Blaxton, J.M. (2017). Daily well-being benefits of physical activity in older adults: Does time or type matter? *The Gerontologist*. Advance online publication.
- Whitehead, B.R., & Bergeman, C.S. (2016). Affective health bias in older adults: Considering positive and negative affect in a general health context. *Social Science & Medicine*, 165, 28-35.
- Whitehead, B.R. (2016). Health behaviors in older adults: Considering age, affect, and attitudes. *Journal of Health Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Whitehead, B.R., & Bergeman, C.S. (advance online publication 2015; in print 2017). The effect of the financial crisis on physical health: Perceived impact matters. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 22, 864-873.
- Blaxton, J.M., Bergeman, C.S., Whitehead, B.R., Braun, M.E., & Payne, J.D. (2015). Relationships among nightly sleep quality, daily stress, and daily affect. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*. Advance online publication.

Service: Professor Whitehead is rated excellent in her service. Professor Whitehead is a valued member of the discipline, department and the university. Within psychology, she regularly participates in discipline committees and assists with Lecturers' Employee Organization reviews and assembling program review materials. She has represented the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters at Faculty Senate since 2015 and in this role regularly attends not only faculty senate meetings, but also CASL Executive Committee and Behavioral Sciences Executive Committee meetings. Professor Whitehead is also involved in community outreach, consulting with local agencies, giving talks about healthy aging, and participating in the local Meals on Wheels program. Professor Whitehead is also involved in service to the profession, regularly reviewing manuscripts for a number of journals.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "The high quality of her articles, her lead author status, and the number of publications given her time as an assistant professor with a high course load are noteworthy."

Reviewer B: "Importantly, her work is theoretically driven and methodologically sophisticated, which results in her being able to publish her work in the top tier journals. The two publications I consider to be outstanding are the Whitehead & Bergeman (2014) ... and her more recent article, Whitehead (2017) ... The first is an innovative study that definitely tested the effects of age on intra-individual variability on global well-being, and the second is a theoretically grounded initial study that could provide the impetus for future important intervention work."


Reviewer C: "I consider Dr. Whitehead's publications to be among the most interesting and thought provoking papers in her area right now. Dr. Whitehead is clearly making her mark on the field and I have no doubt that she belongs to the very select group of [junior] scholars that will challenge our current thinking and take aging research to the next level."

Reviewer D: "I am favorably impressed with the quality and quantity of her scholarly work, given the teaching commitment of three courses per semester. I consider her 2016 Social Science & Medicine paper as well as her earlier papers in Journals of Gerontology to be outstanding."

Reviewer E: "She has published in several first tier journals, and my own reading of her work has left me particularly impressed with her writing, and with the innovative ways that she has approached important problems."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Whitehead is an innovative and rigorous researcher who is on track to make very significant contributions in the field of healthy aging. She is an excellent teacher and mentor to our undergraduate and graduate students, as well as an engaged member of our discipline, college, university and community who contributes both with internal and external service. We are pleased to recommend, with strong support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee, Brenda R. Whitehead for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



Martin J. Herschock, Dean
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



Daniel Little, Chancellor
University of Michigan-Dearborn

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