

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

Rona Carter, assistant professor of psychology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2009	Florida International University
M.S.	2005	Florida International University
B.A.	2001	Florida International University
A.A.	1999	Miami Dade Community College

Professional Record:

2015 – present	Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan
2012 – present	Affiliate Faculty, Combined Program in Education and Psychology, University of Michigan
2011 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan
2011 – present	Affiliate Faculty, Center for the Study of Black Youth in Context, University of Michigan
2009 – 2011	Post-doctoral Training, Department of Psychology and Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Carter has made important contributions to the teaching mission of the Department of Psychology. In her first semester, she taught the large developmental psychology gateway course (Psych 250) that fulfills a key requirement of the major. She regularly teaches The Detroit Initiative, which is a service learning course that assigns students to a weekly internship with a community organization in Detroit where they can experience hands-on learning. Professor Carter also regularly teaches an advanced undergraduate seminar, “Puberty and Early Adolescence,” and a graduate seminar, “Gender and Development.” These smaller seminars have consistently received strong student ratings. Professor Carter has mentored many undergraduate and graduate students in her research laboratory, and many of these students are co-authors on publications and have written letters commending her mentorship.

Research – Professor Carter’s research examines the important role that pubertal timing can play in the well-being of adolescents. Girls who develop earlier than their peers and who have a more adult-like appearance at a younger age tend to engage in riskier behavior and experience more mental health problems than girls who develop later. The vast majority of research previously focused on White adolescents. Professor Carter is one of the only scientists in the world to investigate this issue in ethnic minority youth, and her research has led to important findings. She showed that early external changes that were visible to others (breast development) are a better predictor of negative outcomes than early internal changes (menarche). Consistent with the role of external appearances, Professor Carter also reported that teachers had lower

expectations for early developing girls compared with on-time developing girls, and they had even lower expectations for early developing Black girls than White girls. She demonstrated that Black girls who are more aware of racial and ethnic discrimination as well as negative stereotypes are actually better able to cope with early pubertal development and experience fewer negative outcomes. She also found that Black girls whose friends were mostly Black experience fewer negative outcomes from pubertal timing than did Black girls whose friends were mostly White. One possible explanation is that Black girls generally tend to develop earlier than White girls, and developing early is seen as more normal. The work has been honored by an Early Career Award from the American Psychological Association.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Teachers’ academic and behavioral expectations and girls’ pubertal development: Does the classroom learning environment matter?” with F. Mustafaa, et al., *Social Psychology of Education*, 2018, pp. 1-28, doi: 10.1007/s11218-018-9450-1.

“Racial identity in the context of pubertal development: Implications for adjustment,” with E. Seaton and D. Rivas-Drake, *Developmental Psychology*, 53, 2017, pp. 2170 – 2181, doi: 10.1037/dev0000413.

“Ethnicity, perceived pubertal timing, externalizing behaviors, and depressive symptoms among Black adolescent girls,” with H. C. Caldwell, et al., *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40, 2011, pp. 1394 – 1406, doi: 10.1007/s10964-010-9611-9 17.

“Pubertal timing and its link to behavioral and emotional problems among ‘at-risk’ African American adolescent girls,” with J. Jaccard, et al., *Journal of Adolescence*, 32, 2009, pp. 467 – 481, doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.07.005.

Service – Professor Carter has served the Department of Psychology and the broader research field, locally and nationally. In the Combined Program in Education and Psychology (CPEP), she serves on the Executive Committee and chaired its Diversity Committee. She has served on the departmental Student Academic Affairs Committee, the Diversity Committee, and chaired the Social Committee in the Developmental Area. Nationally, she was invited to serve on two important and prestigious working groups: The Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) Puberty Workgroup, and the National Science Foundation (NSF) Workgroup on Puberty, Race, and Identity. She also serves on the editorial board of *New Ideas in Psychology*.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Dr. Carter sets herself apart from many other scholars through the sophistication of her theoretical and empirical models, and her use of multiple types of datasets and methods to understanding intersecting developmental processes in diverse samples of youth, from secondary analysis of large publically available secondary datasets to intensive mixed-method primary data collections of her own design.”

Reviewer (B)

“...she has a competitive number of publications [which] one would expect at a major research institution, and...her research is of the highest quality. ... I believe her work will become highly cited and go on to significantly impact and shape the field.”

Reviewer (C)

“By focusing on issues associated with on- and off-time puberty, identity development, and contextual experiences in African American populations, Dr. Carter is pushing the field to understand the ‘how’ and ‘when’ of these correlates of development. This focus is especially important with research on racial and ethnic minority populations as the larger research field has only recently begun to examine the successes of persons of color along with their challenges.”

Reviewer (D)

“...this might be seen as a flurry of activity right before going up for promotion but in Dr. Carter’s case, my sense is that this reflects the process of developing her conceptual framework and progressively developing projects to test this framework. The likelihood that her productivity will continue is supported by a large number of additional manuscripts under review and others in preparation.”

Reviewer (E)

“I can say quite confidently that Dr. Carter is going to be a star in the field of puberty research (some may argue she already is one among psychologists) and she is literally one of the only, if not only, major player [sic] who also happens to be a scholar of color. This latter point is relevant as it reflects the ways in which she approaches her understanding of pubertal development in youth of color.”

Reviewer (F)

“...Dr. Carter compared the pubertal development of African American and Caribbean American girls, an important contribution to developmental research that typically homogenizes racial groups. As the United States becomes increasingly diverse, the importance of contextual influences on youth development will become even more pressing and timely. ...her research program sits at the cutting edge of scholarly research and contemporary societal discourse.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Carter’s research on the effects of puberty and pubertal timing on social relationships, identity, and adjustment is set apart by its focus on issues related to race. She has made important teaching contributions and she has a solid service record. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Rona Carter be promoted to the rank of associate professor of psychology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Elizabeth R. Cole, Interim Dean
Professor of Women’s Studies, Psychology,
and Afroamerican and African Studies
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2019