

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
School of Social Work

Katherine E. Richards-Schuster, assistant professor of social work, School of Social Work, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2005	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
A.M.	1997	University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
B.A.	1987	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Professional Record:

2013-Present	Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
2009-2012	Lecturer, Community Organization, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
2007-2012	Assistant Research Scientist, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
2005-2007	Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Michigan Youth and Community Program, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Summary of Evaluation

Teaching: Professor Richards-Schuster is a top teacher and curriculum leader at Michigan Social Work. Over her career, she has taught MSW and undergraduate courses in community practice and social justice. Since 2013, she has focused her teaching and curriculum leadership on undergraduate education, in the undergraduate minor that she designed, Community Action and Social Change (CASC).

She has earned superlative teaching evaluations from her students, who come from more than 50 different undergraduate majors on campus. Her courses and herself as an instructor are rated as overall "Excellent." Not surprisingly, students report that they learn a great deal from her courses (4.42-5.0 on the 5-point scale for her solo-taught courses). Professor Richards-Schuster is an innovative instructor. She participated in the creation of the social work micromasters and is a strong mentor for undergraduate and graduate students. She has participated in eight dissertation committees.

Professor Richards-Schuster's unique and outstanding teaching contribution has been her leadership role, vision, and creativity in the conceptualization and implementation of the CASC minor. In conceiving the minor, Professor Richards-Schuster wove her scholarship into the program. She used her research findings on youth civic participation and empowerment to build an outstanding minor. In the CASC minor, students from over 50 majors across campus engage in learning experiences that enhance their civic participation now and in the future. They identify their core civic values.

Research: Professor Richards-Schuster's research area is community organization, a specialty within social work that focuses on empowerment of people in communities as a force for social change.

Within community organization, her area of scholarly focus is youth civic engagement, a topic that focuses on youth participation in community change. Professor Richards-Schuster's scholarship is rooted on concepts of social justice, and is focused on marginalized youth from oppressed populations including low income youth and youth who are under-served and under-represented in American secondary and higher education. Since receiving her PhD, Professor Richards-Schuster has published 29 peer reviewed journal articles (17 since she became an assistant professor on 2013), 13 book chapters (5 since 2013), and she has served as a co-editor for special issues for *The Journal of Community Practice*, and the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*.

Professor Richards-Schuster's research is based on community-based-participatory research methods. Thus, the voice of youth and their participation is part of the research process. This method embodies the values that Professor Richards-Schuster articulates in her personal statement and implements in her research studies -- partnership in the research process, the importance of collaboration, and a "subject" voice in the research agenda. This has led to a body of research that is highly original and has been very influential in the fields of community organizing and youth development. In 2003, Professor Richards-Schuster wrote one of the first articles in this then-new line of inquiry, "Youth Participation in Community Research and Participation."

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

- Richards-Schuster, K. & Timmermans, B. (2017) Conceptualizing the Role of Adults in Youth Social Justice Work: An Example from Practice. *Children & Youth Service Review*, 81, 284-292.
- Richards-Schuster, K. & Pritzker, S. (2015) Strengthening Youth Participation in Civic Engagement: Applying the Convention on the Rights of the Child to Social Work Practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 50, 90-97.
- Richards-Schuster, K. & Dobbie, D. (2011) Tagging Walls and Planting Seeds: Creating Spaces for Civic Action. *Journal of Community Practice*. 19, 3, 234-251.
- Richards-Schuster, K. & Aldana, A.\* (2013). Learning to Speak Out about Racism: Youth's Insights on Participation in an Intergroup Dialogue Program. *Social Work with Groups*. 36, 4, 332-348.
- Richards-Schuster, K., Ruffolo, M., Nicoll, K.\*, Disletrath, C.\*, Galura, J. (2014) Using e-Portfolios to Assess Program Goals, Integrative Learning and Civic Engagement: A Case Example. *International Journal of e-Portfolio*, 4, 2, 133-141.
- Richards-Schuster, K., Ruffolo, M., Nicoll, K.\* (2015). Integrated Social Work and Social Justice into Undergraduate Education: Exploring Lessons Learned from the Community Action Social Change (CASC) Multidisciplinary Minor. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 51, 2, 329-342.

Service: Professor Richards-Schuster is a strong citizen and contributor to her communities. She serves on several leadership committees at the school and she chairs a CASC advisory committee. She is a citizen of the university and serves on the Council for Engaged Civic Education to connect the university and Detroit, the UM Office of Development's Dobson Summer Internship Program, and the president's Citizen Alum Task Force to promote civically engaged alumni. Professor Richards-Schuster is on the faculty advisory boards for the Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning, and the University Musical Society.

Because her scholarship, teaching and service are so deeply integrated, Professor Richards-Schuster has already served the profession in significant leadership roles. She consulted for the National

Youth Volunteer Corps and the Regional Youth Leadership Series. She chairs the Youth Focused Evaluation Topical Interest Group within the American Evaluation Association. She leads youth civic engagement, empowerment, and youth voice special interest groups for the Society for Social Work Research. She has built a network of scholars aimed at strengthening youth participation in social work practice and research. She is also on editorial boards and is a journal and book reviewer.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “In terms of scholarship, Professor Richards-Schuster has been quite productive. ... This is significant publication output, particularly given her administrative responsibilities as Director of Undergraduate Minor Programs. Her body of work also shows substantial coherence, focussing [sic] on the ideas behind and the approaches to promoting youth civic engagement and its relationship to social work practice and education.”

Reviewer B: “Overall, this is a very strong academic portfolio. I believe she meets and exceeds all the relevant criteria for promotion and tenure as articulated in the University of Michigan guidelines.”

Reviewer C: “She clearly has met the requirements for promotion and tenure at the Associate Professor level.”

Reviewer D: “I find that Richards-Schuster’s work resonates with the best of social work history and the passion, vision, and values reflected in social work’s roots in community engagement and praxis-based education. Richards-Schuster argues that social work still holds promise of reinvigorating its social justice roots through education that focuses on radical practice, critical reflection, participatory engagement and structural analysis. She clearly demonstrates the power of this promise in her scholarship, practice, pedagogy, and service.”

Reviewer E: “...confident that Dr. Katherine Richards-Schuster’s work would meet the requirements for promotion and tenure in the Social Sciences Divisional Committee.”

Reviewer F: “...has no doubt that Dr. Richards-Schuster would receive full support for tenure and promotion from the School of Social Work. She also would likely receive support from the faculty committees in the College of Public Health (where the School of Social Work is situated) and at the university review level.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Richards-Schuster’s generative research on youth civic participation, its thoughtful and deep integration with her teaching and advocacy work, her extraordinary teaching skills and leadership, and her leadership and service to the school, the university and to the profession will provide value and positive reputation for the profession of social work, Michigan Social Work, and the University of Michigan into the future. I am pleased to recommend Katherine E. Richards-Schuster for promotion to associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.



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Lynn Videka  
Dean, School of Social Work  
May 2019