

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Courtney K. Snyder, assistant professor of music, Department of Conducting, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of music, with tenure, Department of Conducting, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

D.M.A.	2011	University of Michigan, Conducting, Ann Arbor, MI
M.M.	2000	Baylor University, Conducting, Waco, TX
B.S.	1997	Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Music Education, Indiana, PA

Professional Record:

2014 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Conducting, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, University of Michigan
2009 – 2014	Assistant Professor, Department of Music, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Omaha, NE

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Snyder leads one of the large instrumental ensembles and teaches conducting, both being required courses in the curriculum. She is a dedicated pedagogue in one of the most challenging jobs at SMTD. Among her signal accomplishments as a teacher is an invitation for her ensemble—SMTD’s Concert Band—to perform at the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) North-Central Division Conference in February 2018. Such cherished invitations are competitive, rare, and are won only through a peer-reviewed, blind-evaluation of recordings as measured against the best collegiate bands at music schools throughout the Midwest and North-Central United States. What also makes her teaching achievements so remarkable is that Professor Snyder does not lead one of SMTD’s elite ensembles, but rather its entry-level band or “second band.” It is a particular challenge to inspire students assigned in Concert Band who, following auditions each term, represent a mixture of less experienced freshmen and students who are either not competitive relative to their elite peers, or are students who are focusing on their studies in demanding disciplines outside of instrumental performance. Professor Snyder thus faces the challenge of fostering artistic excellence and inspiring student growth with a population of students who arrive in her class without the tailwind of confidence provided by a superior audition; within this student population, Professor Snyder has been very successful. Student letters of support routinely praise Professor Snyder’s skills as a conductor and her organizational effectiveness as a leader. Professor Snyder is regarded for her innovative use of technology—notably the Coach’s Eye App—as a tool for teaching conducting. She uses video analysis to encourage deeper understanding of the communicative power and pitfalls of gesture. One of Professor Snyder’s former graduate conducting student (who now teaches in the public schools) observed that, “she has helped inspire my love for conducting and score study as well as given me the tools to incorporate it into my teaching.” Finally, Professor Snyder is also uniquely dedicated to inclusive pedagogy among SMTD’s conducting faculty. She is a champion of women artists generally, and often features women composers on her concerts. About one quarter of the works

she performs in concert have been written by women composers and composers of color. This level of diversity remains pioneering in the field of large ensemble music performance across bands and orchestras. Her work here is significant.

Professional Activities: In addition to Professor Snyder's invitation to be featured at the CBDNA conference, she was awarded second place in the College/University Band Division of the 2018 American Prize in Conducting. Professor Snyder has been invited to conduct for other educational institutions and ensembles, including high school honors bands in Michigan, New York, and South Dakota, as well as at the Universities of Delaware, Georgia, Louisville, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Texas, among others. Professor Snyder has worked to increase diversity in the band repertory through commissioning, performing, and presenting at professional conferences. Through grants, fundraising, and consortia, she has commissioned six new works for band. Of these six, five were written by composers of color and three are by women. She also organized the first band composition competition for women composers, which in turn resulted in identifying and celebrating new music for younger ensembles written by women. Lastly, in a field that prefers performance over publication, Professor Snyder has published six articles and one book chapter, in highly respected, top rated journals, such as *Music Educators Journal*, *CBDNA Journal* (in press), and the *Association of Concert Bands Journal*.

Service: Professor Snyder is a dedicated contributor to faculty governance at the School of Music, Theatre & Dance. She has served on five staff and faculty search committees, and as a representative to our undergraduate curriculum committee (the Council of Departmental Representatives). She has also served on the Advisory Committee to revise our Bachelors of Musical Arts degree. She has twice served in the demanding and critical role of artistic director of SMTD's annual Collage Concert, and she currently serves as an elected member of the SMTD's Alumni Board of Governors. For the university as a whole, Professor Snyder has conducted the Commencement Band each spring for the university's Big House Ceremony, as well as those of the Engineering and Business schools, and the Psychology Department. In the Fall 2018, she began a three-year term as the SMTD faculty representative of the Faculty Senate Assembly. Among Professor Snyder's professional goals has been to build a strong community of women conductors. She serves on the editorial board of *The Women Conductor Journal* and was elected president of the Women Band Directors International Association in 2017, serving for two years as president-elect and now as president.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "She mentions her diversity in programming, and certainly to her credit the programming has been inclusive."

Reviewer B: "...the depth and breadth of her activity is very substantial for someone in this position and is particularly impressive for someone at this rank. Her diverse research interests are all unique and highly relevant to our profession. Her creativity and keen awareness in support of gender and cultural diversity in programming was evidenced at panel presentations."

Reviewer C: "The quality, integrity and sincerity of her every effort is admired and respected by her colleagues around the country. She has proven herself to be an important leader in our

profession. Her ideals, musicianship, curiosity, and passion serve as an inspiration and model for her students, colleagues and the University community.”

Reviewer D: “Amongst her most outstanding accomplishments would be setting of highest standards for the ‘second/lower’ group. These ensembles are notoriously hard to inspire and direct. It is clear from the quality of performances [sic] and the student emails included in her materials that Dr. Snyder is able to inspire these students to a high-not secondary-level.”

Reviewer E: “Her scholarly productivity and performance accomplishments are quite strong, and she continues to develop an excellent reputation, regionally and nationally, as a conductor, teacher, and advocate.”

Reviewer F: “Her scholarly work is impressive, especially in the area of diversity, gesture, and conducting health. She is very active and a leader in the women band director’s movement. Courtney’s teaching record is excellent and I’m sure her student's appreciate her commitment to them and the classroom.”

Reviewer G: “Her service contributions to our discipline are equally impressive. CBDNA committee work and her appointment as President-Elect of the Women Band Directors International Association are obvious and notable examples, but her continued work in commissioning and inspiring others to program diverse works with college and high school student ensembles is vital.”

Reviewer H: “Dr. Snyder’s pedagogical approach to her courses is meticulously thought out and innovative...Dr. Snyder seems able to think ‘outside the box’ in creative pedagogical ways. She clearly takes great pains to be explicit with her expectations and to create a comfortable learning environment for her students.”

Summary of Recommendation:

With the support of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance Executive Committee, it is a great pleasure to recommend Courtney K. Snyder for promotion to associate professor of music, with tenure, Department of Conducting, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



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David Gier  
Paul Boylan Collegiate Professor of Music  
and Dean, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

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