

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan-Flint  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Biology

Jill Witt, assistant professor of biology, Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of biology, with tenure, Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2010	Michigan Technological University, Forest Science, Houghton MI
M.S.	2006	Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI
B.S.	1995	Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Professional Record:

2013-Present	Assistant Professor of Biology, University of Michigan-Flint, Flint, Michigan
2013	Lecturer, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan
2010-2012	Senior Wildlife Biologist, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Manistee, MI

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Since her arrival in the fall of 2013, Professor Witt has taught six different courses including the introductory lecture and lab for BIO 113, "Principles of Biology," as well as new upper division courses in Forest Ecology and Forest Vegetation. Additionally, Professor Witt has taught three different graduate courses, including "Special Topics in Organismal Biology," "Special Topics in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology" and "Scientific Methodology." It is also noteworthy that Professor Witt has taught a course in "Forest Ecosystems" for the University of Michigan's Biological Station in Pellston, Michigan. To this diverse set of courses, Professor Witt applies her pedagogical principles of utilizing multiple learning strategies both in and outside of the classroom in a dynamic and interactive fashion. Professor Witt's approach to teaching has outstanding student learning outcomes as evidenced by her course evaluations. The averages for the questions "Overall, this was an excellent course," "Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher," and "I learned a great deal in this course," and were 4.44, 4.61, and 4.48, respectively. Students often commented on how knowledgeable, passionate and enthusiastic Professor Witt was in her teaching, and that she was always willing to help. The peer evaluations of her teaching reiterate her superb command of the material, the clear structure and organization of lectures, and her positive engagement with her students in class. In addition to her teaching effectiveness in lectures and laboratories, she has made substantive contributions in the areas of curricular reform at all levels, ranging from her own course revisions in light of course evaluations, to program revisions at both the introductory and graduate levels. Professor Witt has also been fully engaged with the department's assessment of student learning and has provided career advising for students in the Wildlife Biology track. Professor Witt has provided research opportunities for fourteen undergraduate students, supervised three graduate theses, and has served on three additional graduate thesis committees.

Research: Professor Witt is a forest and wildlife ecologist whose cross-disciplinary research utilizes noninvasive field methods to collect data on wildlife populations. Her research has studied the re-introduction of the American Marten in northern Michigan using hair snares and genetic analysis to measure its geographic distribution. Professor Witt has also utilized this field methodology to launch a new study focused on the bioaccumulation of Mercury in American Martens. A second line of research which also incorporates noninvasive methods, efficiently estimates the impacts of browsing deer by analyzing scars on saplings thereby representing an important contribution to wildlife management. Professor Witt's research since her arrival at the University of Michigan-Flint has resulted in five peer reviewed publications.

The most recent is forthcoming in *the Journal of Wildlife Diseases* where Professor Witt is the first author. Professor Witt has also presented the results of her scholarship at the annual conference of the Wildlife Society.

Recent and Significant Scholarly Activity:

- Spriggs, MC, RW Gerhold, RP Wilkes, P Keenlance, RL Sanders, JC Witt, E Clark, and D Miller. 2018. "Serosurvey, hematology, and causes of mortality of free-ranging American martens (*Martes americana*) in Michigan." *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine*. 49(2):371-383
- Waller, DM, S Johnson, and JC Witt. 2017. "A new rapid and efficient method that uses twig ages to estimate deer browse impacts." *Forest Ecology and Management*. 404(15):361-369.
- Spriggs, MC, LI Muller, P Keenlance, RL Sanders, JC Witt, and DL Miller. 2017. "Effects of live-trapping and isoflurane anesthesia on free-ranging American martens." *Journal of Wildlife Disease*. 53(3):447-458.

Service: Professor Witt has established a strong record of service to her department, college, university and local and professional communities. For her department, Professor Witt has served as a co-chair for a tenure-track position in Cellular Biology and was a member of the search committee for a tenure-track position in Organismal Biology. Professor Witt also has served her department by being a member of both the Graduate and the Wildlife Biology Program Committees. Furthermore, Professor Witt has represented her department in recruitment events and the college's Honors Recognition Ceremony. For the College of Arts and Sciences, Professor Witt has served on the Murchie Science Building Addition Committee, the College Appeals Panel Committee and has also been an external committee member for two tenure-track searches in Mechanical Engineering. At the university level, she serves on the Graduate Board and the Campus Parking and Traffic Advisory Committee. She has also served on the university's Nominating Committee. As a wildlife ecologist, Professor Witt has served her local community by volunteering at For-Mar Nature Preserve to conduct a forest inventory and to host workshops on wildlife cameras and tree identification/forest measurements. Professor Witt has also been a consultant to the Genesee Conservation District Board of Directors. For her professional community, Professor Witt has served as a peer reviewer for the *Journal of Wildlife Management* and the *Journal of Forestry*, as well as a proposal reviewer for the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "But more pertinent to this tenure application is that together they show proof of a focused research program that likely will continue expanding as evinced by the current submitted manuscript under this same topic."

Reviewer (B): "Dr. Witt's papers are excellent – well-written, comprehensive, of interest to a broader audience and statistically advanced. The end result is uniformly strong manuscripts reporting novel results on topics of interest to conservation biologists, land managers and veterinary medicine and biology."

Reviewer (C): "Her articles are in well-established and respected journals that are regularly cited by other researchers in the field."

Reviewer (D): "All of the studies appear to be of good quality, each making a useful contribution to our overall understanding of the biology of these organisms."

Reviewer (E): "Dr. Witt produced most of her recent publications focusing on the American Marten (*Martes americana*), but her most outstanding publication within the last few years addressed identifying browse impacts by whitetailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)."

Reviewer (F): “The publications are rigorous and contribute to understanding factors affecting marten survival and mortality, and a novel method to assess deer browsing.”

Reviewer (G): “She has contributed greatly to the knowledge about forest ecosystems and especially about many aspects of American marten biology and ecology... She is making a real contribution to forest ecology, especially in the Great Lakes Area.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Witt is a forest and wildlife ecologist whose cross-disciplinary research utilizes noninvasive field methods to collect data on wildlife populations. Her scholarly activity in this area has resulted in five peer reviewed journal publications. As an educator who believes in utilizing multiple learning strategies both in and outside of the classroom in a dynamic and interactive fashion, Professor Witt has a strong record of teaching effectiveness as evidenced by her student evaluations, peer evaluations, commitment to curricular development and assessment, and undergraduate research. Professor Witt has demonstrated the requisite excellence in teaching, scholarly achievement and recognition, and service to her community, university and department. I recommend Jill Witt for promotion to associate professor of biology, with tenure, Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences.

Recommended by:

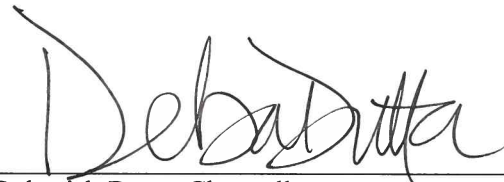


Susan Gano-Phillips, Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences

Recommendation endorsed by:



Keith Moreland, Interim Provost and  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Debasish Dutta, Chancellor  
University of Michigan-Flint

May 2020