

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

Erin A. Cech, assistant professor of sociology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2011	University of California, San Diego
M.A.	2008	University of California, San Diego
B.S.	2005	Montana State University

Professional Record:

2016-present	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan
2012-2016	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Rice University
2011-2012	Post-doctoral Fellow, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Cech is a committed and dedicated teacher. She fills important roles in the sociology curriculum, teaching courses on graduate research methods, professional writing, and undergraduate “sociology of work and occupations.” She is an outstanding mentor to graduate students and serves on nine dissertation committees. She has taken the reins of the Gender and Sexuality research workshop, reinvigorating it with new ways of mentoring (e.g., a remote writing workshop during COVID, peer mentoring). Her mentoring acumen also extends to honors students whom she has led through ambitious projects where students have developed phenomenal research skills.

Research: Professor Cech’s research, using a wide variety of methods, identifies the cultural mechanisms that operate beneath institutional structures and practices. Her research demonstrates how everyday cultural concepts and beliefs like self-expression, meritocracy, and following one’s passion (re)produce social inequalities in the labor market, especially in STEM fields. She has been extremely productive, with 27 peer reviewed articles, including placements in top sociological journals, and two books in the pipeline. Her sole-authored book manuscript, The Passion Principle: Self-Expressive Career Decisions and the Reproduction of Occupational Inequality, will have high impact in sociology and beyond.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Cech, Erin A. and William R. Rothwell. “LGBT Workplace Inequality in the Federal Workforce: Intersectional Processes, Organizational Contexts, and Turnover Considerations.” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 73(1) (2020): 25-60.

Cech, Erin A. and Mary Blair-Loy. “Changing Career Trajectories of New Parents in STEM.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (10) (2019): 4182-4187.

Cech, Erin A., Jessi L. Smith, and Anneke Metz. "Cultural Processes of Ethnoracial Disadvantage for Native American College Students." *Social Forces* 91(1) (2019): 355-380.

Cech, Erin A., Mary Blair-Loy, and Laura E. Rogers. "Recognizing Chilliness: How Schemas of Inequality Shape Views of Culture and Climate in Work Environments." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 6 (2018): 125-160.

Service: Professor Cech has done excellent service in the department and nationally. In the department, she has taken on the role of associate graduate director, running graduate admissions and recruitment. In the discipline, she has been on the editorial board of the two premier journals, the *American Sociological Review* and *American Journal of Sociology*, and taken leadership roles in the Sex and Gender section of ASA. Further, she has done substantial work to translate her research to a wide set of audiences including, among many, NOAA, AAAS, and the American Association of Physics Teachers. Further, her plethora of invitations to speak to a wide variety of public and academic audiences reflect her leadership in and engagement with DEI issues.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "Her work is consistently winning awards. Consider, for example, the fact that her publication in PNAS, the second most-cited scientific journal in the world (Impact Factor 9.4) was chosen by the editors as one of the Top 10 Stories of 2019. I see this as a truly exceptional achievement that underscores the exceptional relevance, quality and impact of her research."

Reviewer (B): "...her scholarship is impressive in its breadth—she studies the effects of a wide range of cultural schemas (individualism, meritocracy, work devotion, the 'passion principle') across many axes of inequality (gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, parental status, social class) and across a variety of settings (workplaces, education, health, professions, engineering)."

Reviewer (C): "I think that Cech is a rising star among scholars of Gender, that she richly deserves tenure, and that any top department would tenure her."

Reviewer (D): "In all the dimensions that matter—quality of work, productivity, and influence—she is well above the vast majority at a comparable career stage and among the leaders of her generation."

Reviewer (E): "Given Cech's strong scholarship thus far, her clear commitment to engaging policy and public audiences, and her excellent presentation skills, I expect Professor Cech to not only do great work but be a great ambassador for academic sociology in the decades to come."

Reviewer (F): "Cech draws on multiple methods: experimental studies, interviews, and—the most useful to me—longitudinal data. With this focus on longitudinal data, she is able to see how women pursuing STEM degrees start to lose confidence over time or how they overcome obstacles to persist. [...]Cech's work on STEM and the gender gap challenges some of the long-standing sociological explanations."

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Cech has made significant contributions to our understanding of how cultural beliefs reproduce social inequalities in work and education, especially in STEM fields. She is also an excellent teacher and emerging leader in public conversations about the reproduction of social inequality in education and work. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Erin A. Cech be promoted to the rank of associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Anne Curzan, Dean  
Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor of  
English Language and Literature, Linguistics,  
and Education  
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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