PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Alain D. Cohn, assistant professor of information, School of Information, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of information, with tenure, School of Information.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2010	Economics, University of Zurich, Switzerland
M.B.	2005	Economics and Finance, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Professional Record:

2017 – present	Assistant Professor, with tenure, School of Information, University of Michigan
2014 – 2017	Postdoctoral scholar, Booth School of Business, University of Chicago
2014 – 2017	Post-doctoral scholar, Department of Economics, University of Zurich

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Cohn's teaching and mentoring easily meets expectations for tenure. Professor Cohn is a thoughtful teacher who has developed a pedagogy centered upon creating a classroom environment that enhances students' ability to learn and to participate; thus he encourages discussion, and employs group projects and other forms of engaged learning. His classroom teaching at the school of Information (UMSI) has been at the undergraduate, masters and Ph.D. levels. Professor Cohn has made a substantial and positive impact on building UMSI's curriculum at all levels. For example, he has contributed to our curriculum by creating one Master of Applied Data Science (MADS) course, Causal Inference (SIADS 630), and creating a Ph.D. seminar on Causal Inference (SI 710-002). These courses reflect him striking out on new ground in UMSI's curriculum.

Professor Cohn has a good track record of mentoring undergraduate and graduate students. He has admitted two Ph.D. students and he is on Dissertation Committees for two more Ph.D. students. He has also been on eighteen master's thesis committees and on sixteen bachelor's thesis committees. Professor Cohn has taught four courses since starting as an assistant professor in UMSI. He taught: SI 334: Persuasion and Social Influence; SI 617: Choice Architecture; SIADS 630: Causal Inference and SIADS 631: Experiment Design and Analysis. Professor Cohn's teaching in these courses exceeds the bar for excellence. For example, when we look at responses to question 1631, "This course advanced my understanding of the subject matter," his ratings are above 4.45 in all of the courses he recently taught. For example, the most recent score for SIADS 630 (Fall 2020) is 4.63 and for SIADS 631 (Fall 2020) is 4.57; for SIADS 630 (Winter 2021) is 4.83 and for SI 334 (Winter 2021) is 4.45. Professor Cohn has also significantly incorporated diversity, equity and inclusion principles into his teaching. For instance, he has sought out diverse voices in course materials by including authors who have non-traditional or under-represented backgrounds.

Research: Professor Cohn's most significant intellectual impact is in identifying subtle situational cues which can alter the ethical values that a decision maker uses to guide choice in a given moment. His empirical findings counter the prevailing view that individuals typically have rather stable and consistent preferences. To investigate such situational cues, Professor Cohn's research presents elegant and deeply human explanations for puzzles observable in human behavior. Professor Cohn is a leader in experimental economics and in particular, in the area of designing lab-in-the-field experiments and natural field experiments. He is also a leader in pushing forward our understanding of the psychological underpinnings that motivate honesty, ethical choice, fairness and reciprocity.

Professor Cohn's work is rooted in economics, but bridges psychology, finance, information science and political science. Professor Cohn is above expectations in his field for this stage of his career. He has been awarded the 2020 Diligentia Prize for Empirical Research. Professor Cohn has published twice in the top-five (among 340+) journals in economics (*American Economic Review*, *Review of Economic Studies*), three times in the top journal in business (*Management Science*, *Review of Financial Studies*), and three times in top general interest journals for the scientific community (*Science*, *Nature*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*). Professor Cohn follows the publication conventions of his field, with author order determined alphabetically. Professor Cohn also has secured $900,000 in research funding, $650,000 in 2011 from Gottlieb Dutweiler Institute and $250,000 in 2013 from the Swiss National Science Foundation. His impact can also be measured as of January 29, 2022 in citations with over 2,375, which is high for an early stage economist.

Recent and Significant Publications:
Alain Cohn, Tobias Gesche, Michel André Maréchal (2021). "Honesty in the digital age," *Management Science*, 0(0), In press.
Alain Cohn, Michel André Maréchal, David Tannenbaum, and Christian Lukas Zünd. "Civic honesty around the globe," *Science*, Vol. 365, No. 6448, June 2019, pp. 70-73.
Alain Cohn, Ernst Fehr, Michel André Maréchal. (2019). "Selective participation may undermine replication attempts," *Nature*, Vol. 575, No. 7782, November 2019, pp. E1-E2.
Michel André Maréchal, Alain Cohn, Giuseppe Ugazio, Christian C. Ruff. "Increasing honesty in humans with noninvasive brain stimulation," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, April 2017, Vol. 114, No. 17, pp. 4360-4364.
Alain Cohn, Jan Engelmann, Ernst Fehr, Michel André Maréchal. "Evidence for countercyclical risk aversion: An experiment with financial professionals," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 105, No. 2, February 2015, pp. 860-85.

Service: Professor Cohn has provided significant service to the external research community and appropriate service to UMSI and the university. Professor Cohn's primary service to UMSI has been through his leadership in the Behavioral and Experimental Economics (BEE) research group. Professor Cohn has also held other service roles at UMSI. He has been a member of the MSI committee (2018-2019) and the doctoral committee (2020-2022). Professor Cohn served in several other service roles, including as a post-doctoral fellows mentor, as a classroom observer, and as an internal UMSI space planner. In all, Professor Cohn has met his expected service contribution to UMSI.

Professor Cohn's service record to his academic community demonstrates a solid national reputation. He has engaged in extensive refereeing, much of it for leading journals across multiple fields, including economics, psychology, finance, law, accounting, and management. He received the *Management Science* Distinguished Service Award in 2015 for outstanding service to the journal. Professor Cohn has also taken upon himself to serve the public by making the research in his field of study more accessible to the general public. Over the course of his brief career, he has given more than 100 interviews to the news media around the world, including *BBC World News*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *USA Today*, *The Guardian*, and *NPR and Le Monde* among others. His talks have included other non-academic audiences, such as the Second Swedish National Pension Fund, Ford Motor Company, and Swiss Re, one of the largest reinsurance companies in the world.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "In my opinion, [Professor Cohn] is one of the top behavioral/experimental economists of his cohort."

Reviewer B: "In summary, in my view, [Professor] Cohn is an excellent and very original researcher. He has great technical skills as all the beautifully crafted experiments show; he is entrepreneurial in finding interesting subject pools; and he is investigating important questions. I am therefore fully and unequivocally supportive of promoting [Professor] Cohn to Associate Professor with tenure."

Reviewer C: "The bottom line is that my evaluation of [Professor] Cohn's promotion case is positive. He has a track record of excellent productivity, publishing at the highest levels, across multiple disciplines, and this reflects the ambition, importance, creativity, and methodological care that characterize his research. He is a terrific scholar, with tremendous promise. [Professor Cohn] would certainly be tenurable at [my institution]. I strongly recommend that he be promoted."

Reviewer D: "My overall assessment of [Professor Cohn] is that he is a star. His research has already made key contributions to our understanding of honesty, fairness, and risk, and his work has both theoretical and practical relevance…. [Professor Cohn]'s productivity and range suggest that he will continue to pen outstanding scholarly work for decades to come. I firmly believe his case for promotion to tenured Associate Professor would be a slam dunk at [my institution] and at any other university in the world."

Reviewer E: "[Professor Cohn] has worked closely with psychologists and understands both economics and psychology deeply. That makes him a valuable bridge builder in many departments with diverse interests."

Reviewer F: "I believe that Professor Cohn's potential for further development is very promising. Accordingly, I fully support Professor Cohn being promoted to the rank of Associate Professor and obtaining tenure at your school."

Reviewer G: "Overall, based on his demonstrated excellence and creativity in research and my positive evaluation regarding all the criteria you asked me to consider, I think that [Professor Cohn] deserves being promoted at the rank of Associate Professor with tenure. [Professor Cohn] is a truly exceptional researcher."

Summary of Recommendation:
Professor Cohn's teaching, research, and service are well above the level expected of a junior faculty member. With the overwhelming support of the promotion and tenure committee of the School of Information, I enthusiastically recommend Alain D. Cohn for promotion to professor of information, with tenure, School of Information.

Thomas A. Finholt
Dean, School of Information

May 2022