PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Social Work

Shawna J. Lee, associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work, is recommended for promotion to professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.

Academic Degrees:
Ph.D. 2005 University of Michigan, Social Work and Social Science (Psychology), Ann Arbor, MI
M.S. 2003 University of Michigan, Psychology (Social), Ann Arbor, MI
M.P.P. 2002 University of Michigan, Public Policy, Ann Arbor, MI
M.S.W. 2001 University of Michigan, Social Work, Ann Arbor, MI
B.A. 1997 University of Michigan, Psychology, Ann Arbor, MI

Professional Record:
2015-present Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan
2012-2015 Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan
2007-2012 Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Wayne State University
2006-2007 Assistant Professor, College of Social Work, University of South Carolina

Teaching: Professor Lee is a dedicated and effective teacher and mentor. She has taught multiple sections of required courses and specialized electives related to physical punishment and poverty in Detroit. Student evaluations across her courses rate her in the 4-5 range (excellent to outstanding) in her instruction and in covering SSW key themes of privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice. Professor Lee is also an exceptional mentor to undergraduate, MSW, and PhD students. She has mentored UROP students, a psychology honors student, and many MSW students. She has chaired three dissertation committees and her students obtain high-level academic positions. She regularly publishes with her students.

Research: Professor Lee’s research program focuses on parenting, examining universal issues such as the use of corporal punishment and the impact of COVID on parenting, and studying low-income, high-risk populations with her research program on fatherhood. These are areas of central importance for the mission of social work, given the profession’s historic commitment to children’s well-being.

Professor Lee is recognized as a leading scholar in child physical punishment and prevention of child maltreatment. Her work is best described as translational, using highly respected theories and research methods, as well as findings from basic research, to conduct her own research that has salience and immediate importance to social work practitioners and social policy. Her work can also be characterized as public scholarship, with her research findings relevant to the issues of today, such as spanking as a disciplinary method and COVID, that it is regularly covered by major media outlets such as The New York Times, The Conversation, and CNN, U.S. News and World Report and NPR.

Professor Lee has established a prolific record since she was promoted to associate professor in 2015. She has a total of 80 peer-reviewed publications (49 published since her last promotion). She is first author on 33 of the 80 publications. She has also co-authored one book and has published 17
book chapters or research briefs. She is also successful in securing funding for her research program, having secured $3.1M in federal, state and foundation funding since 2006 ($1.9M since 2015). Her productivity in publication and grants has accelerated since she received tenure. Her research is based on important questions such as the consequences of spanking, the roles of fathers in parenting, and the impact of COVID on family life. Reviewers cited her research on the deleterious effects of spanking, as well as her innovative, technology-based interventions to support fathers’ connections with their partners and children as her strongest, most important work.

Professor Lee’s work, especially her work on the negative effects of spanking, is based on creative use of diverse data sources to replicate her findings. This research can also be considered as public scholarship because it has resulted in high societal impact, with major advocacy organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) adopting policy statements supporting the cessation of spanking.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Service: Professor Lee has a strong service record. She has served on several school committees, including the P&T, Faculty Search, and Executive Committees. She has taken on leadership roles including serving as faculty director of the school’s Program Evaluation Group (PEG), and in creating strong university partnerships with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, with the goal of bringing federal Title IV-E funding to social work education to Michigan. Professor Lee demonstrates outstanding service to the profession and to science. She is a member of the editorial board for three important journals, Child Maltreatment, Research on Social Work Practice, and Child Abuse and Neglect: The International Journal. She has been named as a fellow of the Society for Social Work and Research, a service distinction in the profession. She has served on several NIH review panels, several APA committees developing policy statements that disseminate her own research findings on spanking, and as membership chairperson of the APSAC Prevention Committee.
External Reviewers:
Reviewer A: “I believe that Professor Lee’s work clearly meets the standards for promotion to Professor. I would similarly recommend her for promotion here at [my institution], based both on the totality of her work and her most recent contributions since being promoted to Associate Professor.”

Reviewer B: “Dr. Lee’s accomplishments to date illustrate an extremely successful career trajectory fueled by dedication to the fields of parenting, child development, child maltreatment prevention, and social work writ large, especially as evidenced by her commitment to multiple vulnerable populations. I can state with confidence that Dr. Lee would exceed our requirements for promotion to Professor.”

Reviewer C: “In sum, Dr. Lee appears to be an excellent candidate for promotion to full professor. She has attained at least the same level of distinction as other, more senior scholars in the field of child welfare.”

Reviewer D: “In my opinion, this is an impressive packet for promotion to full professor from a faculty member that is clearly excelling across all areas of academic life. I do believe Dr. Lee would also meet the standards at our school.”

Reviewer E: “I have adjudicated on many social work promotions in my own institution and can say without even pausing that her case for promotion is an excellent one. She would be promoted at any institution on this side of the Atlantic.”

Reviewer F: “Moreover, Dr. Lee’s scholarly accomplishments and productivity meet and exceed the accomplishments of recently promoted professors at my institution. ... I strongly affirm my recommendation that Dr. Lee be promoted to Professor with tenure at the University of Michigan School of Social Work.”

Reviewer G: “Her application for promotion with respect to her scholarship would be looked on favorably by any top tier social work program.”

Reviewer H: “Dr. Shawna Lee’s case has unquestionably been among the strongest. I am 100% certain that Dr. Lee would be reviewed favorably for a promotion to Full Professor at my own institution.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Lee is an outstanding scholar and educator who has demonstrated superior leadership and service to the SSW, to the state of Michigan, and to the profession. It is with the support of the Executive Committee that I recommend Shawna J. Lee for promotion to the rank of professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.

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Joseph Himle
Interim Dean, School of Social Work

May 2022