

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan – Flint
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Behavioral Sciences

Peter F. Molinaro, assistant professor of psychology, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2015	Florida International University, Legal Psychology, Miami, FL
M.S.	2008	Montclair State University, Psychology, Montclair, NJ
B.S.	2006	Rutgers University, Psychology, New Brunswick, NJ

Professional Record:

2016-Present	Assistant Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan
2015-2016	Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Virginia

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Since his arrival at the UM-Flint in 2016, Professor Molinaro has taught four courses, in a variety of modalities, including Principles of Psychology (PSY 100), Cognitive Psychology (PSY 317), the Capstone Experience (PSY 400) and Advanced Research Topics in Psychology, focused on forensic and legal psychology (PSY 401). His approach to teaching focuses on three key objectives: clearly communicating relevant content and expanding critical skill sets, instilling a sense of skepticism and critical evaluation of information, and sharing a passion for issues of social justice. Underpinning these goals are pedagogical techniques focused on rigorous course and assignment organization as well as technological innovation. Professor Molinaro is effective with this approach as demonstrated by peer and student evaluations. He routinely scores above 4.5 on a 5-point scale on questions related to the excellence of the course and instructor, and has rarely scored below 4. He has also brought an evidence-based assessment of student learning across the program and has been instrumental in promoting changes to increase scientific writing skills among majors. He has been a leader in involving students in research. His mentees have presented nearly 25 papers at local and national conferences, including Meeting of Minds and annual Student Research Conferences over the last 5 years. He is regularly sought out and provides formal and informal academic advising to 10 or more students on a weekly basis throughout the academic year, devoting considerable time to mentoring student success. Professor Molinaro has demonstrated student-centeredness in his course design, a willingness to adapt his instruction to meet student needs, and innovation in use of technologies to promote student learning.

Research: Professor Molinaro studies cognitive processes related to eyewitness testimony and investigative interviewing. He also has worked in the area of counterterrorism and threat assessment. His work is applied in nature, allowing for the advancement of theoretical understandings of cognition and human behavior as well as directly impacting the lives of people in our communities. Professor Molinaro's findings have implications for the justice system. People's lives can be forever ruined by faulty practices that undermine eyewitness accuracy and statements from interviewees (e.g., witnesses falsely accusing someone of a crime). Professor Molinaro is an expert in cognitive interviewing, which involves getting witnesses to think about the context of an event (e.g., a crime) before asking them for any specific details about that event (e.g., a possible suspect).

Since arriving at UM-Flint, Professor Molinaro has published three first-authored peer-reviewed articles, including in the flagship journal, *Law and Human Behavior* and is co-author on a publication on lone offender terrorism for the FBI, which is substantive and impactful, though not a traditionally peer-reviewed manuscript. He has also published a book chapter and has made seven presentations at national conferences, including the American Psychology Law Society, five of which included UM-Flint undergraduate student co-presenters.

Recent and Significant Scholarly Activity:

Molinaro, P.F., Fisher, R. P., Mosser, A., & Satin, G., (2019) Training the Trainer: A comparison of the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Trainers instructed in Cognitive Interview Training Compared to Trainers using typical witness interviewing procedures. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*.

Richards, L. A., Molinaro, P. F., Wyman, J., Craun., S. (2019). Lone Offender: A Study of lone offender terrorism in the United States (1972 – 2015), United States, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Behavioral Analysis Unit. Quantico, VA.

Service: Professor Molinaro's service is most extensive at the department level, as is typical of junior faculty members, but it extends well beyond the department as well. He has served on the department assessment and curricular revision committees where his analytical skills are regularly engaged. He has also led the Scholarship and Research Grants Committee in Psychology and has hosted research talks as well as supported numerous campus recruitment events. He has nominated multiple students for the prestigious Maize and Blue award and serves as the PSY 401 course coordinator. At the college level, he has served for three years on the LEO Major Review Committee and once on the Spring Interim Committee. At the university level, Professor Molinaro has chosen to participate in service which aligns well with his research expertise, serving on the University Conduct Committee and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) oversight committee. Professionally, Professor Molinaro serves as a manuscript reviewer for four peer-reviewed journals and as a reviewer for both the American Psychology Law Society Annual Conference (for the past 11 years) and for the National Science Foundation – Law and Social Sciences Program Grants. Finally, he continues to serve as a research consultant to the FBI Behavioral Analysis unit, where he completed his post-doctoral studies.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I am confident that he shows considerable promise of future productivity given his previous work (i.e., three publications, including a first-authored publication in *Law and Human Behavior* [2013]) and his on-going work."

Reviewer B: "Molinaro et al. (2019) has been cited 7 times, which is a notable amount in a short time-span. The reason why this paper is on a trajectory of being highly cited is because it investigates what is likely the most effective method for interviewing witnesses – the cognitive interview."

Reviewer C: "I have witnessed robust applications of experimental designs, content analysis, process evaluations, evidence syntheses, closed-source data analyses and a range of quantitative methods being applied to a range of interrelated research questions."

Reviewer D: "Dr. Molinaro's ability to investigate numerous psycholegal areas with varying methodologies is exemplary. It speaks to Dr. Molinaro's training and flexibility relative to the changing developments in society, the criminal justice system, and the psychological literature."

Reviewer E: “One thing that struck me as I reviewed his work was that there was consistently an applied problem for which a theory-based solution was proposed and then competently tested.”

Reviewer F: “I would place him among a group of a half-dozen young eyewitness researchers who are coming on strong ... I think the fact Peter has so quickly burst through my general obliviousness is a testament to his strengths.”

Reviewer G: “Dr. Molinaro publishes high-quality work grounded in robust theories across multiple law psychology topics. ... Dr. Molinaro is well on his way to establishing a reputation as an expert on several Psychology Law issues.”

Reviewer H: “Professor Molinaro is capable of performing work that is publishable in strong journals. I also give his most recent paper in Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling high marks in terms of quality.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Molinaro is an enthusiastic, reflective, and dedicated teacher whose pedagogical approaches are constantly adapting to promote student success. He has demonstrated innovative and impactful research at the intersection of cognitive processes and the law, and his research seeks to impact both theoretical developments in cognitive interviewing and improve social justice and equity within the criminal justice system. He also has a strong record of impactful service to his department, college, university, and profession. It is with the support of the College of Arts and Sciences Executive Committee that I recommend Peter F. Molinaro for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, Department of Behavioral Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences.

Recommended by:



Susan Gano-Phillips, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

Recommendation endorsed by:



Sonja Feist-Price, Provost and
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Debasish Dutta, Chancellor
University of Michigan – Flint

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