

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
School of Social Work

Karen M. Staller, 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.	1999	Columbia University, New York, New York
J.D.	1985	Cornell University School of Law, Ithaca, New York
B.A.	1979	Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Professional Record:

2008 - present	Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan
2001 - 2008	Assistant Professor, University of Michigan School of Social Work
1999 - 2001	Assistant Professor, University of Alabama School of Social Work
1996	Teaching Assistant, Columbia University School of Social Work
1993 - 1999	Adjunct Lecturer, Columbia University School of Social Work

Summary of Evaluation

Teaching: Professor Staller brings her unique and deep scholarly qualities to her teaching. She teaches key courses in the MSW and PhD curriculums. By her count, she has reached over 700 students in her classroom courses since her tenure and promotion to associate professor in 2008. Students regularly rate her courses at the top of the scale on instructor effectiveness, being well-prepared, treating students with respect, and by encouraging critical thinking through rigorous intellectual frameworks. Professor Staller is a caring and devoted mentor to her students, as well as offering them a rigorous intellectual learning experience. She is a sought after PhD mentor and has served on 21 PhD dissertation committees and has chaired nine of these. She has been recognized as an outstanding teacher by two awards in the School of Social Work. In 2019, she was awarded the UMSSW Distinguished Faculty Award, a recognition by faculty peers of her excellence in research, teaching and service, and in the same year, she also was awarded the UMSSW Doctoral Student Organization Mentoring Award.

Research: Professor Staller has built an esteemed, rich portfolio of scholarship that is unified by three intersecting themes. These themes include the advancement of youth rights and care, a focus on historical research as a lens through which to view contemporary child welfare policy issues, and an explicitly defined social constructivist lens in all her scholarship. Professor Staller has authored three books, two authored and one edited. She has authored 32 articles (22 first-authored), 19 book chapters (16 first or sole authored) and 10 encyclopedia entries. The characteristics of Professor Staller's scholarship include the depth of analysis, deep scholarly arguments and perspectives, and her commitment to an open and progressive point of view on the social issues that she examines through the lens of history and contemporary social constructionist analysis.

A few examples of her probing rich work that stand out to me and her reviewers includes Professor Staller's most recent book, New York's Newsboys: Charles Loring Brace and the Founding of the Children's Aid Society. The book is a powerful narrative of the deeply progressive nature of the bulk of CAS' innovations, which served 12,000 children and youth. Another one of Professor Staller's most widely read and cited articles is, "Epistemological boot camp: The politics of science and what every qualitative researcher needs to know to survive in the academy." This article was

published in 2013, and it followed a three-decade period in which the ideal of social work scholarship moved from case-study methodology to empirical, experimental design methodology. During this 30-year period, case studies and most qualitative research were damned by some prominent voices as unscientific. Professor Staller's article is one of the voices that have helped to rebalance the ideals of social work research in support of the "mixed methods" of qualitative and quantitative research, that has become the research standard of today. Professor Staller is viewed as a leader for the importance of open and pluralistic intellectual inquiry in social work and for the field as a whole.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

- Staller, K.M. (2014). What Remains? Heroic stories in trace materials. In Stan Witkin (Ed). Narrating Social Work through Autoethnography. Pp. 141-176. NY: Columbia University Press.
- Staller, K. M. (2016). The Many Ways of Knowing Ann Hartman: Themes of power, subjugation and narration. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, 15 (4): 447-456. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325016652531>
- Staller, K.M. (2013). Epistemological Boot Camp: The politics of science and what every qualitative researcher needs to know to survive in the academy. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*. 12 (4): 395-413. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325012450483>
- Staller, K. M. & Faller, K.C. (Eds.) (2009). Seeking Justice in Child Sexual Abuse: Shifting Burdens and Sharing Responsibilities. NY: Columbia University Press.
- Staller, K. M. (invited, 2009). Social Problem Construction and its Impact on Program and Policy Responses. In Kamerman, S.B., Phipps, S. & Ben-Arieh, A. (Eds). From Child Welfare to Child Well-being: An international perspective on knowledge in the service of making policy. Springer. Pp. 155-173.
- Staller, K. M. (2020). New York's Newsboys: Charles Loring Brace and the Founding of the Children's Aid Society. New York: Oxford University Press.

Service: Professor Staller has an outstanding record of service to the School, the profession and the university. She served as the vice chair of SACUA in 2012-13, and as the chair in 2013-14. She has been appointed by the provost to the Model Faculty Grievance Procedure Task Force (2009), and to two different cases reviewed by the Regent Bylaw Appellate Hearing Committee in 2019. She presently serves the University Senate on the Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action (2020-present). Professor Staller was awarded the UM 2015 Distinguished Faculty Governance Award. She has also served the scholarly professional community and the local community with leadership, dignity, and impact. In serving the scholarly community, Professor Staller has distinguished herself as a singular editor of *Qualitative Social Work (QSW)*, the journal that serves as the key forum for qualitative research scholarship in social work. In addition, Professor Staller has also served as reviewer and editorial board member for many other journals. In the Ann Arbor community, Professor Staller has served as an active member of the board of a youth serving organization, Ozone House.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I believe that her work would merit a promotion to full professor rank at my own peer institution."

Reviewer B: "...(being aware) that Australia and the US are very different contexts (though in both the university system is under financial and cultural pressure) and that the University of Michigan is a top tier School of Social Work, I would still give an unreserved yes to both parts of this question"

Reviewer C: “Professor Staller is an outstanding mentor for junior faculty. Her [sic] brings considerable energy, a strong vision, and great distinction to your School, and to your university community. For the above reasons, I give her my strongest recommendation for this promotion”

Reviewer D: “I am certain that she would be granted promotion to full professor in my department and university.”

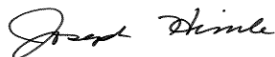
Reviewer E: “Based on the materials available for this review, and bearing in mind that these do not necessarily represent the full range of Dr. Staller’s work and contributions, I would assess her as being well positioned for promotion to full professor at institutions comparable to the University of Michigan.”

Reviewer F: “Dr. Staller’s work would definitely meet the requirements for promotion and tenure at my institution. ... In sum, I recommend Dr. Staller for promotion and tenure without reservation.”

Reviewer G: “If Professor Staller were a member of my faculty and applied for promotion, she would be successful at the School and University levels ... In summary, my review of her materials leads me to see her as fully deserving promotion to the rank of professor.”

Reviewer H: “...Dr. Staller is an internationally recognized qualitative research expert who is widely respected and influential- a statement and honor that seems fitting for promotion to full professor. She would certainly be qualified for the rank of full professor at my university.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Staller is an outstanding scholar and educator who has demonstrated leadership and service to social work knowledge development, to the profession and to the community. It is with the support of the Executive Committee that we recommend Karen M. Staller 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