

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan-Dearborn  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Sarah F. Howell, associate professor of history, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2009	University of Michigan, American Culture, Ann Arbor, MI
M.A.	2002	University of Michigan, American Culture, Ann Arbor, MI
B.A.	1985	Davidson College, Middle East Studies, Davidson, NC

Professional Record:

2015–present	Associate Professor of History (with tenure), Department of Social Sciences, University of Michigan-Dearborn
2009-2015	Assistant Professor of History, Department of Social Sciences, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Howell is rated as significantly capable in teaching. Professor Howell's teaching is focused on the Arab American Studies core curriculum, for which she has developed, and continues to fundamentally redevelop, many courses. She has also taught U.S. history and Detroit history courses. Her courses serve as models for the practice-based learning approach that the campus is now developing. Student evaluations of her classes are generally positive, with a mean score of 4.80 (out of 5.0) on instructor knowledge and a mean score of 4.37 overall. Students praise her knowledge, enthusiasm, and concern for their learning. Professor Howell's pedagogical preference for active and engaged learning, often with a community partner, means that she takes a lot of risks and experimentation in her teaching.

Research: Professor Howell is rated excellent in research. Since receiving tenure, Professor Howell has had a very productive research agenda focused on Muslim Americans, particularly their experiences in the Detroit region in the past 50 years. She has published an edited book, two articles, and one book chapter. She has also provided a model of engaged scholarship by curating museum exhibits, digital exhibits, and podcasts. To support this public-facing work, she has been awarded major grant funding. She has several projects underway, including two books, and her work on them is supported by a Fellowship from the Institute of Humanities at the University of Michigan. Professor Howell's work is interdisciplinary and illuminates how Muslim Americans form communities, live, and worship in diverse neighborhoods, and migrate through urban and suburban spaces.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Zeineddine, G. Abraham N., and Howell, S. eds. 2022. *Hadha Baladuna: Arab American Narratives of Boundary and Belonging*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 232 pp.  
Howell, S. 2022. "Mosqueing the Marketplace: Business as (Un)Usual in Hamtramck,"

*Polish American Studies* 79 (2): 26-49.

Howell, S. 2019. "Rights Versus Respectability: The Politics of Muslim Visibility in Detroit's Northern Suburbs," in *Muslims and Contemporary U.S. Politics*, ed. Mohammed Khalil. Harvard University Press. pp. 149-168.

Howell, S. 2015. "Southend Struggles: Diverging Narratives of Power and Place in an Arab American Enclave," *Mashriq and Mahjar: Journal of Middle East Migration Studies*. 3 (1): 41-64.

Service: Professor Howell is rated excellent in service. She has engaged in valuable service to the university, the profession, and the community. As the director of the Center for Arab American Studies from 2016-2022, she developed the center in significant ways through her programming, fundraising, and outreach efforts, raising both its profile and impact. Additionally, she has provided important service to the university by serving on the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters (CASL) Practice-Based Learning Task Force, the CASL Executive Committee, and the Scholar-Teacher Strategic Planning group. She is also one of the leaders working on a university-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Collaborative. Professor Howell has represented the UM-Dearborn campus on a number of university task forces based in Ann Arbor, including the UM3 Detroit committee. Professor Howell's service to her field and profession is also remarkable, including serving as the president of the Arab American Studies Association, on the board of editors of two journals, and on the advisory board for a PBS documentary on American Muslims.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "In sum, I hold Dr. Howell's public facing cultural work in the highest regard and believe that because of it, in addition to her scholarly work, she excels as the Center's director. She has taken it from a little-known Center to the best example of what a Center for Arab American Studies should look like. That said, Dr. Howell has not only accomplished extensive public facing work, she is also a highly productive scholar and one of the top U.S. scholars of Arab American and Muslim American communities."

Reviewer B: "The quality, quantity, focus, and scholarly impact of Prof. Howell's is impressive. Howell's prolific publications, exhibitions, teaching, and other intellectual activities have shown greater Detroit's importance to national and international narratives about Arab American and Muslim Americans. [Professor] Howell is one of the most creative, productive, and insightful scholars of the Muslim and Arab American experience in the world... The quantity of the work is equaled by its quality."

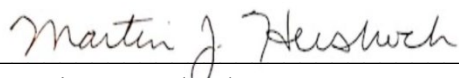
Reviewer C: "In sum, a review of Professor Howell's dossier reveals the stunning level of her engagement with multiple fields. Indeed, I have not encountered an Associate Professor with this level of public intellectualism, rigorous scholarship, active research and grant[-]writing agendas, and dynamic teaching and administrative leadership in my over twenty years of being in the academy. I am quite frankly surprised that she has not already been promoted to the rank of Professor.

Reviewer D: "One outcome of all of [Professor Howell's] projects is a deeper understanding of the history and contemporary realities of Muslim Americans, particularly those residing in

southeastern Michigan.... The works...[are] impressive on account of both the range of topics covered and the quality of scholarship. Since her promotion to Associate Professor, she has produced outstanding works that are of interest and benefit to both scholars and the general public. And she is poised to continue producing such works and to cement her legacy as one of the most important scholars in the field of Muslim studies.”

Reviewer E: “Dr. Howell’s work is highly original, intellectually innovative, and creative in its engagement with broader publics. She is widely respected as a leading scholar in Arab and Muslim American studies, and has done pathbreaking work that has expanded research in studies of immigration, Islam, and urban space to include the historical experiences of Arab and Muslim Americans... Dr. Howell is deeply interested in the politics of visibility and what is at stake in making claims on public space for Muslim and Arab Americans, and her public scholarship is itself a rigorous intervention in this debate, demonstrating her commitment to engagement with grassroots communities and with people working in a range of disciplines.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Howell is a skilled classroom instructor who holds herself to high standards. She has created practice-based learning opportunities for students, building bridges between her teaching and research. Her research addresses critical issues and is recognized by experts as contributing significantly to the scholarly field as well as the general public. Her outreach efforts and on-campus service directly contribute to the university’s goals to serve the metropolitan Detroit region. It is with the support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee that I recommend Sarah F. Howell for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



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Martin J. Hershock, Dean  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



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Domenico Grasso, Chancellor  
University of Michigan-Dearborn

May 2023