

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
School of Social Work

Giovanna Benson, assistant professor of social work, School of Social Work, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2017	University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
M.S.W.	2010	Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona
A.S.	2009	Community College of the US Air Force, Montgomery, Alabama
BA	1999	University of the Philippines, Dilman, Philippines

Professional Record:

2018 - present	Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan
2017 - 2018	Research Fellow, School of Social Work, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation

Teaching: Since her appointment in 2018, Professor Benson has taught eight different courses across the M.S.W. and Ph.D. programs. She has offered introductory courses in macro social work practice as well as advanced courses for the community change and global pathways of the M.S.W. program as well as elective courses related to her expertise in immigration. Across all her teaching, Professor Benson holds students to a high standard of performance and emphasizes critical thinking and application to practice and she exhibits a strong commitment to professional development aimed at honing her skills in classroom teaching. Advising and mentoring represents an area of teaching where Professor Benson's performance has been consistently stellar, evidenced by awards she has garnered from students. She is in demand as a mentor within and outside the School of Social Work, she serves on many Ph.D. committees and frequently mentor's students as co-authors of her journal articles.

Research: Professor Benson is a scholar of refugee organizations and policies, both those within the United States and in other countries around the world. Her research portfolio has three interlocking foci: refugee and resettlement policy, social work practice with refugees and migrants, and grassroots community organizations run by refugees. To these topics she brings impressive theoretical and methodological breadth, with her projects spanning deep historical analysis of documents, critical discourse analysis, qualitative data collection, quantitative analysis, and community-based participatory research. Professor Benson's research breaks new ground in our conceptual and empirical understanding of refugees and their interactions with organizations, institutions, and policies. Her original contributions are particularly relevant given that policies related to forced migration are contested in everyday politics as the United States and other countries respond to refugee crises around the world.

Since her appointment in 2018, she has published 36 peer reviewed articles, the majority of which she first authored and many of which she co-authored with M.S.W. or Ph.D. students. Her rate of article production has continued to increase over time, but the quality remains consistently high, and most have been published in top-tier journals within social work, urban affairs, community practice, and international studies. Given that she works in a nascent field, Professor Benson's citation rate

(h-index of 10 at the time of dossier submission; 12 as of February 2024) is impressive and speaks to the growing influence of her scholarship on the field.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- Gonzalez Benson, O., Smith, R. & Song, C. (2022). Resettlement cities: A mixture model analysis of the dispersion and placement strategy of US refugee policy. *Cities*, 126(103698), 1-13.
- Gonzalez Benson, O. (2016). Refugee resettlement policy in an era of neoliberalization: A policy discourse analysis of the Refugee Act of 1980. *Social Service Review*, 90(3), 515-549.
- Gonzalez Benson, O., Wachter, K., Lee, J., Nichols, D. & Hylton, E. (2021). Social work research on forced migration: A scoping review. *British Journal of Social Work*, 51(7), 2680.
- Gonzalez Benson, O. (2021a). On becoming essential: Coronavirus lessons of ontology, from migrant farmworkers and us who consume the fruit of her labor. *Qualitative Social Work*, 20(1-2), 186-192.
- Gonzalez Benson, O. (2022). Shadows of the Shadow State: Grassroots refugee-led organizations within a contested and multiscalar resettlement institutional domain. *Environment & Planning C: Politics & Space*, 40(8), 1745–1762.
- Gonzalez Benson, O., Routte, I., Pimentel Walker, A., Yoshihama, M. & Kelly, A. (2022). Refugee-led organizations' crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Refuge*, 38(1), 62-77.

Service: Professor Benson exhibits a strong and well-rounded service record. Importantly, she worked in collaboration with several colleagues to develop the school's Global Social Work Practice Pathway, a signature offering that sets the School of Social Work apart from many of its peers. She has served on a variety of school committees, many of which entail significant time effort. Professor Benson's expertise in students with military backgrounds and international studies has also been sought out at the university level. In the arena of professional and community service, Professor Benson's efforts are especially noteworthy because of their synergistic alignment with her research focus, which involves capacity-building work with community organizations in Michigan. Professor Benson has also been active at the professional level for activities such as co-editing a journal special issue, reviewing journal articles and book proposals, and disseminating research findings to community organizations.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "It is my assessment that Dr. Gonzalez Benson would be qualified for promotion and tenure to Associate Professor at [my institution]."

Reviewer (B): "Drawing a parallel with standards at our institution, Dr. Benson's accomplishments and potential certainly align with what we consider exemplary. Therefore, not only would she be deemed highly regarded among her peers, but her body of work also resonates with the benchmarks set for promotion and tenure."

Reviewer (C): "From the materials I have reviewed, Dr. Gonzalez Benson's research and scholarship are indicative of an excellent researcher and impactful scholar who not only meets but exceeds the promotion requirements at leading research institutions including the [my institution]"

Reviewer (D): "Her scholarship would far exceed expectations for promotion and tenure to the associate professor level at [my institution] and indeed would likely merit promotion to full professor for this body of work."

Reviewer (E): “In summary, I give my highest recommendation for tenure and promotion for Dr. Gonzalez Benson. She is a winning combination of social work scholar and grassroots community advocate. As she maintains, she sees these roles as inextricable and her record shows this to be unerringly true. She would be a great asset to any School of Social Work!”

Reviewer (F): “...I was asked if their work would meet the requirements for someone being considered for promotion and tenure at the [home institution] and my answer to that is an unequivocal “yes.” I believe my colleagues would be impressed by Dr. Gonzalez Benson’s quality of mind, demonstrated ability to think across levels of practice (policy, practice, orgs), her commitment to advancing theory, and innovative (and methodologically diverse) research agenda.”

Reviewer (G): “Dr. Gonzalez Benson would, without doubt, qualify for tenure and promotion at our school, her work is solid, and her contributions to social work scholarship, and wider policies and practices are evident. I would absolutely seek to collaborate with her in the future, as I find her work to be innovative and transformative.”

Reviewer (H): “Overall, my assessment is that Dr[.] Gonzalez Benson meets the expectations for promotion to Associate Professor using the benchmarks I have been asked to report. Her portfolio provides an impressive articulation of her commitments to centring [sic] community through critical policy studies and to disciplinary reflexivity.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Benson’s research makes important conceptual and empirical contributions to policy and practice in forced migration and refugee resettlement. She is a rigorous and dedicated teacher who has made significant contributions to the school, the profession, and local and global communities. It is with the support of the School of Social Work Executive Committee that I recommend Giovanna Benson for promotion to the rank of associate professor of social work, with tenure, School of Social Work.



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Beth Angell  
Dean and Professor of Social Work  
School of Social Work

May 2024