

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Charli Brissey, assistant professor of dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of dance, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

M.F.A	2018	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, Dance
M.F.A	2014	Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, Kinetic Imaging
B.F.A	2008	Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, Dance & Choreography

Professional Record:

2018 - present	Assistant Professor in Dance, Department of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, University of Michigan
2015 - 2018	Graduate Student Teacher in Dance, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Brissey teaches core courses in the undergraduate dance curriculum, including composition, improvisation and technique, as well as graduate composition, pedagogy, and performance. Professor Brissey also teaches in her area of research, offering courses in screendance and new media. Professor Brissey is a compassionate and effective teacher who maintains high expectations for student engagement. Their syllabi are notable for their completeness and clarity, and careful sequencing of material. Professor Brissey has developed and shared a foundational anti-oppression ethos in their teaching, prioritizing inclusivity and transparency, and modeling a growth mindset. Their reading lists are explicitly inclusive, uplifting historically underrepresented voices. Professor Brissey brings their research into the classroom and provides ways for students to grow professionally. By retitling the course “Dance & Technology” from the former “Screendance,” they signal a defining shift away from focusing on cinematic techniques historically used in dance. They build on the course content by considering digital resources such as animation, apps, the internet, and sound design, exploring how the form is adapting to quickly changing technologies.

Professor Brissey’s student letters and course evaluations provide consistent evidence of their exemplary preparation, appropriate flexibility, and true partnership in mentoring students. Students describe classes with them as “transformative” and “empowering,” and many students cite Professor Brissey and their courses as clear favorites during their time at Michigan. Professor Brissey’s students and advisees have gone on to notable success. Recent graduates have been accepted into prestigious graduate programs, performed professionally, and secured positions in the arts sector. Professor Brissey has established themselves as a committed and effective teacher across the dance curriculum.

Professional Activities: Professor Brissey is an interdisciplinary artist and scholar who creates performances, installations, experimental videos, and written scholarship, and has been presented in various galleries, conferences, film festivals, and performance venues nationally and internationally. Their research and artistic practice integrates studies in feminist theory, technology, and science, and centers choreography as an invaluable methodology to research social, political, and ecological phenomena. Professor Brissey's most important professional contributions include, *Canis Major*, a short film that was on tour in 2020-2022, and continues to show at national and international festivals (England, France, Israel, Ireland, China, Italy, Serbia, among others). The film has won the Audience Award for Best Experimental Film at three of the most prestigious festivals: OUTFEST: Los Angeles LGBTQ Film Festival, the Paris International Lesbian and Feminist Film Festival, and the Richmond International Film Festival. Another award-winning short film, *DAY 27* (2020), has also been screened nationally and internationally. Professor Brissey's current work as choreographer and dancer, *Future Fish*, was "created through a multi-year research project exploring the choreography of oceans and benthic ecosystems as radical sites for re-imagining terrestrial futures." The work has had performances at venues including The Jam Handy in Detroit and Links Hall in Chicago. Current work also includes an evening-length dance project called *Blood Baby* made in collaboration with a Philadelphia-based artist, Meg Foley. This piece has been performed at ONE Archives at USC (the largest repository of LGBTQ materials in the world), and important venues for contemporary dance in Seattle and Philadelphia and will continue to tour in spring 2024.

While most of Professor Brissey's research output is in the form of choreography, dance performance, and film and video publications, they have also prepared an experimental monograph manuscript titled Dance We Must: Choreographies of Time, Space, and Emergent Matters, which is under review at Wesleyan University Press. They have a demonstrated track record of garnering support for their research, and they have presented their work at important conferences, including American College Dance Association (ACDA) national and regional meetings, the 2020 Gender Studies Conference at Tampere University (Finland), and Taboo, Transgression, and Transcendence Arts & Sciences Symposium at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. Professor Brissey is an exceptional artist and filmmaker whose work defies norms and expectations and has garnered national and international recognition.

Service: Professor Brissey's service to SMTD, UM, and the profession at large is exemplary. Within SMTD, they have served as a member of the SMTD Visioning Committee, DEI Faculty Action Team, EXCELErator Funding Committee, and as a member of a faculty search committee. Professor Brissey has provided energetic leadership as the Department of Dance's director of graduate studies, and, in the category of "hidden service," often advises students (both graduate and undergraduate) experiencing identity-related concerns or questions, or navigating interpersonal conflicts in classes, activities, productions, and creative projects. Outside of SMTD, Professor Brissey has been a member of the Center for World Performance Studies Advisory Committee, and a UM Senate Assembly alternate. Notably, in 2019, Professor Brissey organized the successful *Art in the Anthropocene: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Performance, Politics and Ecology* that brought together artists and scholars from a broad array of disciplines working at "the intersection of performance, art, and ecology."

For the profession, Professor Brissey has served as an adjudicator for film festivals, such as the National American College Dance Association Screendance Festival and Independent Film Festival Ypsilanti. They are active in American College Dance Association (ACDA), the discipline's leading professional organization, having served as adjudicator at the Mid-Atlantic South ACDA annual conference, and as a board member. Professor Brissey's record of service is very strong for her point in the career trajectory.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I am impressed with the quantity and variety of work Prof. Brissey has generated...Prof. Brissey is constantly engaged in making, in community-building and dreaming, in collaborating with students and colleagues, and in generating materials and contributing in manners both inward-facing (department and university) and outward-facing (local community and beyond). There is much to celebrate in Prof. Brissey's dossier."

Reviewer B: "Brissey's achievement in teaching, service, and as a screendance maker surely align with peers who work at similar institutions to U Michigan...Brissey has conducted a healthy amount of service to the field and especially to the home institution. Brissey teaches often and well, and Brissey produces research outputs regularly. Brissey could surely achieve promotion at my current institution."

Reviewer C: "...while many contemporary choreographers both within and beyond the academy currently use film technologies as a result of the exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor Brissey's skill in this area both predates and far surpasses what have become the post-pandemic norms around the use of film in/as choreographic work. The sheer number of awards Professor Brissey's dance films have received is clear evidence of their expertise and field leadership in this area. Indeed, as I reviewed the filmic components of the dossier, I made a note to add Brissey's DAY 27 to my graduate choreography syllabus, as a truly exceptional model of screendance."

Reviewer D: "Assistant Professor Charli Brissey's work is grounded in best practice, and in this way, it fulfills the School of Dance and the University of Michigan's mission. [Their] work provides contributions to the field of dance that go beyond scholarship, addresses studies in feminist theory, technology, and science, and centers on artmaking and choreography. In addition, [their] awards and professional invitations to present scholarly work stand out as exemplars because they are infrequent for candidates at this stage in their careers. Assistant Professor Charli Brissey demonstrates that [they have] reached a high level of achievement...In my estimation, Assistant Professor Charli Brissey could have been reviewed for promotion to Associate Professor before 2023; [they are] at the level of eminence that any respectable institution of higher learning would seek in their most highly qualified faculty. [Their] list of accomplishments and international recognition represents a candidate that exceeds the expectations for promotion."

Reviewer E: "The originality of the work is breathtaking. Professor Brissey tackles many tough issues in our world and brings to light what society may not be ready to face. [They do] this with beauty, intimacy, rigor and imagination. The work truly inspires and offers reflection for oneself. [Their] professional accomplishments of research around gender and somatics I find outstanding. Professor Brissey's work here is truly an impact on the field, especially if you are looking through the lens of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, especially since the context is rooted in the

intersections of self and relationship/identity movement forms. This type of research has been on the fringe of mainstream dance, but Professor Brissey's creative work through her investigations and process has been changing that landscape on many fronts...[they are] a role model, listener, knowledge learner and mentor. The way [they share] information all the while supplying feedback that leads students back to the work itself is profound."

Reviewer F: "The amount of grant and fellowship support Brissey has secured is a testament to the quality, reliability and durability of their research and creative work. It appears from their curriculum vitae that they have received nearly \$12,000 of support over the past decade. This may not sound like a lot from the perspective of a research scientist, but for a dance artist at the early stages of their career, it is substantial and significant...Brissey's standing is equivalent to or surpasses others approaching tenure decisions at other Tier 1 research universities. The complexity, depth, reach, quality and quantity of all areas of their work are extraordinary...Brissey easily meets the requirements for promotion and would receive tenure at [my institution]. Their research, teaching and service surpasses all expectations. Over the coming years, I will be watching Brissey, eager to find out what this unique, intelligent and incredibly talented rising star does next."

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Brissey is a widely respected, award-winning interdisciplinary artist working at the creative boundaries of their discipline. They are a collaborative and creative teacher, and a highly valued and effective mentor and advisor, respected for their success with both graduate and undergraduate students. Professor Brissey is a generous collaborator and engaged in significant ways in service to the school, the university, and their profession. With the support of the school's Executive Committee, I enthusiastically recommend Charli Brissey for promotion to the rank of associate professor of dance, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



David Gier
Paul Boylan Collegiate Professor of Music
and Dean, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

May 2024