

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Sara Heller, assistant professor of economics, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of economics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2013	University of Chicago
M.P.P.	2008	Georgetown University
B.A.	2002	Harvard University

Professional Record:

2020-2021	Visiting Research Scholar, Industrial Relations Section, Princeton
2017-present	Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Michigan
2017-present	Faculty Associate, Population Studies Center, Institute of for Social Research, University of Michigan University
2017	Visiting Scholar, Department of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2016	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2016-2017	Secondary Appointment, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania
2013-2017	Assistant Professor of Criminology, University of Pennsylvania

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Heller has been a successful instructor at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students find her undergraduate course on the economics of crime to be challenging and rewarding. Her graduate course on experimental methods provides students with the tools needed to implement and analyze randomized control trials. She has served on several completed dissertations, organized a seminar for students to present their work in progress, and supervised two undergraduate theses.

Research: Professor Heller is an applied economist studying the effects of programs to reduce violence, crime, dropout, and unemployment among youth in the U.S. She has become a leading scholar in the design, implementation, and analysis of cutting-edge randomized controlled trials to address causes and remedies for these social issues. Her research has demonstrated the positive impact of summer youth employment programs and cognitive behavioral therapy reducing violence and improving graduation rates, employment, and earnings. Given the policy relevance of her work, she regularly advises policy makers. Her work has been featured in numerous national publications and has been referred to by two U.S. presidents and their administrations.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Heller, Sara B. “Summer Jobs Reduce Violence among Disadvantaged Youth.” *Science* 346, no. 6214 (2014): 1219-1223.

Heller, Sara B., Anuj K. Shah, Jonathan Guryan, Jens Ludwig, Sendhil Mullainathan, and Harold A. Pollack. “Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132, no. 1 (2017): 1-54.

Davis, Jonathan M.V. and Sara B. Heller. “Rethinking the Benefits of Youth Employment Programs: The Heterogeneous Effects of Summer Jobs.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 102, no. 4 (2020): 664-677.

Bhatt, Monica, Sara B. Heller, Max Kapustin, Marianne Bertrand, and Chris Blattman. “Predicting and Preventing Gun Violence: Experimental Results from READI Chicago.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (accepted).

Service: Professor Heller has had numerous roles in the Department of Economics, having served on the admissions committee, social committee, diversity committee, space committee, graduate program committee, undergraduate program committee, and a senior hiring committee. She has co-organized the weekly labor seminar and the labor lunch. She has also spoken about her research to the Provost’s Advisory Council.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “Professor Heller is a first-rate scholar tackling incredibly important issues in the crime space... In a short time, she has become one of the leading academic scholars engaged in the economics of crime.”

Reviewer (B): “Heller has an impressive research track record and a well-developed and ambitious research agenda on how to improve socio-economic outcomes among disadvantaged youth in the United States... Her work is both of great and direct public policy importance and also of considerable intellectual interest. She has rapidly established herself as one of the leading scholars of disadvantaged youth in the US.”

Reviewer (C): “[Professor Heller] has written important papers on the effectiveness of programs that connect economically-disadvantaged youth and young adults at high risk of involvement with gun violence with summer jobs and provide socio-emotional skill training... Her work is careful and thoughtful, and she has not shied away from trying to implement studies in some of the most difficult settings to carry out field experiments... I cannot think of another scholar at her stage doing work on crime, violence, or youth unemployment whose work is as ambitious and impactful as [hers].”

Reviewer (D): “[Professor Heller’s] work has also had a significant impact on the research frontier—both in terms of topic and, I think, in terms of method.”

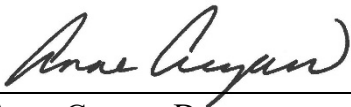
Reviewer (E): “...Heller is a versatile, insightful, and always careful applied microeconomist whose work illuminates crucial topics spanning the economics of crime and violence prevention, labor economics, and social economics. She has emerged as a leader in the design, implementation, and analysis of clever and compelling randomized-controlled trials (RCTs) to make progress in assessing the causes of and potential remedies for key U.S. social problems

related to crime and violence, unemployment and unstable employment, and school dropout behavior among youth and young adults.”

Reviewer (F): “[I]n the Economics of Crime field, [Professor Heller] is one of the leading scholars in her cohort...[she] is one of the top empirical crime economist [sic] with a bright future ahead.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Heller is a tremendous scholar who has done important research evaluating programs to reduce violence and crime among youth in the US. She is a dedicated teacher and advisor and has provided service to the department, university, and the broader policy making community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Sara Heller be promoted to the rank of associate professor of economics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Anne Curzan, Dean
Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor of
English Language and Literature, Linguistics,
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Arthur F. Thurnau Professor
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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