

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

Michael G. Mueller-Smith, assistant professor of economics, without tenure, 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.   | 2015 | Columbia University      |
| M. Phil | 2012 | Columbia University      |
| M.A.    | 2011 | Columbia University      |
| B.A.    | 2006 | Johns Hopkins University |

Professional Record:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 2017-present | Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Michigan   |
| 2017-present | Faculty Associate, Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan          |
| 2015-2017    | NICHD Post-doctoral Fellow, Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Mueller-Smith has been a successful teacher at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He teaches an advanced elective course on the economics of crime that satisfies the college's upper-level writing requirement. He also teaches in the Ph.D. labor economics sequence. Professor Mueller-Smith has been an active advisor, with thirteen graduate and thirteen undergraduate advisees.

Research: Professor Mueller-Smith studies the causal effects of criminal justice and social policy on recidivism, earnings, and other household outcomes. He partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to create the Criminal Justice Administrative Records System (CJARS) which combines criminal justice records covering 84% of the U.S. population with other Census data sets. He has used CJARS and other data sets to answer questions such as: How does criminal justice-involvement correlate with economic inequality, racial disparities, and family structure? How do events like criminal charges, convictions, and incarceration of caregivers contribute to household instability for minor children? What are the implications of criminal justice-involvement for retirement, the ability to work, or start a business?

Recent and Significant Publications:

Finlay, Keith, Michael Mueller-Smith, and Brittany Street. "Children's Indirect Exposure to the U.S. Justice System: Evidence from Longitudinal Links between Survey and Administrative Data." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 138, no. 4 (November 2023): 2181-2224.

Deshpande, Manasi, and Michael Mueller-Smith. “Does Welfare Prevent Crime? The Criminal Justice Outcomes of Youth Removed from SSI.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 137, no. 4 (November 2022), 2263-2307.

Currie, Janet, Michael Mueller-Smith, and Maya Rossin-Slater. “Violence while in Utero: The Impact of Assaults During Pregnancy on Birth Outcomes.” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 104, no. 3 (May 2022): 525-540.

Mueller-Smith, Michael, and Kevin Schnepel. “Diversion in the Criminal Justice System.” *Review of Economic Studies* 88, no. 2 (March 2021): 883–936.

Service: Professor Mueller-Smith has served on numerous committees in the Department of Economics and is currently serving on the department’s executive committee. Outside of the university, he has served on the American Economic Association’s Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession, the Arnold Ventures/NORC Expert Panel on Firearms Data Infrastructure, and the Michigan Data Convening Advisory Board.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “I am very impressed with both the quantity and quality of [Professor Mueller-Smith’s] CJARS-related work. I normally counsel assistant professors not to lead projects of this magnitude before tenure because the infrastructure investment usually precludes publishing fast enough in high-quality journals. CJARS is a notable exception to this advice.”

Reviewer (B): “Michael Mueller-Smith has, in short term, made some of the most important, interesting and creative contributions to the economics of crime—moving the frontier away from a focus on the deterrent effects of criminal justice policies towards a more foundational exploration of the causes of crime—poverty and a lack of resources...I cannot think of another junior scholar (or many senior scholars) who have created something as grand and innovative as CJARS.”

Reviewer (C): “[Professor Mueller-Smith’s] most important work helps us understand how the U.S. criminal justice system impacts disadvantaged and socially excluded groups using convincing empirical designs and *exceptional* data.”

Reviewer (D): “[Professor Mueller-Smith] is clearly a leader in the economics of crime, and he makes contributions to applied microeconomics more generally through careful implementation of frontier econometric techniques.”

Reviewer (E): “...I can honestly say I have never before written a letter for anyone who has contributed more public goods to the profession than [Professor Mueller-Smith]...I teach [Professor Mueller-Smith’s 2022 QJE paper with Deshpande in my] graduate public economics class, where I also ask the students to read the paper in advance for an extended discussion. In my view, this is one of the best papers in public economics that we’ve seen in the last decade.”

Reviewer (F): “He’s a rising star and one of the very best people in the country—or in the world—in the economics of crime field, unconditional on seniority...The thing that *really* sets [Professor Mueller-Smith] apart is that he is, without exaggeration, changing the field of the economics of crime...He’s in a whole class to himself.”

Summary of Recommendation

Professor Mueller-Smith is a tremendous scholar who has done important research on the impact that the criminal justice system has on life outcomes such as employment, earnings, retirement, and the welfare of dependent children. He is an excellent teacher and willing advisor, who has provided service to the department, profession, and broader policymaking community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Michael G. Mueller-Smith be promoted to the rank of associate professor of economics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anne Curzan", is written over a horizontal line.

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

May 2024