

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

Megan L. Sweeney, associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, and associate professor of women's and gender studies, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of English language and literature, with tenure, professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, and professor of women's and gender studies, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2002	Duke University
M.A.	1997	The Pennsylvania State University
B.A.	1989	Northwestern University

Professional Record:

2010-present	Associate Professor of English Language and Literature, Afroamerican and African Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies, University of Michigan Faculty Affiliate: Joint Program in English and Education Faculty Associate: American Culture
2004-2010	Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature and Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
2002-2004	Adjunct Assistant Professor of English and Women's Studies, Georgetown University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: In her thirteen years of teaching since her promotion to associate professor in 2010, Professor Sweeney has designed and taught eight new courses for undergraduate programs. She has taught with great success at all levels, from first-year writing to upper-level courses. In this same period, she has supervised eighteen undergraduate honors theses and mentored students in a variety of formal capacities as well. In addition, she has served on forty-five Ph.D. committees, often in the capacity of the chair or co-chair. Professor Sweeney's teaching record is exemplary in every way as has been recognized by her Arthur Thurnau Professorship, the Class of 1923 Teaching Award, and the John D'Arms Award for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities.

Research: Since her last promotion, Professor Sweeney has authored two books, one an edited collection of narratives of reading by incarcerated women and a second monograph, Mendings, that draws on theoretical and conceptual work across disciplines to weave together a narrative about family, interpersonal relationships, and grief. This book is as impressively creative as it is theoretically sophisticated. It applies research strategies taken from autotheory and creative nonfiction to an expanded idea of "the archive," and links autoethnography with issues of material culture, political critique, feminist thought, aesthetics, and social analysis. In addition, Professor Sweeney is the author of a number of articles that bring together her interests in material culture, African American studies, and feminist thought.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Mendings. Durham: Duke University Press, 2023.

The Story Within Us: Women Prisoners Reflect on Reading. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

“Solo’s Life Narrative: Freedom for Me Was an Evolution, Not a Revolution,” in *Incarceration in Michigan: Grounding the National Debate in State Practice*, edited by Lynn Orilla Scott and Curtis Stokes, 87-118. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2020.

“The Rickety Bridge: Prisoners and Human Rights in the Literature Classroom,” in *Teaching Human Rights in Literary and Cultural Studies*, edited by Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Alexandra Schultheis, 294-304. New York: MLA, 2015.

Service: Since receiving tenure, Professor Sweeney has held one or more major administrative positions during every term of active service. She has made significant contributions to all three units with which she is affiliated: Afroamerican and African Studies, English Language and Literature, and Women’s and Gender Studies. This work has included revising both undergraduate and graduate curricula, rethinking core elements of graduate education, reconceptualizing pedagogical training and support for graduate student instructors, expanding and redistributing resources to support creative writing, and participating in the daily problem-solving and intricate interpersonal negotiations required for navigating complex contemporary contexts. Her leadership in her three units has been sought out and admired by all who have benefited from it.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “I thought I was a good colleague, who did my fair share of institutional service, until I learned what Sweeney has done.”

Reviewer (B): “[In Professor Sweeney] I see abundant evidence of someone who is hitting on all cylinders, making powerful scholarly contributions, teaching a wide range of necessary classes, and providing students and colleagues with generous service and collegiality.”

Reviewer (C): “Reading the passionate, immersive, fierce and dedicated research of Dr. Sweeney is to remind oneself all over again as to why some of us choose the solitary path of being writers and often under-appreciated teachers, and why teaching is a powerful place to change a life, even two lives, one book at a time.”

Reviewer (D): “*Mendings* contributes in meaningful and compelling ways to studies of autobiography, culture, fashion, gender, materiality, sustainability, textiles, and time.”

Reviewer (E): “Professor Sweeney’s scholarly achievement is cutting-edge, highly creative, nuanced, archivally rich, and perhaps, most importantly, asks perceptive questions that few of us dare to ask.”

Reviewer (F): “Dr. Sweeney’s work evinces an enviable disciplinary range and depth, all while exploring the theory *and* practice of engaging, beautiful, and accessible writing.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Given the strengths of Professor Sweeney's case in all three criteria for promotion—research, teaching and mentoring, and leadership, service, and governance, the Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Megan L. Sweeney be promoted to the rank of professor of English language and literature, with tenure, Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, and women's and gender studies, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anne Curzan", is positioned above 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

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