The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Karen M. Staller, Ph.D., J.D., professor of social work in the School of Social Work, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2026.

Professor Staller received a juris doctor degree in 1985 from Cornell University School of Law and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1999 from Columbia University School of Social Work. Professor Staller joined the University of Michigan in 2001. Over the course of an exceptional career, Professor Staller has consistently challenged orthodoxy, proposing new approaches to qualitative research inquiry, social welfare history, social policy, and the philosophy of knowledge. Professor Staller's contributions include three renowned books – *Runaways: How the Sixties Counterculture Shaped Today's Practices and Policies*, *Seeking Justice in Child Sexual Abuse*, and *New York's Newsboys: Charles Loring Brace and the Founding of the Children's Aid Society* – which integrate historical inquiry, legal analysis, qualitative methodology, and social welfare policy as it relates to child wellbeing.

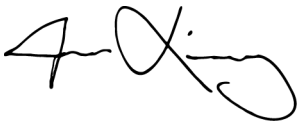
For over a decade, Professor Staller served as editor-in-chief for the North and South American Continents of *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*. She now serves as the journal's special consulting editor. Professor Staller has influenced thousands of scholars, through her own writing as well as through rigorous mentorship of authors and her focus on qualitative methodological innovation. Notably, Professor Staller delivered the 2018 Keynote Address at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry.

Professor Staller was awarded the University of Michigan Distinguished Faculty Governance Award in 2015. Within the School of Social Work, she was elected to multiple terms on the School's Executive Committee, Promotion and Tenure Committee and Faculty Grievance Hearing Panel. Her university-level governance service included service as an elected representative to the University Senate Assembly (2008–11), and to the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA), serving as vice chair in 2012–13 and chair in 2013–14. She held faculty governance and oversight roles as a faculty grievance monitor, head faculty grievance monitor, and member of the Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action.

In recognition of her exceptional contributions to student mentorship and teaching, Professor Staller was awarded the Distinguished Faculty Award from the School of Social Work (2019), the Doctoral Student Organization Mentoring Award (2019), and the Doctoral Program Legacy Award (2026).

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **Karen M. Staller, professor emerita of social work.**

Respectfully submitted:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

November 2026