



AMERICAN
EVALUATION
ASSOCIATION

AEA Board Candidates

Board President-Elect Candidates

**Tessie Catsambas
Jonathan Morell**

Candidate Name: Tessie Tzavaras Catsambas

Board Position Candidacy: President-Elect

Title: CEO

Affiliation: EnCompass LLC

Discipline: evaluation, management and training

Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Focused on practice, and publishing on adaptation of methods for field experience

Geographic Representation: United States and international

Area(s) of Work Application: organizational evaluation, mixed methods, evaluation capacity building, appreciative evaluation, systems thinking, participatory, and gender-responsive evaluation.

AEA Member Since: 2002

AEA Positions Held:

Chair, AEA International Working Group (2016-present)

EvalPartners International Award for creativity, leadership and exceptional contributions to the Global Evaluation Community (2015)

Member, EvalGender+, EvalPartners

Program co-Chair, American Evaluation Association Annual Conference 2015, Chicago

Co-chair, EvalPartners Task Force to promote an Enabling Environment for Evaluation (2012-2015)

Member of the AEA International Working Group (2014-present)

IOCE Advisors Group (2014-present)

Representative of the AEA to the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (Jan 2012 – Dec 2014)

Executive Group Member, EvalPartners (Jan 2012 – Dec 2014)

Member of the AEA Finance Advisory Task Force (2009-2011)

Chair, International Auction (2009-2010)

Co-Chair of the International and Cross-Cultural Evaluation Thematic Interest Group (2008-2011)

Nominee Statement:

This is an important time for the evaluation profession in the United States and in many other countries. In a world challenged to find ways to resolve conflict and make decisions peacefully, evaluation offers a process that promises productive discussions on common criteria, inclusive and systematic approaches for multi-stakeholder engagement, and a rigorous review of evidence. My candidacy for AEA president-elect position is founded on my deep belief that our profession is highly relevant and needed today, and on my commitment to promote evaluation as a core service for decision makers and the public to weave their desired futures together.

Since joining the AEA in 2002, I have been privileged to serve in different roles supporting member engagement, financial management and international representation. My goal in these roles has been threefold: to get the work done efficiently, to enable others to have access and serve, and to leave something good behind. For example, as co-chair of the International and Cross-Cultural TIG, working with other excellent colleagues, we enhanced the profile of the AEA's International Travel Awards by intensive outreach, which included mentorship of new applicants to help improve the quality of proposals and navigate AEA's processes. The result was an increase in the number of applicants from 7 to more than 50, and a concomitant meaningful engagement among members.

While serving on the Finance Committee, I helped manage the first AEA audit to safeguard the AEA's interests bringing to bear my past experience as CEO/CFO in my private practice. We also strengthened the AEA's due diligence by adding a background check in the presidential election process that is still used today.

My most recent contributions to the AEA were in my capacity as the AEA representative to the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), focusing on enhancing the global profile of our discipline. During my service time, we built a new strong coalition—EvalPartners—that linked evaluation advocates in evaluation associations from different countries, United Nations evaluators and policy makers. As a member of the EvalPartners Management Group and Executive Committee, I contributed to stimulating volunteer engagement, responsible stewardship of EvalPartners' funds, and the adoption of a UN Resolution that declared 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. My proudest contribution to our AEA community, however, was in expanding access to and engagement of AEA members to EvalPartners. Now, the AEA is represented not only on the IOCE board, but also in global evaluation networks on gender+, youth, indigenous, and evaluation policy including the role of evaluation in the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, we have an AEA International Working Group advising our Executive Director on international strategy (which I currently chair).

I bring to my AEA volunteer service both my love for evaluation and my extensive management experience. Seventeen years ago, I co-founded EnCompass LLC, a company that provides evaluation and training services in the United States and internationally, and now employs more than 70 staff and 100 consultants. I have personally managed evaluations over the past 25 years in areas as diverse as economic development, education, health, and the evaluation of organizational effectiveness. A firm believer that theory informs practice and vice versa, I have published on topics such as Appreciative Evaluation, creative logic modeling, and evaluation competencies.

If elected, my pledge is to nurture a vibrant evaluation community of practice that promotes partnership, scholarship, open exchanges, and mentorship; a community that welcomes and encourages young evaluators, delights in intellectual discourse, and makes space for differences in practice and thinking. As we grow, we must pay attention to member services, accepted evaluator competencies, and strategies for strengthening the visibility of evaluation with many stakeholders who can benefit from it. We should increasingly use technology to enable virtual AEA communities to form and share, while being vigilant to preserve our culture of intimacy, mutual support and openness. Key partnerships in the United States and overseas are also an important strategy to enrich evaluation and position it strongly as a profession.

It has been an honor to be nominated for AEA president-elect, and it would be a privilege to serve you if elected. I would cherish the opportunity to continue working closely with the AEA Executive Director and the SmithBucklin team, the Board as well as our community in this new capacity. My aspiration is to promote the visibility of evaluation, and to disseminate an exciting vision for the AEA's role both in the United States and the international arena.

Candidate Name: Jonathan (Jonny) A. Morell

Board Position Candidacy: President

Title: Dr.

Affiliation:

Director of Evaluation, Syntek Technologies
Principal, 4.669 Evaluation and Planning
Editor *Evaluation and Program Planning*

Discipline: Psychology

Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Practitioner

Geographic Representation: Midwest

Area(s) of Work Application:

Industrial Safety
R&D
Complexity in Evaluation

AEA Member Since: 1985

AEA Positions Held:

Board Member
Elections

TIG member: Systems; Integrating Technology Into Evaluation; International and Cross-Cultural Evaluation; Research, Technology and Development Evaluation; Systems in Evaluation; Use and Influence of Evaluation

Evaluation at local, regional, national and international levels is entering a time of decreasing respect for the contribution of data to good decision making. Our challenge is to reverse this trend. Working to meet this challenge will be my goal as AEA president.

Over the years I have been involved in AEA in many ways – Board Member, service on the elections committee, one of the originators of the Systems in Evaluation TIG, and a frequent participant in annual meetings. I am awed and grateful that AEA has awarded me both the Ingle Service Award, and the Lazarsfeld Evaluation Theory award.

AEA is both a collection of individuals, and a community. To support its members, AEA needs to improve their technical skills and sharpen their judgement in applying those skills. I am convinced that to be a successful evaluator, one must both respect data and trust judgement. We also need to help others appreciate this perspective. We have our rationality. Our stakeholders have theirs. All the rationalities make sense, they just don't make the same sense. Our challenge is to advocate for evaluation use while understanding and respecting the good reasons that others have for acting otherwise.

Our members engage AEA with varying intensity. For some, we are a primary professional affiliation. For others, we are secondary. Some avail themselves of many of our offerings. Some, of few. Some see themselves as "evaluators". Others, as social scientists, administrators, or policy makers who sometimes engage with evaluation. We need to recognize these stances, and meet the unique needs of each segment of our membership.

As a collective, AEA represents “evaluation” to policy and program planners, to other associations with interests similar to ours, and to citizens. Also as a community, we nurture evolution in thought – theory, methodology, competencies. We must continue to advocate and nurture in ways that are creative and powerful.

I believe that AEA’s environment will change in the next few years. The needs and interests of our clients will change. The heterogeneity of stakeholders scrutinizing our findings will broaden. Resources available for doing evaluation will change. I propose five broad strategies to meet these challenges

- 1- AEA has been very active and effective in working with government to advocate for evaluation. We must continue this work in an ever more deliberate and comprehensive manner.
- 2- AEA offers many modes of training to its members, ranging from short coffee break webinars, to in-depth multi-session offerings. This variety of form is matched by a rich choice in content. These already successful efforts must be expanded so that we can appeal both to the broad needs of many of our members, and also, to the niche needs of small groups of our membership.
- 3- We need to draw more intensely on the “middle” of AEA’s structure, i.e. from TIG leadership. That is the source of knowledge about changing demands from customers, the needs of individual members, the challenges facing specific areas of evaluation, and the diversity of skills, of viewpoint, and of people needed for our organization to thrive.
- 4- Diversity matters. We must pursue it not only because it is a social good, but also because diversity will make us better able adapt as our environment changes.
- 5- We need to honor the work of others who are not part of our community, but who also do evaluation. Having multiple centers of activity serves the public good by increasing the diversity of approaches to understanding how programs work, and what they accomplish. AEA offers a unique contribution in terms of evaluation theory, methodology, and competencies. We must continue to develop and share these contributions. But we must also form rich networks of cooperation with the people and groups who do evaluation from other perspectives.

My confidence in these strategies comes from insight I have gained from moving among three domains: 1) hands-on evaluation of many different kinds of programs – industrial safety, R&D, development, health, education, mental health; 2) original research on applying complexity to evaluation and to understanding unintended consequences; and 3) duties as Editor-in-Chief *Evaluation and Program Planning: An International Journal*. If given the privilege of being your president, I will do all in my power to apply this understanding to developing our people and increasing respect for the role of data in good decision making.

Board Member-at-Large Candidates

Eric Barela

Wanda Casillas

Jara Dean-Coffey

Bianca Montrosse-Moorhead

Leah Goldstein Moses

Boris Volkov

Candidate Name: Eric Barela

Board Position Candidacy: Board Member-at-Large

Title: Measurement & Evaluation Manager

Affiliation: Salesforce.org

Discipline: Evaluation

Practitioner Focus: Internal evaluation, technology evaluation, education evaluation, qualitative inquiry

Geographic Representation: San Francisco, CA (Western US, urban)

Area(s) of Work Application: Research on evaluation, K-12 education, technology innovation, corporate social responsibility

AEA Member Since: 2000

AEA Positions Held: TIG Co-chair: Internal Evaluation TIG (2016); Program Co-chair: Qualitative Methods TIG (2006-2015), Internal Evaluation TIG (Present); Member Survey working group Co-chair (2014-2016); Evaluator Competencies Working Group Member (2015-Present); Guiding Principles Task Force Member (Present); *American Journal of Evaluation* Editorial Advisory Board Member (2008-Present); San Francisco Bay Area Evaluators Leadership Advisory Team Member (2015-Present)

I am honored to have been chosen as a candidate for a member-at-large position on the AEA Board. I have a great desire to give back to AEA as it has given me so much throughout my career. AEA looks very different than it did back when I first joined in 2000. Our big tent has gotten much bigger. I feel that AEA must work to advance the field of evaluation while also supporting those who practice it. If AEA is able to meet its organizational needs while meeting individual evaluators where they are and giving them a voice, we will be an even stronger community of practice. If I am elected, I will work to ensure the AEA will be able to do both as effectively as possible.

After obtaining my Ph.D. from UCLA, I have spent most of my career as an internal evaluator. In that capacity, I have learned that organizations thrive when stakeholder needs are met at all levels, from the organization itself down to the individual employee. This is especially important for evaluators who may not feel listened to by AEA and for those who only have contact with their local affiliates.

I have had the privilege of working side-by-side with many brilliant colleagues over the years through my involvement with AEA. Regardless of the challenge, I have rolled up my sleeves alongside some truly brilliant people and have worked toward ensuring that AEA represents the cutting edge with respect to evaluation theory, policy, and practice. Whether it is planning a conference program, reviewing a manuscript, or codifying evaluator competencies that resonate with as many members as possible, there is an energy around making sure the work being done really reflects the best the association has to offer. Frankly, this energy is infectious

and is one of the reasons I decided to run for a position on the Board. As Co-chair of the most recent Member Survey Working Group, I got to know the Board's Ends Goals pretty well. If elected to the Board, I would work to ensure that the organization strives to meet its Ends Goals and that they reflect the cutting edge of our field.

The need to ensure that members who want a voice have one is something that also drove me to run for a position on the Board. As a gay Latino, I have dealt with many attempts to have my voice silenced. Through AEA, I found my voice as an evaluator. After working on the Member Survey, I learned that there are still many members who feel like they do not have a voice within AEA. I need to change that. If elected, I will work to ensure that those who have something to contribute are given an avenue to do so. Seventeen years ago, AEA accepted me with open arms. I want to make sure that AEA's arms remain open.

During my time working as an internal evaluator for the Los Angeles Unified School District, I learned a very important lesson about collaboration. When those affected by the evaluation have a voice, my work is strengthened. This lesson has come into sharp focus during my time with San Francisco Bay Area Evaluators. I have been helping to lead the organization since 2015. In that time, I have learned that there are quite a few evaluators in the Bay Area and that many of them think the only way they can benefit from being an AEA member is by attending the annual conference, if they even know AEA exists at all. Bringing together this group has been a highlight of my career. Many of my local colleagues now know that a community of like-minded professionals exists and that there are resources available to them. In turn, they have influenced my work in a positive way. The links between AEA and its local affiliates need to be strong and I intend to work toward strengthening these ties if elected.

I believe I can best contribute to the AEA Board by doing three things: 1) working to ensure that AEA's goals are met and truly advance our field, 2) providing avenues for increased contribution from members who may not feel like their voice is currently heard, and 3) strengthen our local affiliate network to meet evaluator needs while advancing AEA's mission. If you believe these are worthwhile contributions, I hope I can count on your vote.

Candidate Name: Wanda D. Casillas, Ph.D.
Board Position Candidacy: Board Member at Large
Title: Specialist Master/Evaluation Specialist
Affiliation: Deloitte Consulting, LLP
Discipline: Developmental Psychology
Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Culturally Responsive Evaluation
Geographic Representation: South East- Georgia
Area(s) of Work Application: Health Care/ Federal Government/ Education
AEA Member Since: 2007
AEA Positions Held: Alumna of the GEDI Program/ Communications Chair of LARED TIG/
Mentorship Co-Chair of MIE TIG

It was my privilege to join the American Evaluation Association (AEA) as a first-year graduate student over 9 years ago. In that time, AEA has been instrumental in my development as an evaluation professional. However, I suspect this statement would hold true for much of the organization's constituency- a testament of the extent to which the organization successfully operates as a community. What may be less common among the membership at large is the direct impact that the Association has had on my academic career and personal development- and the reasons whereby AEA has garnered my loyalty, respect, and utter support.

I was provided entry into AEA as a GEDI Fellow in 2008. This was a critical time for me in which I contemplated leaving my PhD program (thereby sacrificing an unquantifiable opportunity for a world-class education) because I could not make the cultural adjustments needed to be successful. I failed to see how continuing my education, which was a huge personal sacrifice in many respects, would allow me to become the professional I imagined- a person empowered with knowledge and position to advocate for communities and support social change. Dr. Bill Trochim and Dr. Rodney Hopson hoped that the AEA community would support and help guide me through the acculturation. They were correct. The Association's membership acted as a buffer to protect the parts of my professional goals at risk of loss through acculturation and acted as a support to nurture areas of development that the traditional graduate program is not designed to address.

After nearly a decade of receiving critical support from AEA and its membership, I believe the community has developed me into a professional and individual that now has much to offer in return. As such, I seek a position as an AEA Board Member at Large beginning in January 2018. I have had the opportunity to make small impacts over the years of my membership. For instance, I am a founding member of the newly formed LaRED Topical Interest Group (TIG), which focuses on LatinX issues in evaluation and applied research. I am also the communications chair for this TIG. I co-chair the mentorship work lane for the Multi-ethnic Issues in Evaluation TIG where we are spearheading a mentorship program for evaluators new to culturally responsive approaches. I have served in both of these roles for 2 years. I have also

reviewed abstracts for the AEA conference every year, served as a reviewer of article submissions to AJE and NDE, contributed to the AEA 365 Blog, and have published in the AEA journals. I contribute actively to the Association's thought leadership on ethical, culturally responsive practices in evaluation and have provided formal and informal feedback to Association efforts, such as the development of core competencies.

Additionally, my passion for mentoring professionals and students new to the Association is evident in the informal relationships I hone and prioritize. It is an honor to be continually leveraged as a mentor and advocate for the GEDI cohorts that have followed since my fellowship. I continue to urge my employer, Deloitte Consulting, to sponsor a GEDI fellow as soon as possible for our Community of Excellence. Within my firm, I actively encourage junior staff to join AEA, present, and attend conferences. More importantly, I work to integrate the Association's values and missions into our evaluation practice and internal training as a corporate entity with the potential to greatly influence how our clients engage with and implement evaluation in federal spaces.

I believe I am uniquely qualified to serve on the board given the appreciation I hold for an organization and community that continues to serve as an academic, professional, and personal "home" for my commitment to social advocacy and principled evaluation. I also believe that I bring a perspective rooted in lived experience, professional experience, and commitment to diversity that would benefit 1) the work of envisioning the Association's future, 2) the Association's action planning, and 3) the Association's decision-making. In this current phase of my career and for the last 2 years, I have worked to influence federal evaluations and the corporate perspective on evaluations to embody ethical and culturally responsive approaches as a standard for quality evaluation, assessment, and monitoring. I am excited by the prospect of continuing to encourage this brand of evaluation and dedicated to carrying this work forward to a role on the AEA Board.

Candidate Name: Jara Dean-Coffey
Board Position Candidacy: Board Member-At-Large
Title: Principal and Founder
Affiliation: Luminare Group (formerly jdcPartnerships)
Discipline: Leadership Development, Youth Development and Youth Leadership, Social/Structural/System Change Efforts
Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Equable Evaluation and Evaluative Thinking
Geographic Representation: San Francisco Bay Area
Area(s) of Work Application: Philanthropy and NonProfit Sector
AEA Member Since: 2001
AEA Positions Held: TIG member and Annual Conference Session Reviewer

I believe we have a moral imperative for our work to contribute to the world being a better place for all. A need ever more pressing given the seemingly increasing daily attacks on human and civil rights domestically and internationally. For that to happen we must evaluate and make explicit our own values and intentions. We must expand our notions of evidence, truth and knowledge and determine how principles of equity infuse our work, regardless of theory and method, population focus and evaluator demographic. The terms “objectivity” and “neutrality” hide bias and a lack of proximity to the work in which many are engaged and for which evaluation is supposed to be useful. If our efforts are to have any worth, we also must ensure that those who consume and use evaluation have an evaluative mindset grounded in context and values. They must be partners in this work with us.

A core piece of my work over the past years has been to elevate the discourse around the role of values and equity in evaluation, while also evolving evaluation so that it meets its full potential of being a tool in service of equity. I currently lead the collaborative Equitable Evaluation Project with the Center for Evaluation Innovation and The Johnson Center researching the intersection of equity and evaluation in philanthropic practice. The first phase of our work will offer insights, tools and recommendations for adoption of equitable evaluation principles in philanthropy and nonprofits. It is critical that we shift the paradigm so that our work matters more and to more communities.

Over the years I have contributed to the evaluation field in multiple ways. I have served on numerous AEA TIGs (e.g., Organizational Learning and Evaluation, Multicultural TIG) which helps me understand the depth and breadth of the membership as well as the conversations of interest (and disinterest). I was a member of a 2010 task force charged with answering “What is evaluation?” I have been published in NDE, and am currently working on paper for AJE for a special edition on race and evaluation. I have presented 11 times at AEA with leading practitioners and theorists who are advancing field dialogue and practice. Session titles include

Equity in Evaluation Practice: Raising the Bar in Philanthropy (2013) Quality in Evaluation-Who Defines, Who Determines and Who Cares? (2015) and Advancing Equity Through Evaluation: A Dialogue Across Different Standpoints (2016). I have also been a reviewer for the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment annual conference (2015, 2016 and 2017) as well as an attendee.

For 20+ years I have had a national practice, formerly known as jdcPartnerships and now Luminare Group, working with nonprofits and foundations offering strategy and evaluation consulting and capacity building primarily focusing on evaluative thinking. This has afforded me the opportunity to understand the challenges, opportunities and trends in these sectors as well as influence practice. The toolkit I bring includes strong and creative facilitation, strategy and decision-making skills and an understanding of what supports people to come together in service of shared aims leveraging their assets.

By designing and delivering a wide arrange of evaluative thinking capacity building efforts for grantees of foundations (i.e., Hawai'i Community Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation) as well as foundations and intermediaries (i.e., Association of Black Foundation Executives and the Forum for Regional Associations of Grantmakers), I know how to make evaluation and evaluative practice accessible and meaningful. This May I led a well-attended and well-received session on equitable evaluation for Grantmakers for Effective Organizations as the public kick off the Equitable Evaluation Project referenced earlier. I am a Steering Committee member of the National Network of Consultants to Grantmakers. I also serve on the Advisory Body of the Center for Evaluation Innovation. I understand volunteer service as well as the interworking of a membership association. These experiences and relationships can serve AEA as philanthropy is a key consumer, user and producer of evaluation. It is important that we are in dialogue with them through multiple venues about how evaluation is defined, designed, delivered and what and who is shaping those decisions.

I am eager to apply my skills, experience and relationships to strengthen AEA's stance and value and evolve evaluative practice as a Board Member-At-Large. I hold those who supported my nomination in the highest esteem, and if elected, my intentions and actions will reflect my commitment to exceeding their expectations. I will do the same for you as your board representative.

Candidate Name: Bianca Montrosse-Moorhead
Board Position Candidacy: Board Member-at-Large
Title: Assistant Professor of Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment
Affiliation: University of Connecticut
Discipline: Evaluation
Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Academic focus, with active evaluation practice
Geographic Representation: Storrs, CT (Northeast US, Rural)
Area(s) of Work Application: Evaluation of national and state preK-12 educational programming (United States), Needs assessment and evaluation of national special education educator policy (United States); and Evaluator and evaluation capacity building (International)
AEA Member Since: 2001
AEA Positions Held: Member of International Working Group (current), Co-Chair of *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* Review Task Force (past), Member of Member Survey Working Group (past), Program Chair of Theories of Evaluations TIG (past), Program Chair of Graduate Student and New Evaluator TIG (past), Secretary of Research Triangle Park AEA Affiliate (past), Web Master of Southern California Evaluation Association AEA Affiliate (past)

I am running for Board Member-at-Large of AEA. I appreciate the confidence of those who encouraged, nominated, and continue to support me. I would be grateful for your vote too.

Three of my main qualifications include the leadership positions I have held in AEA, my recent work with a number of international evaluation groups, and my job as a faculty member in an evaluation program.

My perspective is informed by the institutional memory I have developed through my track record of service to AEA. Like so many, I moved through AEA's leadership pipeline. For example, while earning my doctoral degree from Claremont Graduate University, I served as the program chair for the Graduate Student and New Evaluator TIG (2005-08), and as a graduate student representative on the AEA Membership Committee (2005-08). I went on to serve as the program chair for the Theories of Evaluation TIG (2010-13), as co-chair of the AEA *Guiding Principles* Review Task Force (2012-13), and as a member of the AEA Member Survey Working Group (2014-16). In these roles, I engaged members and contributed to the health and life of AEA. In the process, I developed a historical understanding of AEA's vision, policies, and procedures, which will be essential as I represent your voice in the association's decision-making process.

My viewpoint is also influenced by my international evaluation service, both within and outside of AEA. Since 2015, I have served as a member of the AEA International Working Group (IWG), where I weigh in on issues that are relevant for those who live or work outside of the US, and assist with putting AEA's International Engagement Strategy into action. In my IWG role, I also serve as a liaison between AEA and EvalYouth. EvalYouth, which I co-chair, is a vibrant global community founded with the goal of giving a voice to and building capacity among novice and emerging evaluators. This experience has allowed me to work with and learn from other

evaluators who also share an interest in developing evaluator and evaluation capacity, but who work in different nations, cultures, and languages. My collective IWG and EvalYouth experiences have illuminated two admirable qualities about AEA: one, AEA has always been a welcoming environment for international and novice evaluators, and two, AEA has always been willing to create pathways for those who otherwise would have a hard time finding their way into the field. I would like to see AEA continue this work by helping to support efforts to build capacity across the globe and within the US. I believe the knowledge I have gained through the IWG and EvalYouth and my experience putting this knowledge to use will be informative as AEA continues to be a key investor in the future of evaluation.

My perception is also informed by my role as a faculty member. At the University of Connecticut (UConn), where I serve as assistant professor of measurement, evaluation, and assessment, I help train future evaluators through our masters, doctoral, and certificate programs. I also regularly provide evaluation trainings, including at the AEA Summer Institute, geared toward practicing evaluators and commissioners of evaluation. My role as a faculty member also affords me the opportunity to maintain an active evaluation practice and contribute to our evaluation knowledge base. Since joining UConn, I have secured over \$6 million in grants and contracts to evaluate PreK-12 educational programs and policies. I also regularly present at AEA's annual conference and contribute to the published literature on evaluation, with publications in the *American Journal of Evaluation*, *New Directions for Evaluation*, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, and the *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*. In 2014, I was selected for AEA's Marcia Guttentag Award for early career contributions to evaluation practice and research.

As a faculty member, I channel my expertise and energy into fostering the vitality of the field and AEA. I do this because I grew up in AEA and because it is my professional home. The responsibility I feel for the association and the field will guide my efforts as I represent you in future AEA board deliberations.

I have the passion and experience needed for this important role. My experiences and interests will ensure that AEA continues to invest in leadership pathways, that all AEA members are engaged and their voice heard in deliberations, and that AEA remains open to new ideas and new frontiers that will be brought to life through your work and mine. I hope I can count on your vote. I will honor it.

Candidate Name: Leah Goldstein Moses

Board Position Candidacy: Board Member-at-Large

Title: Founder & CEO

Affiliation: The Improve Group

Discipline: Evaluation

Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Practitioner

Geographic Representation: Based in St. Paul, MN; operate locally, nationally, and internationally

Area(s) of Work Application: Evaluation, including capacity building, evaluation design, and strategy. Topic areas include: arts, culture, education, transportation, land use, community development, economic development, workforce development, disabilities, aging, health, early childhood, child protection, environment, philanthropy, and social enterprise. Apply evaluation at the program, organization, and systems level. Have built an evaluation company that uses competencies and a community-focused practice.

AEA Member Since: 2005

AEA Positions Held: Local arrangements committee (AEA2012)

Nominee Statement: My interest in serving as a Board Member-at-large for the American Evaluation Association is driven by three priorities:

- 1. *Giving back.*** When I founded The Improve Group in 2000, I benefited tremendously from the relationships I made through AEA. I learned about the practice of evaluation from the conference, publications, professional development, and listservs. I continue to be inspired by the innovators in our field who help evaluators refine their systematic process to determine merit, worth, value, or significance. I have been significantly influenced by evaluators advocating for greater inclusion in the field and practice of evaluation. I learned about running a business from the Independent Consulting TIG and mentors like Dick Hezel and Gary Ciurzak. As a leader and adjunct professor, I have had the opportunity to mentor interns, students, and new evaluators. Many have shared their excitement about using their analytical and personal skills to give back to their communities, and their desire to learn more about how evaluation is actually practiced. I hope that I can continue to mentor others as a Board member for AEA.
- 2. *Contribute to our professional association.*** AEA is already doing a great job of serving its members in many ways. The conference is full of rich discussions and content; the blog covers a wide array of topics; and members are engaged through several different channels. However, our profession faces several challenges and I want to help make sure AEA is poised to address them; for example:
 - How can AEA contribute to a more diverse, inclusive profession?
 - How should AEA prepare its members to advance important issues – such as the role of data in decision making, using data to understand equity, or considering the role of evaluation in movements and justice?
 - How will systems-thinking, networks, and other distributed-power, complex models guide our work in the future, as evaluators are increasingly asked to look beyond a linear outcomes model?

In addition to helping AEA support our profession, I want to support an association that is well-run, transparent, and easy for our members to get involved in. For example, I hope to help AEA deepen its member engagement with more opportunities to volunteer on task forces and committees. I also hope to work with the Board to provide guidance when it becomes important to take a public stand on issues that affect our members.

3. *Sharing innovations.* As The Improve Group has expanded and matured, we've implemented a number of innovations that could potentially be of interest to our peers. For example, we've developed a community-responsive approach to evaluation, which engages stakeholders in all phases of an evaluation; we've transformed our personnel management and development practices to use the evaluator competencies; and we are working at the intersection of evaluation and social impact with benefit corporations, impact investors, and corporate social impact teams.

I hope to put these three priorities to work in helping AEA advance its mission to improve evaluation practices and methods, increase evaluation use, promote evaluation as a profession, and support the contribution of evaluation to the generation of theory and knowledge about effective human action. In its current [strategic plan](#), the Board has identified several goals, the current products and tools that meet these goals, and some actions. I'd like to help the Board analyze which products and tools are most valuable in meeting AEA's goals, which products or tools can be updated to better meet these goals, and whether we need to discontinue or add any new products and tools. I look forward to gathering feedback from my fellow members, incorporating their input into decision making, and helping contribute to implementation.

Previous service and leadership. I have previously served AEA by: attending and presenting at conferences, serving on the local arrangements committee for the Minneapolis conference, contributing to AEA365, delivering coffee breaks, hosting a GEDI intern, and supporting my staff's contributions to AEA. I served my local chapter as a board member and then president.

Talking points for meet the candidates:

- I love AEA
- Think we can be more inclusive and engaging of our membership
 - o This would also allow us to get more from our committees, products and tools – there is interest in serving
- There are opportunities to refine some of our products and tools, particularly those that are not generating much value for our goals
- I'll be inclusive and listening to other members – both through conversations and by participating in listserv and other activities
- So excited to serve!

Candidate Name: Boris B. Volkov, PhD

Board Position Candidacy: Board Member-at- Large

Title: Director of Monitoring & Evaluation and Assistant Professor

Affiliation: Clinical and Translational Science Institute; School of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, University of Minnesota

Discipline: Evaluation Studies; Monitoring; Evaluation Capacity Building; Strategic Learning; Continuous Improvement

Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Both

Geographic Representation: US Midwest

Area(s) of Work Application: NIH Multisite Programs in Clinical and Translational Science; Research Translation; Education/Workforce Development; Public and Global Health

AEA Member Since: 2001

AEA Positions Held:

- Founding Co-Chair and Program Chair of the Internal Evaluation TIG.
 - Co-Founder and former Program Chair of the Organizational Learning and Evaluation Capacity Building TIG.
 - Volunteered at the AEA conference registration desk, as an event photographer, and translator.
 - Evaluation Team Member for the Evaluation of the American Evaluation Association Conference in Saint Louis, 2001.
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Dear AEA Colleagues,

Around 20 years ago, I learned from my Evaluation Teacher, Dr. Jean King, that *Social Betterment* is the ultimate goal of Program Evaluation. It was a key reason why I picked Evaluation as my professional career. Since then I have been sharing this vision of Evaluation with my colleagues, program stakeholders, family, and friends. If elected an AEA Board member, I will capitalize on this vision and my diverse experience of an internal and external evaluation practitioner, trainer, scholar, and leader to help AEA advance the areas I consider strategic:

- 1) Promoting a more diverse yet united, confident, and energized AEA membership;
- 2) Expanding our approaches to evaluation capacity building—on multiple levels, in more pragmatic ways;
- 3) Establishing meaningful, impactful connections with policy makers and other influentials;
- 4) Fostering strategic partnerships and collaborations with other associations, networks, organizations; and
- 5) Finding more effective ways of demonstrating our discipline’s value to the public at large.

I encourage us all at AEA to further expand our thinking about Evaluation as a strategic “decision-making-support” function to include approaches like monitoring, tracking, performance measurement, analytics, etc., which are essentially evaluative activities. AEA should market and position itself programmatically to be welcoming and attractive to professionals from the abovementioned fields as well as to those from quality assurance, continuous improvement, audit, and accountability – the powerful subject areas that also have so much to do with Evaluation.

Together with many of you my colleagues, I see Evaluation as a beacon of collaborative learning, enabling and advancing societal values, keeping us all honest, telling the truth, and helping interpret the evidence for better decision making and improvement. AEA's role and advocacy are especially important. I want to help AEA become an important voice in the national discourse – to influence both policies and executive actions implemented domestically and globally. I will collaborate with the AEA leaders and members to advance AEA's status in the public and policy-making arena and expand the reach and benefits of evaluation as a truly trans-disciplinary field.

I think that the Board can benefit from my experience and training: 17 years of evaluation and research in a number of domestic and international research and evaluation studies in public health, health care, epidemiology, clinical and translational science, education, philanthropy, science, technology, poverty reduction, community building, and communication, as well as evaluation capacity building in organizations; 11 years of teaching/mentoring/advising; 8 years of administrative experience; Ph.D. in Evaluation Studies; Master's degrees in Educational Policy & Administration (International Development Education) and Psychology; proud to be one of the first graduates of the CDC Evaluation Fellows Program.

I may contribute to diversity in the governance of AEA. I offer a strong international and cross-cultural background (originally from Central Asia; lived and worked in different countries); diverse work experience in multiple subject areas and organizations – in both internal and external evaluation; and practitioner, administrator, and academic perspectives.

I am also eager to share my leadership/board experience of being: the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute Advisory Board Member; the Association for Clinical and Translational Science Evaluation SIG Chair; and the American Public Health Association International Health Section Councilor.

As a board member, I will work tirelessly to represent your values and interests and to contribute to the AEA mission of fostering an inclusive, diverse, international community of evaluation practice. I will be honored if you will give me this chance, and I thank you for your consideration!

Cordially,
Boris Volkov