

Matt Feldmann

AEA BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE CANDIDATE

PROFILE

Name: Matthew L Feldmann, Ph.D.

Board Position Candidacy: Member at Large

Title: Principal and Co-Owner

Affiliation: Goshen Consulting

Discipline: Education

Practitioner/Academic Focus: Higher Education Administration and Sustainability, STEM Education, Military Connected Communities, and Evaluation Entrepreneurship

Geographic Representation: Rural, Midwest with projects across the U.S.

Area(s) of Work Application: Post-secondary education, Military Connected Students

AEA Member Since: 2011

AEA Positions Held: Independent Consulting TIG (Chair, Communications Chair, informal leadership through the IC Topic Chats), Higher Education TIG (Program Chair, Webmaster), Financial Vitality Task Force, Professional Development Working Group Member, Financial Advisory Board member, TIG Council Member, Regular contributor to pre-conference workshops.

Other Evaluation Positions Held:

Founding President for the Evaluation Association of St. Louis

Hi, I am Matt Feldmann and I hope you will support me for the At Large role on the AEA Board. I believe that you will find that I meet the leadership, organizational service, professional service, and business management skills needed for a Board Member. AEA has problems with membership, revenue, and conference attendance. I have an approach to get us back on track.



VISION

I believe there are two new things AEA needs to do to meet the challenge.

- (1) Regional Evaluation Collaboratives. Small regional conferences that focus on foundational evaluation practices for members and non-members alike. Guided by the core principle: "If they will not come to AEA, AEA must go to them," these one-day events target local, non-member professionals who need foundational evaluation skills but do not attend the national conference. These one-day sessions will not compete with local / regional affiliates, but will serve to complement their offerings.
- (2) Topical Interest Group (TIG) Support & Development. TIG engagement often begins and ends with the annual conference. As AEA evolves—most notably with recent changes to the TIG-led conference strand review process—there is a critical need for TIGs to establish independent, year-round value for their members. A proven blueprint for building a vibrant, sustainable online community of practice includes implementing a sustainable cadence to TIG online virtual meeting engagement and the use of existing (and soon to be developed AEA resources) to maximize reach and minimize administration.

As a board member candidate, I was asked, "What is your vision for AEA's role as a thought leader in evaluation?" I am not a thought leader in evaluation. What I am is a builder of organizations through support for people, members, and the development of sustainable systems. Those are the skills that our association needs right now to survive and thrive.

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WHY I AM QUALIFIED

I joined AEA in 2011 and have remained very active with the Association for the past 15 years. Since 2009, my partner and I have grown [Goshen Consulting](#), an evaluation focused consulting firm, from one (just me) to an organization that annually generates more than \$1 Million in fees, serves 40+ clients and 50+ projects. I grew passionate about how to develop a practice, so I found assistance from my AEA IC TIG colleagues. I took what I learned about consulting and actively collaborated to give back to the IC TIGgers through leadership in the [IC TIG](#) and then later through workshops and web-based trainings. During the pandemic, I gathered together with AEA friends to create a weekly, free, collaborative interactive Zoom meeting, known as [IC Topic Chats](#). Sensing a need for evaluation professionalization in the St. Louis community I gathered local evaluators together and founded the [Evaluation Association of St. Louis](#). What I have learned is that my professional evaluation association connections and my professional success are tightly coupled. I am now actively engaged with the [Higher Education TIG](#) and helping to create a monthly [Higher Ed TIG Chat](#) to actively grow that TIG community of practice.

Over the years, in the name of evaluation professionalization, I have conducted surveys of IC TIG members, formed non-profits, created by-laws, wrote contracts, edited and wrote articles for the special NDE journal on independent consulting, led pre-conference workshops, met colleagues for lunch, consulted lawyers, conducted web-based trainings, brainstormed with the Financial Vitality Task Force, attended thousands of hours of PD meetings, connected colleagues, and made great friends along the way. I am a huge fan of our Association, but I am also ready to be a critical colleague to keep the Association's focus on creating opportunities for members to connect and ensuring the Association's longevity.



The [IC Topic Chats](#), in particular, are a model of member engagement that I would like to share with the AEA community. Since May 2020, we have convened 283 sessions, with 1,421 individuals, for 24,259 lifetime registrations. We record most of the sessions and currently have more than 280 videos on our [YouTube Channel Playlist](#). The sessions have effectively become an unofficial weekly conference session. Weekly we have more than 40 evaluation professionals show up to share, network, and connect with colleagues. We have discussed everything from marketing strategies, to subcontracting with colleagues, and how to survive through troubled times. I did a survey in June, and we found that every respondent "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" that the Chats provided value to their membership in AEA. One person wrote,

"I have personally benefited from the supportive community that engages through the Topic Chats. I've been encouraged to take on more development and leadership opportunities and received regular doses of advice and mentorship from other attendees."

I would love to channel some of this energy to further encourage TIG development and regional evaluation collaboratives to further develop AEA offerings, improve association revenue, and underscore membership benefits.

So, go ahead, vote for me. Let's get AEA back on track. I look forward to supporting you and our colleagues.