



Candidate Name: Kimberly N. Harris, PhD

Board Position Candidacy: Member-at-Large

Title: Founder & Principal Evaluator

Affiliation: Educa Consulting, Inc.

Discipline: Economics

Practitioner and/or Academic Focus: Practitioner and Academic

Geographic Representation: South / Southeast Region, North Carolina

Area(s) of Work Application: Business/Private Sector; Government; Non-profit Philanthropy; Social Services; Education; Public Health; Community Development; Food Sovereignty

AEA Member Since: 2016

AEA Positions Held: Program Co-Chair (Arts, Culture, and Museums TIG); Co-Chair (Leadership and Organizational Performance TIG)



Who I Am

My name is Kimberly N. Harris, an economist, evaluator, and researcher. I am also the founder and principal consultant at Educa Consulting, Inc. (Educa), a full-service research and evaluation firm for organizations with a social impact focus desiring to center the lived-experiences and the wisdom of the communities they serve, more effectively. At Educa, both the work I do and how I do it are informed and inspired by the kaleidoscopic identities I hold as auntie, cousin, sister, neighbor, friend, and the proud daughter of two children of the Jim Crow south; who taught me the value of being unapologetically collectivist. This is our foundational bedrock at Educa. We believe culturally responsive and liberatory evaluation practices are both stances and methodologies, and we are committed to transforming them from the aspirational to the practical through embedding culturally responsive and liberatory ethos into our methodologies such as our Community Evaluator Model (CEM), which trains community members to co-create evaluation processes. My practice centers community wisdom and social justice. This is also why I am seeking the support of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) community in my candidacy for Member-at-Large on the AEA Board of Directors.

Why I am Running

Nearly a decade ago, I attended my first AEA conference in Minneapolis. I was not new to evaluation, nor was I new to actively participating in large, international conferences. However, I was new to the lovingly affirming and radically visionary microcosm built on a foundation of profound intentionality by AEA service-leaders whom I lovingly regard as “mentor-members”, especially Dr. Geri L. Peak and Dr. Hazel Symonette (thank you both so sincerely). I witnessed commitment to creating, holding, and nurturing “spaces within spaces” for evaluators whose lived experiences had historically rendered them invisible. Through those brave spaces, curated by brilliant leaders who have guided our field, I saw what happens when time, attention, and humanity are knitted together. It makes room for everyone, allowing us to see ourselves in our totality, affirming that we are enough and that we belong. That experience was my entry point, and it remains the cornerstone of why I am seeking to serve as a Member-at-Large on the AEA Board of Directors.

My Service to AEA

My service and commitment to AEA began in 2013 as member of RTP Evaluators (now North Carolina Evaluators Network). I was an active participating member for more than six years. Since becoming an AEA member in 2016, I have demonstrated a sustained and multifaceted commitment to the association through leadership and active professional engagement. I have held significant roles within Topical Interest Groups (TIGs), serving as the Program Co-Chair for the Arts, Culture, and Museums TIG and as a Co-Chair for the Leadership and Organizational



Performance TIG. Beyond my formal leadership positions, I am a frequent presenter at annual conferences, a dedicated proposal reviewer, and a regular contributor to the AEA 365 Blog.

My Vision for AEA

We are living in a moment that demands high-level strategic agility. When faced with federal funding cuts and shifting political landscapes, organizations often retreat to the familiar. My vision for AEA is for the organization to be the global lighthouse for "Evaluation as Liberation." We must continue to move beyond the role of a standard-setting body to become an active, bold provocateur in the research landscape. I will advocate for AEA to be a safe harbor for evaluators navigating these challenges.

As a thought leader with a proven reputation for shaping both policy and practice, AEA is uniquely positioned to meet this moment and demonstrate to policy actors and practitioners that rigorous scientific inquiry and social justice are not mutually exclusive—rather, they are inextricably linked.

To navigate current industry challenges and meet the urgency of this moment, I advocate for a responsive and inclusive evolution of the evaluator's toolkit, ensuring that our economic and data-driven practices are deeply informed by the same principles of accessibility and belonging that shaped my own relationship with AEA during my earliest years of membership.

I want to build on the work of those who mentored me, ensuring our TIGs and conferences are spaces of respite and professional revitalization. Resilience is not just about fiscal health; it is about the health of our members. We must formalize supports and tools that help our members articulate the *economic* and *societal* value of evaluation to non-traditional stakeholders. I would be honored to help guide AEA toward a future defined by increased strategic agility and inclusive organizational health.