

Biographical Data and Platform Statements

2024 Candidates

BOARD MEMBER (3 POSITIONS)



M. Evan Thomas, PhD (He/Him)

I am grateful for the opportunity to run for an AAMFT Board Position. Recently, I have been working directly with AAMFT as the chair-elect and chair of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN).

Building this relationship with AAMFT, which focuses on advocating for the LGBTQIA and larger MFT communities, has been a remarkable experience. It has allowed me to understand AAMFT at multiple systemic levels and to deeply appreciate the focus that AAMFT has on advocacy for the field of MFT. This is what motivates me to run for a Board position. To continue to work toward advocating for the LGBTQIA community and strengthening the advocacy that AAMFT is currently doing to support its members.

My goals as a Board member are to focus on the continued growth and development of the field of MFT. My training of origin at two COAMFTE-accredited programs (Purdue and Virginia Tech) focused on the importance of the AAMFT community and how it strengthens our field at the local, state, and national levels. My vision focuses on pushing policy forward to be more inclusive and welcome diversity. I strive to continue strengthening LMFTs at the state and national levels via policy that advocates for licensure portability, streamlining licensure processes, and bridging the gap between researcher and practitioner.

As a COAMFTE Program Director and a Private Practice owner, I have fully invested in AAMFT and MFT in my ten years in the field. My accomplishments below showcase my commitment. My diverse identities and experience will allow me to work collaboratively as a Board member to strengthen the organization. As a systemic healthcare leader, I believe that AAMFT has the tools to create social justice change, and I hope to be able to provide my experience to support AAMFT in this mission.

(I) PRESENT PROFESSIONAL POSITION

Converse University (UCG) – Greenville, SC

Assistant Professor
July 2019 – Current

Department Chair: Marriage and Family Therapy Program
July 2020- Current

Program Director
July 2021 - Current

Thomas Counseling Services, LLC

Greenville, SC
Owner/Private Practice
October 2020 - Current

- Specialize in working with LGBTQIA Couples/Individuals/Families
- Specialize in working with individuals/couples/families impacted by substance misuse.

(II) MOST RELEVANT PAST PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS (WITHIN THE LAST 7 YEARS)

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA

Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies

Graduated May 2020

Concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy

Purdue University

Hammond, IN

M.S. in Child and Family Development

Graduated May 2016

Concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy

(III) AAMFT MEMBERSHIP: PAST AND PRESENT PARTICIPATION IN AAMFT, INCLUDING TOPICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC INTEREST NETWORKS

AAMFT Membership

September 2013 – Current

AAMFT Approved Supervisor

April 2021 - Current

Professional Member

September 2020 – Current

Student Member

September 2013 – September 2020

Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN)

Chair

January 2023 – December 2025

- Oversee QTAN network activities.
- Communicate with AAMFT regarding policy related to Queer/Transgender/Non-binary/Gender-expansive topics.
- Advocate for Queer/Transgender/Non-binary/Gender-expansive members of AAMFT.

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Chair-Elect

January 2021 – December 2022

- Co-Chair QTAN Conference in Summer 2021 and Summer 2022.

Family Team Leader

January 2017- January 2020

- Advocacy leader for the state of Virginia.
- Represented AAMFT at the state and national levels.
- Advocate for underserved communities and policy around substance abuse.

Minority Fellowship Program – Doctoral

September 2017 – August 2019

- Cohort member

Minority Fellowship Program - Youth

September 2015 - September 2016

- Cohort member

(IV) PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES (Activities should be directly linked to the position and should demonstrate the skills needed for the position. Please refer to the list of competencies and skills for the position)

Past and present activities, projects, or publications (limit 3) that are evidence of leadership skills, experience integrating information, working towards consensus, and decision-making skills.

Thomas, M.E. and Pittman, L. (2023). Creating systemic change through a social justice lens: Steps to make impactful changes. *Family Therapy Magazine*. <https://ftm.aamft.org/creating-systemic-change-through-a-social-justice-lens-steps-to-make-impactful-changes/>

Thomas, M.E. and Nedela, M.R. (2021). Queer therapists practicing in their cultural community: Proactive ethical decision-making suggestions. *Family Therapy Magazine*. <https://ftm.aamft.org/queer-therapists-practicing-in-their-own-cultural-community-proactive-ethical-decision-making-suggestions/>

Thomas, M.E., Gafsky, E.L. (2021). Appalachian church leaders: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study to understand how substance use impacts their communities. *Pastoral Psychology*, 70, 379–397. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-021-00956-3>

(V) COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: Past and present activities demonstrating knowledge of and commitment to social justice and systemic science.

Recent AAMFT Presentations that focus on DEI:

Thomas, M.E. and Veldorale-Griffin, A. (2024, March). *Be the Leader You Want to See*. The workshop was presented at the AAMFT National Leadership Symposium. Phoenix, AZ.

Thomas, M.E. and Addison, S. (2023, October). *Affirming Supervision via the AAMFT LGBTQIA Affirming Guidelines*. "Intensive Workshop" presented at the AAMFT National Systemic Family Therapy Online Conference.

Veldorale-Griffin, A., Thomas, M.E., and Surmick, S. (2023, October). *Advocating for LGBTQ+ Rights as MFTs*. "Expert Hour" presented at the AAMFT National Systemic Family Therapy Online Conference.

Recent work with AAMFT that focuses on DEI:

Assistance in writing [Pride is Meaningful](#), which was a blog post written by QTAN leadership.

Assistance to AAMFT in the creation of [Transgender Resource Page](#) for AAMFT.

(VI) RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION – Optional (up to five sentences)

You may choose to identify and/or describe parts of your background which may include the following: work setting (e.g., private practice, academia, agency, community health, government), home location (e.g., rural, urban, suburban), region (e.g., US state, international), any other relevant demographic information (e.g., age, ethnicity/race, gender, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual affiliation, ability, immigration status, languages spoken).

My positionality statement:

The identities that I would bring to the Board position include Queer, Appalachian, Cisgender, White, Male, First Generation College Student, Ph.D., COAMFTE Program Director, Private Practice Owner, able-bodied, neurotypical, and AAMFT Approved Supervisor.