

American Evaluation Association
Annual Conference Evaluation:
Evaluation 2002 Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, the American Evaluation Association (AEA) holds a conference to serve as both a professional and a business meeting for the membership. To make certain that the annual conference is successful, AEA sends out a call for proposals for a group of graduate students to evaluate the annual conference. Applied Research Consultants (ARC)¹ from Southern Illinois University Carbondale submitted a proposal and after being reviewed by the AEA PD Committee, ARC was awarded the conference evaluation contract to evaluate the 2002 annual conference held November 6-9 in Washington D.C. This year's evaluation measured the strengths and weaknesses of four specific areas including the conference experience of newcomers, the overall conference experience of attendees, the professional development workshops (methods, results, and conclusions can be found in a separate report), and the attendance at all sessions.

In order to assess the conference experience of newcomers, a new survey was developed to assess the conference experience of first-time attendees (the Newcomer Feedback Form, NFF), whereas the survey used in previous years to assess overall conference experience of attendees (Overall Conference Feedback Form, OCFF) was adapted to the AEA 2002 Conference. Both surveys provided a means to obtain quantitative and qualitative data in order to copiously measure the attendees' conference experience². To obtain an estimate of attendance at all sessions, all sessions were counted during the conference.

The OCFF and the NFF surveys were distributed during the conference and after the conference. During the conference, the surveys were included in the conference

¹ ARC is a consulting organization run by Ph.D. students from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

² For a more detailed discussion of instruments and data collection methods, please consult the Evaluation Plan and the Data Collection and Instruments report.

packets given to every registered attendee and available at the evaluation table. The surveys were also distributed via e-mail as a web survey. Both surveys were slightly altered in the web-format; two open-ended questions were added to the NFF pertaining to the first-time attendees expectations of the conference and whether those expectations were met, and one open-ended question was added to the OCFF dealing with what the conference participant would take away from Evaluation 2002 (positive or negative).³

The response rate for both surveys was moderate. Overall, there were 1,810 attendees at Evaluation 2002. Nine hundred and forty-six of the attendees completed the OCFF for a response rate of 52%. Just under half of the total number of conference attendees (46%) were first-time attendees and 43% of the first-time attendees completed the NFF. Most respondents completed the web version of both the OCFF and the NFF (68% and 71%, respectively).

In addition to surveying conference attendees, all sessions were counted during the conference in order to estimate attendance at the different session types, times, and sponsorship. The overall average attendance at a session was 30.7. Receptions and plenaries were excluded from the calculations of the average because they falsely inflate the estimate of the average attendance, as no other sessions were concurrently conducted during receptions and plenaries. However, the total attendance for these sessions are as follows: poster session, $n=625$; information fair, $n=570$; and silent auction, $n=479$.

The OCFF provided demographic information about the attendees of Evaluation 2002. Most of the attendees were professional members or student members (82% and 10%, respectively). The majority of respondents (46%) were first time attendees, closely

³ Responses to this question were not analyzed because the responses tended to be redundant with those from questions 5 and 6. However, the responses can be made available (in Excel file format) upon request.

followed by those who had attended 2-4 conferences (33%). With respect to the respondents' evaluation knowledge and skills, most categorized themselves as either novice or intermediate (38% and 37%, respectively). Despite most attendees labeling their knowledge and skills as amateur, half of the respondents (50%) identified their position as researcher/evaluator. The remaining 50% were evenly distributed among manager/administrator, consultant, professor/teacher, and other.

Conference newcomers were generally aware of the various newcomer activities (i.e., Newcomer Orientation Session=68%, Information Fair=57%, Ambassador Program=56%) with the exception of the newcomer packet of information (23%). Most newcomers, however, did not attend or make use of the activities (i.e., Newcomer Orientation Session=27%, Newcomer Packet of Information=15%, Information Fair=32%, Ambassador Program=18%). Newcomers who did attend or make use of the newcomer activities and resources reported being satisfied with the activities (i.e., Newcomer Orientation Session=77%, Newcomer Packet of Information=81%, Information Fair=84%, Ambassador Program=77%) and also found the activities to be useful (i.e., Newcomer Orientation Session=72%, Newcomer Packet of Information=73%, Information Fair=76%, Ambassador Program=81%)⁴.

Although they felt that the newcomer activities had "some influence" on their overall satisfaction with the conference (i.e., Newcomer Orientation Session=45%, Newcomer Packet of Information=51%, Information Fair=46%, Ambassador Program=48%), newcomers at Evaluation 2002 overwhelmingly felt that the activities should be continued at future conferences (i.e., Newcomer Orientation Session=67%,

⁴ Percentages reported for satisfaction of newcomer activities and usefulness of newcomer activities are additive of response options "Somewhat Satisfied/Useful" and "Very Satisfied/Useful".

Newcomer Packet of Information=74%, Information Fair=80%, Ambassador Program=78%). Finally, a slight majority of respondents indicated that they definitely or maybe intended to return to future AEA conferences (54%), and slightly fewer than half of the respondents indicated that they did not intend to return to the AEA conference in the future (46%).

According to the OCFE, the majority of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the conference overall (“Overall, I enjoyed the conference=89%⁵). Specifically, respondents were pleased with the organization and content of the conference, and the proposal submission and review process. Also, large proportions of the attendees suggested that they would attend another AEA conference (49%) and recommend the conference to others (40%). A large percentage of the respondents indicated that they hoped to present at a future AEA conference (42%). Both demographic characteristics and satisfaction ratings of Evaluation 2002 attendees were consistent with those of the previous two conferences.

Responses to the open-ended questions revealed several salient response themes. Attendees indicated that the overall quality of the program (i.e., sessions, topics, presenters), opportunities to network, opportunities to learn, the professional development sessions, and being able to interact and listen to famous evaluators were among the most positive experiences they had at Evaluation 2002. Among the most disappointing conference components at Evaluation 2002 were the quality of sessions and presenters,⁶ hotel location, large number of concurrent sessions, professional

⁵ The percentage reported reflects the additive results of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.

⁶ Two comments need to be made regarding the inclusion of presentation quality among the most disappointing aspects of Evaluation 2002: (1) the quantitative data suggest that the overall quality of presentations is good; and, (2) the quantitative data also suggest that presentation quality is relatively low

development workshops, program book, lack of handouts and materials offered by presenters, and networking opportunities.⁷ Suggestions for improving future conferences included emphasizing presenter guidelines, decreasing the number of presentations, increasing presentation quality, making the program book more usable, and increasing the number of networking opportunities.

The results from the sessions being counted can be very useful to estimate several needed conference amenities including room size for particular types of sessions and food needed for receptions. Conference planners might also pay particular attention to the estimates of attendance by day of the week in planning future conferences. The number of sessions attended for Thursday ($N=124$), Friday ($N=117$), and Saturday ($N=105$) were fairly comparable, however average attendance dropped by Saturday.

Recommendations for AEA welcoming newcomers are as follows:

- Continue the newcomer activities at future conferences and provide more networking opportunities, mixers, and sessions specifically for newcomers.
- Advertise and provide more information about the activities to increase awareness and attendance/utilization. Utilize pre-conference opportunities (e.g., e-mail, AEA website) to notify and inform conference newcomers about various aspects of the conference, newcomer activities, and AEA in general.
- Provide more information prior to and throughout the conference regarding all aspects of the AEA annual meeting.
- Make the newcomer packet of information available to all newcomers upon registration or prior to the conference.

when compared to the other conference components. If the former is given more weight, then the importance of the qualitative data is minimized. If the latter is given more weight, however, then efforts need to be made to improve the quality of presentations at future AEA conferences.

⁷ The quantitative data suggest that the attendees were generally satisfied with the networking opportunities provided. The qualitative data suggest that a few individuals desired both more networking opportunities in general, and more unstructured networking opportunities (e.g., longer breaks in between sessions and during the lunch hour).

- When planning future conferences, continue to consider location and cost as major factors that influence whether evaluators will attend the conference. Also continue planning to accommodate the needs of international newcomers (in terms of cost of attendance, international travel, etc.).
- Formalize the Ambassador Program. Consider assigning specific “mentors” for conference newcomers, or consider instituting a “buddy system” to help newcomers feel welcome in AEA.
- Continue considering diversity, generality, and applicability of topics and information when planning conference and session content.

Recommendations for AEA pertaining to the overall conference include:

- Emphasize the guidelines for presenting. Attendees indicated that many presenters might benefit from a “Best Practices” information guide (e.g., tips to improve presentation quality).
- Make the program available on-line before the conference so that attendees can plan their schedule prior to their arrival.
- Continue providing structured networking opportunities.
- Expand informal networking opportunities and social activities.
- Cut down on the number of presentation sessions per day (which would increase the quality of the sessions), allowing more time for lunch and networking.
- Select conference hotels that are closely tied to local restaurants and public transportation that would be more conducive to successful networking opportunities AEA provided in 2002.

INTRODUCTION

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) is an international, non-profit, professional association for individuals who are engaged in many different forms of evaluation. AEA engages in numerous activities to further the organizational goals, which include improving evaluation practices and methods, increasing evaluation use, promoting evaluation as a profession, and supporting the contribution of evaluation to the generation of theory and knowledge about effective human action. One such activity is the organization's annual conference, which serves as both a professional and a business meeting for the membership. Activities at the conference include hundreds of sessions addressing current issues in evaluation, professional development workshops, dinners and other social activities, and various other professional networking opportunities. In order to ensure that the annual meeting is successful and helps to achieve the goals of the organization, AEA allows groups of graduate students to apply to become the evaluation team for the annual conference. Applied Research Consultants (ARC) from Southern Illinois University Carbondale submitted a proposal to evaluate the 2002 annual conference, held November 6-9 in Washington, D.C. After the AEA Professional Development Committee reviewed the proposals, they awarded ARC the contract to evaluate the 2002 annual conference.

The purpose of the current evaluation was to assist AEA in improving its effectiveness by evaluating the organization's annual conference. The evaluation measured the strengths and weaknesses of four specific areas of the annual conference, outlined by the Board members of AEA. The four specific areas that were evaluated during the 2002 conference included: (1) conference experience of newcomers, (2)

overall conference experience of attendees, (3) professional development workshops, and (4) attendance at all sessions. The sections that follow outline the methods, results, conclusions, and recommendations of three of the four areas evaluated (i.e., conference experience of newcomers, overall conference experience of attendees, and attendance at all sessions). Methods, results, and conclusions for the professional development workshops can be found in a separate report.

METHOD⁸

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for the 2002 AEA annual conference evaluation. Paper and web surveys were utilized to collect data of both types. Following the conference, the OCFE was sent to all participants with valid e-mail addresses (n = 1,744). Because we did not want to overwhelm the recipients with two surveys, the OCFE was set up in a manner that if the respondent indicated that Evaluation 2002 was his/her first conference then after he/she submitted the survey, the NFF would automatically appear on the screen. Three rounds of reminder e-mails were sent to those who had not completed a form in order to maximize the response rate. Specific details concerning instruments, data collection, and data analysis are outlined below for each of the major areas of interest.

Conference Newcomers' Evaluation

Instruments and Procedures. The newcomer questionnaire (the Newcomer Feedback Form, NFF) addressed issues relevant to first-time attendees including the revised newcomer orientation session, the newcomer orientation packet, the expanded networking reception, and the ambassador program. Specifically, the NFF asked

⁸ For a more detailed discussion of instruments and data collection methods, please consult the Evaluation Plan and the Data Collection and Instruments report.

newcomers to rate their awareness of the newcomer activities, satisfaction with each of the newcomer activities, and usefulness of each activity, and to provide feedback about successful strategies and changes needed in the newcomer outreach efforts. Additionally, intention to return to future conferences and the impact of the newcomer activities on that intention was assessed. The NFF was distributed in several different ways, including at the evaluation table, as a separate page with the overall conference form in the conference packets given to all attendees, and via e-mail after the conference.

In addition to the questionnaire, a limited number of interviews were conducted with first-time attendees. However, because these data were mistakenly discarded at the hotel, open-ended questions were added to the web survey to assess newcomers' expectations of the conference and how well the conference met those expectations.

Data Analysis. Quantitative analyses assessed different areas of newcomers' experience including awareness, attendance/make use of, satisfaction, usefulness, and influence of different newcomer activities. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviations, and frequencies) were calculated for each area of newcomers' activities. Results are presented in text and table format.

A large number of newcomers responded to the open-ended questions that were presented, although the response rate varied slightly across items. Two Evaluation Team members developed categories from the reoccurring themes in the responses. Responses were then sorted into the appropriate categories. Results of qualitative analyses are presented primarily in the text, although frequencies of response categories are presented in tables; representative quotes, selected because they best characterize or summarize the sentiments of a large number of respondents, are presented in tabular format.

Overall Conference Evaluation

Instruments and Procedures. The Overall Conference Feedback Form (OCFF), which was used in previous years, assessed satisfaction of conference attendees with the whole conference. During the conference, the OCFF was distributed at the evaluation table and in the conference packets that were given to every conference attendee. The OCFF was distributed via e-mail as a web survey after the conference. There was one open-ended question added to the OCFF web form, which asked what two things (positive or negative) the attendee took away from the conference experience. This question was added to obtain data that was included in the original OCFF and was lost.⁹

Data Analysis. The quantitative analyses revolve around five areas: demographics, conference organization and content, proposal submission and review process, overall conference satisfaction, and behavioral intentions related to future AEA conferences. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and frequencies) were computed for each of the five areas, and are presented in text and table form. Correlations were used to further explore relations between conference satisfaction and other conference components.

Most of the 946 respondents completed the four open-ended questions that were included on the OCFF. Each of the responses ranged from a word to phrases and sentences. Two members of the 2002 Evaluation Team independently categorized the responses to the four open-ended questions. Specifically, each rater initially examined the responses to two of the four open-ended questions. Subsequently, each rater cross-

⁹ Responses to this question were not analyzed because the responses tended to be redundant with those from questions 5 and 6. However, responses to this question can be made available (in an Excel file format) upon request.

examined a selection¹⁰ of the other rater's categorizations to check for agreement. When responses were grouped into different clusters, the two raters discussed the appropriate item-grouping until consensus was achieved. Although percent agreement between raters was not calculated, the disagreement rate was low.

Attendance at Sessions

Procedure. To obtain an accurate count of attendance at the 2002 conference, attendance at each session on Wednesday through Saturday was counted. Presenters were included in the total count of their respective sessions because of the difficulty distinguishing presenters from attendees when they were sitting in the audience. There were 11 cancelled sessions, five with notice and six with no notice, which were not included in any analyses.

Data Analysis. Attendance was analyzed using frequencies and means.

RESULTS

All of the quantitative data from the NFF and OCFE were scanned using Remark Office OMR[®] software or were collected through the World Wide Web using Remark Web Survey[®], which was developed by Principia[®] Products. A company representative of Principia scanned all of the on-site data and set up the on-line survey free of charge.¹¹

Conference Newcomers' Evaluation

Of the 1,810 attendees at Evaluation 2002, 824 (46%) were newcomers to the AEA annual conference. Three hundred fifty-six newcomers completed the newcomer questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 43%. Of the 356 respondents, 91 completed the questionnaire at the conference, 13 mailed the completed questionnaire to the

¹⁰ Responses were selected non-randomly, but a large number of responses were cross-examined. Therefore, the cross-examination process likely avoided any selection problems.

¹¹ Special thanks to Nora Petchkofski of Principia Products for her help on this project.

evaluation team via U.S. mail, and 252 completed the questionnaire on-line. Thus, nearly 71% of newcomer respondents completed the questionnaire after the conference in response to e-mailed requests.

Quantitative Data and Analysis

Awareness & Attendance. Most newcomers were aware of three of the newcomer activities, with the notable exception being the newcomer packet of information. Only 23% of the respondents stated that they were aware of the newcomer packet of information. Awareness of the three other activities, however, consistently exceeded 55%. Table 1 presents awareness data for each of the newcomer activities.

Although over half of the newcomers were aware of most of the activities, a minority of newcomers attended or made use of each activity or resource. For instance, about 27% of newcomers attended the newcomer orientation session, and only 18% of newcomers made use of the Ambassador program. The best-attended activity was the information fair, with 32% of newcomers attending. Table 2 presents attendance and use data for each of the newcomer activities and resources.

Non-Attendance. Newcomers' reasons for not attending or using the activities or resources varied slightly across the activities. For the newcomer orientation session and the information fair, newcomers were fairly evenly divided among the three reasons for not attending: being unaware of activity (28% and 39%, respectively), being unable to attend (36% and 31%, respectively), or choosing not to attend (36% and 30%, respectively). Newcomers who did not use the newcomer packet of information, however, overwhelmingly indicated that the reason was because they were not aware of the packet (63%). The major reasons for not using the ambassador program were being

unaware of the activity (44%) and choosing not to use the program (41%); only 15% of newcomers indicated that they were unable to utilize the ambassador program. Table 3 summarizes non-attendees' reasons for not attending or using each of the four activities.

Attendees Only. A major purpose of the newcomer questionnaire was to determine newcomers' satisfaction with each of the activities and to determine the usefulness of each activity. Additionally, the evaluation team and the AEA Professional Development Task Force wanted to determine how much each activity contributed to newcomers' satisfaction with the overall conference and whether newcomers thought that each activity should be continued in future years. Because only newcomers who attended or made use of and fully experienced an activity can accurately rate each activity in terms of satisfaction, utility, influence on overall conference experience, and whether or not it should be continued, each activity was evaluated on these grounds according to the responses of newcomers who stated that they attended or made use of the activity. Newcomers who stated that they did not attend or make use of an activity were excluded from these analyses.

Newcomers tended to be satisfied with all of the newcomer activities. Mean satisfaction ratings for the activities ranged from 4.04 to 4.22, which translate into qualitative ratings of between "Somewhat Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied." Among the four newcomer activities, the Ambassador Program received the lowest, although still fairly high, satisfaction rating ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.01$), and newcomers were most satisfied with the newcomer packet of information ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .92$). Although the Ambassador program received the lowest satisfaction rating (albeit a rating that still indicates satisfaction with the activity), the program was rated as the most useful of the

newcomer activities ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .90$). The newcomer orientation session, however, was rated as the least useful activity, with a mean utility rating of 3.86 ($SD = 1.20$), translating into a qualitative rating between “Neutral” and “Useful.” Tables 4 and 5 present satisfaction and usefulness data, respectively.

Newcomers generally felt neutral about the newcomer activities’ influence on their overall satisfaction with the conference. Ratings ranged between 3.28 and 3.44, indicating responses between “Neutral” and “Some Influence.” Although the newcomers did not have strong feelings about the activities’ influence on their satisfaction with the conference, they overwhelmingly thought that the newcomer activities should be continued at future AEA conferences. The percentage of newcomers indicating that each newcomer activity should be continued in the future consistently exceeded 65%. Only 2 (2%) respondents felt that the newcomer orientation session should be discontinued, and only 1 (1%) respondent felt that the information fair should be discontinued. No newcomers thought that the newcomer packet of information or the Ambassador program should be discontinued. Table 6 summarizes each activity’s influence on newcomers’ overall satisfaction with the conference, and Table 7 presents newcomers’ opinions about continuing each activity.

Newcomers’ Intention to Return. Of the respondents to the newcomer questionnaire, 58 (17%) reported that they definitely intended to return to future AEA conferences. Another 125 respondents (37%) reported that they might return to future AEA conferences. Finally, 156 respondents (46%) indicated that they definitely did not intend to return to future AEA conferences. Thus, a slight majority (54%) of respondents indicated that they definitely or maybe would return to the AEA conference in the future.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

Revisions to Newcomer Activities. Newcomers were asked to recommend revisions for the newcomer activities. From the responses to this item, there emerged several categories including more information, increased visibility of the activities, increased availability of the information packet, a more structured Ambassador Program, and adjustments to the scheduling of newcomer activities as well more opportunities for networking and socializing. Taken together, the first two categories (more information and increased visibility of activities) account for nearly 30% of the responses. Requests for a more structured Ambassador Program, however, were the most frequently mentioned single suggestion. Please refer to Table 8 for specific numbers of comments as well as representative newcomer comments regarding revisions to newcomer activities.

Most respondents suggested that AEA advertise the newcomer activities more vigorously and provide more information about the activities and about the conference and AEA in general. One newcomer stated that he or she would have liked “clearer communication” about the newcomer activities. Pre-conference notification of the activities was an especially popular suggestion, and e-mail and the AEA conference website were repeatedly mentioned as channels for distributing information prior to the conference. Generally, newcomers at Evaluation 2002 suggested that revisions to the newcomer activities should include giving newcomers more general information and increasing the visibility and publicity of the newcomer activities, especially through pre-conference communication with newcomers.

A more structured Ambassador Program was the next most frequently mentioned category of response. Several newcomers mentioned that ambassadors did not approach

them or that they “never saw [the program] in action.” The general sentiment seemed to be that the ambassador program was a good idea, but there needed to be “more coordination with the ambassadors.” A few respondents suggested that ambassadors be formally assigned and connected with newcomers prior to the conference. Other newcomers also suggested that ambassadors “should be more proactive in looking to support newcomers” and that they should be sure to “seek out newbies.”

The next most frequently mentioned suggestion was increasing the availability of the information packet. Many of the newcomers who responded to this question seemed surprised that there was a newcomer packet of information and disappointed that they did not receive it. Several respondents who attended the orientation session stated that they never received the packet, and they suggested that the packet be given out at the beginning of the session. Other newcomers who did not attend the orientation session expressed a strong preference for making “the newcomer packet available to all newcomers regardless of their attendance at the orientation session.” Most of these newcomers suggested that the packet should be made available at registration or prior to the conference.

Newcomers also suggested that there should be more opportunities for socializing and networking and that the scheduling and timing of newcomer activities should be reconsidered. Many newcomers stated that the conference was very long and tiring; thus, they did not have the energy to attend some of the newcomer activities such as the orientation session. Some newcomers felt that the orientation should be held before the first sessions begin because “by the time [they] attended the newcomer orientation session, [they] had already heard most of the information before,” or because they were

too tired after a full day of workshops and sessions. Several other newcomers, however, cited travel arrangements that prevented attendance at the Wednesday evening orientation. Many newcomers suggested that there should be “more times available” for newcomer activities to facilitate attendance. Along these same lines, many newcomers suggested that there should be more opportunities for newcomers to meet and socialize with each other and with more experienced evaluators. Suggestions included breakfasts, brunches, lunches, and other types of “meet and greet social events.”

Factors Influencing Intention to Return to Future AEA Conferences. Newcomers were also asked what factors might play a role in their intention to return to future AEA conferences. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that cost and location were the major factors that would influence their decision to return to the conference. Additionally, many newcomers stated that funding support from their agencies, organizations, or jobs would be a major determinant of whether they were able to return to future conferences. The topics and content of sessions were mentioned by more than a few newcomers; several respondents were concerned with the timeliness and diversity of information presented. Other newcomers stated that diversity “in terms of the ways in which [topics] are shared” and the utility and generality of the content of different sessions were factors that could be influential in their decision to return to Evaluation 2003 and beyond. Relevance to his or her job and the newcomer’s personal career path were other major factors in determining whether a newcomer expected to become a repeat-attende. These four categories (cost & funding support, location, topics and content of sessions, career relevance) were the most frequently mentioned influences on

intention to return to future AEA conferences. Table 9 presents category frequencies and representative comments.

Other factors that could influence whether newcomers would attend the conference in the future included: quality of the conference and presentations; the workshops and training opportunities available at the conference; the opportunity to present at the conference; and conference theme. A few newcomers also mentioned that more detailed pre-conference information could help them decide whether or not the AEA conference would be a good investment of their time and money. The AEA website was repeatedly mentioned as a possible method of disseminating the information.

Another area of concern mentioned by several newcomers was the timing of the conference and the time it took to attend (e.g., time away from work, time away from family). Some stated “conflicting priorities at work” or “family conflicts” would determine whether or not they would be able to attend in the future. Other respondents stated that the time of year conflicted with other professional conferences. One person said that it was “simply a matter of resources/time and client mix at the scheduled time of the conference.”

Suggested Changes for the Overall Conference. In addition to asking newcomers to suggest revisions to the newcomer activities, the questionnaire also asked newcomers to provide suggestions to make the conference more welcoming for first time attendees and to increase the likelihood that they would return to the conference on a regular basis. Many newcomers stated that they felt very welcome at Evaluation 2002 and that no changes were necessary. Several respondents specifically mentioned that the conference was “very welcoming” and “friendly” and were very impressed with the conference.

Most newcomers, however, did make suggestions for improving the conference, with the most frequently mentioned categories including: having more and better information; more opportunities for networking; rearranging the schedule of activities; controlling the cost attendance, especially in terms of conference quality; and the provision of miscellaneous amenities. Please refer to Table 10 for category frequencies and representative comments.

The major suggestion that emerged in response to this question concerned having more and better information, especially prior to the conference. Several newcomers expressed a desire to have “more information prior to the conference so attendees have a better idea of what to expect.” The newcomers suggested that AEA could use e-mail, U.S. mail, or the AEA website to publicize and describe the different conference activities and to provide information specifically pertinent to newcomers (e.g., the newcomer packet of information). Further, many newcomers wanted more information about the specific types of sessions and the content of specific sessions; several suggested providing “an abstract book” or a link to session abstracts on the AEA website.

Several newcomers suggested that the conference could be more welcoming for newcomers if there were more networking opportunities and sessions specifically for newcomers. There were also several newcomers who suggested that AEA should “change the time of the orientation session,” with respondents suggesting that the session not be held at night, that it be held “before sessions begin,” or that there be a second orientation session or a “Newcomers’ Brunch” on the second day of the conference to accommodate travelers who could not attend the first orientation. Additionally, many newcomers mentioned that there should be “more opportunities for newcomers to meet with each

other and meet ambassadors” or that the Ambassador Program should be slightly more formalized.

A few newcomers were concerned about the expense and the quality of the conference and stated that these factors might influence whether they returned to the conference on a regular basis. Several of these respondents noted that they were from other countries and invested quite a bit of time and money into attending Evaluation 2002. One newcomer stated that because he or she was “coming from abroad, it should be worth the price” in terms of quality. Other newcomers suggested that AEA institute some form of financial assistance for attendees who might not be able to afford the trip; one respondent suggested that there should be a “lottery for a free airline ticket for second time attendees” and that the person who wins should “also work a portion of the conference as staff.” Another different type of assistance that was mentioned was developing “graduate or professional development credit...for the longer workshop sessions.” Respondents also suggested that the conference could benefit from increasing the variety of topics and types of presentations. Suggestions included: “diversifying the sessions, moving away from only presentations,” including “more practical ‘how-to’ sessions,” and “increase[ing] the variety of topics presented.”

Miscellaneous amenities were also mentioned as areas of concern. Several international attendees mentioned that special care should be taken to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for conference attendees traveling to the AEA conference from other countries. A few newcomers were upset that there was not a free continental breakfast or coffee table in the mornings before sessions started. Other respondents indicated that shuttle service was inconvenient in Washington, D.C. and that

improved shuttles in the future would be an improvement. Finally, a couple of newcomers commented that there was very little “sitting and chatting space” and suggested that the conference set up a “chill zone” where attendees can simply relax.

Expectations about the Conference. As part of the expanded electronic version of the newcomer questionnaire, respondents were asked what expectations they had about the AEA conference and how well Evaluation 2002 met those expectations. Several newcomers ($n = 14$) responded that they had no specific expectations about the conference and came to Washington, D.C. with open minds. Most newcomers, however, did have specific expectations which included: learning new information and skills, learning more about the profession and field of evaluation, networking and interacting with professionals and experts, and interesting and high quality presentations. Please refer to Table 11 for specific frequencies and representative quotes.

Newcomers most frequently indicated that they had come to the conference expecting to learn new, “timely,” and applicable skills. Many newcomers specifically mentioned the expectation that they would learn new methodologies that they could apply immediately in their jobs, and many respondents mentioned that they expected the conference would provide them with evaluation resources and be a “vast source of information and tools.”

The desire to network with other evaluators was mentioned about half as often as the desire to learn new information and skills, making it the second most frequently mentioned category. Respondents acknowledged that they wanted to interact with professionals and share knowledge and skills. The desires to gain more information about the field of professional evaluation and learn what other evaluators were doing were

sentiments echoed by several conference newcomers. Other newcomers also stated that they expected a high level of quality, interesting presentations, a high level of professionalism, and variety in terms of topics and session types.

Newcomers who responded to the on-line questionnaire were also asked to indicate whether or not the AEA annual conference met their expectations. Table 12 presents frequencies and representative comments. Generally, most conference newcomers stated that Evaluation 2002 met or exceeded their expectations ($n = 76$). Several respondents stated that they were “very impressed” and that the AEA conference was one of the best professional conferences they had attended. One newcomer stated that he or she was pleasantly surprised that it was “not like other conferences.”

Several newcomers, however, were disappointed and responded that Evaluation 2002 did not meet their expectations. Some of the newcomers found that the sessions were “only somewhat useful,” and some were disappointed in the quality (“weak,” “unchallenging”) and structure (“too lecture like”) of the presentations. Several respondents were disappointed at the lack of consistency in terms of quality across sessions and presenters. A few newcomers also were frustrated that the information presented at the conference was not very applicable.

Generally, newcomers’ expectations were met. Most of those whose expectations were not met did not entirely discount the experience, however, and some expressed hope that future conferences would be better. One newcomer stated that although his or her expectations were met only “to an extent,” he or she was “expecting improvements the next year.” Please see Table 12 for more newcomer comments about how well the conference met their expectations.

Overall Conference Evaluation

There were 1,810 conference attendees at Evaluation 2002, and 946 (52%) attendees completed the OCFE. Importantly, 644 (68%) of the attendees who responded completed their form on-line, post-conference. During the conference, 234 (25%) completed and returned the survey, and 68 (0.07%) respondents sent their survey through the US postal service.

Quantitative Data and Analysis

AEA Membership Status. Of the 933 Evaluation 2002 attendees who responded to item seven, 82% were professional members, 10% were student members, and 7% were non-members (see Table 13). The proportion of the Evaluation 2002 respondents who were professional members, student members, or non-members is roughly the same as in Evaluation 2001.

Number of AEA Conferences Attended. Question 8 of the Overall Conference Feedback Form (Appendix) asked participants how many AEA conferences they had attended (including Evaluation 2002). Of the 934 Evaluation 2002 attendees who responded to this item, 47% were first time attendees, 33% had attended 2 to 4 conferences, 9% had attended 5 to 7 conferences, 4% had attended 8 to 10 conferences, and 7% had attended more than 10 conferences (see Table 14). A further examination of Table 14 reveals similar patterns between Evaluation 2001 attendees and Evaluation 2002 attendees with regard to the number of conferences they had attended.

Position Titles of Conference Attendees. Question 9 asked respondents to choose the position title that best described their current job. Of the 928 Evaluation 2002 attendees who responded to this item, 50% indicated that they were a

researcher/evaluator; 13% indicated that they were a manager/administrator; 12% indicated that they were a consultant; 11% indicated that they were a professor/teacher; and, 9% described themselves as students (see Table 15). The category of “Other” was chosen by 6% of the respondents. One of the primary differences between Evaluation 2001 attendees’ responses to this item and current responses centered on the “Other” response option. Nearly 30% of the respondents chose “Other” during Evaluation 2001. Of these respondents, approximately 75% indicated that their job titles were researcher or evaluator (see Bartholomay et al., 2002, p. 23). The inclusion of the “Researcher/Evaluator” category was added to the current version of the OCFF, and resulted in a substantial reduction in the frequency with which this response option was selected in Evaluation 2002. Additional response pattern differences between Evaluation 2001 and Evaluation 2002 include the less frequent selection of “Manager/Administrator” (25% in 2001 compared to 13% in 2002), “Consultant” (20% in 2001 compared to 12% in 2002) and “Professor/Teacher” (16% compared to 11%). A large proportion of the reduction in these three categories may be attributable to the addition of “Researcher/Evaluator,” which garnered a majority of the responses in Evaluation 2002.

Evaluation Knowledge and Skills. In question 10, respondents were asked to describe their evaluation knowledge and skills on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating no background in evaluation and 5 indicating expert knowledge and skill in evaluation. Of the 932 Evaluation 2002 attendees who responded to this item, very few respondents (0.6%) indicated that they had no evaluation background; 11% respondents described themselves as novice evaluators; 38% described themselves as intermediate evaluators; 37% described themselves as advanced evaluators, and 13% described themselves as

expert evaluators (see Table 16). Moreover, the respective proportions for the Evaluation 2002 respondents are very similar to those for the Evaluation 2001 respondents.

Percent of Evaluation-Related Duties. For the Evaluation 2002 question 11, “In your current position, what percent of your workload includes evaluation-related duties?” the highest response was in the category 76% to 100% (43%; see Table 17). The lowest observed frequency was in the category 0% (0.6%). Fourteen percent of the respondents indicated that 1% to 25% of their workload consisted of evaluation-related duties; eighteen percent indicated that 26% to 50% of their workload consisted of evaluation-related duties, and 25% indicated that 51% to 75% of their workload consisted of evaluation-related duties. Response patterns between Evaluation 2001 and Evaluation 2002 were again very similar.

Comparative Quantitative Analyses Among Demographics

AEA Membership Status by Number of AEA Conferences Attended. Table 18 is a contingency table that contains figures for the three categories of AEA membership status by the five categories of conference attendance. First time attendees accounted for the largest proportion of all attendees at Evaluation 2002. Among professional members, 43% were first time attendees. The next highest figure for professional members was among the group that had attended two to four conferences. Similarly, the percentages for first time attendee student members (60%) and non-members (79%) exceeded those that had attended two to four conferences (38% and 19%, respectively). Also worth noting is that the disparity between first time attendees and two-to-four year attendees is greatest among non-members (disparity between percents equal to 60%) and student members (23%).

Evaluation Knowledge and Skills by Number of AEA Conferences Attended. An examination of Table 19 reveals a “positive” relationship between evaluation knowledge and skills and the number of AEA conferences attended. Starting from the lower-left corner of the table, we see that 100% and 90% of the attendees who reported no background or that they were novice evaluators, respectively, also reported that this was their first conference. The majority of those who rated their knowledge and skill as intermediate were first-time attendees (57%), but a large percentage of those reporting intermediate skill also indicated that they had attended two to four conferences (37%). Among those perceiving their evaluation knowledge and skill as advanced, 38% reported that they had attended two to four conferences, 34% reported that this was their first conference and 13% reported that they had attended five to seven conferences. Finally, among those reporting their evaluation knowledge and skill as expert, 30% reported that they had attended two to four conferences, 25% reported that they had attended more than 10 conferences, and an additional 22% reported that they had attended five to seven conferences.

Position Titles by Number of AEA Conferences Attended. Table 20 is a contingency table containing AEA attendee position titles by the number of conferences attended. For each position title group, the largest proportion was first-time attendees, and the second largest proportion for each position title group (with the exception of Professor/Teacher) came from the two-to-four year attendees. Among those in the Professor/Teacher group, 26% indicated that they had attended more than ten conferences, whereas 18% percent indicated that they had attended two to four conferences.

Percent of Evaluation Related Duties by Number of AEA Conferences Attended.

Table 21 also reveals a slight “positive” relationship between percent of evaluation related duties and the number of AEA conferences attended. Specifically, 92% of those who reported spending 0% of their time on evaluation-related duties and 65% of those reporting that they devoted 1% to 25% of their in evaluation-related duties also reported that this was their first conference. Among those spending 26% to 50% on evaluation duties, 49% reported that this was their first conference, 31% reported that they had attended two to four conferences, and 11% reported that they had attended more than ten conferences. Similarly, among those reporting that they spent 51% to 75% of their time in evaluation duties, 51% also reported that this was their first conference, 31% reported that they had attended two to four conferences, and 9% reported that they had attended more than ten conferences. Finally, among those who reported spending 75% to 100% of their time on evaluation-related duties, 38% reported that they had attended two to four conferences, 37% reported that this was their first conference, 13% reported that they had attended five to seven conferences, and 6% reported that they had attended more than ten conferences.

Overall Conference Satisfaction

Conference Organization and Content. Nine items were included to assess satisfaction with conference organization and content. Each of the nine items received a mean rating of 3.80 or greater in 2002 (a rating of 3.00 equals Acceptable; see Table 22). Specifically, the Evaluation 2002 attendees tended to give the conference support staff ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.76$) the highest quality rating of any of the nine Conference Organization and Content areas. Similarly high ratings included those for the registration

on-site process ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.82$), the pre-conference registration process ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.84$), and the variety of presentation and discussion topics ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.91$).

The items that received the lowest ratings revolved around the perceived quality of preparation by the presenters ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.87$), the quality of the presentations ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.82$), and the quality of the moderation given by session chairs ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.89$). It is important to note, however, that all nine items received relatively high ratings, with less than 10% of the respondents indicating that improvement is needed for any one item.

Proposal Submission and Review Process. Just under half of the respondents (49%) communicated that they had given a presentation at Evaluation 2002 (see Table 23). Among the respondents who presented or submitted a presentation, over 85% percent indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with both the call for papers and presentations and the paper/presentation selection process. These data, although positive, may be subject to a selection bias given an assumption that those in attendance are more likely to have had their paper/presentation proposal accepted than those who are not in attendance.

Overall Conference Satisfaction. Each of the seven items measuring participants' overall conference satisfaction received ratings of 3.93 or greater, indicating that the Evaluation 2002 participants tended to be satisfied with their experience (see Table 24). Moreover, the item that received the highest rating directly asked participants to indicate whether they enjoyed the conference ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.76$). The next three highest item means included: "I felt welcomed at the conference" ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.79$); "The conference was worth the time and money" ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.88$), and, "I learned things

that will inform my practice” ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.80$). The frequency with which people reported their dissatisfaction with their conference experience failed to exceed more than 10% for each of the seven items included in this measurement area.

Behavioral Intentions Related to Future AEA Conferences. Participating conference attendees not only tended to report satisfaction with the conference, but also tended to indicate that they planned to attend future conferences ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.83$), recommend the conference to others ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.86$), and present at future conferences ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.93$; see Table 25). Specifically, over 80% of the participants indicated that they would attend another AEA conference, and would recommend the conference to others. Over 75% indicated that they hoped to present at a future AEA conference.

Exploratory Analysis

In this section, we explore bivariate relationships between overall conference satisfaction and other relevant aspects of the conference. The motivation for this comes from the strong positive relationships observed between attendees’ overall conference satisfaction and their plans to attend future AEA conferences ($r = .72$, $p < .01$) and their intentions to recommend the conference to others ($r = .74$, $p < .01$; see Table 26). Given the strong positive bi-variate relationships between these variables, it is crucial to identify components of the AEA conference experience that are related to a positive overall conference experience.

Table 27 shows zero-order correlation coefficients between overall conference satisfaction and the Conference Organization and Content item-components. All correlation coefficients were significant at the .01 level, although their significance is

partly due to the large number of observations. Therefore, the following section highlights the bi-variate associations that are greater than .50 (i.e., large effect, Cohen, 1988). The order in which these relationships are reported is purposeful. Specifically, overall program content is reported first because it is a very broad item encompassing other sub-components of the conference. Then, relationships between this broad item and the specific sub-components are discussed. The purpose of this ordering is to provide a “proxy” path diagram that is able to illuminate ways in which AEA can potentially have a systemic impact on overall conference satisfaction (i.e., interventions designed to impact one part of the path may impact overall conference satisfaction; see Figure 1).

At the “top” of the proxy-path diagram, a positive correlation exists between overall conference satisfaction and overall program content ($r = .56, p < .01$). Examination of Table 27 reveals that overall program content is also strongly associated with variety of presentation and discussion topics ($r = .76, p < .01$) and quality of presentations ($r = .62, p < .01$). Furthermore, quality of presentations is strongly correlated with preparation of presenters ($r = .78, p < .01$); and, although not as strong, moderation of sessions by chairs was positively associated with quality of presentations ($r = .49, p < .01$).

Interestingly, the non-presentation components were also related to overall conference satisfaction, but not as strongly as the presentation-related components. Specifically, overall conference satisfaction was positively related to the on-site registration process ($r = .24, p < .01$), the pre-conference registration process ($r = .24, p < .01$), the conference support staff ($r = .37, p < .01$), and the conference information available on the AEA website ($r = .30, p < .01$). Although each of these non-presentation

conference components are related to overall conference satisfaction, their associations are weaker than the presentation-related conference components.

In sum, overall conference satisfaction was directly or indirectly correlated with overall program content, variety of presentation and discussion topics, quality of presentations, and preparation of presenters, and more modestly with moderation of sessions by chairs, all of which are presentation-related variables. Overall conference satisfaction was also related to the non-presentation conference components, but the magnitude of these relationships suggests that attention should be given first to the presentation-related components. Moreover, considering that the qualitative data (discussed below) tend to support the quantitative relationships reported above, one might conclude that in order to efficiently increase participants' overall conference satisfaction, presentation-related variables should be highlighted as key determinants to the production of a satisfying AEA conference.

Longitudinal Quantitative Comparisons with Evaluation 2000 and 2001

Differences in attendee responses for the last three years of the conference are described in the following section. Specifically, the following content areas are discussed: Conference Organization and Content, Overall Conference Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions Related to Future AEA Conferences.

Conference Organization and Content. The Conference Organization Content item means for the last three years were very similar (see Table 28). The largest deviation among the means for any one item was 0.21 ("Registration on-site"). Although statistical significance between group means, especially with the large n-sizes, may be

found with this type of small mean deviation, the consistency with which AEA attendees positively rate the conference across years is meaningful.

Overall Conference Satisfaction. Each of the Overall Conference Satisfaction items were rated higher during Evaluation 2002 than during Evaluation 2001 or Evaluation 2000 (see Table 29). The discrepancies between the means, however, never exceeded 0.25 for any one item. Regardless of the magnitude of difference, the consistency with which Evaluation 2002 was rated higher in terms of satisfaction is positive.

Behavioral Intentions Related to Future Conferences. The means were also very similar for all three of the behavioral intention items (see Table 30). The discrepancies between the item means never exceeded more than 0.12, and generally indicated that AEA attendees have positive intentions with regard to their decision to return to future conferences.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

Single best experience in attending Evaluation 2002. From responses to this question, six categories emerged including the program; networking; learning, information, and professional development; professional development workshops; famous people and senior evaluators; and atmosphere. Program (sessions, roundtables, plenaries, particular presenters) ($n = 233$) was most frequently cited by the attendees as the single best part of Evaluation 2002. In general, the attendees noted that there were a number of good sessions and good presenters (Table 31 contains quotes).

The first theme was followed by Networking ($n = 198$). Most of the responses in this category expressly used the word, “networking,” but also mentioned the opportunity

to visit with old friends and colleagues as well as to meet new people.

Other responses to this item focused on Learning New Information, and Professional Development ($n = 146$), Professional Development Workshops ($n = 95$), Famous People and Senior Evaluators ($n = 40$), and Atmosphere ($n = 22$) (representative quotes¹² can be found in Table 31).

The one disappointing aspect in attending Evaluation 2002. Eight themes emerged from the question, “What one thing did you find most disappointing in attending Evaluation 2002?” These themes included poor presenters, presentations, or content; hotel, session rooms, and isolation; too many sessions; professional development workshops; the program book and information; lack of papers and handouts; networking; and breakfast/lunch/refreshments.

The single most disappointing aspect of the conference that attendees noted was Poor Presenters, Presentations, or Content ($n = 264$).¹³ Many stated that the presentation quality varied, that a lot of the presenters, chairs and discussants were not prepared, and that very few brought an adequate number of handouts, if any at all. Several also noted the poor quality of the opening plenary (refer to Table 32 for quotes).

The second most frequently cited theme as most disappointing about Evaluation 2002 was the Hotel, Session Rooms and Isolation ($n = 123$) of the Conference (Table 32 contains quotes). The responses indicated that the hotel was too isolated from restaurants, public transportation, and downtown; also, that the session rooms were too

¹² Quotes that best represented the majority of the responses within a particular category were selected as “representative.” This use of “representative quotes” is used throughout the remainder of the Qualitative Data and Analysis section.

¹³ The quantitative data suggest that although the mean rating for overall presentation quality is high (see Table 22), it is also relatively low when compared to attendee ratings of the other overall conference components. This relatively low rating may be due to the large number of individuals who included presenters, presentations and presentation content as their most disappointing feature of the conference.

small for some presentations.

Ranking a close third as the most disappointing aspect of Evaluation 2002 was Too Many Sessions ($n = 119$). Respondents often noted that they missed sessions they wanted to attend because there were too many interesting sessions being held concurrently; also that there was not enough time between sessions, especially for a lunch break or networking; and, that they would rather have the selection process be more stringent so that there were fewer, yet higher quality presentations.

Less frequently mentioned categories included disappointment with Professional Development Workshops ($n = 42$), Program Book and Information (including the program on the web) ($n = 34$), Lack of Papers and Handouts ($n = 32$), Networking ($n = 19$), and Breakfast/Lunch/Refreshments ($n = 18$). Below are some of the written comments (refer to Table 32 for quotes).

Improvement of future AEA meetings. Attendees were asked to make suggestion about what AEA could do to improve future conferences. There were nine categories that emerged from the analysis: before, during and after sessions (with subcategories: proposal quality; better presentations; discussion/interaction; and, more handouts); conference scheduling and networking opportunities; hotel location and food; information on the program; TIG processes and scheduling; diversity; signs/notice; and, registration process.

The majority of the suggestions to improve future AEA meetings were related to Before, During, and After-Sessions ($n = 223$). Specifically, these suggestions can be sub-grouped into four themes such as Select Proposals for Quality ($n = 58$), Suggestions for Better Presentation ($n = 96$), Discussion/Interaction ($n = 15$), and Want Papers, Handouts

at Conference and/or on the Web ($n = 32$) (representative quotes for all categories can be found in Table 33).

The second most frequently cited theme for suggestions regarded Conference Scheduling and Networking Opportunities ($n = 122$). Hotel Location and Food ($n = 83$) is third most common type of suggestion. These themes were followed by Information on the Program ($n = 42$), TIG (more Systematic method for electing TIG officers; TIGS were offered at the same time) ($n = 21$), Diversity (more diverse attendee population in terms of expertise, work area and ethnicity) ($n = 14$), Assignment of Conference Rooms ($n = 13$), Signs/Notice ($n = 11$), and Registration Process ($n = 10$).

Additional comments. At this last opportunity to write in comments on the Overall Conference Feedback Form, 10 themes materialized. These themes include, the AEA staff (positive feedback), comments on the future, the program, AEA staff (criticisms), hotel, presentations, distribution of conference materials, food, pre-conference, and the evaluation.

Attendees most frequently thanked the AEA staff ($n = 68$) for their hard work in making this a smoothly run conference (refer to Table 34 for representative quotes). The second most frequently mentioned category was the provision of Future Direction and Comments on the Future ($n = 47$). The third and fourth most frequently mentioned themes focused on the Program (criticisms and suggestions) ($n = 25$) and AEA Staff Feedback (criticisms and suggestions) ($n = 24$), respectively. Other categories that emerged include Hotel (cost, location, directions and service) ($n = 17$), Presentations (presenters/chairs/discussants) ($n = 17$), Distribution of Conference Materials (criticisms and suggestions) ($n = 12$), Food ($n = 12$), Pre-Conference ($n = 11$), and Evaluation (paper

v. web) ($n = 9$).

Attendance at Sessions

Attendance at sessions at the 2002 AEA conference was analyzed in several ways. Three hundred and sixty sessions were counted, excluding three receptions and three plenaries. The overall average attendance at sessions, excluding plenaries and receptions, was 30.7. Receptions and plenary sessions were not included in the calculation of the overall average because there were no other sessions scheduled during receptions or plenary sessions, therefore including attendance figures for these types of sessions would artificially inflate the average attendance for the “average” session. However, the reception attendance is reported below.

Session attendance was analyzed by session type (e.g., Panel, Multipaper), day (e.g., Wednesday, Thursday), start time (e.g., 9:30am, 12:00pm), and sponsorship (e.g., TIG). Means are reported to illustrate the average number of participants per session type, day, time or sponsorship in place of total attendance due to the potential inflation of the total number of attendees resulting from the likelihood of one person being counted multiple times in one session type, day, or time.

Attendance by Type of Session. Attendance at the conference by type of session is shown in Table 35. The session types with the highest average attendance ($M=87$) were the Panel and the Skill Building sessions. The second highest average was 70 participants attending the Demonstration sessions. The least attended session type was the Round Table, with an average of 26 participants per session. Also notable were the three Plenary sessions, which averaged 305 participants per session and the Receptions, which had an average of 525 participants in each of the two sessions. The attendance for each

reception is shown in Table 36. The poster session had the highest attendance ($n=625$), followed by the information fair ($n=570$), and then the silent auction ($n=479$).

Attendance by Day of the Week. Attendance at the conference varied by the day of the week (see Table 37). Wednesday had the highest average attendance per session ($M=62$). Thursday had an average of 38 participants attending each session. Friday had an average of 36 participants per session. Saturday had the lowest average attendance with an average of 19 participants per session.

Attendance by Session Start Time. Session attendance by start time is shown in Table 38. Session start times were divided into categories of early morning (i.e., before 9:30am), mid morning (i.e., 9:45-11:45am), early afternoon (i.e., 12:00-2:30pm) and late afternoon (i.e., 3:00-5:15pm). The early afternoon start times had the highest average ($M=80.13$), followed by sessions starting before 9:30 ($M=63.31$), midmorning start times ($M=52.79$), and then later afternoon start times ($M=50.33$).

Attendance by Session Sponsorship. Attendance by session sponsorship (i.e., TIG) is shown in Table 39. Sessions sponsored by The Theories of Evaluation TIG had the highest average ($M=80.29$) followed by sessions sponsored by the AEA Conference Committee ($M=56.35$), and then the Program Theory, Theory-Driven Evaluation TIG ($M=53.13$). Sessions sponsored by the Crime and Justice TIG had the lowest average ($M=6.93$); followed by session sponsored by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Issues TIG ($M=8.00$); and then the Evaluation of Services for Special Needs Populations TIG ($M=9.40$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Conference Newcomers' Experience

Recommendations for AEA are as follows:

- Continue the newcomer activities at future conferences and provide more networking opportunities, mixers, and sessions specifically for newcomers.
- Advertise and provide more information about the activities to increase awareness and attendance/utilization. Utilize pre-conference opportunities (e.g., e-mail, AEA website) to notify and inform conference newcomers about various aspects of the conference, newcomer activities, and AEA in general.
- Provide more information prior to and throughout the conference regarding all aspects of the AEA annual meeting.
- Make the newcomer packet of information available to all newcomers upon registration or prior to the conference.
- When planning future conferences, continue to consider location and cost as major factors that influence whether evaluators will attend the conference. Also continue planning to accommodate the needs of international newcomers (in terms of cost of attendance, international travel, etc.).
- Formalize the Ambassador Program. Consider assigning specific “mentors” for conference newcomers, or consider instituting a “buddy system” to help newcomers feel welcome in AEA.
- Continue considering diversity, generality, and applicability of topics and information when planning conference and session content.

Overall Conference Experience

Recommendations for AEA include the following:

- Emphasize the guidelines for presenting. Attendees indicated that many presenters might benefit from a “Best Practices” information guide (e.g., tips to improve presentation quality).
- Make the program available on-line before the conference so that attendees can plan their schedule prior to their arrival.
- Continue providing structured networking opportunities.
- Expand informal networking opportunities and social activities.

- Cut down on the number of presentation sessions per day (which would increase the quality of the sessions), allowing more time for lunch and networking.
- Select conference hotels that are closely tied to local restaurants and public transportation that would be more conducive to successful networking opportunities AEA provided in 2002.

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Table 1

Awareness of Newcomer Activities

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	Aware	Unaware
Newcomer Orientation Session	352	238 (68)	114 (32)
Newcomer Packet of Information	346	81 (23)	265 (77)
Information Fair	350	201 (57)	149 (43)
Ambassador Program	347	196 (56)	151 (44)

Note. Frequencies of newcomers selecting each response option are followed by the percentage in parentheses.

Table 2

Attendance and Use of Newcomer Activities

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	Attended ^a	Did Not Attend ^a
Newcomer Orientation Session	347	95 (27)	252 (73)
Newcomer Packet of Information	333	50 (15)	283 (85)
Information Fair	343	111 (32)	232 (68)
Ambassador Program	344	61 (18)	283 (82)

Note. Frequencies of newcomers selecting each response option are followed by the percentage in parentheses.

^aThe term “attend” represents attendance and/or use of the newcomer activity or resource.

Table 3

Reasons for Not Attending Newcomer Activities

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	Not Aware of Activity	Unable to Attend ^a	Chose Not to Attend ^a
Newcomer Orientation Session	230	65 (28)	82 (36)	83 (36)
Newcomer Packet of Information	249	157 (63)	45 (18)	47 (19)
Information Fair	210	82 (39)	65 (31)	63 (30)
Ambassador Program	224	99 (44)	33 (15)	92 (41)

Note. Frequencies of newcomers selecting each response option are followed by the percentage in parentheses.

^aThe term “attend” represents attendance and/or use of the newcomer activity or resource.

Table 4

Satisfaction with Each Newcomer Activity

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	<i>M^a</i>	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
			1	2	3	4	5
Newcomer Orientation Session	92	4.07 (1.12)	3 (3)	9 (10)	9 (10)	29 (31)	42 (46)
Newcomer Packet of Information	46	4.22 (.92)	0 (0)	3 (6)	6 (13)	15 (33)	22 (48)
Information Fair	10 7	4.17 (.78)	0 (0)	4 (4)	13 (12)	51 (48)	39 (36)
Ambassador Program	54	4.04 (1.01)	2 (4)	2 (4)	8 (15)	22 (40)	20 (37)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

^aStandard Deviations appear in parentheses.

Table 5

Usefulness of Each Newcomer Activity

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	<i>M^a</i>	Not at all	“Somewhat	Neutral	“Useful”	Very
			Useful	Useful”			Useful
			1	2	3	4	5
Newcomer Orientation Session	91	3.86 (1.20)	5 (6)	11 (12)	9 (10)	33 (36)	33 (36)
Newcomer Packet of Information	45	3.93 (1.03)	1 (2)	4 (9)	7 (16)	18 (40)	15 (33)
Information Fair	103	3.92 (.90)	2 (2)	6 (6)	16 (16)	53 (51)	26 (25)
Ambassador Program	53	4.08 (.90)	1 (2)	2 (4)	7 (13)	25 (47)	18 (34)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

^aStandard Deviations appear in parentheses.

Table 6

Influence of Each Newcomer Activity on Satisfaction with Overall Conference

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	<i>M^a</i>	No	Very Little	Neutral	Some	Great
			Influence	Influence		Influence	Influence
			1	2	3	4	5
Newcomer Orientation Session	91	3.37 (1.18)	9 (10)	13 (14)	16 (18)	41 (45)	12 (13)
Newcomer Packet of Information	45	3.44 (1.03)	3 (7)	5 (11)	10 (22)	23 (51)	4 (9)
Information Fair	100	3.28 (1.01)	7 (7)	14 (14)	28 (28)	46 (46)	5 (5)
Ambassador Program	56	3.41 (1.17)	6 (11)	6 (11)	10 (18)	27 (48)	7 (12)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

^aStandard Deviations appear in parentheses.

Table 7

Newcomer Attitudes about Continuing Each Newcomer Activity at Future Conferences

Activity/Resource	<i>n</i>	Continue Activity	Continue Activity with Revisions	Discontinue Activity
Newcomer Orientation Session	92	62 (67)	28 (30)	2 (2)
Newcomer Packet of Information	43	32 (74)	11 (26)	0 (0)
Information Fair	101	81 (80)	19 (19)	1 (1)
Ambassador Program	50	39 (78)	11 (22)	0 (0)

Note. Frequencies of newcomers selecting each response option are followed by the percentage in parentheses.

Table 8

Q8: *What revisions do you recommend for the newcomer activities?* (N = 126)^a

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
	First Category: <i>More Information & Increased Visibility of Activities</i> (n = 46) ^b
8a	Advertise! Send newcomer emails prior to the conference. Have a special section of the AEA conference website for newcomers.
8b	Explain/advertise better about these sessions and their content on the Web prior to the conference and at the conference
8c	To have some 'welcome package' for newcomers prior to the conference (via email or at the website).
8d	It would have been a good idea for someone at the onsite registration desk to mention them or hand me a brochure.
8e	Let us know about them in advance!! I would have very much liked to attend the orientation and info fair, but I did not know about them prior to arriving, and had made previous arrangements for those times.
8f	Clearer communication about them to newcomers. I heard rumors but did not have clear info.
8g	Explain more how the conference is structured-theme, sessions, differences between panels, papers, workshops, etc.
8h	Have the newcomer orientation include time for networking by TIG interests. The orientation was entertaining but not very informative other than about basic questions on navigating the conference. What else is there to AEA besides the conference?
	Second category: <i>A More Structured Ambassador Program</i> (n = 29)
8i	Ambassadors should wear more clearly defined buttons or tags, or etc. to make them easier to find.
8j	For the ambassador program, I think the ambassador should be more proactive in looking to support newcomers.
8k	Make sure ambassadors seek out newbies. Maybe have an Ambassador training for them if you don't already do it.
8l	Ambassador Program should be explained and highlighted more and groups of new individuals should be assigned an ambassador.
8m	More publicity and more outgoing ambassadors. I was only approached by one during an entire week.

Table 8 Continued

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
Third category: <i>Increasing Availability of Information Packet</i> ($n = 25$)	
8n	At the beginning, announce that people should pick up the information packet on your way out and have it available at the door just after the session starts (OR) just have the info packet available at registration
8o	Distribute newcomer packet at registration.
8p	I would make the information pack available whether or not people attend the orientation
8q	I would recommend sending out the newcomer packet prior to the conference and making sure all newcomers received this information.
Fourth category: <i>Timing & Scheduling Issues</i> ($n = 16$)	
8r	It would be good to offer [the orientation] again on the morning of the first full day so those of us who missed it can attend.
8s	I didn't get there until late Wednesday night. Can you distribute newcomer activities over several conference days so that those who arrive later can attend at least some these sessions?
8t	Schedule activities at more convenient times (i.e. not after a long day at the conference when people are tired and hungry)
8u	I don't know what went on but given that not all people could arrive Wed. night, I think another "get-together" would have been helpful i.e. a lunch or a breakfast for new comers
Fifth category: <i>More Opportunities for Networking & Socializing</i> ($n = 12$)	
8v	More networking opportunities during some of the sessions, when participants with common interests are grouped together
8w	Have newcomers from similar fields come together from the beginning (academic evaluators, acctg. auditors, non-profits of differing types, bank Int'l groups (OED, World Bank, etc).

^a The total N represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The ns for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 9

Q9: What factors might play a role in your intention to return to future AEA conferences? (N = 183)^a

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>Cost & Funding Support</i> (n = 83) ^b	
9a	Hotel and travel costs.
9b	Availability of funds in my organization.
9c	Cost of conference, meals and hotel.
9d	The cost. That is actually the only factor that might prevent me from attending. The Canadian/U.S. exchange rate is a challenge.
9e	Whether my employer will pay my conference fees, hotel accommodations, etc.
9f	Cost of conference, meals and hotel
9g	First and foremost, whether the institution where I work will sponsor me to attend. Being from New Zealand, this is expensive for us.
Second category: <i>Location</i> (n = 51)	
9h	Location would be the biggest factor quite honestly.
9i	Location – More central would be better for me (like last year’s conference – I had wanted to attend but held back after 9/11). I really enjoyed being in DC.
9j	Location and sight seeing available. I always enjoy visiting Washington, DC, New York, San Francisco, Boston, New Orleans, Chicago, etc.
Third category: <i>Topics & Content of Sessions</i> (n = 44)	
9k	New information! The sessions were full of 30 year old information; we can't spend money to hear the same thing over and over.
9l	Much much better presentations and the creation of a learning environment rather than a show and tell environment.
9m	I found the sessions on general evaluation issues more useful than those sessions that discussed specific evaluations.

Table 9 Continued

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
Fourth category: <i>Career Relevance</i> ($n = 22$)	
9n	Whether or not I feel the information is relevant to what I do in my job
9o	The direction of my career.
9p	Since evaluation isn't the only thing I do, I have to weigh other areas of interest - I can't do everything. I would like to come to AEA again. If my work changed so that I did more evaluations, I would definitely make an effort to come again.
Fifth category: <i>Quality of Conference</i> ($n = 17$)	
9q	Quality of conference.
9r	The quality of the sessions I attended was excellent - that is what will keep me coming.
9s	Make sure more sessions are high quality.
Sixth category: <i>Timing of Conference</i> ($n = 16$)	
9t	[It's] simply a matter of resources/time and client mix at the scheduled time of the conference
9u	Whether I can get the time off from work.
Seventh category: <i>Conference Theme</i> ($n = 11$)	
9v	Strand and key themes of the conference.

^a The total N represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The ns for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 10

Q10: What changes do you suggest to make the conference more welcoming for first time attendees and/or to increase the likelihood that you would return to the conference on a regular basis? (N = 131)^a

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>More & Better Information</i> (n = 30) ^b	
10a	Put more useful information in the program.
10b	Distribute more information prior to the conference so attendees have a better idea of what to expect.
10c	Not for first-timers alone, but for all attendees, please add descriptions of the sessions (not paragraphs, but maybe a sentence, so we know what we're getting into).
Second category: <i>Networking Opportunities</i> (n = 27)	
10d	Offer a new attendee lunch, with an "experienced" AEA member at each table.
10e	The interest groups should start with a social mixer and then business meetings.
Third category: <i>Miscellaneous Amenities</i> (n = 12)	
10f	Where is the food? Having no break, snacks or opening continental breakfast is very disappointing.
10g	A bus/shuttle service to less expensive hotel?
Fourth category: <i>Scheduling</i> (n = 10)	
10h	Change the time of orientation session or offer several sessions-during lunch would be good.
10i	Be sure some of the more popular papers/authors do their presentations on each of the conference days ... at various times ...avoid the "favoritism" of prime time scheduling.
Fifth category: <i>Cost & Funding</i> (n = 9)	
10j	Keep the cost down and make a broader range of housing (costs) available, so those on a limited budget can still attend.
10k	I was an international attendee from a Third world country, so funds are an issue. If AEA could create a fund or initiative to further support attendees from this group of countries (reduced memberships, registration costs, airfares, etc.).

^a The total N represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The ns for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 11

Q11: What expectations did you have about the AEA annual conference? (N = 118)^a

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>Learn New, Applicable Skills & Information (n = 59)^b</i>	
<i>11a</i>	To learn about new and innovative methodologies.
<i>11b</i>	I thought I would learn more about actual skills/methodologies.
<i>11c</i>	That I would be with a group of professionals who I could learn a lot from and hopefully share some of my knowledge and experience with.
<i>11d</i>	I hoped I would learn a lot, that I could learn and hopefully transfer that to my work.
<i>11e</i>	That I would leave with innovative ideas about systems evaluation that I could apply to my work and in the transformation in my own country.
Second category: <i>Networking (n = 28)</i>	
<i>11f</i>	I expected to meet theorists, learn more about evaluation, and meet fellow evaluators.
<i>11g</i>	I expected to network and learn about what others are doing.
Third category: <i>Professional Development & Learn about Field of Evaluation (n = 21)</i>	
<i>11h</i>	I expected to learn more about the field of evaluation. Furthermore, I expected to see what evaluation theory looks like in practice.
<i>11i</i>	I wanted to learn more about evaluation and about career opportunities in the field.
Fourth category: <i>High Quality & Interesting Presentations (n = 14)</i>	
<i>11j</i>	High quality sessions, applicable and timely content.
<i>11k</i>	I was looking for a deep professional immersion, a level of expertise in both the precessions and the presentations.
Fifth category: <i>No Expectations (n = 14)</i>	
<i>11l</i>	I came with an open mind and had no real heavy expectations.

^a The total *N* represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The *ns* for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 12

Q12: How well did Evaluation 2002 meet your expectations? (N = 94)^a

Quote	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>Expectations Met</i> (n = 81) ^b	
12a	I have attended a fair number of conferences. I always hope to learn 5 or 6 things that I can apply to practice immediately. I also hope to expand my thinking on various subjects and have the opportunity to meet one or two new colleagues. Despite those modest expectations, I am often disappointed, particularly as I become more expert at what I do. I was not disappointed by AEA.
12b	I met several interesting people with common interests. It was a very stimulating meeting.
12c	I came away with a much better understanding of program evaluation and feel more confident in my abilities as an evaluator
12d	It exceeded my expectations, most presenters were excellent, and I often had trouble deciding between sessions because there were so many high quality topics.
12e	The Evaluation conference far surpassed my expectations. I can honestly say that the session offerings were extensive and interesting.
12f	My expectations were more than realized, the AEA conference is a wonderful learning opportunity on evaluation and related issues.
12g	It well exceeded them. I found exciting and interesting new ideas, many people with commitment and enthusiasm about the work, and excellent networking.
Second category: <i>Expectations Not Met</i> (n = 11)	
12h	While I felt that I was exposed to a lot of topics, I didn't feel like I learned a lot of practical, take-home-and-put-to-use knowledge, which disappointed me. Also, I do internal evaluation, and I felt like a lot of the sessions weren't applicable to my job.
12i	Some presentations were fantastic and informative. Others were terrible, with little connection between the idea being presented and the theme of the particular session.
12j	Not at all, with very minor exceptions. Overall the sessions I attended were very unchallenging and often very poorly presented.

Note. For item 12, 2 respondents indicated that they were unsure about whether the conference met or failed to meet their expectations.

^a The total *N* represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The *ns* for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 13

AEA membership status

Year	n	Professional Member	Student Member	Non-Member
2001	712	575 (81)	78 (11)	59 (8)
2002	933	769 (82)	96 (10)	68 (7)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 14

Number of AEA Conference Attended

Year	n	First AEA Conference	2 to 4 Conferences	5 to 7 Conferences	8 to 10 Conferences	More than 10 Conferences
2001	712	318 (45)	236 (33)	64 (9)	36 (5)	58 (8)
2002	934	439 (47)	308 (33)	85 (9)	36 (4)	66 (7)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 15

Evaluation Knowledge and Skill Level

Year	n	No Background in Evaluation	Novice Evaluator	Intermediate Evaluator	Advanced Evaluator	Expert Evaluator
2001	713	9 (1)	79 (11)	290 (41)	243 (34)	92 (13)
2002	932	6 (0.6)	98 (11)	357 (38)	346 (37)	125 (34)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 16

Position Titles of Conference Attendees

Year	n	Researcher/ Evaluator	Manager/ Administrator	Consultant	Professor/ Teacher	Student	Other ^a
2001	70	N/A	176	140	115	67	206
	4		(25)	(20)	(16)	(10)	(29)
2002	92	468	119	107	104	79	51
	8	(50)	(13)	(12)	(11)	(9)	(6)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

^a Responses coded as “Other” in Evaluation 2001 consistently indicated that another category, “Researcher/Evaluator,” should be created. Therefore, this category is new in Evaluation 2002.

Table 17

Percent of Workload Including Evaluation Related Duties of Respondents

Year	n	0%	1% to 25%	26% to 50%	51% to 75%	76% to 100%
2001 ^a		0.6	31 ^c		22	45
2002 ^b	924	12 (1)	126 (14)	162 (18)	230 (25)	394 (43)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

^aOnly percentages are reported. ^b Frequencies of newcomers selecting each response option are followed by the percentage in parentheses. ^cData were reported in aggregate, text form for these two categories in Evaluation 2001.

Table 18

AEA Membership Status by Number of AEA Conferences Attended

AEA Membership Status	This is my first AEA conference	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10
Professional member	324 (43)	256 (34)	81 (11)	35 (5)	66 (9)
Student member	58 (60)	36 (38)	2 (2)		
Non-member	54 (80)	13 (19)	1 (2)		

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 19

Evaluation Knowledge and Skills by Number of AEA Conferences Attended

Level of Knowledge/Skill	This is my first AEA conference	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10
Expert	20 (16)	37 (30)	28 (22)	9 (7)	31 (25)
Advanced	118 (34)	130 (38)	45 (13)	22 (6)	28 (8)
Intermediate	203 (57)	130 (37)	10 (3)	5 (1)	6 (2)
Novice	87 (90)	9 (9)			1 (1)
No background	6 (100)				

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 20

Position Titles by Number of AEA Conferences Attended

Position Title	This is my first AEA conference	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10
Student	52 (66)	26 (32)	1 (1)		
Manager/Administrator	64 (54)	37 (31)	8 (7)	3 (3)	6 (5)
Professor/Teacher	39 (38)	18 (18)	12 (12)	7 (7)	27 (26)
Consultant	47 (44)	35 (33)	12 (11)	7 (7)	6 (6)
Researcher/Evaluator	201 (43)	175 (38)	49 (11)	16 (4)	22 (5)
Other	26 (51)	16 (31)	2 (4)	3 (6)	4 (8)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 21

Percent of Evaluation Related Duties by Number of AEA Conferences Attended

Percent of Evaluation Duties	This is my first AEA conference	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10
76-100%	146 (37)	149 (38)	52 (13)	21 (5)	23 (6)
51-75%	117 (51)	72 (31)	16 (7)	4 (2)	20 (9)
26-50%	79 (49)	50 (31)	11 (7)	4 (9)	17 (11)
1-25%	81 (65)	31 (25)	3 (2)	5 (4)	4 (3)
0%	11 (92)				1 (8)

Note. Percentages are in parentheses under the frequencies.

Table 22

Please rate the following Evaluation 2002 conference components in terms of quality.

Conference Organization and Content	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Needs				
				Improvement		Acceptable		Excellent
				1	2	3	4	5
Registration Process (Pre-conference)	4.34	0.84	858	1	3	10	34	52
Registration on-site	4.39	0.82	426	1	2	10	31	56
Conference support staff	4.43	0.76	877	1	1	10	32	57
Conference information on AEA website	4.02	1.01	914	2	8	14	38	38
Overall program content	4.08	0.90	928	1	6	12	46	35
Variety of presentation and discussion topics	4.21	0.91	930	1	5	11	37	46
Moderation of sessions by chairs	3.80	0.89	894	1	6	23	48	21
Preparation of presenters	3.96	0.87	924	1	6	17	50	27
Quality of presentations	3.89	0.89	924	2	7	16	53	23

Note. Ratings are reported in percentages.

Table 23

If you presented or submitted a presentation, please rate your level of satisfaction with the proposal and review process.

Proposal Submission and Review Process	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Very Dissatisfied		Neutral		Very Satisfied
				1	2	3	4	5
Call for papers/presentations	4.54	0.77	452	1	1	9	22	67
Paper/presentation selection process	4.45	0.87	448	1	4	9	23	64

Note. Ratings are reported in percentages.

Table 24

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following:

Overall Conference Satisfaction	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
				1	2	3	4	5
I felt welcomed at the conference.	4.27	0.79	938	1	2	11	42	45
Evaluation 2002 met my expectations.	4.08	0.90	936	1	5	12	47	35
The conference was worth the time and money.	4.18	0.88	937	1	5	12	41	42
I had adequate opportunities for networking.	4.04	0.89	933	1	6	15	46	32
I learned things that will inform my practice.	4.18	0.80	934	1	4	9	50	37
The conference met my professional development needs.	3.93	0.90	929	1	6	18	48	27
Overall, I enjoyed the conference.	4.28	0.76	935	1	2	9	46	43

Note. Ratings are reported in percentages.

Table 25

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following:

Overall Conference Satisfaction	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Response Categories				
				Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
				1	2	3	4	5
I intend to recommend the conference to others.	4.15	0.86	934	1	3	16	41	40
I plan to attend another AEA conference in the future.	4.29	0.83	936	1	2	13	35	49
I hope to present at a future AEA conference.	4.13	0.93	932	2	3	13	35	42

Note. Ratings are reported in percentages.

Table 26

Zero-order Correlation Coefficients Between Conference Satisfaction and Future Intentions

OCFF Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	3j	3h	3g
3j) Overall conference satisfaction	4.28	0.76	935	1.00		
3h) Attend another AEA conference	4.29	0.83	936	0.72	1.00	
3g) Recommend the conference to others	4.15	0.86	934	0.75	0.75	1.00

Note. All correlation coefficients are significant at the level of .01.

Table 27

Zero-order Correlation Coefficients Between Conference Satisfaction and Conference Components

OCCF Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	3j	1e	1f	1i	1h	1g	1c	1b	1a	1d
3j) Overall conference satisfaction	4.28	0.76	935	1.00									
1e) Overall program content	4.08	0.90	928	0.56	1.00								
1f) Variety of presentation and topics	4.21	0.91	930	0.50	0.76	1.00							
1i) Quality of presentations	3.89	0.89	924	0.49	0.62	0.52	1.00						
1h) Preparation of presenters	3.96	0.87	924	0.39	0.50	0.42	0.78	1.00					
1g) Moderation of sessions by chairs	3.80	0.89	894	0.34	0.42	0.41	0.49	0.52	1.00				
1c) Conference support staff	4.43	0.76	877	0.37	0.27	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.20	1.00			
1b) Registration on-site	4.39	0.82	426	0.24	0.17	0.18	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.54	1.00		
1a) Pre-conference registration process	4.34	0.84	858	0.24	0.21	0.17	0.16	0.21	0.21	0.48	0.64	1.00	
1d) Conference info. on AEA website	4.02	1.01	914	0.30	0.39	0.35	0.24	0.19	0.21	0.34	0.32	0.39	1.00

Note. All correlation coefficients are significant at the level of .01.

Table 28

Conference Organization and Content Item Ratings Across 2000, 2001 and 2002

	2002		2001		2000	
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>
Conference Organization and Content						
Registration Process (Pre-conference)	4.34 (0.84)	858	4.27	713	4.37	284
Registration on-site	4.39 (0.82)	426	4.26	712	4.47	224
Conference support staff	4.43 (0.76)	877	4.33	692	4.51	261
Conference information on AEA website	4.02 (1.01)	914	3.92	710	4.11	281
Overall program content	4.08 (0.90)	928	4.00	706	3.95	301
Variety of presentation and discussion topics	4.21 (0.91)	930				
Moderation of sessions by chairs	3.80 (0.89)	894	3.74	707	3.73	291
Preparation of presenters	3.96 (0.87)	924	3.90	710	3.89	294
Quality of presentations	3.89 (0.89)	924	3.84	708	3.77	292

Note. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Table 29

Overall Conference Satisfaction Item Ratings Across 2000, 2001 and 2002

	2002		2001		2000	
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>
Overall Conference Satisfaction						
I felt welcomed at the conference.	4.27 (0.79)	938	4.08	716	4.04	295
Evaluation 2002 met my expectations.	4.08 (0.90)	936	3.99	717	3.97	296
The conference was worth the time and money.	4.18 (0.88)	937	4.11	716	4.12	299
I had adequate opportunities for networking.	4.04 (0.89)	933				
I learned things that will inform my practice.	4.18 (0.80)	934	4.10	716	3.93	294
The conference met my professional development needs.	3.93 (0.90)	929	3.87	712	3.68	294
Overall, I enjoyed the conference	4.28 (0.76)	935	4.25	720	4.16	297

Note. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Table 30

Behavioral Intentions Related to Future Conferences Item Ratings Across 2000, 2001 and 2002

Behavioral Intentions Related to Future Conferences	2002		2001		2000	
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>
I intend to recommend the conference to others.	4.15 (0.86)	934	4.14	713	4.03	295
I plan to attend another AEA conference in the future	4.29 (0.83)	936	4.33	714	4.29	299
I hope to present at a future AEA conference.	4.13 (0.93)	932	4.14	714	4.10	298

Note. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Table 31

Q4: What was the single best part of your experience in attending Evaluation 2002?
(N = 743)^a

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>Program</i> (n = 233) ^b	
4a	Wow! I've heard and thought about so many good topics and how I can incorporate pieces into my current work. I've already started thinking about a multi-paper session for next year devoted solely to one of our projects.
4b	Sessions on systems thinking by MIT professor. This theme was interwoven in many sessions and there was a great synergy among the various presentations.
Second category: <i>Networking</i> (n = 198)	
4c	Networking with others. The panel sponsored by the independent consulting TIG sharing personal experiences of establishing and growing your own evaluation practice. Interacting with members of the Independent Consulting and Feminist Issues TIG.
4d	Networking with peers and luminaries in the field, and following the development of their work via presentations and informal conversations. It's great that such prominent members of the field are so accessible, welcoming, and supportive.
Third category: <i>Learning New Information, and Professional Development</i> (n = 146)	
4e	Learned about a specific evaluation type and learned about books on it, that I was being asked to expand my work into at the time for a current client and really needed this information at the time. Perfect timing and good information found.
Fourth category: <i>Professional Development Workshops</i> (n = 95)	
4f	The pre-conference workshop on participatory evaluation techniques facilitated by Jean King was the best that I have ever attended. They were very well organized, had the timing and activities down to a fine art and managed to be amusing at the same time.
Fifth category: <i>Famous People and Senior Evaluators</i> (n = 40)	
4g	The opportunity to hear the people who write the books in person. I felt like I got a better understanding of what people were thinking. I appreciated the presenter's willingness to speak plainly, and to disagree.

Table 31 Continued

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
Sixth category: <i>Atmosphere</i> ($n = 22$)	
4h	The atmosphere at the conference was amazing...everyone was incredibly nice and welcoming. As a student, it was just incredible to be able to approach and speak to all of the theorists that I have been reading about. It is a very welcoming atmosphere.

^a The total N represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The ns for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 32

Q5: What one thing did you find most disappointing in attending Evaluation 2002?
(N = 758)^a

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>Poor Presenters, Presentations or Content</i> (n = 264) ^b	
5a	The quality of several of the presentations I attended: misspellings on overheads, clear lack of presentation preparation, presentation of unsubstantiated statements, etc.
5b	The opening plenary was very poorly organized and presented - not a good lead-off to the conference especially given the high number of first-time attendees not a good first impression.
Second category: <i>Hotel, Session Rooms and Isolation</i> (n = 123)	
5c	Hotel was too isolated and too close to airport! For those of us who don't travel frequently, I would rather be in the heart of the city, than in a suburb.
5d	Logic Model sessions were difficult to attend due to room capacity and overflow.
Third category: <i>Too Many Sessions</i> (n = 119)	
5e	Difficult to attend all the sessions that I found interesting, as they were frequently in conflict with each other.
5f	Too crowded, too many presentations, not a selective approach to topics, marketing was emphasized rather than research, it is like a show business rather than an academic conference.
Fourth category: <i>Professional Development Workshops</i> (n = 42)	
5g	I think 'beginner, intermediate, and advanced' level of evaluator, used to organize the professional development sessions, should be clearly defined. I went to one session for an intermediate that provided information for a beginning evaluator.
Fifth category: <i>Program Book and Information</i> (n = 34)	
5h	I didn't have enough time to review the program beforehand, and I found the web information on the sessions to be inadequate. Electronic posting of abstracts as AERA has done would be helpful.

Table 32 Continued

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
<i>Sixth category: Lack of Papers and Handouts (n = 32)</i>	
5i	Lack of available papers and handouts from sessions, including those I was unable to attend.
<i>Seventh category: Networking (n = 19)</i>	
5j	The networking opportunities may need to be more structure to bring in individuals that are new to AEA. There seems to be lots of people that know each other and I felt quite isolated for the entire conference.
<i>Eighth category: Breakfast/Lunch/Refreshments (n = 18)</i>	
5k	No food/refreshments were provided between sessions. It took too long to venture upstairs to buy snacks or drinks (and the lines were too long)--or lunch for that matter!! So I found myself starving and distracted while attending the sessions

^a The total *N* represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The *ns* for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 33

Q6: What could AEA do to improve future meetings? (N = 662)^a

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
<p style="text-align: center;">First category: <i>Before, During and After-Sessions</i> <i>Subcategories include: Proposals Quality, Better Presentations, Discussion/Interaction, More Handouts (n = 223)</i>^b</p>	
6a	<p>Fewer sessions. More screening for quality of topics/presenters. We *certainly* need to get feedback on the quality of individual sessions: preparation, presentation, handouts. Results should inform decisions about who presents in subsequent years.</p>
6b	<p>Perhaps provide criteria online for good papers/presentations. These could be used as a checklist for self-evaluation of one's presentation. Alverno College, who had a booth at the conference, has excellent criteria for papers and speeches.</p>
6c	<p>Include alternative presentations in different formats - conversations, role-playing, etc. and include stakeholders, participants in panel and presentations.</p>
6d	<p>Provide access to abstracts online, post-conference access to papers, and require adequate amount of handouts. Incentives for speakers to show up on-time and prepared. I know a conference that requires attendance at a speaker breakfast with speaker support room and presentation sessions.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Second category: <i>Conference Scheduling and Networking Opportunities (n = 122)</i></p>	
6e	<p>Extend the lunch break so that we can rest our minds and spirits, get nourished, and meet others.</p>
6f	<p>Provide a networking lunch opportunity at least one day of which the fee is included in the registration.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Third category: <i>Hotel Location and Food (n = 83)</i></p>	
6g	<p>Locate conference in a facility with better access to food within the immediate vicinity, so less time needs to be taken away from meetings to get something to eat that is of a reasonable price.</p>
6h	<p>Consider having things that people can grab like boxed lunches at a reasonable cost (not \$10 for a sandwich like in the hotel), lots of bottled water, and perhaps things like granola bars and fruit. It's not expensive.</p>

Table 33 Continued

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
Fourth category: <i>Information on the Program</i> ($n = 42$)	
6i	Have a one-page overview grid that shows all sessions on one fold-out. The SIOP conference does this every year, very successfully, and they are about the same size if not a bit bigger (about 20-25 parallel sessions).
Fifth category: <i>TIG</i> ($n = 21$)	
6j	To continue gathering and including many, to continue the good work of the TIGs and pull topics from some of the exciting conversations from EVALTALK.
Sixth category: <i>Diversity</i> ($n = 14$)	
6k	There is a lot of evaluation related research (primarily quantitative) in the physical, biological and social sciences. I believe evaluators would benefit from more direct contact with scientists and researchers, as well as the "users" of evaluation.
Seventh category: <i>Assignment of Conference Rooms</i> ($n = 13$)	
6l	Anticipate which sessions need bigger rooms; encourage those speakers to bring more handouts; it was great that most speakers offered to e-mail their handouts.
Eighth category: <i>Signs/Notice</i> ($n = 11$)	
6m	Have signs outside each of the room doors identifying what sessions will be held in the room.
Ninth category: <i>Registration Process</i> ($n = 10$)	
6n	Have registration open later on the first night / prior night so that late arrivals can get their materials and look over session choices for the next day.

^a The total N represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The ns for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 34

Q12: Please share any additional comments we can use to serve you better and fulfill your expectations: (N = 281)^a

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
First category: <i>AEA Staff (n = 68)^b</i>	
12a	A big "thank you" to the organizers for excellent logistics, to the Board, and to the students who did the evaluation. It is easy to see how much you all care about the work and the field and each other!
12b	I want to thank Susan Kistler for all her wonderful coordination work. I hope she gets a sizeable raise in appreciation & recognition of her work!
Second category: <i>Comment on the Future (n = 47)</i>	
12c	I look forward to the conference topic of Evaluation Methods. I think that conference will serve as a very useful resource for evaluators.
12d	My primary professional affiliation has been AERA (school evaluation). I would have become more active in AEA had I known more about it. Suggest more advertising via other professional organizations (i.e., NCME and AERA).
Third category: <i>The Program (n = 25)</i>	
12e	Also, I strongly recommend having brief descriptions of each presentation. I often had no idea what the group/persons would be presenting on.
12f	I like the program book. One suggestion to improve it would be to add some space for taking notes, maybe at the end of each time slot.
Fourth category: <i>AEA Staff (Criticisms and Suggestions) (n = 24)</i>	
12g	Clean up that website and keep doing a fantastic job on everything else!
12h	Many of us were still there on Sunday for professional development sessions but there were no AEA staff around that I could find. Computers were taken away and not available on Saturday. Please extend the time that we have access to the computers.

Table 34 Continued

Quote Number	Categories and Representative Quotes
Fifth category: <i>Hotel</i> ($n = 17$)	
12i	To continue gathering and including many, to continue the good work of the TIGs and pull topics from some of the exciting conversations from EVALTALK.
12j	The hotel personnel at the Hyatt were wonderful. Accommodations could have been better. The lines for breakfast and lunch were too long. Exercise facilities amounted to nothing. Need workout equipment, hot tub, saunas-something likes that.
Sixth Category: <i>Presentations (Presenters/Chairs/Discussants)</i> ($n = 17$)	
12k	It was better group (selection & quality) of presentations than last year's. More sessions were enjoyable than not.
Seventh Category: <i>Distribution of Conference Materials</i> ($n = 12$)	
12l	A central web site that contained electronic versions of presentations that could be downloaded back at the office would be helpful. Things get lost. Paper is heavy. Sometimes there aren't enough hard copies.
Eighth Category: <i>Food</i> ($n = 12$)	
12m	We needed more access to less expensive meals and drinks in the area. The hotel food was very expensive.
Ninth Category: <i>Pre-Conference</i> ($n = 11$)	
12n	Please include session abstracts on the website prior well in advance of the meeting. With the call for abstracts, please include a sample abstract considered "excellent."
Tenth Category: <i>Evaluation (Paper v. Web)</i> ($n = 9$)	
12o	Great option to do the evaluation on-line. Prefer this over the paper version. Is it possible to have a couple of computers setup at the conference to complete the form while at the conference? If not, I still prefer the on-line version after the conference.

^a The total N represents the number of newcomers who responded to the item.

^b The ns for each category represent the number of times the category was mentioned; some newcomers' responses fit into multiple categories.

Table 35

Attendance by Seminar Types

Type	Number of Sessions	<i>M</i>
Plenary	3	305.33
Panel	126	87.24
Skill Building	14	87.00
Demonstration	41	69.54
Expert lecture	10	60.40
Multiple Paper	104	35.05
Business Meeting	33	31.94
Think Tank	31	26.22
Round table	12	25.76

Table 36

Reception Attendance

Reception	Attendance
Poster Session	625
Information Fair	570
Silent Auction	479
<i>Total</i>	1674

Table 37

Attendance by Day of the Week

Days	Number of sessions	<i>M</i>
Wednesday	17	61.88
Thursday	124	38.13
Friday	117	35.74
Saturday	105	19.10

Note. Calculations do not include receptions.

Table 38

Attendance by Session Start Time

Start Time	Number of Sessions	<i>M</i>
Before 9:30	59	63.31
9:45-11:45	138	52.79
12:00-2:30	83	80.13
3:00-5:15	94	50.33

Table 39

Attendance by Session Sponsorship

Sponsor	Number of Sessions	<i>M</i>
Theories of Evaluation	7	80.29
AEA Conference Committee	17	56.35
Program Theory, Theory-Driven Evaluation	8	53.13
Qualitative Methods	10	49.30
Business and Industry	9	45.89
Evaluation Use	12	42.33
Quantitative Methods: Theory and Design	14	41.07
Presidential Strand ^a	9	35.56
Non-Profit and Foundation Evaluation	15	35.20
Collaborative, Participatory & Empowerment Evaluation	21	35.14
Graduate Student Association	4	33.00
Independent Consulting	9	32.33
Minority Issues in Evaluation	14	32.00
Extension Education Evaluation	9	30.89
Evaluation Managers and Supervisors	5	30.20
Research, Technology and Development Evaluation	8	28.75
Computer Use in Evaluation	6	28.00
International and Cross-Cultural Evaluation	17	27.29
Pre-K - 12 Education Evaluation	34	24.68

Table 39 (Cont.)

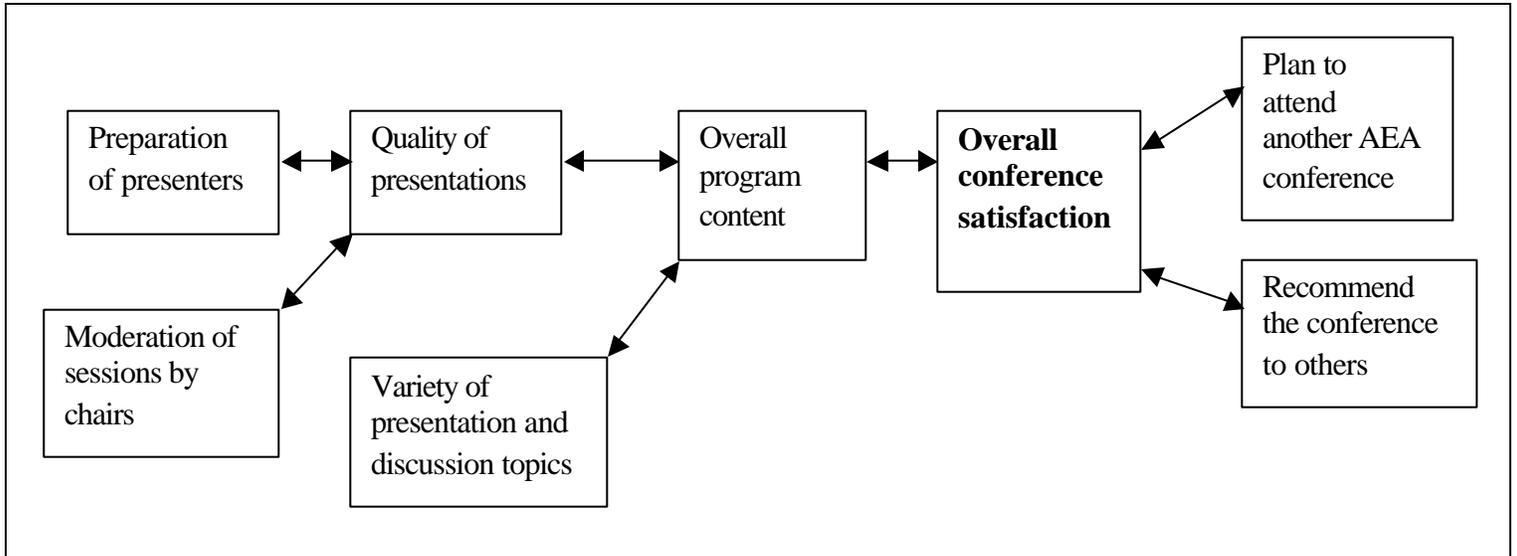
Sponsor	Number of Sessions	<i>M</i>
State and Local Government	13	22.54
Health Evaluation	13	21.85
Cluster, Multi-Site and Multilevel Evaluation	9	21.67
Teaching of Evaluation	8	21.13
Needs Assessment	4	19.75
Assessment in Higher Education	8	19.13
Human Services Evaluation	10	18.70
Social Work	5	18.60
Alcohol, Drug Abuse & Mental Health	19	18.58
Distance Education and Other Education Technologies	7	18.00
Feminist Issues in Evaluation	6	16.17
Environmental Program Evaluation	4	14.50
Evaluation of Services for Special Needs Populations	5	9.40
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Issues	2	8.00
Crime and Justice	9	6.93

^a Presidential Strand calculations do not include plenary sessions.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. “Proxy” Path Model for Antecedents and Consequences of Overall Conference

Satisfaction. The double-headed arrows between variables indicate that the relations are correlational, not causal.



Appendix

EVALUATION 2002

NEWCOMER FEEDBACK FORM



This questionnaire is **only for first time attendees** at the AEA Annual Conference. Because AEA wants to ensure that conference newcomers have a positive experience, we are continually looking for ways to make the conference better and more welcoming. Please tell us what you think about the activities and resources available for first time conference attendees. Your feedback is important and will be used to improve future AEA conferences.

IMPORTANT! This document will be scanned for data entry. Please fill in the circle next to your selection like this: ●

1. Were you **aware** of the following activities and resources during the AEA Conference?

2. Did you **attend or make use of** the following activities or resources?

	Question 1		Question 2	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
a. Newcomer Orientation Session	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y
b. Newcomer Packet of Information (distributed at orientation session)	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y
c. Information Fair (Wednesday evening)	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y
d. Ambassador Program	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Y

3. Rate your **satisfaction** with each of the activities. If you were not aware of or did not attend/make use of an activity, please select the most applicable response.

	Very Dissatisfied		Neutral		Very Satisfied	Not Aware of Activity	Unable to Attend	Chose Not to Attend
a. Newcomer Orientation Session	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8
b. Newcomer Packet of Information (distributed at orientation session)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8
c. Information Fair	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8
d. Ambassador Program	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8

4. Rate the **usefulness** of each newcomer activity. If you were not aware of or did not attend/make use of an activity, please select the most applicable response.

	Not At All Useful		Neutral		Very Useful	Not Aware of Activity	Unable to Attend	Chose Not to Attend
a. Newcomer Orientation Session	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8
b. Newcomer Packet of Information (distributed at orientation session)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8
c. Information Fair	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8
d. Ambassador Program	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8

5. Do you intend to return to the AEA Annual Conference in the future?

Yes, Definitely	Maybe	No, Definitely Not
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

6. Please rate the following newcomer activities in terms of each activities' influence on your satisfaction with the overall conference. If you did not attend/make use of an activity, please select NA for not applicable.

	No Influence		Neutral		Great Influence	NA
a. Newcomer Orientation Session	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9
b. Newcomer Packet of Information (distributed at orientation session)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9
c. Information Fair	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9
d. Ambassador Program	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9

7. Please tell us if you think AEA should continue or discontinue each of the newcomer activities.

	Continue Activity	Continue Activity with Revisions	Discontinue Activity	Don't Know
a. Newcomer Orientation Session	①	②	③	④
b. Newcomer Packet of Information (distributed at orientation session)	①	②	③	④
c. Information Fair	①	②	③	④
d. Ambassador Program	①	②	③	④

8. What revisions do you recommend for the newcomer activities?

9. What factors might play a role in your intention to return to future AEA conferences?

10. What changes do you suggest to make the conference more welcoming for first time attendees and/or to increase the likelihood that you would return to the conference on a regular basis?

THANK YOU! Please return this survey to the evaluation table at the bottom of the escalators on the main conference floor. Also remember to pick up your free gift, compliments of AEA. If you run out of time during the conference, feel free to mail the form to: Applied Research Consultants, Dept. of Psychology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6502.



Conducted for the American Evaluation Association by students from
Applied Research Consultants at Southern Illinois University Carbondale
(E-mail: arcmail@siu.edu)



Special thanks to the Principia Products Division of Gravic, Inc., for use of their Remark Office OMR^â scanning software!

EVALUATION 2002

OVERALL CONFERENCE FEEDBACK FORM



We would like to ask you to take a few moments to complete this important survey. This information will allow us to understand your experience of Evaluation 2002 and will be used to improve future AEA conferences.

IMPORTANT! This document will be scanned for data entry. Please fill in the circle to indicate your selection like this: ●

1. Please rate the following Evaluation 2002 conference components in terms of **quality** (please select NA for not applicable).

	Needs improvement		Acceptable		Excellent	NA
a. Registration process (Pre-conference)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
b. Registration on-site	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
c. Conference support staff	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
d. Conference information on AEA website	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
e. Overall program content	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
f. Variety of presentation and discussion topics	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
g. Moderation of sessions by chairs	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
h. Preparation of presenters	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
i. Quality of presentations	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨

2. Did you give a presentation during Evaluation 2002? (N) No (Y) Yes

If you presented, or submitted a presentation, please rate your level of satisfaction with the proposal submission and review process.

	Very Dissatisfied		Neutral		Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
a. Call for papers/presentations	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨
b. Paper/presentation selection process	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑨

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following:

	Strongly Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly Agree
a. I felt welcomed at the conference.	①	②	③	④	⑤
b. Evaluation 2002 met my expectations.	①	②	③	④	⑤
c. The conference was worth the time and money.	①	②	③	④	⑤
d. I had adequate opportunities for networking.	①	②	③	④	⑤
e. I learned things that will inform my practice.	①	②	③	④	⑤
f. The conference met my professional development needs.	①	②	③	④	⑤
g. I intend to recommend the conference to others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
h. I plan to attend another AEA conference in the future.	①	②	③	④	⑤
i. I hope to present at a future AEA conference.	①	②	③	④	⑤
j. Overall, I enjoyed the conference.	①	②	③	④	⑤

4. What was the single best part of your experience in attending Evaluation 2002?
5. What one thing did you find most disappointing in attending Evaluation 2002?
6. What could AEA do to improve future meetings?
7. What is your current AEA membership status? (select one)
- ① Professional member ② Student member ③ Non-member
8. How many AEA conferences (including this one) have you attended since 1986? (please select one)
- This is my first AEA conference 2-4 5-7 8-10 More than 10
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
9. Which of the following position titles *best* describes your current job? (select one)
- ① Student ④ Consultant
 ②? Manager/Administrator ⑤ Researcher/Evaluator
 ③ Professor/Teacher ⑥ Other (please specify) _____
10. How would you describe your evaluation knowledge and skills? (please select one)
- No Background Novice Intermediate Advanced Expert
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11. In your current position, what percent of your workload includes evaluation-related duties? (please select one)
- 0% 1-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
12. Please share any additional comments we can use to serve you better and fulfill your expectations:

THANK YOU! Please return this survey to the evaluation table at the bottom of the escalators on the main conference floor. Also remember to pick up your free gift, compliments of AEA. If you run out of time during the conference, feel free to mail the form to: Applied Research Consultants, Dept. of Psychology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6502.



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