

Biographical Data and Platform Statements

2025 Candidates

BOARD MEMBER (3 POSITIONS)



Veronica Viesca, PhD (she/her)

It is an honor to be considered for this opportunity to serve the AAMFT community. In times of political and social uncertainty, strong systemic leadership is critical to ensuring that marriage and family therapy

remains resilient, inclusive, and future-focused. With 15 years of experience across private practice, academia, agency work, community health, and government roles, I understand the unique challenges our members face—navigating licensure barriers, sustaining viable practices, and serving diverse communities.

As a Latina therapist, I have witnessed firsthand the need for advocacy, equity, and inclusion, particularly as these values face increasing external pressures. My work as Executive Director of CFMHE and Founder of IRWB has focused on economic justice for early-career professionals, ensuring that MFTs have access to sustainable financial pathways and innovative business models. Additionally, my role as Associate Professor and Researcher has allowed me to mentor diverse students and conduct research on relational health, keeping the field grounded in systemic, evidence-based practices.

The most pressing issues—economic justice, licensure portability, and the retention of MFTs from diverse backgrounds—require strategic leadership that balances the history, present needs, and future direction of our profession. My AAMFT governance experience, including serving as Election Council Chairperson and Member at Large for the Component Evaluation Committee, has prepared me to contribute collaboratively and effectively toward systemic solutions.

As AAMFT President recently affirmed, our professional responsibility is to honor the dignity and value of all individuals, even as external pressures challenge these commitments. I am deeply dedicated to ensuring that AAMFT remains a leader in fostering inclusion, protecting professional integrity, and advocating for policies that support MFTs and the communities we serve. I hope to bring a collaborative, thoughtful perspective to this role, ensuring our profession remains strong, adaptive, and prepared for the evolving needs of individuals, families, and communities.

(I) PRESENT PROFESSIONAL POSITION

- Associate Professor of Psychology, Pepperdine University (2024-Present)
- Executive Director, Center for Mental Health Excellence, Inc. (2023- Present)
- Owner and Clinician, Institute for Relational Well-being, PLLC (2023- Present)

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

- Assistant Professor of Psychology, Pepperdine University (2018-2024)
- Adjunct Instructor, Couple and Family Therapy, School of Leadership and Education, University of San Diego (2020-2021)
- Adjunct Instructor, California School of Professional Psychology, Couple and Family Therapy, Alliant International University (2020)
- Program Coordinator, Family Therapy Masters of Sciences and Ph.D. Program, Department of Family Sciences, Texas Woman's University (2017-2018)
- Assistant Professor (Tenure Track), Department of Family Sciences, Texas Woman's University (2016-2018)

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

- *Member at Large*, Component Evaluation Committee, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Term: 2022-2024
- *Elections Council Chair*, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Term: 2020-2021
- *Elections Council Representative*, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Term: 2018-2021
- *Member*, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy: 2010- Present
- *Approved Supervisor*, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy: 2016- Present
- *Member*, Washington Geographic Interest Network, 2022-Present

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(IV) PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES (Activities should be directly linked to the position and should demonstrate the skills needed for the position. Please refer to the list of competencies and skills for the position). Past and present activities, projects, or publications (limit 3) that are evidence of leadership skills, experience integrating information, working towards consensus, and decision-making skills.

Throughout my career, I have held leadership roles that required strategic thinking, collaboration, and governance expertise—qualities that are essential for success as an AAMFT Board member. Each of these experiences has prepared me to contribute effectively to AAMFT’s mission by ensuring strong leadership, ethical decision-making, and advocacy for the needs of marriage and family therapists. Below are key professional activities that highlight my leadership skills and how they translate to board service.

1. GSEP Faculty Association President

As President of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP) Faculty Association at Pepperdine University, I have been responsible for leading faculty governance, advocating for faculty needs, and fostering collaboration between administration and faculty. The skills I have developed—particularly in consensus-building, governance oversight, and policy advocacy—will transfer directly to my role on the AAMFT Board, where ensuring the fair representation of membership voices is essential.

2. University Faculty Council Representative

Serving as a representative on the University Faculty Council has given me experience in shared governance, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and policy analysis—key skills for AAMFT board service. Just as I have worked to align institutional policies with faculty and student needs, I will contribute to ensuring that AAMFT’s strategic initiatives are aligned with the evolving needs of its membership and the field.

3. Research Lab Director

As a Research Lab Director, I have led research teams, integrated data to inform best practices, and mentored the next generation of therapists. The ability to critically assess information and make data-driven decisions will be instrumental in my role as a board member, particularly in addressing key challenges such as workforce development, licensure portability, and the retention of diverse professionals in the field.

4. Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Mental Health Excellence (CFMHE)

Leading CFMHE has required me to develop sustainable business models, advocate for systemic change, and create training opportunities that promote economic justice for early-career therapists. These experiences will allow me to contribute to AAMFT’s strategic planning, particularly in expanding opportunities for MFTs and ensuring financial sustainability within the profession.

5. AAMFT Election Council Chair

My experience as Chair of the AAMFT Election Council has provided me with a deep understanding of the association’s governance structure and commitment to transparent leadership selection. This experience will allow me to uphold AAMFT’s governance policies, ensure ethical decision-making, and foster inclusion and diversity within leadership structures.

6. Program Chair – Texas Woman’s University (TWU)

As Program Chair, I was responsible for accreditation, curriculum development, and faculty leadership—balancing institutional priorities with the needs of students and faculty. This experience mirrors the responsibilities of an AAMFT Board member, where strategic oversight and decision-making must prioritize the long-term viability of the profession while addressing the immediate concerns of members and communities of interest.

7. Director of Finance – University of San Diego SOLES Student Association

Managing financial allocations and advocating for student funding during my graduate studies helped build my foundation in fiscal responsibility, budgeting, and resource allocation—key competencies for board service. On the AAMFT Board, I will apply these skills to ensure the association remains financially strong and continues to invest in initiatives that benefit the field.

8. Lead and co-author

These publications demonstrate my commitment to integrating clinical innovation, policy, and systemic thinking into practice, aligning with AAMFT’s mission to advance research-informed therapy. Note: Publications prior to 2020 appear under the surname Kuhn.

1. *Viesca, V., Leukart, P., Rausch, A., & Wirth, W. (2024). Bumpin’ into therapy: Planning for parental leave. In The Therapist’s Notebook for Systemic Teletherapy: Creative Interventions for Effective Online Therapy. Routledge Publishing.*

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2. Woods, S. B., Priest, J. B., Kuhn, V., & Signs, T. (2019). Close Relationships as a Contributor to Chronic Pain Pathogenesis: Predicting pain etiology and persistence. *Social Science & Medicine*, 237, 112452.
3. Kuhn, V. P., Freitas, C., France, B., & Distelberg, B. (2014). Getting Parents Involved: The Influence of Parental Engagement on Emergency Care Use in Children with Asthma. *Families, Systems and Health*, 32(4), 389.

Each of these roles has prepared me to serve effectively as an AAMFT Board member by strengthening my ability to lead with integrity, make informed decisions, and work collaboratively to advance the mission of the organization. I bring experience in strategic governance, fiscal responsibility, policy advocacy, and diversity and inclusion initiatives, all of which are critical for ensuring the long-term success of AAMFT and the profession of marriage and family therapy.

As a board member, I will leverage these experiences to advocate for economic justice, licensure portability, and the retention of diverse professionals in the field. My leadership philosophy is rooted in collaboration, innovation, and a deep commitment to serving the needs of AAMFT members, ensuring that our profession continues to grow and evolve in meaningful ways.

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

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As systemic therapists, we are uniquely positioned to address the complexities of human relationships, recognizing the profound impact of culture, identity, and systemic inequities on mental health. In a time when some institutions are retreating from diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitments, AAMFT has reaffirmed its stance that DEI is not an optional initiative but a core value that strengthens our profession and the communities we serve. I share this commitment wholeheartedly and have dedicated my career to advancing DEI through leadership, research, and clinical training.

Throughout my professional journey, I have worked to promote cultural competence, expand access to equitable opportunities, and create spaces where diverse voices are valued and represented. As President of the GSEP Faculty Association and a University Faculty Council Representative, I have advocated for inclusive policies that support faculty, students, and emerging professionals from historically underrepresented backgrounds. My leadership has focused on ensuring that institutions prioritize accessibility, representation, and structural equity in both policy and practice.

Serving as AAMFT Election Council Chair and Member at Large for the Component Evaluation Committee, I have worked to ensure that governance structures reflect fair, transparent, and inclusive decision-making. I am committed to fostering a leadership pipeline that reflects the diversity of the profession and the clients we serve. These efforts align with AAMFT's ethical standards, particularly the expectation that marriage and family therapists respect and uphold the dignity of all individuals, free from bias and discrimination.

My work as Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Mental Health Excellence (CFMHE) has centered on economic justice, recognizing that financial barriers are a key factor in limiting access to education and career advancement for many early-career professionals. By developing sustainable training programs and mentorship opportunities, I have sought to reduce disparities in career access and create viable pathways for the next generation of MFTs. Similarly, as Research Lab Director at Pepperdine University, I have focused on relational health disparities, ensuring that our work addresses systemic issues that influence well-being across diverse populations.

AAMFT has long embraced DEI as an essential part of its mission. If elected to the Board, I will work to ensure that these values remain at the forefront of policy, training, and advocacy efforts. By championing cultural competency, advocating for intentional inclusion, and amplifying diverse voices, I will continue the work of ensuring that marriage and family therapy remains a profession committed to fairness, justice, and equitable care.

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

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

I am a Latina, Spanish-speaking clinician, educator, and leader committed to advancing equity and inclusion in marriage and family therapy. As a single mother of two daughters, I understand the complexities of balancing professional growth with family responsibilities, which informs my dedication to mentorship and economic justice for early-career professionals. With 15 years of experience across private practice, academia, community mental health, agency work, and government settings, I bring a broad perspective on the diverse needs of MFTs in rural, suburban, and urban communities. My leadership roles, including Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Mental Health Excellence (CFMHE) and AAMFT Election Council Chair, reflect my commitment to fostering diverse representation and systemic change within the profession. Through research, advocacy, and governance, I remain dedicated to licensure portability, increasing access for underrepresented MFTs, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our field.