

INSTITUTIONAL VITA
The EVALUATION CENTER
Western Michigan University

Mission	The Evaluation Center's mission is to advance the theory, practice, and utilization of evaluation.
Nature of Evaluation	Evaluation is the systematic determination of merit, worth, and/or significance. Evaluation may be done for the purpose of improvement, to help make decisions about the best course of action, and/or to learn about the reasons for successes and failures. Professional evaluators evaluate programs, personnel, products, policies, and more. The process of evaluation encompasses identifying audiences and their questions; defining evaluation criteria; obtaining, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant information to judge merit, worth, and/or significance; reporting results; and promoting appropriate and effective use of the findings.
Funding	Since 2000, the Center's average annual funding from external grants and contracts has been \$1.8 million. WMU provides the equivalent of 3 professional staff and 1 administrative/clerical staff.
Senior Staff	<p>Dr. Stephen Magura, Director Dr. Gary Miron, Chief of Staff and Principal Research Associate Dr. Chris Coryn, Senior Research Associate Dr. Liesel Ritchie, Senior Research Associate Dr. Jessaca Spybrook, Senior Research Associate Ms. Sally Veeder, Assistant Director</p> <p>Center personnel have served in a variety of university, state, and national leadership roles; have had many journal articles, monographs, books, and chapters published; and have participated in evaluation work in 20 countries outside the United States.</p>
Principal Activities	(1) Research to study current evaluation practices and to formulate and test theoretical propositions about evaluation; (2) development to produce data-gathering instruments, reporting formats, and evaluation procedures; (3) dissemination to inform interested persons about relevant evaluation issues and the Center's contributions; (4) service to help a selected group of clients—including school districts, nonprofit agencies, government agencies, businesses, foundations, and colleges—evaluate their programs; (5) instruction to provide evaluation training to students at Western and other interested parties; and (6) leadership to help develop evaluation as a field of professional practice.
Affiliations	<i>Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation.</i> Since its founding in 1975, the Center has served as the Joint Committee's administrative home, and the Committee's chairperson has been a senior Center staff member.

Consortium for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE). From 1990 to 1995, the Center housed the only federally funded R&D Center on teacher evaluation., When funding ceased for the R&D center, the CREATE organization was formed. The Center hosts CREATE's Web site and is an institutional member of the organization.

Since its establishment in 1965, the Center has conducted a wide range of activities in areas such as these:

- Evaluation Training** collaboration with the WMU Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Health and Human Services in an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Evaluation; workshops on evaluation topics tailored to audience needs; summer evaluation institutes and internships to provide evaluation training to professionals involved with STEM programs/projects
- Higher Education** a technical assistance project to aid WMU in developing a universitywide system of program review; evaluation of the Charter School of Education at California State University; evaluation of a project at the University of Montana to recruit and retain women science faculty
- International Development** evaluation of Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation's housing initiative in the Philippines; evaluation of UNICEF's Sara Communications Initiative to promote the realization of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Africa; evaluation of Heifer Project International's work in Albania, Peru, Nepal, and Thailand; evaluation of Food Resources Bank's international hunger reduction efforts
- Personnel Evaluation** metaevaluation of the U.S. Marine Corps' personnel evaluation system; evaluation of extant systems for evaluating teachers, administrators, support personnel, and schools in an effort to improve educational evaluation practices in public and private schools in the United States for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement; evaluation of the Ohio Entry Year Project, a pilot performance assessment and mentor program for first year teachers
- PreK-12 Education** scoring and related consultant services provided for the National Association of Secondary School Principals' CASE battery of instruments that assess relationships between school inputs and student outcomes; analyses of school effectiveness and efficiency, including possible interventions for school improvement, for the CASE Information Management System; community surveys of public perceptions of local schools; evaluation of curriculum in the South Haven, MI, schools; evaluation of charter schools in Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania; evaluation of several school- and intermediate school district-based initiatives throughout Michigan; several evaluation and technical assistance projects for Kamehameha Schools in Hawaii

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education	evaluation of the National Science Foundation's Rural Systemic Initiatives in six regions of the U.S.; evaluation of the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education program; evaluation of NASA's Aerospace Education Services Program based at Oklahoma State University; evaluation of a project to raise awareness of the importance of science literacy and develop science curricula for the American Association for the Advancement of Science
Social Issues and Community Development	study of compulsive gambling in Michigan; evaluation of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation-sponsored Youth Initiatives Program; external evaluation of the MacArthur Foundation-sponsored Fund for Community Development that assisted selected community development corporations to improve housing, commerce, and industry in their neighborhoods; evaluation of The Community Foundation of Greater Flint Neighborhoods Small Grant Program; evaluation of the Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation's Waianae Self-Help Housing Initiative
Standard Setting	development of professional standards for program evaluation, personnel evaluation, and student evaluation
State/Regional Educational Services	development of an evaluation system for Ohio's state system of career education; evaluation of Michigan's regional educational media centers; primary evaluation and metaevaluation of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory; evaluation of the research and evaluation departments of organizations providing educational services
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