

President eyes bright future for association

The year 2015 marks a time of change and looking forward to the future as SSCA welcomes a new Executive Director and develops a new strategic plan. I am pleased to have the opportunity to work with two Executive Directors during my term in office. I want to thank outgoing Executive Director Carl Cates for his leadership and dedication. Having worked with Carl for a few years, I can attest to his attention to detail and his commitment to the association. Carl was always available to answer questions or offer advice to officers when asked. Incoming Executive Director Jerry Hale has already demonstrated his leadership abilities and the unique style that he brings to being Executive Director. SSCA is fortunate to have



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such talented and dedicated individuals in the association.

The Executive Council is also dedicated to helping SSCA continue to serve the needs of members and the discipline of Communication. Over the summer, we met to draft a strategic plan for the next five years. We will

be sharing that plan with the membership soon and will have an opportunity for you to provide feedback. We gathered in Charleston for two meeting-filled days, where we engaged in lively conversation while enjoying the high-energy snacks Jerry Hale provided. We began our process with a close examination of the previous strategic plan and were thankful to the officers who have worked to implement that plan over the last five years. One aspect of the new strategic plan focuses on enhancing convention and member services, including looking at ways to improve technology availability. Other components include enhancing the visibility of SSCA

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Moving on: focus on the classroom

Like most all of you, I'm attracted to some aspects of the changing higher education landscape. New technologies allow us to study in ever greater detail the ways in which humans interact and are impacted by messages. Other aspects of this changing landscape such as the need to master a nearly endless number of new instructional software programs can be less attractive. Few issues in our changing landscape find me sitting on the fence. However, I'm still on the fence regarding online courses.

An impressive body of literature exists that deals with the topic of online education, and a number of journals (e.g., *American Journal of Distance Education*) have as their mission the aim of promoting research into

this aspect of pedagogy. Multiple studies support the proposition that online learning outcomes are consistent with the learning outcomes experienced by students in a traditional face-to-face format. The ambivalence that I feel grows out of my belief that good teaching is based on building effective relationships with students. Simply put, I'm not sure how to build effective relationships in an online environment. As a member of SSCA, I have the opportunity to gain from the wisdom and experiences of my colleagues to address my concerns about online instruction.

As we move on to build and rebuild communication programs, our association is uniquely positioned to help guide our efforts



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to better understand the evolving classroom and address the concerns of members. As an association of communication educators, we can and should take a leading role in identifying what works and what does not work in the online world. We should not leave this opportunity to others to determine what kind of classroom the communication educator of the future will confront.

Shoes to fill

I was an undergraduate Political Science major at UCLA when Gene Bartow took over as basketball coach following the retirement of John Wooden. John Wooden won 620 games at UCLA. Over his last 13 seasons he won 355 games and lost 14. While at UCLA Wooden won 19 Conference Championships and 10 National Championships, including 7 National Championships in a row. Coach Bartow had a successful career including reaching an NCAA Final coaching Memphis State before going to UCLA. At UCLA he won 52 games and lost 9. He won two Conference Championships and had a Final Four appearance. He was summarily fired after his second season when UCLA lost 76-75 to Idaho State in the Sweet 16 because he just didn't measure up to expectations after following John Wooden.

Carl Cates served SSCA with distinction in his years as Executive Director. He has been a loyal member for years. He attended his first SSCA convention as a student in 1984 and began continuous full involvement in SSCA with his attendance at the 1992 convention in San Antonio, Texas. SSCA is more secure financially than it has ever been in large part because of Carl's service. His shoes seem as large to me as John Wooden's shoes must have seemed to Gene Bartow. Trying to fill his shoes seems like the same exercise in futility



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that filling Coach Wooden's shoes must have seemed to Coach Bartow. I have chosen this particular metaphor because I have enjoyed our conventions that meet during March Madness even when my beloved Spartans have not fared well. More importantly, it seems to me that Coach Wooden and Carl Cates have both been fiercely loyal to their teams, served with a firm and guiding hand, with mild temperament, with aplomb, and with great success.

I had attended joint Southern States/Central States conventions dating back to my doctoral studies at Michigan State University. The first stand-alone SSCA conference I attended was the 1994 conference in Norfolk, Virginia. I was immediately struck by the friendliness of our members and the accessibility of some of our field's best known and prolific scholars. I made some friends in Norfolk that have remained the friends and colleagues to whom I am closest. I have only missed one of our annual meetings since 1994. In 2004 a logging truck overturned on I-20 east of Atlanta spilling logs across the highway and closing it for several hours. I missed my flight and because it was spring break all of the other flights to Florida were overbooked for days. I felt awful about missing in 2004 because I was scheduled to appear on a panel honoring Past President Dwight Freshley, a wonderful friend and colleague who helped make my time at the University of Georgia such a fantastic experience.

As I assume the role of Executive Director I am humbled to have had my appointment by the Executive Council ratified by our members. I am sure I will make mistakes. I hope I can limit them to 9, the number of games that Coach Bartow lost at my alma mater. I am counting on our members to help guide me when mistakes are made with the same friendly spirit that drew me to SSCA in 1994, and that has kept me wanting to come back ever since. I have three modest goals as I be-

gin my service. First, I want to maintain the financial security the Association built during Carl's years of service. Second, I want to work collaboratively with our leadership and members to chart a course we can look back on with pride. Third, and finally, I hope not to be summarily fired by you after two seasons.

Meet Katie Monk and Christine Ragusa

Most of you know that I am Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the College of Charleston. I am fortunate to have what I believe is the best staff on our campus, and two members of that staff, Katie Monk and Christine Ragusa, have agreed to be part of my administrative team serving SSCA.



Katie Monk

Katie Monk is the Administrative Coordinator and Budget Analyst for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. She does all of the financial accounting and analysis for the School. Katie has a B.S. in Accountancy and Finance from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She will assist me with all of SSCA's budget and financial work.



Christine Ragusa

Christine Ragusa is the Assistant to the Dean and performs a number of critical duties, including but not limited to, managing the School's communications and alumni outreach, facilities management, and keeping and managing my calendar. Her SSCA duties will be to assist me with membership services and website updates, and to be a liaison to the publisher of our internal documents and our IT contractor. Christine has a B.A. in Interpersonal Communication from Bowling Green State University and an M.A. in Mass Communication from the University of South Florida.

Katie and Christine will be on-site for the 2016 convention in Austin so you will have the opportunity to meet them in person instead of just by email.

Why join the NCA community

The National Communication Association (NCA) invites you to join a thriving community that serves as the professional home for nearly 8,000 Communication scholars, teachers, and practitioners.

What is NCA?

The National Communication Association (NCA) is the scholarly society dedicated to advancing Communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry. NCA serves its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests in research and teaching. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems.

Why join NCA?

There are many direct benefits of membership. All regular and student members receive:

- Free online access to NCA's 11 journals,

both current and archived. For a list of journals visit <https://www.natcom.org/journals.aspx>.

- Steeply discounted registration rate for NCA's Annual Convention which typically draws more than 5,000 people and features more than 1,000 programmatic sessions. This November, we will convene in Las Vegas.
- Membership in NCA Interest Groups. For a list of interest groups visit <https://www.natcom.org/interestgroups/>.
- Exclusive members-only content at www.natcom.org, including an extensive teaching and learning resource center; data about the discipline; research, publication, and funding resources; and much more.
- A print subscription to award-winning *Spectra* magazine.
- Eligibility to win NCA awards.
- Eligibility for NCA grants.
- And more...

NCA also serves the collective good by fostering public engagement with Communication education and scholarship. For example, we pitch Communication research findings



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to the media, produce public programming (see www.natcom.org/mlkprogram/ as an example), advocate on Capitol Hill for social science and humanities research and education funding, and are in the process of completing work on a major grant to develop learning outcomes in communication.

To review the benefits offered by all of NCA's membership categories, and for pricing information, visit www.natcom.org/join/.

How can you join NCA?

Visit www.natcom.org/join/, select the membership category that best suits your needs, and sign up to become a part of NCA's community of Communication scholars, teachers and practitioners today!

If you have any questions about NCA or becoming a member, please contact the association via email at memberservice@natcom.org or via telephone at 202-464-4622.

CONNECTIONS

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Connections is the official newsletter of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA). It is published two times a year by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the College of Charleston.

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UHC readies for Austin and new category

inspiring. And it is truly wonderful to witness our faculty colleagues mentoring their undergraduate students.

This year, based on input from some of those faculty mentors and thoughtful discussions with the executive board, the UHC call features a new category of submission. For the first time, on a pilot basis, the UHC will include one panel devoted to original digital projects that are research based, demonstrating, illustrating, or interrogating aspects of rhetorical, media, and/or communication theory and practice.

As indicated in the call, which can be found here: <https://ssca.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2016/ssca%20uhc%20call%20for%20papers%202016%20final.pdf>

Projects and their length must conform to one of the following two stipulations: Either 1.) the entire project can be attached to an email and sent via Gmail (not shared through Google Drive but actually attached

to the email itself) OR 2.) the author(s) shall prepare a written description of the project and provide screen shots of the project in a Word file.

While we anticipate that the majority of submissions will continue to be student papers, with topics including rhetorical, social science, humanistic, critical, and performance-oriented approaches to the study of communication, we look forward to reviewing the submissions for this new category and to observing the impact on the UHC.

If you have any questions about the UHC or the pilot, please be sure to contact Victoria Gallagher: vgallagh@ncsu.edu.

In the meantime, thank you for encouraging your students to consider submitting their work. The first paper submission arrived at the end of September—so we are on our way and looking forward to a great conference in Austin!



Congress Street by Earl McGehee/CC BY 2.0

Austintatious! 2016 convention set in the heart of Texas Hill Country

Our 86th Annual Convention will be held April 6-10, 2016 in Austin, Texas, at the Hyatt Regency on Lady Bird Lake, in the heart of downtown. Austin is my adopted home, and I can't wait for you to experience it for yourself!

Our 2016 convention theme is "Communication and Conscience," an inquiry how communication intersects with our personal values, conceptions of social justice, and other matters of conscience in our personal and professional lives. The convention will feature spotlight thematic programs, including one focused on the social justice legacy of Lyndon Johnson, as well as panels featuring outstanding research and new ideas about pedagogy and our profession.

Additionally, the Hyatt Regency provides a perfect location from which to explore Austin's outdoor activities, dining scene, and diverse cultural experiences. Just outside are boat docks, kayak and bicycle rentals, and the 13-mile hike and bike trail that traverses Lady Bird Lake. Within a short walking distance you will find great food and live music in the South Congress, Barton Springs, 2nd Street, and 6th Street entertainment districts. To the east is the Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge, which not only is a direct route



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to the Texas State Capitol across the river, but also is home to the largest urban bat colony in the U.S. Trust me, they can be spectacular to see when they depart at sunset!

Austin also is home to several museums of note, including The Contemporary (downtown), and the L.B.J. Presidential Library, the Texas State History Museum, and the Blanton and Ransom Center Museums on the University of Texas campus (all accessible by bus/taxi). With a car, you might also want to visit the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on the southwestern edge of the city. Plus, in the "Live Music Capitol of the World," you can find music every night for every taste!

Additionally, there are some very special events occurring during our 2016 convention in Austin, so be sure to plan ahead:

The Austin Symphony performances at the Long Center on April 8 and 9, just a block from the Hyatt. <http://www.austinsymphony.org/events/lior-vocalist/>

The annual Fusebox Festival of art and theatre at venues across the city throughout the weekend. <http://www.fuseboxfestival.com/>

The opening week of "Ann," a play about Texas Governor Ann Richards, at Zach, Austin's premier regional theatre, less than a mile from the Hyatt. <http://www.zachtheatre.org/content/2015-16-season>

And, the biggest event of all: The Statesman Capitol 10,000 on Sunday, April 10, the largest 10K race in Texas and one of the top 10 in the nation, with over 20,000 registered participants. The start of the race is on the Congress Avenue Bridge, right outside of our convention hotel.

So, plan now to join the reincarnated "Southern Striders" (runners and walkers welcome) and participate in the "Cap10k" Austin's annual rite of spring—more details to come about this in our Spring newsletter! <http://www.cap10k.com/>

With all that SSCA's convention and the city have to offer, I hope that you will join us in Austin in 2016!

Cates reflects on term

Five years ago in the newsletter I urged the Southern States Communication Association membership to review the draft of the strategic plan. It is time to echo that call. Many of the goals presented in the plan from 2010 were achieved including the increase of the reserve fund and the development the next generation of leaders for the Association.

This new generation of scholars has the opportunity to organize the Association in ways that can embolden research in Communication. At the planning retreat I expressed my curiosity regarding what the divisions and interest groups would be if

SSCA was being organized as a new association. Would it look like our current structure or would there be divisions to address new communication technologies and modes of interaction? While I feel certain long-established areas would continue to find relevance, what other areas of inquiry would come to the forefront?

Let me close this final column by thanking the membership for your constant support. Thank you to those that worked as convention staff including Norman Earls, Andrew Pyle, TJ Martin, Katie Balcom, Danielle Williams, Kevin Bryant, Gabi Garrett, Ashley Cooper, and the dozens of



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graduate students that assisted us. Thank you to Janet Fisher of Conference Direct for her problem-solving skills with the hotels. Finally, thank you to Jerry Hale for his willingness to accept the Executive Director role. May the next five years find such success that my term is a quiet memory!

president

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members' pedagogy and scholarship and building our community through expanding our relationships with diverse constituencies. Through our discussions, we generated many examples of ways current and future officers may choose to pursue the goals of the strategic plan. Each of you plays an important role in the successful implementation of the strategic plan. Your input, support, enthusiasm, and collaboration are central components in actualizing the ideas put

forth in the plan. Thank you for your active participation this year and in future years.

I am eagerly anticipating spring of 2016, when we journey to the Live Music Capital of the World—Austin, TX—where Vice-President Roseann Mandziuk is planning an exciting convention for us! In addition to the great panels and papers submitted through the divisions and interest groups, Roseann has some creative ideas for spotlighting Austin and welcoming us to her city.

The Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference is always one of the highlights of the convention. For 2016, Vice-President

Elect Victoria Gallagher is broadening the offerings at the UHC by including a panel devoted to original digital projects that are research based. What a great addition to our already outstanding UHC! Please encourage your students to submit their digital and traditional written work to the UHC. They, and we, benefit from their successful participation.

I look forward to seeing many of you at NCA in Vegas and at SSCA in Austin! Please contact me if you think of any way SSCA can be of help to you this year.

It's that time of year again... time to start gearing up for the upcoming SSCA convention!

Please consider supporting YOUR ASSOCIATION by...

Advertising in the Convention Program – A great way to publicize your institution, department, programs, and faculty! As you begin the fall semester, make sure your department chairs and other administrators are aware of this opportunity.

Be sure to reserve your EARLY BIRD ad by December 1, 2015!

Half Page	\$225 (\$50 off the regular price)
Full Page	\$275 (\$50 off the regular price)
2 Full Pages	\$375 (\$100 off the regular price)

Becoming an Institutional Member – It's a new year and a new budget, so talk with your Department Chairs and make sure they know of this opportunity. Look at the benefits:

- Listing on the SSCA website at www.scca.net
- Opportunity to post job announcements on the SSCA website
- Complimentary one-year student membership (\$30 value)

As always, thank YOU for your continued membership in SSCA! Please contact Jennifer Mize Smith anytime at jennifer.mize.smith@wku.edu for more information on these and other marketing opportunities.

SSCA DIVISIONS AND INTEREST GROUPS

SSCA DIVISIONS

- Applied Communication
- Communication Theory
- Community College
- Freedom of Speech
- Gender Studies
- Instructional Development
- Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Language and Social Interaction
- Mass Communication
- Performance Studies
- Political Communication
- Popular Communication
- Public Relations
- Rhetoric and Public Address
- Southern Argumentation and Forensics

INTEREST GROUPS

- Association for Communication Administrators (ACA)
- American Society for the History of Rhetoric
- Ethnography
- Kenneth Burke Society
- Philosophy & Ethics of Communication

Don't forget to visit the SSCA website at www.ssca.net!



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