

## Conscience, Community, and Collaboration



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We all value SSCA as the nexus that enhances scholarship and teaching, enables significant conversations and connections, and fosters young scholars. I am honored to be serving as your SSCA President, as I truly believe that regional communication associations are the lifeblood of our profes-

sion. Throughout this year, I am committed to enhancing our association in three areas: conscience, community, and collaboration.

**Conscience.** Our April 2016 convention in Austin on the shores of Lady Bird Lake, in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, was focused on examining the intersections between communication and conscience, including questions of social justice, equality, conservation, caring, and civic responsibility. The sessions we engaged in together included a discussion of the social justice legacy of Lyndon Baines Johnson, explorations of conscience in politics, personal relationships, and classrooms, and a performance by Darden Smith, the singer-songwriter who founded SongwritingWith:Soldiers. I hope

the conversations we had at our convention will continue to spark thoughtful words and actions. My deepest thanks to all of the division and interest group planners who did such a spectacular job of embracing the theme of conscience and creating such fantastic programs. Kudos also to our Executive Director, Jerry Hale, for shepherding us through a spectacular meeting in his first year in the post—our association is in great hands!

**Community.** As our region continues to grow and diversify, SSCA also must expand our role as its leading voice in promoting the value of communication scholarship and communication competencies. Together we

Please see **Conscience**, page 5

## Greenville, Communication, and Innovation



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What is the relationship between communication and invention? Between ideas thought and ideas communicated? Between communities and the communication practices that create, maintain, and sustain them? SSCA is a catalyst for community building, communicating ideas, and inventing new ways of thinking, speaking, teaching,



COMMUNICATION  $\equiv$  INNOVATION

and theorizing, hence this year's conference theme: Communication and Innovation. As a scholar who is particularly interested in the visual, I considered how best to capture that theme visually and, with the help of a very talented colleague (thank you Dr. Keon Pettitway!), came up with the graphic presented here. I like this image because it graphically combines two related Aristotelian concepts: engergia, understood as the "energy" or vitality of spoken expression and engergia, understood as vivid or graphic description,

the pleasurable bringing to presence of that which is absent. I hope the stylized light bulb provides a vivid, visual spark as we prepare for Greenville, where we will bring together our ideas, our scholarship, and our energy.

With that vision in mind, I am pleased to be working with the 22 SSCA members who are serving as division and interest group planners this year to put together a truly invigorating program of panels and presentations. Our work will begin in earnest as of September 9, 2016, the submission deadline. But I have already been working in consultation with these folks to develop several spotlight panel proposals and special presentations and am pleased to announce two

Please see **Greenville**, page 5

**INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE**

**Conference  
Costs**  
Page 2

**Southern  
Experience**  
Page 3

**Volunteer  
Spirit**  
Page 3

**UHC  
Greenville**  
Page 4

**Award  
Nominations**  
Page 5

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# Is The Sky Falling?



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SSCA members who attended the Austin will recall me saying in several meetings that it might be time for a dues and/or conference registration fee increase. Over the last few years food and beverage (F&B) costs have been creeping upward. Our conference contracts typically include an F&B minimum of \$25,000. That is what we are obligated to spend on conference events like receptions, the breakfast business meeting, and the awards luncheon. Our actual costs for such events has hovered between \$28,000 and \$32,000.

The F&B costs spiked in Austin even though I was very careful to make catering choices that mirrored those made by previous executive directors. Put another way, costs spiked to approximately \$42,000, and the spike was not due to more extravagant food and drink choices. I feared, and still do to some degree, that if F&B costs continue to show inflationary increases, our current dues and registration structure will be inadequate to sustain the quantity and quality of conference events SSCA has historically hosted.

As it turns out, in Austin the spike in F&B costs was offset by increased conference attendance. The last thing a new executive director wants is to run a deficit, either for the annual conference or the overall association budget. I confess I was sweating the bottom line as I watched Austin conference costs climbing while our conference pre-registrations were pretty slow. Onsite registrations were much higher than normal and so my worries were for naught, at least for another year.

The preliminary catering prices for the Hyatt Regency in Greenville are similar to, but slightly less than those for the same hotel chain in Austin. I doubt our bill will be

\$42,000 in 2017, but am confident it will be more than \$28,000, the amount that has been a sort of benchmark for us. Greenville is a wonderful city and the hotel is an absolutely fantastic conference venue, but I cannot imagine us matching our Austin conference attendance numbers. So the proof of the pudding that is our financial model will be what happens when costs are slightly higher than usual and attendance is more typical of our annual meetings. We will learn a lot this year.

There is one issue that the finance committee needs to consider for us. It would help our financial projections immensely if more conference goers pre-registered. It is very difficult to accurately project conference attendance, or even attendance at receptions and catered conference events when a large proportion of our members register on site. And the quantity of onsite registrations varies considerably depending on the venue. Sustaining memberships pose a special challenge in that regard. Sustaining memberships include conference registration. Sometimes sustaining members renew their memberships at the conference. Other times sustaining members do not attend the conference. The difficulty we experience is having an accurate estimate of conference attendance, and hence conference revenues and expenses, due to the number of onsite registrations. I will ask the finance committee to consider ways to increase conference pre-registration.

## CONNECTIONS

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So does SSCA need to increase membership fees and/or conference registration fees? We probably need data from a city like Greenville which is more typical of our conference venues than Austin to get a good idea. If you are attending the Greenville conference please pre-register so that we may be good stewards of SSCA's resources.

## A Clean Financial Bill of Health

SSCA engages the services of two people to keep us on a straight and narrow financial line. They are John Harvard and Angelyn Bagwell. The association has engaged their services for several years dating back over three executive directors. Mr. Harvard completes our annual financial review and Ms. Bagwell does the association's taxes. Our review is complete and our taxes have been filed. The association received a clean financial bill of health.

# Sharing the Southern Experience



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It's time to *Share The Southern Experience!* Of course, we hope you will join us in Greenville, SC this coming April, but until then, there are more ways to connect to SSCA. Read on to learn how you can support Southern and help others learn more about the Association we call 'home'!

Advertising in the Convention Program is 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. Look for advertising details and rates on the SSCA website, and don't miss the Early Bird Deadline for great discounts!

Becoming an Institutional Member is a win-win, as it provides much needed support for SSCA and valuable benefits for your Department. For only \$100, your Department receives:

- A listing on the SSCA website at [www.scca.net](http://www.scca.net)
- An opportunity to post job announcements on the SSCA website
- A complimentary one-year student membership (\$30 value)

It's a new year and a new budget, so talk with your Department Chairs and make sure they know of this opportunity. If you send students to the convention and/or if you will be advertising any faculty positions in the upcoming year, an Institutional Membership is a great investment!

Special thanks to our exhibitors at the 2016

Convention: Taylor and Francis, Kendall Hunt, and GoReact. If you are in the market for journals, textbooks, or public speaking software, please consider these. We want to support those who support us!

In between conventions, be sure to stay connected with each other through our social media sites on Facebook and Twitter. To date, SSCA has attracted 496 Likes on Facebook and 244 Followers on Twitter. You can *Share The Southern Experience* by inviting your colleagues to join us online, and be sure to share your own thoughts and information by posting and tweeting! Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SSCA.COMM> and follow us on Twitter @SSCA\_COMM.

As always, thank YOU for your continued membership in support of SSCA! As I enter my last year as Marketing Director, it has been a pleasure serving the Association in this capacity. Please contact me at [Jennifer.mize.smith@wku.edu](mailto:Jennifer.mize.smith@wku.edu) if I can be of any assistance.

## The Volunteer Spirit

During my time as an officer in SSCA, I have chaired the Committee on Committees and the Nominating Committee. Chairing these committees provides an opportunity to work with SSCA colleagues who are interested in increasing their involvement in the association through service as an officer or a committee member. Each year, the announcement of a new slate of officers and committee members is an exciting time, because the willingness of members to volunteer is the key to continued vitality and growth of the association. The importance of the volunteer spirit resonates especially strongly with me as we are preparing for a convention in Greenville, SC. Just over thirty years ago, I began my university teaching career as an Instructor at Clemson University—about 45 minutes from Greenville. While living in Clemson, I attended an annual festival in Greenville that was devoted to the Reedy River. Food vendors, entertainers, and the public enjoyed the festival, which was an event planned as a way to transform the area around the Reedy River into a space that could be enjoyed by resi-

dents and visitors. The area wasn't much to look at during that time. The food was good; the festival was fun, but I put little thought into what that area would actually become in the future. Now, when I visit Greenville, I am amazed at the transformation that has occurred. The Greenville of today is vastly different from the Greenville of thirty years ago. The once stark area around the Reedy River is now a beautiful downtown park (Falls Park on the Reedy). Greenville incorporates elegance, calmness, and excitement to create an environment where visitors feel welcome and have abundant choices for dining, shopping at locally owned stores, attending sporting events, and enjoying natural beauty. This transformation occurred through the dedication of committed volunteers who gave of their time to help in whatever way they could. Some volunteers worked for years; others helped make one fundraising event or revitalization project happen. Together, the volunteers achieved what many probably never imagined could happen. If we apply the spirit of Greenville to SSCA, we can begin to imagine the po-



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tential for innovative transformation that can happen within an association. SSCA is a strong, vital association that is strengthened through the creativeness and dedication of our volunteers. We witnessed an example of this creativity when Vicki Gallagher added a digital media component to the Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference. Vicki's innovation created an environment that set the stage for Jason Munsell to make additional innovations this year (see Jason's report for details). There is room for you to serve as a leader in SSCA! If you would like to be more involved with the association, let one of the current officers know. We welcome your ideas, enthusiasm, creativity and dedication. I look forward to seeing you in April and to being inspired once again by the spirit of volunteerism in the city of Greenville and among the members of SSCA!

# The UHC is Contemporary Cool!

I really like the Greenville, South Carolina official tourism/travel website. Mainly because they use the word, “nestled.” Allow me to quote the site at length: “Nestled into the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Greenville, South Carolina has combined traditional southern charm, stunning natural beauty and an unexpected contemporary cool to create one of America’s hottest emerging destinations and fastest growing cities.” Greenville is indeed a cool, hip town and undergraduates will love it; our 27th Annual Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference (UHC) will certainly be “contemporary cool.”

The UHC will take place alongside our 87th Annual SSCA convention in Greenville. I love the UHC, in part, because I teach at a PUI (that’s Primarily Undergraduate Institution in administrator-speak). My students have found our UHC to be one of the highlights of their undergraduate careers. Undergraduates throughout the region and beyond do excellent work as budding scholars thanks to our wonderful faculty colleagues in SSCA who teach undergraduate students; an act of mentorship that we should herald laud to the gods. Further, the UHC students more than often present with pose and excitement, which is a nice alternative to some of the presentations at the “adult” conference. UHC students get instructive feedback from reviewers and respondents, interact with each other to constitute a nice impromptu community of young academics, and network with faculty at graduate institutions to learn about graduate programs in the SSCA region.

I think undergraduates will love Greenville. There are loads of cool restaurants, coffee shops, museums, art things, pubs/bars and the like within easy walking distance of our hotel. And, it’s all relatively cheap. I know Greenville well—this is likely the best locale for undergradu-



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ates in several years. And for all of us! Let us all be nestled...

Like last year, we are experimenting a bit thanks to feedback from SSCA members and SSCA leadership initiative. Last year we created a brand new category—a panel devoted to original digital projects. By all accounts that worked out pretty well and was an innovative move for the UHC. We’re keeping that, but (to be even more innovative) I have broadened that new category to also accept

performance submissions. Obviously, the majority of submissions should still be traditional paper submissions and most all slots (save one or two) will be dedicated to traditional papers. We, as ever, accept submissions from all walks: communication science/communication theory, humanistic, critical, media, performance, rhetorical work, and whatever as such typologies are often slippery and blur. Please see our SSCA website for all the details. Please note that the deadline for submissions to the UHC isn’t until December 16, 2016. You can find the UHC call here:

<https://ssca.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2017/2017%20ssca%20uhc%20call%20for%20submissions.pdf>

If you would like more information about the UHC please don’t hesitate to email me, [jmunsell@columbiascedu](mailto:jmunsell@columbiascedu).

The slogan for Greenville’s tourism office is, “Yeah, that Greenville.” SSCA has a diversity of callings nestled in our association’s membership. The landscape of contemporary higher education has changed drastically and so SSCA embraces—yeah, those colleagues. I would urge you to consider inviting at least one potential “new member” to our conference. Some folks don’t attend our conference because they don’t know, don’t care, or don’t have no money. SSCA is stronger when our entire community attends our spring festival. Let us nestle and be contemporary cool together.

## 2017 Conference and Awards Nominations

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Southern States Communication Association will be held April 5–9 in Greenville, South Carolina. Greenville is a delightful city located in the Upstate of South Carolina. It is easily accessible from Atlanta and Charlotte, and its airport is served by several commercial air carriers.

Nominations, including self-nominations, are invited for all Southern States Communication Association awards. **Nominees for awards must be SSCA members in good standing.** For all SSCA awards, a single letter of nomination is required. Although this may be written by the nominee, most nomination letters are written by colleagues who

know the nominee and his or her qualifications well. For all SSCA awards except the Minority Retention and Recruitment Award, the nominee’s curriculum CV is a required portion of the nomination materials. The Minority Retention and Recruitment Award honors an institution and not an individual, so a CV would not be needed. For all SSCA awards except the Janice Hocker Rushing Early Career Research Award, a maximum of three (3) supporting letters and five (5) pages of additional supporting documentation may be submitted, but are not required.

Additional information may be found at <http://www.sscanet/award-committees>

## conscience

Continued from page 1

need to develop strategies to retain and increase our membership by enhancing how SSCA serves as a key source for professional development. SSCA is powered by dedicated volunteers who do the excellent work that sustains our association's financial and scholarly viability. We have many members who are actively engaged in working to better our association in a variety of ways, and I invite you to join us in those efforts! My thanks especially to those who recently said yes when I asked them to serve on one of our standing or award committees. This year, we also are inviting interested members to consider becoming our next Marketing Director as Jennifer Mize Smith steps out of that post after two terms. If you can imagine yourself as our steward of promotions and advertising, please contact me or Jerry Hale to learn more about this position.

**Collaboration.** Together we can work to improve SSCA's service to its members by increasing our connections with other academic and professional associations. In the year ahead, I am committed to collaborating with you to finalize the fine work on our association's Strategic Plan that began last year under Jean DeHart's leadership. You will be hearing more about initiatives regarding a plan for future financial sustainability for the association, as well as renewed efforts to further develop our digital resources and member partnerships. To remain vital and viable, SSCA must be a significant resource that brings scholars together in multiple forums, as well as retain our status as an association that is relevant and responsive to our members' needs. Consequently, I invite all of you to share your ideas with me: What is your vision for SSCA? What assistance can SSCA offer to enhance your teaching, research, creative, and service missions? Please feel free to get in touch with me at [rm07@txstate.edu](mailto:rm07@txstate.edu) and share your thoughts. I am confident that together we can honor SSCA's storied past while steering a course into a secure and lasting future for our association.

Onward to Greenville in April, 2017, where I know that our Vice President, Vicki Gallagher, will set the stage for a fantastic convention. I will look forward to seeing you there and continuing the conversation!

## greenville

Continued from page 1

scholars who will be sharing their work with us (with a promise of more to come!):

Dr. Michael Waltman, an SSCA member and colleague at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has agreed to be the keynote speaker at the annual awards luncheon on Saturday, April 8, 2017. Dr. Waltman's scholarly work on hate speech and his reflections on the role of innovations in communication technology, research and pedagogy that might help us communicate more productively in our own lives, classrooms and institutions, will inform his address. Be sure to attend this event and join us in honoring our outstanding colleagues and hear Dr. Waltman's address.

Dr. Rhondda Robinson Thomas, Associate Professor of African American Literature in the Department of English at Clemson University has agreed to join us in Greenville for a special Vice President Spotlight Panel on Thursday afternoon, April 6, 2017. Dr. Thomas is the author of *Claiming Exodus: A Cultural History of Afro-Atlantic Identity, 1774-1903*. Other publications include two edited volumes titled *The South Carolina Roots of African American Thought: A Reader*

(2014) and *Jane Edna Hunter: A Nickel and a Prayer* (2011). Her most recent project examines the role of convict laborers in constructing several of Clemson's original buildings.

The planned panel will feature Dr. Thomas along with two SSCA rhetoric and communication scholars, who will discuss and respond to Dr. Thompson's research innovations in relation to cultural history, commemoration and race. Topics may include a discussion of how archival research and digital technologies may be employed to excavate histories and places that have been hidden, lost, or covered over; the identification of efficient and effective processes in using the archive (and other materials) to better understand how commemoration and cultural heritage sites, along with other historical texts, preserve national and cultural identities, especially in terms of gender, race and class relations, and the innovations in scholarship made possible by partnerships between humanities scholars and colleagues in architecture and design. 10 divisions and interest groups have indicated that they will serve as co-sponsors for this special panel presentation.

I look forward to sharing updates in the coming months as the program develops. Thank you for your submissions and your support of SSCA!

## Texas on a Saturday Night

Texas singer-songwriter Mundo Earwood wrote a song covered by artists ranging from Willie Nelson to The Time Jumpers. The lyric goes, "Well there's nothin' quite like Texas on a Saturday night. Nothin' can compare to it no matter how you try." Austin was incomparable for conference goers to the 2016 annual meeting where SSCA set attendance records! Counting UHC participants, there were 780 conference participants. We can't verify that everything is bigger in Texas, but in the history of SSCA nothin' could compare to Saturday night in Austin!

## Watch for Blast Emails

The SSCA room block at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville will open as soon as the division and interest group chairs have been able to notify submitters of their conference attendance. You will receive a blast email from Jerry Hale when the room block is open, so if you need to update your records in the "Members" area of the website please do so quickly. The room block will be accessible from the SSCA website ([ssca.net](http://ssca.net)).

# 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.sca.net](http://www.sca.net)!

Click to connect with SSCA.



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