

SSCA 90th Annual Convention Call

“Disruptive Communication: A Discipline without Constraints”

April 1-5, 2020

Embassy Suites | Frisco, Texas

Harvard economist Clayton Christensen developed the theory of disruption in his ground-breaking book (1997) “The Innovator’s Dilemma.” In this book, he describes disruption as a transformation process, which powerfully changes existing business concepts so much that these legacy concepts are driven out of the market. According to his theory, even successful and established entities will be threatened by such a revolution which deprives its existence.

The 2020 Southern States Communication Association conference extends the concept of disruption to the discipline of communication. This provocative, controversial, and contested theme serves as an open call to reimagine how we have traditionally and historically studied and situated communication. This is an invitation to those within, between and outside of the discipline to reflexively and proactively rethink and disrupt the arbitrary boundaries and restrictive nature of communication in our scholarship and practice. In short, this is an opportunity to use disruptive communication as a means to unleash the power and influence of communication in our discipline and beyond and test new ideas and theories that interrogate the status quo and propels us forward in new and interesting ways.

Historically, our discipline has bounded our thinking by time, context, place, theories, methods, and praxis—to aid in legitimatizing our field. Yet, the well-meaning efforts to “discipline” our discipline may have unintentionally marginalized our voices outside of important and necessary conversations. Some argue that we are studying safe and traditional forms of communication. Others find that we are not pushing the disciplinary and thought boundaries enough to lead or serve at the center of disruption or forward-thinking innovations. From a critical perspective, a driving question is not what defines our field, but who defined our field? We are not an agenda-free discipline and now is the moment to recover the debates and opportunities for engagement that could/should have happened during the genesis and maturation of our identity as a discipline.

Our work, although outstanding, operates on the fringes of public debates, muted in national dialogues, or are mischaracterized or misunderstood by other disciplines and the public at large. Moreover, we have scholars working in all areas of interesting scholarship across the academy, government, and industry—yet their work seemingly swims in isolation and not viewed as the collective forces of communication scholarship. The 2020 SSCA convention is a forum for us to centralize communication as important historical, continuous, episodic,

contemporary and everyday moments in our transdisciplinary and disruptive communicative lives.

Communication at its core is disruptive! Communication is transformative and latent; it is transdisciplinary and siloed; it is dynamic and static; it's paradoxical and certain. Communication is transparent and strategically ambiguous. Communication is authentic and disingenuous. Communication is raced, gendered, sexualized, and othered. Further, it is confounding and exciting. Communication is hopeful, as well as despaired. Indeed, the power of communication is intoxicating, covert, rewarding and punitive. Disruption can be democratizing enterprise.

Please join our community of scholars in Frisco, Texas (voted the #1 place to live by Money Magazine in 2018) as we rethink, rework, reimagine, and more importantly, disrupt, the bountiful, influential nature of communication. Each division and interest group is encouraged to program at least one panel addressing the conference theme, and division/ interest group co-sponsored panels which provide unique opportunities to reflect on the theme are encouraged. In addition to traditional panels of papers, the VP is interested in workshops and interactive programs that maximize opportunities to address the theme and/or contemporary communication issues in ways that encourage professional development.

Where entire panels are proposed, submitters are encouraged to diversify the institutional affiliation of the panel participants, and to consider opportunities to bring in colleagues and peers who have not recently or never attended an SSCA conference. Program proposals which do not align with SSCA's divisional and interest group structure may be submitted directly to the vice president for consideration as part of the Vice President's Spotlight Series.

The deadline for all submissions is September 6, 2019. The complete call for papers will be posted in June 2019. For more information, contact Dr. Shawn D. Long, Vice-President and Program Planner by email at shawn.long@uncc.edu. We look forward to seeing you in Frisco, Texas in 2020!