

**Southern States Communication Association 91st Annual Convention**

**“Harboring Hope: Rebuilding through Communication”**

**April 7-11, 2021**

**Hilton Norfolk The Main | Norfolk, Virginia**

The word “harbor” has multiple, and sometimes contradictory, meanings. It is, of course, a safe space for boats and ships to be stored. It is a refuge, a home, a place to put down anchors. Harbors guide us to safety. At the same time, harbors also constrict movement—driving certain behaviors and actions. We might also choose to harbor something away—keeping it hidden from others. The conference theme of “Harboring Hope” asks us to consider the role that communication should—*must*—play in securing, anchoring, guiding, fixing ways of maintaining hope in even the most dangerous of waters. But we can also consider the ways that communication can stifle progress if used in the wrong ways.

Tumultuous times call for disruptions and questions, the theme that we (theoretically) explored in preparation for the 2020 SSCA conference. Soon thereafter, we experienced disruption on a major scale. Now and over the next few months, we must also look for some reprieve from the chaos and the struggle. We must especially reflect on the important role that communication—in all of its forms—will need to play in establishing a sense of hope when it seems there may none to be had. When we meet as a discipline in Norfolk, Virginia in 2021, surrounded by the waters of the Elizabeth River and the warming sands of the beaches, let’s spend time reflecting and recharging by exploring ways to rebuild hope through communication.

Each division and interest group is encouraged to program at least one panel addressing the conference theme, and division/ interest group cosponsored panels which provide unique opportunities to reflect on the theme are encouraged. Workshops and interactive programs that provide opportunities to address the theme and/or contemporary communication issues in ways that encourage professional development will also be considered.

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 October 1, 2020. All submissions will be handled through the conference web site: <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/abstract/index.cfm?ID=7Zb2tA0>. For more information, contact Dr. Wendy Atkins-Sayre, Vice-President and Program Planner by email at SSCA2021@gmail.com. Join us in Norfolk in 2021!