

CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 2024 ISSUE



Norfolk 2025!

Planning is underway for the 95th annual convention held this year in Norfolk, VA. Norfolk is a waterfront city, bordered on the west by the Elizabeth River and in the north by Chesapeake Bay. Norfolk is part of large maritime region that includes four commercial marine port terminals, the largest shipbuilding shipyard in the United States, two US Navy shipyards, and the world's largest naval base, Naval Station Norfolk.

In recognition of the rich naval history of Norfolk, the 2025 conference theme is about anchors and anchoring. An anchor is a device for holding fast, a reliable member of a team, or a business that attracts other businesses. To anchor is to secure, attach, moor, support, or imbed. Just as an anchor holds a ship in place against the wind and rough seas of foul weather, communication anchors us, as individuals, as a society, and as a discipline.

Patrick Wheaton, 1st Vice-President, is planning an exciting program for the conference. We look forward to seeing you in Norfolk!

WHAT'S NEW

SSCA PRESIDENT
CARL CATES

Association Updates

CAROLINE SAWYER

Akers Prize in the Humanities

1ST VICE-PRESIDENT
PATRICK WHEATON

2025 Convention Program

Katherine Grace Hendricks

Instructional Development Division
Award

Thank you to all those who made the Frisco conference a success! It was a joy to watch the interactions in sessions and in the open spaces around the convention site. It is those interactions that make SSCA who we are and will be. This year has two major changes as part of our routine business. First, Frances Brandau in her role as Executive Director elect, is now following the processes throughout the year. She will assume her duties during the 2025 convention. Second, as we move forward during this year, we need to draft and approve a new strategic plan.

During the 2024 convention during the SSCA Business Meeting a resolution was introduced during new business focusing on calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. After a lengthy discussion including concern regarding whether such a resolution could create risk for a 501(c)(3) organization and the wish to have more time to review the resolution, the members present approved an action to send the resolution to a committee to be formed by the incoming association president. The committee was appointed by April 12 and received its charge by April 18. This charge included the option to write an alternate resolution that might answer concerns expressed by members. The committee was assured their work on any alternate resolution would be reviewed by legal counsel obtained by John Haas, SSCA Executive Director.

A draft of the alternate resolution was submitted by the committee May 14. After discussion with the Executive Director and our original review of the original and alternate resolutions, I requested those be sent to legal counsel in early June. Executive Director Haas reported the attorney expressed concern about risk to SSCA's status due to the actions advocated along with other concerns. These concerns included the resolution could be argued to reflect the disposition of one political party over another.

On June 24, I approached the committee and asked if they would undertake another attempt for an alternate resolution that might better answer the concerns. The committee agreed to undertake the task. A new draft of an alternate resolution was sent to the attorney. On August 1, I communicated with the committee my understanding that the latest draft met the major concerns that had been raised, and that I would ask the Administrative Committee to discuss it at their next meeting, August 30. At that meeting, it was agreed that a meeting,

Carl Cates

President

Southern States Communication Association



President Carl Cates continued

with the resolution as its primary agenda item, would convene on September 13.

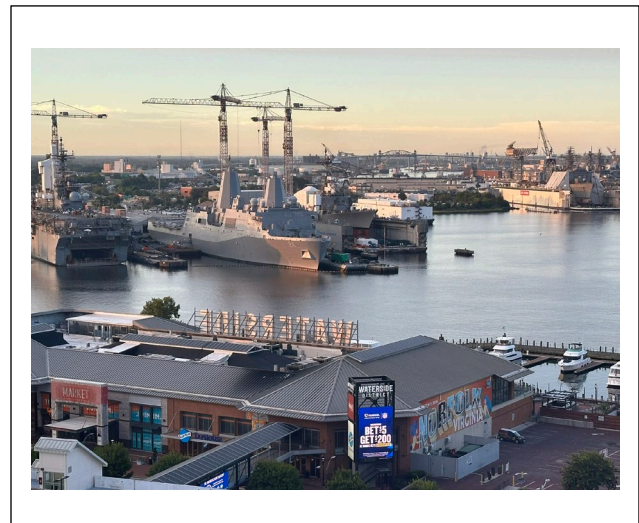
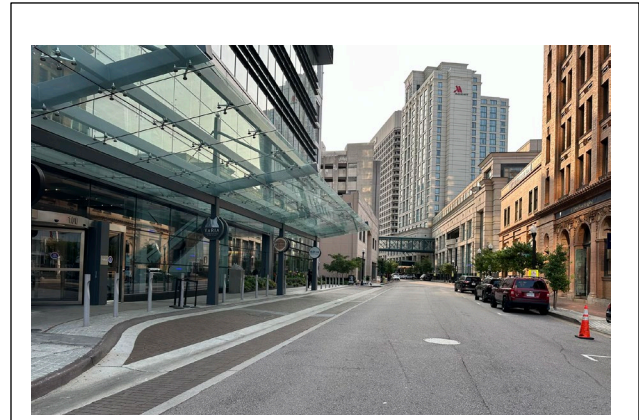
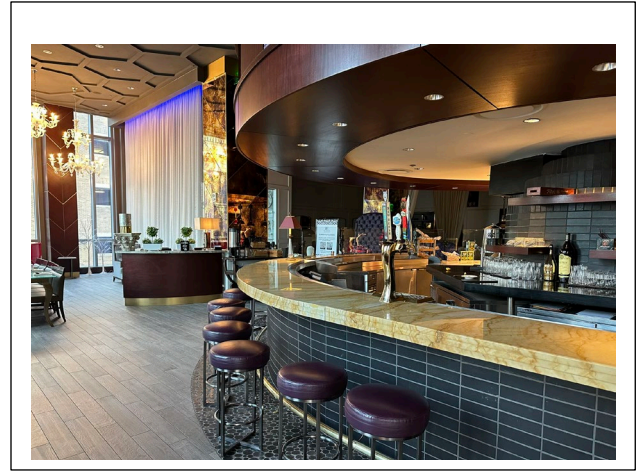
During the AC meeting on September 13, the Executive Director shared that legal counsel has a new concern regarding the alternate resolution and its possible impact on the 501(c)(3) status of SSCA. These concerns included the subject of Gaza ceasefire now being identified as an element of the political process as of the August 23 DNC speech of United States Vice-President Kamala Harris, the advocacy for actions outside the bounded stated purpose of SSCA, and the lack of a stated and published advocacy policy should SSCA choose to change to include such positions. Based on these concerns, the attorney recommended the Association stop working on alternate resolutions and table the original resolution until questions surrounding the direction of SSCA regarding advocacy are determined.

At the writing of the newsletter article, the AC has taken no formal action nor made recommendations regarding next steps specific to the issue. The remainder of the meeting focused on ideas to address the role and purpose of SSCA. These included the suggestion that the convention planner include a session on the purpose of SSCA and that the next strategic plan include resolution on the purpose of the Association as an element of its next strategic plan. Further, a number of AC members hope SSCA members will continue to act individually to address their concerns.

I love the compassionate hearts and passionate people across SSCA. I know you will continue to do great work addressing the exigencies that concern you most.

Advocacy Listening Session and Open Forum 2025 April Convention

What should be the role of SSCA in public advocacy? We need to examine the purpose and role of the organization as defined in Article II of our association and we need to consider what, if any, issues fall within our concern as an association. We also need to consider what limits may be placed on our advocacy by either our purpose or our legal status as a 501(c)(3) organization. Per the IRS, a 501(c)(3) organization "must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3), and none of its earnings may inure to any private shareholder or individual. In addition, it may not be an action organization, i.e., it may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities, and it may not participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates. For a full review of 501(c)(3) regulations, visit www.irs.gov.





**Dr Caroline Sawyer
2024 Governor's Awards in the Humanities and the
Akers Prize**

USCB's Dr Caroline Sawyer is a 2024 recipient of the Governor's Awards in the Humanities and the Akers Prize, presented by South Carolina Humanities. The Akers Prize, formerly the Fresh Voices in the Humanities Award, recognizes innovative individuals who use culture and history to bring people together, but whose efforts may have gone relatively unnoticed beyond their own community.

Sawyer is an award-winning producer and associate professor of Communication Studies at University of South Carolina, Beaufort. She is being awarded this honor for her work on the collaborative community media projects through the Sand Shark Center for Innovative Media. This work has included producing a short documentary about the Mather School, successfully writing \$24,320 in grants for the museum to help provide programming, including digital media workshops for the community, matching students with the museum for internships and special projects such as social media campaigns, and setting up a podcasting station in the museum.

As an active member of SSCA, Sawyer has mentored six USCB students who presented at the Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference, served as Chair for the Gender Studies Division, Secretary for the Language and Social Interaction Interest Group, and received the 2020 Dwight Freshley Early Career Teaching Award.

SSCA Elections

Make Your Voice Heard!

Visit ssca.net for information about candidates for 2nd Vice-President, Candidates for NCA Legislative Assembly, and candidates for NCA Nominating Committee.

The **2nd Vice President** shall perform the following duties and other related duties as may arise:

1. Be responsible for the annual recruitment efforts of the Association.
2. Assist the President and 1st Vice President in promoting the activities and interests of the Association as needed or requested.
3. Plan the annual Theodore Clevenger, Jr. Undergraduate Honors Conference and determine the Franklin Shirley Award winner.

SSCA Representatives to NCA shall represent the interests of SSCA and its members at the national level, reporting to SSCA's President.

Only SSCA members in good standing are eligible to vote.

**Katherine Grace Hendrix
Instructional Development Division
Article of the Year Award**



Dr Katherine Hendrix was honored by members of the Instructional Development Division with the naming of the Article of the Year Award. A fund has been established with the goal of endowing a monetary prize for the award recipients. For those interested in contributing to the endowment or if you have questions about the charitable nature of the contribution, please contact the Executive Director at jhaas1@utk.edu.

Premium Affiliates 2024-25 (Sept – Aug)

Baylor University – Department of Communication

Clemson University – Department of Communication

Samford University – Department of Communication & Media

University of Memphis – Department of Communication & Film

University of South Carolina, Aiken – Department of Communication & Emerging Media

Institutional Members 2024-25 (Sept – Aug)

Georgia College & State University – Department of Communication

Mississippi State University – Department of Communication

