

**Rhetoric and Public Address Division
Business Meeting
Southern States Communication Association, Norfolk, VA
April 5, 2025**

Minutes:

- I. Welcome
- II. Old business
 - A. 2025 convention update
 1. Submissions and panels
 - a) 19 paper submissions received and 13 accepted (approx. 68%)
 - b) 4 panel submissions received and accepted (100%)
 - c) 9 panels
 2. Submission rate
 - a) Panel submission rate is unchanged from the previous year.
 - b) Overall panels declined from 11 to 9 from the previous year.
 - B. Recognition of the top paper award winners:
 1. Top Faculty Paper: Nikki Orth (Drake University): "Confrontational Memory and the Equal Justice Initiative's Community Remembrance Project"
 2. Top Student Paper: Jack Wood (University of Georgia): "Rethinking 'Resilience' in the Rhetoric of Urban Planning"
 - a) Also the Bostrom award winner!
- III. New business
 - A. Expanding submissions to R&PA in for future conferences.
 1. A vigorous & productive discussion was had. Resulting ideas include but were not limited to the following ideas:
 - a) We need to provide more opportunities for graduate students and early-career faculty with large teaching loads at this conference. We can and should create more space for panel submissions, work-in-progress, and other types of presentations. There is widespread support in the room for this.
 - b) Additional suggestions include a "meet the scholars" event, a workshop for works in progress, debates, brief presentations of works in progress, Civil Rights (visual and other) rhetoric, events at the Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, a roundtable or panel on an urgently relevant topic to be determined closer to the time of the conference.
 - B. Planning for the 2026 SSSA Convention in Birmingham, AL
 - C. Election of new officers
 1. Graduate Student Representative
 - a) Sophia Flemming of the University of Georgia
 2. Secretary
 - a) Alyson Farzad-Phillips of the University of South Carolina Upstate
 3. Sommelier
 - a) Jonathan Carter of Georgia Southwest University
 4. Vice Chair Elect
 - a) Celnisha Dangerfield of Transylvania University
- IV. Officer Reports
 - A. Thanking the officers, especially Baugh-Harris for her work planning this year's convention
 - B. Bylaws:
 1. Bylaws were last updated in 1998. We need to update them to account for grad student rep and sommelier. There is a suggestion to name the sommelier position in James Darsey's honor since he founded the position.
 2. We need to find the updated bylaws so that we can post them.

- C. Badu addresses next year's theme, "Comm-AI-nity," and asks for proposed topics and ideas:
 - 1. Large-language model speeches & large-language model policy
 - 2. Rethinking rhetorical tropes in an AI environment
 - 3. AI's consumption of our scholarship and its consequences
 - 4. Personas of AI (Who is the presumed speaker? Who is the presumed audience?)
 - 5. Affect & collective fear of AI
 - 6. Suggestion to work with other divisions to deal with environmental impacts of AI
 - 7. Decorum / civility and interactions with AI
 - 8. What intelligences get framed rhetorically as artificial
 - 9. Visual rhetoric and AI (deepfakes, art, etc.)
 - 10. Reality, disinformation, and AI
 - 11. What is the role of rhetorical education in a world where we don't know what truth is?
 - 12. What is invention in the world of AI?
 - 13. "A good chatbot thinking well"
 - 14. Topics specifically about community and AI?
 - a) Trans communities
 - b) AI companionship for disconnected communities (and resulting conversations about what we consider good use of AI)
 - c) Combine place and the topic – Civil Rights, AI, & Rhetoric
- V. Passing of the gavel
 - A. Jonathan Edwards becomes Past Chair
 - B. Sara Baugh-Harris becomes Chair
 - C. Lionnell "Badu" Smith becomes Vice Chair/Division Planner for the 2026 convention
- VI. Good of the order