

**Southern States Communication Association**  
**96<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention | “Comm - AI - nity: Conversations in the Age of Intelligence”**  
**April 8-12, 2026 | Birmingham, AL**

**Applied Communication Division**

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The Applied Communication Division invites submissions for competitive selection for the SSCA 2026 Conference to be held in Birmingham, Alabama. We welcome submissions that address the convention theme, “Comm - AI - nity: Conversations in the Age of Intelligence.” This theme blends the ideas of “community” and “AI,” emphasizing the evolving relationship between human and artificial intelligence in shaping communication.

Our Division welcomes proposals with an emphasis on identifying solutions and recommendations for both scholars and practitioners to improve or apply to communication practices, from social issues to organizational or business problems to unique communication contexts.

We welcome submissions addressing applied communication including, but not limited to:

- Social issues (e.g., mental health, civic engagement, homelessness)
- Organizational or business contexts (e.g., sports, environment, nonprofit/NGO)
- Social media, platform studies, mobile apps, especially related to AI trends
- Collaborative work environments, including hybrid/remote
- Practical implications of AI for communication faculty/researchers/professionals
- Disaster response, risk, and crisis communication.

**Competitive Paper Submissions:** All paper submissions must be electronically submitted to the SSCA convention site at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>. For the paper to be assigned for review, please follow the instructions on the convention site. For the purposes of anonymous review, please omit all author-identifying information from the manuscript. Include a separate cover page with author(s) and institutional information. All papers submitted will be considered for the Division’s Top Paper Award.

For student papers, indicate “STUDENT” on the first page of the manuscript, and indicate “Student Paper” during the submission process. The Division’s Top Student Paper will be submitted for consideration for the SSCA Bostrom Young Scholar Award.

**Panel Submissions:** Submit electronically to the SSCA convention site: <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>. The submitter can add other panelists as “authors” after the initial submission.

Panel proposals are for a slate of papers focused on a central topic or theme. A panel proposal typically has 3-5 presentations. Panel proposals are required to diversify the institutional

affiliation of panel participants beyond two institutions. Consider opportunities to bring in presenters who have not recently or never attended an SSCA conference.

Panel submissions must include (1) a panel title, (2) an overall panel rationale of no more than 200 words, and (3) the following information about each presentation on the panel: (a) the presentation title, (b) the presentation author(s) with institutional affiliation(s) and contact information, and (c) the presentation abstract of no more than 200 words. All of this should be compiled in a single document and submitted in the “paper upload option” on the XCD platform.

**Research-in-Progress Submissions:** Submit electronically to the SSCA convention site: <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>. Please select the “Research-in-Progress” option.

Research-in-Progress submissions are designed for projects that are fully conceptualized but prior to, or in the early stages of, data collection or data analysis at the time of submission. Submissions should be 500-750 words (excluding references). The purpose of Research-in-Progress submissions is to foster scholarly dialogue, receive early feedback, and support the development of emerging research projects. We invite all scholars but especially encourage junior scholars, including students and early career professionals, to submit their Research-in-Progress. Accepted Research-in-Progress submissions are not required to be completed before the conference.

**Submission Deadline:** Submit electronically to the SSCA convention site (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>) no later than 11:59 p.m. PST on **Monday, September 15, 2025**.

### **Information Pertinent to All Calls**

*Anonymous Review:* All submissions should follow standard procedures for removing any information that identifies the author and/or the institution within the paper and within any document metadata. Divisions reserve the right to reject any papers not following these standards.

*Audio-Visual Support:* To maintain affordable conference rates, audio-visual support is extremely limited. It must be requested only if needed with supporting rationale and should be part of the submission to the division planner. Requests will be considered and are not guaranteed. An alternative may be a shareable QR code that audience members can access from their own personal devices.

*Panel Proposals:* Best practices, in the interest of divisions, is to submit a proposal with a diverse panel, comprised of individuals representing different institutions, and where possible and relevant, potential new members.

*Submission Protocol:* Submissions to SSCA must be **original** research that has not been published or presented at another regional, national, or international conference. Also, the same paper or panel should not be submitted to more than one division. Divisions reserve the right to reject any submissions not following these standards.

*Student Papers:* For a submission to be considered a student paper and to be eligible for student awards or recognition, the author or authors of the paper must all be students at the time the

papers is submitted. A paper co-authored by a student and a faculty member, for instance, will not be classified as a student paper.

*Co-Sponsorship:* Proposals that explore connections and co-sponsorship with other divisions or interest groups are strongly encouraged. Please notify the convention planner if you think your proposal would be suitable for co-sponsorship.

*Additional Submission Instructions:* Submit electronically on conference website:

<https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>. Click the submission link. First time visitors must create an account. Return visitors must use the email address that established the account. Early submissions are strongly advised to avoid technical problems. Submission not meeting the above requirements will not be reviewed. Questions? Contact Division Vice-Chair and Planner, Alex Rister at [ristera@erau.edu](mailto:ristera@erau.edu).