



Strategic Plan 2011-2015

Southern States Communication Association

Final Draft (3/23/2011)

Developed by the 2010-2011 SSCA Administrative Committee

June 18-20, 2010

Previous Drafts (#1--7/16/10; #2--8/25/10; #3--9/11/10; #4--10/27/10)

Thomas J. Socha, President

SSCA

Background

1. SSCA Strategic Planning Meetings

- The SSCA constitution states that the officers “shall meet for the purpose of strategic planning. No more than five years shall elapse between such meetings.”
- According to the SSCA constitution, members required to attend strategic planning meeting include current members of the SSCA Administrative Committee and those invited by the President.
- Previous SSCA strategic planning meetings: 2003 (Memphis), 2004 (Tallahassee), and 2006 (Ellijay, Georgia, President Chuck Tardy, presiding).

2. 2010 Strategic Planning Meeting

Meeting Location:

Villas of Grand Cypress, Orlando Florida, June 18-20. This site was selected in a competitive bidding process—overseen by ConferenceDirect (Janet Fisher), SSCA President (Thomas Socha), and SSCA Executive Director (Carl Cates). The site was selected by a low bid, availability of AC members, ease of access, as well as the availability of meeting space within the villas and use of kitchens for meal preparation. By all accounts, the property exceeded all expectations. SSCA is grateful to Janet Fisher for her help with site procurement and selection, meeting support, and even her help with childcare while in Orlando. Thanks, Janet!

Attended:

Thomas Socha, Old Dominion University, President
Frances Brandau-Brown, Sam Houston State University, Vice President
Monette Callaway-Ezell, Hinds Community College, Vice President Elect
Patricia Amason, University of Arkansas, Past President
Carl Cates, Valdosta State University, Executive Director
Mary Stuckey, Georgia State University, Editor, *Southern Communication Journal*
J. D. Ragsdale, Sam Houston State University, Editor-Elect, *Southern Communication Journal*
Kelli Fellows, UNC-Wilmington, Marketing Director

Elisa Foster (Chair, Finance Committee), John Haas (Member, Finance Committee), and Emmett Winn (Past Executive Director) were invited but unable to attend.

Meeting Budget:

AC Members paid for their own transportation to Florida as well as their incidental expenses. Per membership budget approval (in Memphis) SSCA paid for lodging. SSCA President, (Thomas Socha) used part of his SSCA officer's budget to shop and pay for groceries for the weekend. Mary Stuckey, with many thanks from SSCA, graciously oversaw meal preparation with assistance of AC members. Thanks, Mary!

3. Approach to the Plan

- Prior to coming to Orlando, AC members reviewed the 2006 SSCA strategic plan, and read a short news article about SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). SWOT seeks to identify not only SSCA's strengths and weaknesses, but also to identify potential benefits SSCA might be missing, as well as to help prepare SSCA to handle identified threats on the horizon.
- The SSCA mission statement was parsed into its constituent elements and SWOT was used to review and discuss SSCA's existing strategies used to advance each mission statement element. Specifically, how SSCA helps to advance: (a) the communication discipline, (b) communication criticism, (c) communication research, (d) communication instruction, (e) individual SSCA members' professional development, and (g) SSCA's organizational development.
- Procedure: The results of the discussions of SWOT of each element were used to develop points in the draft of a new strategic plan that offered an assessment of the state of each element and developed recommendations for SSCA to consider over the next five years.
- Timetable:
 - (1) AC meeting held on June 18-20, 2010.
 - (2) Draft #1 sent to AC members for comment on July 16 with comments due on August 13.
 - (3) Draft #2 sent to AC members (and invited others) on August 16 with final comments due on August 30.
 - (4) Draft #3 of plan made available to entire SSCA Membership for 30-day comment period starting on September, 20.
 - (5) Comment period closed on October, 22.
 - (6) Members' comments processed, considered, and revised plan (and summary of comments) presented at SSCA Meeting at NCA, November 15.

(7) Final draft presented to SSCA Executive Council on March 23, 2011 at the SSCA convention in Little Rock (as a part of the President's report).

- Plan Implementation:
 1. The SSCA constitution gives the association's President the authority to make appointments and create ad hoc committees. Presidential appointments and ad hoc committees last one year and extensions beyond a year must be approved by the Executive Council. Given this, most of our recommendations charge future Presidents (in concert with a variety of officers, the EC, and members) with appointing committees and overseeing implementation of the plan. Although the final composition of these committees is left to the discretion of our future Presidents, we also offer recommendations about who might be included in the appointments for each committee. We have also endeavored to recognize and respect the heavy work load of officers such as the Vice President (who plans the annual convention) and Executive Director by involving them sparingly.
 2. We recognize that, collectively, addressing all fourteen recommendations is very ambitious for a 5-year time frame. We also recognize that some of the recommendations involve few people and can be addressed in a short period of time, while others involve many people and will take considerably longer—likely multiple years. We leave it up to future Presidents to work out implementation, but also suggest a timeline when these recommendations might be taken up and by whom. We provide more details about first three years of the plan (as the Presidents are known), but also suggest items for years four and five for Presidents yet elected. And of course future Presidents are free to take up items suggested for later on, earlier during their terms.

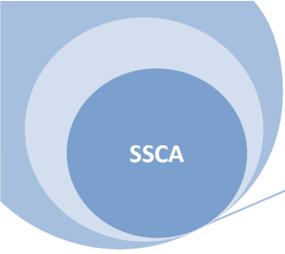
2010-2011

- Recommendation #8— *Re-label GIFTS panels to GIFT-COMM panels* for the 2012 SSCA convention in San Antonio. 2011-2012 Vice President Callaway-Ezell to make this change in the convention planning process.
- Recommendation #13 and #14—President Socha will hold a *mini-summit on SSCA finances* at SSCA's annual convention (March 2011) in Little Rock. As Past President, he will submit a report at the 2011 mid-year SSCA meeting (held at NCA, New Orleans) about summit that will include: identifying fund-raising needs (that includes *increasing reserve funds*—recommendation #13), development of fundraising priorities, improving coordination between resource-development,

marketing, the ED, and Finance Committee, and development of initial strategies to raise funds to meet identified needs.

2011

- Recommendation #2— *Promoting SSCA Members' Accomplishments*. SSCA ED, Carl Cates to work with the AC to develop a proposal to be presented to EC at the mid-year SSCA meeting (at NCA, New Orleans) in November, 2011.
- Recommendation #1— *Digital SSCA* (President Brandau-Brown). Shortly after SSCA Little Rock convention, President Brandau-Brown appoints a committee, works with committee to set specific goals and timelines for completion of their work, and oversees committee work. First report to be given by committee chair (or President) at the SSCA mid-year meeting (at NCA New Orleans) and report #2 at SSCA in San Antonio (that includes all cost estimates). As this work might require more than one year, it is possible that multiple association Presidents may have to oversee this project (that may include committee reappointments, and so on). At all stages, regular reports must be given to the EC and in particular any action items involving the budget.
- Recommendation #6— *Works-in-Progress Panels at Conventions*. In preparation for the 2012 convention, Vice President Callaway-Ezell will develop a draft of the content of, and call for, works-in-progress panels and then work with the division and interest group vice chairs (program planners) to run a pilot of works-in-progress panels at 2012 SSCA San Antonio. She will report on the pilot program to the EC the following year (at SSCA Louisville) as a part of the President's report.
- Recommendation #7— *Expanding SSCA's Publication Program*. President Socha charged the 2010-2011 Publication committee (John Meyer, Chair) to present recommendations about how to expand SSCA-supported publication outlets (possibly including a second journal in an online format) for its members. This follows up on the previous publication committee's unsuccessful proposal to Taylor & Francis for a second SSCA journal (*Qualitative Research in Communication*).
- Recommendation #4— *SSCA Feedback Program*. At the SSCA Little Rock meeting, President Socha will convene an *Open Forum* to begin to a dialogue with the SSCA membership concerning feedback and respondent expectations for papers at



conventions. After Little Rock, he will work with Division and Interest Group Chairs to develop plan to propose (as Past President) to the EC at the SSCA meeting in San Antonio.

2012

- Recommendation #9—*Dissertation and Thesis Support Program*. SSCA President to meet with Instructional Development division chair and members to develop a plan that includes support during conventions as well as between conventions. The plan could be presented at the 2012 or 2013 meeting.
- Recommendation #3— *SSCA Outreach Program* (President Monette Callaway-Ezell). After the San Antonio convention, President Callaway-Ezell appoints a committee, sets goals, and timelines for completion of work and assists as needed. A report is expected at the 2013 SSCA meeting in Louisville.

2013

- Recommendation #5—SSCA Distinguished Scholars Program
- Recommendation #12— SSCA Year-Round Support Program.

2014-2015

- Recommendation #10—SSCA Distinguished Teachers Program
- Recommendation #11—SSCA and the K-12 Instructional Communication Program

Plan

SSCA'S ROLE IN ADVANCING THE COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINE

Review:

SSCA seeks to advance the communication discipline by means of: the presentation of papers at its annual convention, the *Southern Communication Journal*, sending representation to NCA, as well as sponsoring the annual Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference. However, SSCA's presentation on the internet, its use of the internet, as well as its use of time between conventions are potentially untapped areas of opportunity to further advance the communication discipline. Also, if left unattended these areas might evolve into potential future threats to the growth and stability of SSCA membership and to SSCA's ability to promote work on behalf of the communication discipline. At present, SSCA's primary vehicle to promote its work in the discipline is its annual convention followed by its journal. Heavy emphasis on the annual convention raises additional potential concern that SSCA may be under-utilizing its available resources between conventions that can further limit SSCA's ability to advance the discipline year-round.

Recommendations:

1. A future SSCA President should create an ad hoc committee, **Digital SSCA Committee**, whose purpose is to make recommendations how to improve SSCA's website design and its utilization and delivery of web-based services. It is recommended the Digital SSCA committee membership include: President, Vice President, Vice-President Elect, Executive Director (as Committee Chair), Finance Committee Chair, Marketing Director, and at least two other SSCA members with relevant expertise and interest, appointed by the President. It is anticipated that the committee will study the websites and website management of the other regional communication associations and similar organizations, inquire about professional design and hosting services options (e.g., Janet Fisher, Conference Direct, would be a good resource), and examine the costs of upgrading, as well as ways that SSCA might better e-market its work and advance its mission using digital communication technologies. It is further anticipated that the committee's work should initially result in a report given to the EC that includes recommendations and cost estimates for future action items. It is further anticipated that the work of this committee may likely require multiple years to complete.

2. The current Executive Director should work with the Administrative Committee to develop a plan to identify and **promote the current expertise and publications of SSCA members** on the SSCA website and in *Connections* including such items as: announcements of new books, new grants, awards, and so on.
3. A future SSCA President should create an ad hoc committee, **SSCA Outreach Committee** whose purpose is to identify and develop contacts between SSCA and its academic constituencies in the south, in particular the state communication associations located within the borders of SSCA as well as its universities. It is recommended that the committee membership include: Past President, President, Vice President, Vice President Elect, Marketing Director (Committee Chair), Executive Director, SSCA K-12 Representative, and two members of SSCA appointed by the President who have interest and/or connections to state associations. Further, it is also been suggested that this outreach effort would benefit by the involvement of the SSCA Past Presidents (as a group). It is anticipated that the committee would compile a contacts database and identify ways that SSCA might collaborate with and support communication **departments** in southern universities and state associations of the south. It is conceivable that a redesigned SSCA website might serve as a point of contact for state communication associations in the south, and this outreach effort also might be helpful in developing relationships between historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU's) and SSCA. The committee's work should be reported to the EC and include its recommendations and any cost estimates for future action items. Such an outreach effort should focus on what SSCA can do for its constituencies (e.g., provide speakers from a potential SSCA Speaker's Bureau, assistance with departmental assessments, and so on) as well as help SSCA to increase departmental and individual participation in SSCA.

SSCA'S ROLE IN ADVANCING COMMUNICATION CRITICISM

Review:

SSCA is well-known for its long and proud history of advancing communication criticism at its convention and in articles published in *SCJ*. Currently, SSCA advances communication criticism, association-wide, by offering members of all divisions the opportunity to receive critical feedback about their work as presented in papers at convention, as well as by means of staging occasional town hall debates. SSCA is also the home to many of the communication field's best known and highly-regarded rhetorical/critical communication scholars. Opportunities exist to further strengthen SSCA's role as a leader in communication criticism include increasing

the visibility of its leading scholars and by becoming a model for the communication field in providing members' feedback about the work they present at its annual conventions and beyond. The rhetorical act of responding publically and critically to competitively-selected papers presented at convention is a long-standing SSCA communication tradition (and of scholarly communication associations like SSCA), yet we have recently learned that the practice of using respondents to convention panels is not widely embraced by some divisions in other associations (many SSCA panels, but not all, use respondents). Further, questions have been also raised about the quality of criticism provided to authors at convention and the utility of this criticism in helping to develop ideas for future publication and wider dissemination. This presents a particularly important opportunity for SSCA to add value to the work of developing scholars and increase the incentive for these scholars to submit to SSCA as they face reduced travel funds and limitations to their choices about submitting their work to professional associations for feedback. And, this also represents a chance to showcase SSCA's distinguished scholars charged to provide critical feedback.

Recommendations:

4. 2011 SSCA Past President Socha will chair an ad hoc committee, **SSCA Feedback**, whose purpose is to examine the current state of SSCA's feedback (e.g., its quality, utility, availability, etc.) given to members about their work presented at convention and to consider how SSCA might develop ways to offer members feedback about their work between conventions. It is recommended the committee membership shall include: Past President (Chair), the current Chairs of all the SSCA divisions and interest groups, and past *SCJ* Editor. It is anticipated that the committee would develop a statement of SSCA's position on the act of giving feedback (e.g., a statement of Respondent Ethics), an assessment of the means of providing feedback to competitive papers (e.g., what can those submitting papers expect to receive in terms feedback about their papers?), as well as recommendations for future action items concerning maintaining and improving the quality of SSCA feedback as well as how SSCA might assist members desiring feedback about their work between conventions.
5. A future SSCA President (as the Committee Chair) and the SSCA Administrative Committee should develop a proposal to be submitted to the EC for review and adoption concerning the development of a procedure to identify and increase the visibility of **SSCA's Distinguished Scholars**. It is anticipated that such a proposal would include the development of criteria for determining who might be designated an SSCA Distinguished Scholar, SSCA's expectations for the service duties of an SSCA Distinguished Scholar (e.g., responding at convention, holding office hours at convention, being available to mentor between conventions, giving guest lectures, etc.),

as well as ways to increase the visibility of SSCA Distinguished Scholars by means of a redesigned website. It is also thought that SSCA might consider asking SSCA award winners (e. g., the Michael T. Osborn Teacher-Scholar Award or Janice Hocker Rushing Early Career Research Award) to give a lecture at the SSCA mid-year meeting at NCA as a way to showcase the work of SSCA scholars beyond the SSCA annual convention.

SSCA AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Review:

Historically, SSCA plays an important formal role in the dissemination of high-quality communication research via the presentation of papers at its annual convention and publication of articles in *SCJ*. Also, SSCA plays a role in shaping research prior to publication by the feedback given to members by respondents and by those who choose to discuss their work informally with others SSCA members. However, opportunities exist for SSCA to play a larger role in the creation of research by the development of more formal ground-up strategies such as: creating a works-in-progress series at the annual convention as well as considering how SSCA might expand its publication program.

Recommendations:

6. We suggest that the SSCA Vice President charged to plan the annual convention in 2012 (San Antonio) should work with interested SSCA Division and Interest Group program planners to pilot **Works-in-Progress panels** as a part of division's and interest group's convention programs (e.g. Works in Progress: Interpersonal Communication). Similar to NCA's Scholar-to-Scholar program (but at the division level), these panels would bring together scholars who desire feedback about an idea in development or a research or creative project underway with interested and knowledgeable peers who can share their insights. Details of the call for participation in works in progress panels (e. g., minimum participation requirements such as submitting abstract, securing mentor scholars, and so on) and collecting feedback about the merits of works in progress panels held in 2012 are left to the Vice President. Post convention, it is anticipated that the VP would report on the works-in-progress panels to the EC to determine if such panels might become a permanent feature of SSCA's future annual conventions.
7. Anticipating development of this strategic plan, the 2010-2011 SSCA Publications Committee was charged by President Socha to reflect on how SSCA might expand its publication program beyond the five issues published in *SCJ*. **Expanding SSCA's**

publication program could take a variety of forms such as an annual monograph series, a book series, a second journal (possibly online given Taylor & Francis not supporting our proposal to launch a second print journal), or more, and on-going exploration of new publication platforms should be a regular and ongoing part of SSCA's mission. This initial committee report is anticipated at the annual convention in Little Rock (2011).

SSCA AND COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION

Review:

SSCA supports excellence in communication instruction by means of two awards (Dwight L. Freshley Outstanding New Teacher Award and the John I. Sisco Excellence in Teaching Award), sponsoring Great Ideas for Teaching Speech (GIFTS) panels at the annual convention, as well through the work of members of the Instructional Development Division as well as all SSCA Divisions and Interest Groups. However, opportunities exist to further develop and support communication instruction by: aiding students writing dissertations and theses, increasing the visibility of Distinguished Teachers (beyond the annual award winners), and ascertaining SSCA's current and future role in support of communication instruction at the K-12 levels.

Recommendations:

8. Use of the current label "GIFTS" (Great Ideas for Teaching Speech) may pose a perceptual barrier to SSCA members—who teach in areas other than "speech communication"—from submitting and participating. Thus, we recommend that in the future the division responsible for sponsoring these panels (i.e., Community College) and those with whom they might collaborate should refer to these panels as: *Great Ideas for Teaching Communication (GIFT-COMM)*.
9. A future SSCA President should meet with the SSCA's Instructional Development Division (or alternatively create an ad hoc committee) to seek help to develop formal ways that SSCA might provide ongoing support to graduate students writing PhD dissertations and MA theses association-wide. One form of this support might be hosting an annual **Dissertation and Thesis Support Panel** at the convention (possibly run by an SSCA Distinguished Teacher/Scholar) as a part of the IDD's program (or other interested divisions).
10. A future SSCA President (as Committee Chair) and the SSCA Administrative Committee should develop a proposal to be submitted to the EC for review and adoption concerning the development of a procedure to identify and increase the visibility of SSCA's

Distinguished Teachers. It is anticipated that such a proposal would include the development of criteria for determining who might be designated an SSCA Distinguished Teacher, SSCA's expectations for the service duties of an SSCA Distinguished Teacher (e.g., holding "Professor is in" hours at convention, being available to mentor between conventions, giving guest lectures, overseeing coaching sessions, etc.), as well as ways to increase the visibility of SSCA Distinguished Teachers by means of a redesigned website. It is also thought that SSCA might consider asking SSCA Teaching award winners to give a lecture at the SSCA mid-year meeting at NCA as a way to showcase the work of SSCA teachers beyond the SSCA annual convention.

11. Currently, SSCA elects an SSCA K-12 Representative to represent the association to the National Communication Association in matters regarding K-12 communication instruction. However, questions have arisen concerning SSCA's support of communication instruction at the K-12 levels as well as the duties of this representative. A future SSCA President should appoint an ad hoc **K-12 Communication Committee** whose purpose is to determine and assess SSCA's role in supporting K-12 instruction. It is recommended that this committee's membership include: The SSCA K-12 representative (Committee Chair), the Chair of Instructional Development Division, the Chair of the Southern Forensics Division, and two members appointed by the President (that may include the Presidents of some of the larger state associations located in the south such as Texas). It is anticipated the committee's report will include an assessment of the current state of support for K-12 instruction, an estimate of the level of interest in supporting K-12 instruction by the SSCA members, and any action items to improve SSCA's role in K-12 communication instruction.

ADVANCING SSCA MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Review:

SSCA supports its members' professional growth in a number of ways that include: a means to present and receive feedback to their scholarship presented at conventions, a publication outlet for their work (*SCJ*), a platform to network at its annual convention, a newsletter to inform them of association activities, a website, an awards program to recognize excellence in teaching and research, as well as opportunities to participate in leadership and service roles. However, opportunities exist for SSCA to offer its members additional services in support of their professional development that include: considering using the mid-year SSCA meeting slots available to SSCA at NCA to provide SSCA live programming beyond the annual convention, a web-based platform for e-programming and connections during the time between the annual convention, as well as a searchable SSCA archive for use throughout the year.

Recommendations:

12. As SSCA conducts much of its business at its annual meeting, it is recommended that a future SSCA President should create an ad hoc committee, **SSCA Year-Round Support Committee** whose purpose shall be to assess the kinds of services that SSCA members would find useful beyond the convention, and based on SSCA resources, offer actions items for the EC to consider. This recommendation is connected to recommendation #1 (Digital SSCA) as it is likely that between conventions members may desire a means to network, receive feedback, access archives of digital resources (e.g., archives of keynote addresses, convention programs, etc.), and participate in webinars. As a part of its work, this committee should give consideration to how SSCA might better use the meeting slots given to SSCA at the National Communication Association meeting (in addition to the annual meeting of the SSCA Executive Council held at NCA). And, as this recommendation has financial implications, it will also be considered at the mini-financial summit in Little Rock (recommendation #14).

SSCA'S ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Review:

By all accounts, as an 81-year old organization, SSCA continues to thrive. Membership numbers are stable, our finances are in order, we have a financial reserve for a rainy day, we continue to exceed our room blocks and food and beverage minimums at our hotel sites, we have desirable sites and hotels selected for the next four conventions (2011-Little Rock, 2012-San Antonio, 2013-Louisville, 2014-New Orleans), and more. However, although thanks to Emmett Winn (Past ED) SSCA has a reserve fund, the current ED, Carl Cates, recommends that it be larger in order to be able to be able to handle any unforeseen future obstacles, as well as be made comparable to the reserves of the other regional associations. Also on the financial side of things, there is a need for increased communication and better coordination between and among groups and individuals responsible for SSCA finances including: the SSCA Finance Committee, the SSCA Resources Development Committee, the SSCA Executive Director, the SSCA Marketing Director, and relevant members of the SSCA Administrative Committee.

Recommendations:

13. As President (and future Past President) Thomas Socha will work with relevant members and units responsible for SSCA's finances to develop a proposal to be presented to the EC in 2012 for five-year plan aimed at doubling the size of SSCA's reserve funds to approximately \$120,000. This initiative will be a part of a mini-summit on SSCA finances to be arranged by President Socha and held at the 2011 annual convention in Little Rock.

14. President Socha will convene and chair a Mini-Summit on SSCA's Finances at the 2011 SSCA meeting in Little Rock. The purpose of this meeting is to lay the foundation for the development of a comprehensive plan to regularize communication and improve coordination among SSCA's financial units that raise and manage funds on behalf of SSCA including: setting and prioritizing SSCA's fund-raising goals, development of branding and marketing SSCA, identifying new sources of income (e.g., development and sales of SSCA apparel, a major gifts program, increasing departmental membership, etc.), as well as an taking an overall look at memberships and benefits of memberships. Participants in the mini-summit will include: the SSCA Finance Committee (Elissa Foster, John Haas, Barbara Biesecker), the SSCA Resources Development Committee (Todd Goen, Sherry Ford, Abby Brooks, Melissa Smith), the SSCA Marketing Director (Kelli Fellows), the SSCA Marketing Director Elect (TDB), the SSCA Executive Director (Carl Cates), the past SSCA Executive Director (Emmett Winn), the SSCA Past President, and Janet Fisher (ConferenceDirect). Sadly, Darren Goins (a member of the Resources Development Committee) passed away this August, and he will be missed and remembered at this mini-summit (as well as other points in the convention).