

Communication key to choices and possibilities

How do the communication choices we make today affect our tomorrows? In a myriad of ways. As I reflect on implications and conclusions after the last SSCA conference with the theme of Communication, Choices, and Consequences I cannot help but be impressed by all of the ways that communication affects our choices—and the effects those choices have. The influence we can have on others’ choices as well as the influence that others have on our own motivate us to communicate—and study the subject—in the first place.

A wide variety of research is done on many aspects of communication choice, which was



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on display in Louisville. I thank the membership for helping make the results of planning the SSCA conference for this past Spring so enjoyable. We heard about hypertext and the mythos of war, pregnancy ideals and the

American dream, interpersonal conflict and parental involvement, saving lost souls and ideological criticism, celebrity activism and employee well-being. Those are just a few snippets from presentation titles this past year. The choices we make in our communication lead to so many of life’s rewards and hazards, it is a privilege to be along for and to help facilitate the study of those choices.

We also have to make choices about our regional association. Southern States Communication Association is a financially stable, healthy and pleasant organization to be a part

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Road to the future goes through the Big Easy

The annual Southern States Communication Association meeting returns to New Orleans for 2014. The convention takes place April 1-6, 2014 at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. The Big Easy is an ideal conference site with outstanding meeting facilities. It is home to a truly unique blend of food, music, and culture found nowhere else in the U.S.

Our convention hotel, the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, is located on Canal Street and is just steps away from Bourbon Street. Its rooms offer views of the waterfront and French Quarter. Following a recent \$50 million renovation, the hotel boasts a refreshed lobby, inviting guest rooms, a 24-hour fitness center, and state-of-the-art meeting spaces.

The theme for the conference is “Moving On: Envisioning the Future of the Field.” As scholars, we see the communication



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landscape around us changing in both pronounced and subtle ways. We see new communication technologies influencing the nature of relationships, workplace interaction, and social movements. We also see communication being influenced by cultural shifts and societies that appear to be increasingly polarized.

With what often appears to be competing currents taking place in the communication

landscape, the way forward holds the potential to be very different from the path that lies behind us. The road ahead will likely involve changes in instructional practices and the ways in which we engage in scholarly activity.

In addition to papers and panels exploring emerging topics of inquiry, new ways of examining communication, and new ways of delivering educational programs, the Vice President’s spotlight series will showcase interactive programs that address emerging research practices, on-line instruction and its potential impact on communication programs, and evolving assessment procedures for communication programs. We hope that your experience at the 2014 SSCA convention will serve as a bridge to the field’s future.

I look forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

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Gates on service and opportunity

It scarcely seems like five years since a group of SSCA members approached me about serving as executive director for the association. After initially laughing heartily and thinking how desperate the group must be, I asked why I should consider the responsibility.

Those members offered reasons one would expect – service to the discipline, good networking, and working with great people. The best part of the story is that those reasons were all true.

Now it is time for the association to see a new individual to manage our operations. It is



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a great opportunity to interact with colleagues regionally and nationally. If you have an interest I invite you to contact me.

CONNECTIONS

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Connections is the official newsletter of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA). It is published two times a year by the Department of Communication Arts at Valdosta State University.

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SSCA officer nominations sought

The SSCA Nominating Committee seeks self- or other nominations for three important offices:

Vice President-Elect: Once elected, the successful candidate commits to a four-year obligation beginning as the Vice President-Elect who will plan the Undergraduate Honors Conference in 2015, plan the 2016 annual convention as Vice President, and then serve as President May 2016-April 2017. After serving as President, the Immediate Past President then serves as Chair of the Association's Nominating Committee.

Community College Representative to NCA: Candidates for the Community College Representative to NCA should be committed to attending the NCA and SSCA conventions during the 3-year term of this position. The term begins May 2014 and ends April 2017.

SSCA Representative to the NCA Nominating Committee: Candidates for the SSCA Representative to the NCA Nominating Committee should be committed to attending NCA and SSCA conventions during the three year term of this position. The term begins in November 2014 and finishes in November 2017.

If anyone would like information about these offices, contact committee chair Monette Callaway, SSCA Past President at mezell@hindsscc.edu.

Call for Nominations for SSCA Executive Director

The Southern States Communication Association seeks self- or other nominations for the position of Executive Director. Experience with the management of budgets, membership rolls, mailing lists, financial statements, the ability to provide staff assistants, and a personality characterized by efficiency, patience, and good cheer are highly desirable. This is a volunteer position.

The Executive Director performs a wide range of duties for the association. Inter-

ested parties are strongly encouraged to contact the current Executive Director, Carl Gates, for details concerning these duties.

This is a multiple year commitment beginning after the 2014 New Orleans convention as Executive Director-Elect for one year then taking over as Executive Director on August 1, 2015 and serving until July 31, 2020 at which time the Executive Director becomes the Immediate Past Executive Director for one year.

All nominees must submit a brief letter accepting the nomination and responsibilities, a vita, a vision statement, and a brief document outlining the candidate's experience that is relevant to the Executive Director's duties as specified explicitly and implicitly in the SSCA Constitution.

Electronic submissions of all materials are preferred. Please email packets and address questions to Dr. Carl M. Cates, SSCA Executive Director, at ccates@valdosta.edu by October 1, 2013.

Benefits of 'The Southern Experience' abound

A recent article in *HigherEdJobs* touted the benefits of being involved in a regional association. While there were no surprises on the list, it did remind me of all the reasons I love Southern.

Educational – SSCA helps us learn more about our field.

Networking – SSCA connects us to friends and colleagues across the discipline.

Professional Support – SSCA provides support from other professionals.

Staying Current – SSCA offers opportunities to discuss current issues in the field.

Other Benefits – SSCA is affordable, hosts great conferences, produces a top-quality journal, and encourages student involvement.

I'm sure you find yourself benefiting in some or all of these ways as well. In return, you can show your support for Southern by:

Advertising in the Convention Program – A great way to publicize your institution, department, programs, and faculty! As you



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begin the fall semester, make sure your department chairs and other administrators are aware of this opportunity. Look for advertising details and rates coming your way soon!

Becoming an Institutional Member – It's a new year and a new budget, so talk with your Dept. Heads and make sure they know of this opportunity. Even includes a free student membership!

Social Media Update

I hope you know by now that you can find SSCA on Facebook and Twitter. To date, SSCA has attracted 213 Likes on Facebook and

more than 100 Followers on Twitter. Thanks to all those who visited the social media table at the 2013 Convention in Louisville. Many won SSCA luggage handles, T-shirts, and other great prizes from our wonderful vendors. Look for us again in New Orleans! Already following SSCA online? Great! Be sure to post information, start conversations, and *Share The Southern Experience* by inviting your colleagues to join us online!

Support Our Supporters

Special thanks to our exhibitors at the 2013 Convention: Taylor and Francis, Kendall Hunt, Bedford/St Martin's, SpeakWorks, and Oxford University Press. As you make textbook and software decisions for next semester, please consider these vendors. We want to support those who support us!

As always, thank YOU for your continued membership in SSCA! Please contact me anytime at jennifer.mize.smith@wku.edu for more information on these and other marketing opportunities.

UHC participation great opportunity to excite students

When I was a college sophomore, my professor (Dr. John Morello) suggested that I submit a paper I wrote about political cartoons to the Undergraduate Honors Conference, which was held at Memphis State University. I had no idea how much submitting that paper, and having it accepted, would change my life. After spending a few days working closely with Dick Ranta, Michael Osborn, Michael McGee, and other scholars, I was excited about the field of communication and the possibilities for continuing my education in that area. The Undergraduate Honors Conference was a pivotal point in my academic career. I am grateful to those who worked with the conference and to John Morello, without whose guidance I would not have known about the conference or submitted my work to it.

The UHC has now expanded into the Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference and is held in conjunction



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with SSCA's annual convention. What has not changed is the conference's ability to make a major impact in the lives of young academics. Each of us has the opportunity to change the lives of our students by encouraging them to submit their work to the UHC.

In New Orleans, students will have the opportunity to engage in conversation with fellow students and faculty while enjoying the culture of the Crescent City. Special events for the UHC participants include the UHC Breakfast and the Osborn

reception. Each participant will receive a welcome packet (complete with Mardi Gras beads) and will be recognized with a certificate of accomplishment.

Any student who is currently enrolled as an undergraduate is eligible to submit a paper. Students participating in past conferences have represented a wide range of colleges and universities. I welcome a diversity of communication related topics and methods of analysis. Check the SSCA website for more information about the specific submission requirements. The deadline for submitting papers is Saturday, December 14, 2013. Between now and then, I will be happy to answer questions or provide assistance to you and your students. You may contact me at 828-262-2402 or DEHART2JL@appstate.edu. Please help enrich the lives of your students! I look forward to reading their papers and to seeing both you and your students in New Orleans!

Key

Continued from page 1

of, but we do have some issues we continue to contend with. What, for instance, should be our next or future foray into the publication world? Will it be something entirely online? Partially? Will it be another journal, or sponsoring a series of monographs or books? I have heard all of these ideas floated, but so far not with a team that was ready to “love” any of the ideas enough to make it happen. But we do have choices to make about how we share our research—certainly SCJ is an excellent and highly reputable outlet, but the question of what other outlets are possible will always be with us. The Administrative Committee and the Publications Committee continue to discuss these possibilities, and we always welcome member input.

Speaking of the web, we also discussed in Louisville some of the ways we can preserve what we love about SSCA—the friendships, the welcoming climate, the engagement

in scholarship, the chances to get to know people, the mentoring—while reaching out to more potential members, especially in our region. Once again, the possibilities offered by the world wide web entered that picture. Enhancing our websites has helped, but what more could we do? Post or broadcast major addresses and panels at our conferences? Sponsor online discussions or presentations in between conferences? Set up connections online that can be followed through in person by those close together? These are ideas that have been considered. They sound good on their face, but will require people, time, energy and resources to make happen. There is a sense that we must really want these things before we do them.

Two populations keep occurring to me as especially worthy of reaching out to: those faculty in communication studies throughout and near the South who, for whatever reasons, are not regulars with SSCA. Also, as noted at our business meeting in April, the many communication scholars who are teaching the bulk of many students’ com-

munication knowledge at local community colleges. We need to be asking, “what can we do for you?” In some cases, we already may be doing it; we just need to show or convince people of that, and of how they can benefit from joining SSCA. Other initiatives, like those mentioned above, may be needed to bring more people in.

Part of my role as president is looking ahead at where SSCA may be going. What do you think about these issues? What aspects of SSCA drew you to us and keep you here? What ideas have you had for SSCA’s future? I would love to hear these! When a corpus of these thoughts are expressed and gathered, we can get them together in a strategic plan and start enacting some of them. But it all starts, as it ever has with SSCA, with discussions. I welcome some on any of these issues. Please feel free to get in touch with me at John.Mayer@usm.edu, or 601-266-4280 and let’s talk. In the meanwhile, I am already looking forward to our time together in New Orleans in the Spring.

UHC Call for Papers

84th Annual SSCA Convention • April 1-6, 2014 • New Orleans Sheraton Hotel • New Orleans, Louisiana

The 24th annual Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference (UHC) will take place during the Southern States Communication Association meeting in New Orleans, LA, April 1-6, 2014. (UHC panels will likely be scheduled for April 4th and 5th.) The UHC provides an opportunity for exemplary undergraduate students and faculty to discuss current research projects and consider directions for future communication scholarship. The goals of the UHC include supporting undergraduate scholarship, networking and exchanging ideas with other communication scholars, and exploring opportunities for graduate study.

Students participating in past conferences represent a wide range of colleges and universities that extends beyond the southern states region. The topics of papers have also been wide-ranging and include social science, humanistic, critical and performance oriented approaches to the study of communication.

Any student who is currently enrolled as an undergraduate is eligible to submit a paper. In the case of multiple-authored papers, one student must be designated as the submitting/presenting author of each paper, and no student may present more than one paper. Students may submit only ONE PAPER. Submissions from anyone other than the author(s) will disqualify the paper from review.

Papers must be double-spaced in 12-point font and with one inch minimum margins. Submissions should not exceed 25 pages

(including all references, figures, tables, and appendices), should avoid sexist language, and should include an abstract of 100-150 words. The identity of the author or institution should not appear anywhere in the paper.

The deadline for submission to the UHC is Saturday, December 14, 2013. Papers should be submitted by the author(s) in Word or PDF format to Dr. Jean DeHart, Appalachian State University, at DEHART2JL@appstate.edu. The subject line of the email should contain the phrase “UHC Paper Submission.” The email message should have two files attached:

File #1: A submission letter requesting review of the UHC paper that includes the title of the paper, name(s) of the author(s), institutional affiliations, mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses. If the paper addresses the convention theme (Moving On: Envisioning the Future of the Field), please note this in the submission letter.

File #2: The paper that begins with the title/abstract as page one. SSCA reserves the right to disqualify any paper. (We hope that we do not exercise this right, but we just need to indicate that we do maintain the right.)

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jean DeHart at DEHART2JL@appstate.edu or at (828) 262-2402.

We look forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

RDC continues campaign to strengthen SSCA

This year the Resource Development Committee (RDC) is continuing its work to increase the funds for all of the awards offered by the association. Balances for the awards are growing each year because of the continued generosity of our membership.

We will continue the multi-year campaign targeting three specific needs identified by the RDC and the SSCA Executive Committee. The goal of this campaign is to ensure the long-term financial health of the association through a series of steps designed to preserve the association's ability to continue many of the projects that make SSCA a strong organization.

First, we have a long-term goal of continuing to build the SSCA award funds. When we began the process to fund the awards, \$5,000 was the amount required to generate the revenue needed for the



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awards each year. Since that time, the economic landscape changed.

In today's market, \$5,000 is not enough to generate the funds needed for the awards. Thus, the association continues to defray the costs of the awards each year. Raising the individual award balances to \$10,000 will ensure the awards are self-sufficient in any economic climate. We will continue Caring Connections and all

monies will go to a specific award fund each year until all award balances reach \$10,000. Caring Connections monies will again go to the Michael Osborn Teacher Scholar Award fund.

More focus will be placed on the goal to raise the balance of the association's reserve fund. One concern as brought up by Director Carl Cates is the need to protect SSCA against the possibility of a variety of economic hardships. The primary method for SSCA to do this is through maintaining a healthy reserve fund the association could use in the unlikely event of a catastrophe. One of the hallmarks of Emmett Winn's tenure as Executive Director is SSCA's current financial position. His legacy is one of fiscal responsibility, without which we could not undertake a campaign such as this.



Sheraton New Orleans Hotel set to welcome convention attendees

Fresh off a \$50 million revitalization, the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel boasts a superb location, bordering the historic French Quarter, just steps from the Mississippi River, the Ernest M. Morial Convention Center and the Warehouse Arts district. Other major attractions in the Hotel's immediate area include the Aquarium of the Americas, the Imax Theater, Harrah's Casino, the Riverwalk Marketplace, and the Louisiana Superdome. The Hotel is located only 16 miles from the New Orleans International Airport.



Courtesy of the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. www.sheratonneworleans.com

SSCA DIVISIONS AND INTEREST GROUPS

SSCA DIVISIONS

- Applied Communication
- Communication Theory
- Community College
- Freedom of Speech
- Gender Studies
- Instructional Development
- Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Language and Social Interaction
- Mass Communication
- Performance Studies
- Political Communication
- Popular Communication
- Public Relations
- Rhetoric and Public Address
- Southern Argumentation and Forensics

INTEREST GROUPS

- Association for Communication Administrators (ACA)
- American Society for the History of Rhetoric
- Ethnography
- Kenneth Burke Society
- Philosophy & Ethics of Communication

Don't forget to visit the SSCA website at www.scca.net!



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