

Candidate Statement: Danette Ifert Johnson

I am honored to be nominated as a candidate for ECA First Vice President Elect-Select. Participating in ECA's annual convention has been a highlight of my spring since I joined ECA and attended my first convention in 1990 as an undergraduate student. I remained a member through my time as a graduate student earning my M.A. and Ph.D. at Northwestern University and through academic appointments at Texas Tech, at West Virginia Wesleyan and at Ithaca College, where I am presently a Professor in the Department of Speech Communication and a life member of ECA.

Over my two decades of ECA membership, I have been fortunate to serve ECA in a variety of capacities:

- Advertising Manager for the Saratoga Springs Convention (1998)
- Chair, Budget Task Force (2005-06) and Ad Hoc Committee for Award Committee Structure (2009)
- ECA Representative to NCA Nominating Committee (2010)
- Executive Director (2004-07)
- Interest Group Planner for Nonverbal (1997-98), Interpersonal/Organizational (2002-03), Instructional (2007-08), and Organizational (2009-10) Interest Groups
- Interest Group Representative to Executive Council (1999-01)
- Member, Publications, Site Selection, Finance, and Hotel Contract Negotiation Committees and Task Force on Institutional Membership

In addition to serving on committees and participating in convention planning, my scholarly contributions to ECA include service on the editorial boards of all three ECA journals, presentation of 14 competitively-selected conference papers at ECA (6 of which

were presented on top paper panels), and participation in numerous panels as chair, panel participant, or respondent.

From this service, I have gained understanding of how ECA works. Even more importantly, I have gained immense appreciation for the essential contributions, both public and private, of members, officers, and staff to keeping ECA going. Without the willingness of many people across the Association to work collaboratively with each other, conventions would not happen, journals would not be published, and ECA truly would not be the strong, vibrant organization it is today.

Although ECA is in a strong position moving into its second century, challenges continuously face us, as they do any organization. Rising costs of conference travel, restructuring of traditional publishing and moves toward more electronic media, and reduced institutional financial support that may limit individuals' ability to participate in professional organizations are all issues that require us to reconsider how we currently conduct our business as an organization. In order to meet these challenges and others that will come in the future, ECA needs to work toward several goals.

First, we have done an excellent job of promoting participation by both graduate and undergraduate students. The upcoming inaugural undergraduate scholars conference is an exciting example of how ECA reaches out to students. While continuing to encourage student participation, ECA's next task is to focus on sustaining that participation once students leave their undergraduate or graduate institution. We need to make sure that ECA offers intellectual stimulation and professional mentoring so that new faculty see the benefit of becoming long-term members of ECA and, as they develop experience with the organization, prepare them to be the leaders of ECA's second century.

At the same time we work to improve mentoring for new faculty, we should also seek to increase participation from all institutions within our region. Although several institutions are represented through active participation from many of their faculty and students, many other institutions are represented by only a small percentage of their faculty or are not active with ECA at all. Increasing participation, particularly within the region, not only provides the Association with a greater number of members but also provides a forum for relationships between members to develop that can evolve into more localized cross-institutional collaborations on scholarship, curriculum, or programming. ECA needs to be proactive in sharing what its conventions and publications can offer teachers and scholars at all levels, in all types of institutions.

Additionally, we need to make our scholarship accessible to a wider audience than just our own members. Partnerships with Taylor and Francis and EBSCO have helped increase the scholarly visibility of our journals, which is important. We must also think of ways to promote the results of our scholarship outside the academic community. Steps in this direction have been taken with the press releases written for some panels at the 100th anniversary convention and with panels including people outside the academic community at several recent conventions, but we need to seek out additional ways to increase the visibility of our scholarly work beyond the academic community. After all, we study human communication, which is fundamental to everyone's lives, regardless of where they are or what they do.

ECA provided a wonderful introduction to the communication discipline 20 years ago when I attended my first convention and continues to do so today, thanks to the ongoing

dedication and efforts of its members. Our challenge as an organization is to maintain the welcoming environment ECA provides while also working to expand ECA's reach.

I would be honored to contribute to these efforts if elected to serve as First Vice President Elect-Select. Thank you for your consideration.