

Candidate Statement

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It is with enormous gratitude and honor that I serve as a candidate for the position of ECA First Vice President Elect-Select. My first convention was in Charleston, WV in 1999 where I traveled in a 10 passenger van with other students to present at our first conference. We were excited, anxious and unsure of what to expect. It was at this first conference where I learned that our organization is the oldest communication organization in the United States. It was apparent even from my first experience with the organization that the long tradition of scholarship, teaching and service was rooted in the foundational principles of mentoring and leadership. With your trust, it would be my privilege to continue these core principles and traditions.

For the last 16 years, I have been an active and engaged member of the Eastern Communication Association. I consider ECA to be my academic family. Since that first convention in 1999, I have only missed one convention (the month my son was born). In 2005 it was not a difficult decision to become a life-member of this organization. While it was very early in my academic career, I knew ECA would always be my academic home, and I have served the Association for more than a decade. During this time, I have recruited faculty and students as new members, and I mentored them as some pursued leadership roles in various interest groups. Because ECA is such an integral part of my professional career, I made a commitment early in my career to serve my colleagues. Over the years I have served as a paper reader for Nonverbal, Interpersonal, Instructional and Communication Administration interest groups, and I have served as a reviewer for *Communication Research Reports* and *Communication Quarterly*. Through my role as Interest Group chair for the Nonverbal, Interpersonal, and Communication Administrative groups, I not only served on Executive Council, but I also gained valuable insight into the details associated with convention planning. In 2011, I was elected as the ECA rep to the NCA nominating committee, and I look forward to mentoring young scholars as the planner of the 2016 James C. McCroskey and Virginia P. Richmond, Undergraduate Scholars Conference. Each role has taught me about ECA's structure, operational procedures, and our organizations' rich history. I have had the opportunity to meet new people, share my enthusiasm for this organization, and learn more about the challenges that face us in the future.

As I reflect on my experience as a member of ECA, I can share with you that I have gained an immense appreciation for those who continue to be advocates for our discipline. Everyone from our past presidents to the loyal members that attend each conference have taught me the importance of carving out value for our members and promoting our field to other disciplines. We must continue to build bridges to increase our impact and effectiveness. We will continue to create opportunities for communication scholars to be heard across disciplines and in the media. It is our responsibility to do this by being conscientious and sensitive to the diverse needs of our members.

If elected, there are four specific areas area that I would like to address:

1. Continue our efforts in sustaining excellence in communication scholarship and teaching. Additionally, I would work towards creating opportunities for our scholars and teachers to be heard in different ways. We can increase awareness of our discipline by providing multi-dimensional approaches to enhancing our communication reputation within our own institutions, media outlets and partnerships with other organizations.
2. Recruitment and membership are cornerstones to our livelihood and future endeavors. In today's academic landscape communication scholars have many choices, and we need to be competitive and provide meaningful member benefits. Our ECA officer team needs to continue listening to our members and soliciting their input on our recruitment efforts and our promotion of membership benefits. I would like to continue this dialogue and explore accessible and affordable membership options for those who lack institutional funds. I would like to broaden our conversations with those who teach in the K-12 systems and build more support for our Community Colleges and part-time faculty members. By making ECA affordable, both financially and time-wise we can gain more opportunities for a wide range of communication educators to contribute to the conversation and provide unique outlets for these individuals to get involved and participate within our organization.
3. Create opportunities that encourage our membership to network and collaborate beyond our annual convention. I will work to coordinate yearlong efforts to increase exposure and participation that makes sense for our members and future members. While our social media has significantly improved over the past few years, I believe we can use this channel and other forms of technology to provide members a value "added" experience and provide opportunities to stay connected between annual conventions.
4. Ongoing efforts to solicit student feedback to create an engaged atmosphere that encourages students to return to ECA conventions year after year. While many of us have fond stories of our "first convention" I am committed to preserving this experience. I would like to take a closer look at retention of student members and examine the student experience-- everything from arrival to departure of the convention. Scholarships for student attendance, ECA student clubs on college campuses or an ECA student "officer team" are some avenues for conversation. May we continue to continue to provide a welcoming environment and ongoing opportunities for emergent scholars to help preserve the future of the Association.

I am committed and dedicated to serve ECA as this level. I am grateful for my experiences and mentorship that I have received and would like to give back to an organization that has given me such wonderful experiences. I would be grateful for your vote and I am excited to work with you to enhance our dynamic and growing academic family.