

**Statement on Academic Freedom, Faculty Governance, and Justice
February 2024**

In response to a number of hostile actions implemented by the State of Texas affecting academic freedom, faculty governance, and justice, the administrative committee and membership of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA) affirm that in a democratic society any teaching, scholarship, and efforts to secure human rights cannot be constrained by state interference. SSCA has long centered the agency of institutions of higher learning and the value of justice in the pursuit of contributing to the common good. Recent policies in the State of Texas threaten the very foundation of academia, and specifically that of the Communication discipline because of its eternal validation of human beings across intersectional subject positions.

This year we gather in the State of Texas based on a years-long arrangement through which we are contractually obligated. However, the SSCA administrative committee and membership have actively leveraged this challenging space and complicated moment to celebrate academic freedom, to actuate faculty governance, and to reaffirm our commitment to justice. To this end, many of our division and interest group planners have organized sessions that will provide opportunities to share ideas, networks, and tools to manage and assail the current socio-political landscape. SSCA is also committed to the work of the SSCA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, which sponsors keynote events and workshops to educate people about how to navigate these issues within the classroom and educational institutions at large. Please refer to the conference schedule for specific Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programming and spotlight panels on inclusivity in scholarship, teaching, and service.

SSCA renews its pledge to treasure academic freedom, support faculty governance, and cherish justice as values this year, as in past years, and well into the future. More than that, SSCA commits to authentically acting on these values despite the threats of state-sanctioned policies, such as those currently deployed by the State of Texas, to the democratic arts central to and nurtured by the Communication discipline.

We anticipate a vibrant gathering at the 2024 conference. Members who attend the convention can share and learn strategies for fighting the assault against human rights and academic freedom playing out in Texas and in other Southern states. We can and must use our skills as communication teachers, scholars, and practitioners to defend and uphold our most important values.

*[Adapted from a statement submitted by
Jason Edward Black and Kathleen J. Turner, February 2023.]*

*Affirmed by the Administrative Committee of
the Southern States Communication Association*