

CONNECTIONS

SOUTHERN STATES COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION



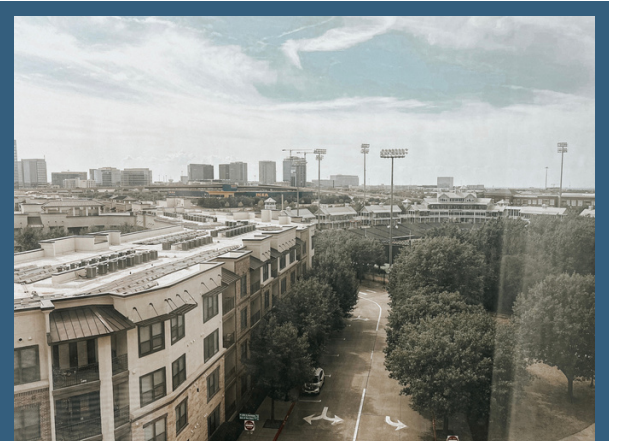
HIGHLIGHTS

**SSCA's 94th Annual Conference in
Frisco, TX April 2024**

**African American
Communication Division (AACD)**

**Undergraduate Honors
Conference Call for Submissions**

DEI Committee



“COMMUNICATING BELONGING” IN FRISCO, TX

It's not too early to start planning for the 2024 SSCA Annual Convention in Frisco, Texas! I hope that you will join us for our 94th Annual Convention from April 3-7, 2024. This year's conference theme is "Communicating Belonging." SSCA welcomes scholars and scholarship that represent the diversity of our experiences and communities. The city of Frisco will be an invigorating backdrop for what I hope will be serious and inspiring conversations about our discipline, our work, and the power of communication to facilitate belonging. We have been navigating a global pandemic, ongoing threats to social justice, and political opposition to freedom of expression. In many Southern states, politicians have targeted the academy. As communication teachers, scholars, and practitioners, we can—and must—bring our knowledge of persuasion, audiences, relationships, and institutions to advocate for a world that reflects our ideals. How do we best argue for and practice diversity, equity, and inclusion? How do we defend free speech and academic freedom? How do we use our communication skills to foster belonging? Our convention provides an opportunity for us to deliberate these ideas. Every year at the SSCA convention, we have the chance to come together, share and discuss important scholarship, reconnect with colleagues, and form new friendships. I hope you are looking forward to this opportunity as much as I am. I hope to see you in Frisco!



Ann Burnette
President

FRISCO IS CALLING

April 2024 is fast approaching! Ensure you are prepared for the 94th Annual SSCA Convention by getting an early start planning.

HELPFUL LINKS

[Embassy Suites By Hilton Dallas & Frisco Convention Center](#)

[Accessibility & Accommodations](#)

[Frisco Visitor Center](#)

*Downtown Frisco is a quick 5 mile drive from the location of the hotel!

SEE WHAT FRISCO, TEXAS HAS TO OFFER



[Restaurants](#)



[Live Music](#)



[Parks & Trails](#)



[Museums](#)

COMMUNICATING BELONGING-TOGETHER



Tina M. Harris
Immediate Past
President

This is a bittersweet time for me as I am entering my last year of leadership in SSCA. It has been a great experience with a wonderful team of colleagues who are also committed to and enthusiastic about taking us to the next level of intellectual excellence. I have been a member of SSCA since my first year of my MA program, so I have been around for a while. I am excited to see our organization continue to evolve and create spaces that are more inclusive and provide opportunities for so many people to engage in scholarship and service. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has ever, is currently, and will in the future choose to serve SSCA in one or more capacities. We are nothing without our members and their willingness to sacrifice their time, energy, and effort to make us who we are and who we aspire to be. I am thankful to be a part of those efforts.

As I round out this year, there are three tasks I am specifically working on in service for SSCA. I am currently working on a slate of nominees for our upcoming elections. I am appreciative of those who are willing to take on these considerable service roles. I want to also encourage members to remain active in their roles, such as reviewing, chairing, responding, and planning, as those responsibilities are essential to our work as an organization. One of our major goals is to have a successful annual conference, and that is an impossible task without your volunteerism. Thank you for all you do!

Another task is to establish the African American Communication Division (AACD) for our members. SSCA is in serious need of a division that can be home for our colleagues who are invested in the advancement of scholarship particularly attuned to the communication processes, realities, and experiences of African Americans. I, along with many other scholars, center a great deal of my research on African Americans, and it is important now more than ever to create a division that prioritizes this area of scholarship. I encourage everyone to consider becoming a division member, which will be more than supporting it. AACD will need support from at least 5% of the membership. More importantly, AACD will need members who designate AACD as one of their Divisional Affiliations in their SSCA profile. Support is great, and active members are even better! Be on the lookout for the forthcoming proposal seeking signatures.

Lastly, I will be working with the Administrative Committee and the Strategic Planning Task Force to execute some of the goals that have been outlined in the evolving Strategic Plan. I am excited to work collaboratively to identify the many ways we intend to prioritize diversity currently and more pointedly in the future. Additionally, I aim to be involved in the plans to create "a more diverse and inclusive group of leaders" by providing mentoring and leadership opportunities for those members. I am excited that we have been moving towards diversifying our leadership and remain committed to helping us achieve these very important and necessary goals.

Thank you all for your support over the last few years! I look forward to continuing to support SSCA and our leadership as we prepare for Frisco, Texas. See you there!

Approaching SSCA Convention Sites

95th Annual Convention	96th Annual Convention	97th Annual Convention
April 2025	April 2026	April 2027
Norfolk The Main- Hilton Norfolk, Virginia	Hilton Birmingham, Alabama	Renaissance Riverview Mobile, Alabama

STAY CONNECTED WITH SSCA



Southern States Communication Association

UNDERGRADUATE HONORS CONFERENCE

Join SSCA for an extraordinary event to showcase your knowledge and research with fellow students, faculty and great minds alike! Don't miss out on the opportunity to build connections, network with scholars and discuss graduate study opportunities!

The 34th annual Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference (UHC) will take place during the Southern States Communication Association's annual convention in Frisco, TX, April 3-7, 2024. The UHC provides an opportunity for outstanding undergraduate students to present their research and engage in conversations about their scholarship with faculty and fellow students. The UHC endeavors to support excellence in undergraduate scholarship, providing opportunities for participants to network and exchange ideas with other scholars, as well as exploring graduate study opportunities. Undergraduate students are invited to submit papers and digital and/or applied projects on any topic that is relevant to the study of human communication or mass communication. Past participants represent a wide range of colleges and universities, and their research has represented rhetorical, social scientific, humanistic, critical, applied, and performance approaches to understanding communication. We especially welcome papers or projects that connect to the 2024 conference theme, "Communicating Belonging."

Submission Deadline: December, 15th 2023 by 11:59 (Pacific)

[For more information about your submission](#)

SEE YOU ON SOCIALS

Another fall semester starts with some long anticipated changes on the horizon for SSCA. This year's conference theme is "Communicating Belonging" which the Administrative Committee has taken to heart. In line with our strategic plan, SSCA has renewed our podcast series "The Southern COMMfrence Podcast" which will spotlight various officers, members, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The series will start with roughly nine episodes and an extended episode for the summer. Some of the episodes will discuss the benefits of supporting regional conferences as well as how to get involved, the undergraduate honors conference, DEI initiatives, insights from SSCA's top leadership, and how to make the most of your conference experience with a focus on our upcoming convention in Frisco, TX. Our long term goal is to create a bi-weekly episode schedule.



Kevin Bryant
Strategic Communication Director

This podcast is just part of a greater social media campaign push to provide more channels to disseminate information, easier access for engagement with SSCA, greater membership recruitment, and more recognition of our members' accomplishments and scholarship. It is time that SSCA advances to the 21st century with our online presence through continuous updates to our website, content creation for existing platform accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (now X) while also establishing our new podcast.

There have been a few changes in prices for our exhibitor booths, Grad Fair and UHC Breakfast sponsorships, and program advertisements. These are to help offset our rising cost, but also to create new support initiatives. Our first initiative is the creation of a graduate student travel grant and an undergraduate student travel grant. All current graduate student members who attend and present at the conference will be entered into a drawing to help with travel cost. A second drawing will include all undergraduate students who attend and present in the Theodore Clevenger Jr. UHC. These travel grants are contingent on the sale of a newly created sponsorship for institutional members called "Premium Affiliates." Premium Affiliates will still receive all the benefits of their institutional membership, but will also receive additional entries in the travel grant drawings for all of their students, bundled discounts for program ads, recruitment fairs, direct hyperlinks to their institutions' websites from SSCA.net, and more.

One more area of communicating belonging that we are working on right now is the expansion of institutional coverage. We are working on new recruitment methods that will attract underrepresented and underserved communities. This includes informational campaigns about our Theodore Clevenger, Jr. Undergraduate Honors Conference, fostering networking and mentorship opportunities, and actively seeking individuals with diverse backgrounds for leadership positions and representation. As acting Strategic Communication Director, I am working closely with the search committee members to find individuals who will continue and expand on these initiatives.



DEI COMMITTEE

The DEI committee was created in 2018 from a need to incorporate more emphasis and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion within SSCA. As the committee, we struck a generative and pedagogical tone in our approach to DEI keynote workshop in our conference. Additionally, we are coming up with new ideas to bring to SSCA in years to come. In this short blurb, I discuss items the DEI committee is accomplishing in the 2023-2024 year.

Membership

The membership of the DEI committee will maintain a 5 person unit. We are on a 2-1-2 person rotation. In 2024, we will seek two more people to recruit to the DEI committee and two others will roll off, including the current chair of the committee. In 2025, we will seek one person to add to the committee, and one will roll off. Each member will complete a three year commitment to the committee.

For us, diversity across racial identities, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, and nationalities (among others) are important for us because we believe our committee should embody the name of our group.

Workshop

Based on the positive reception this year, we will again host the DEI keynote workshop for the 2024 year in Frisco! This year, we plan on having a presenter discuss and strategize ways educators can teach diversity, equity, and inclusion within politically hostile states and institutions. It has become quite apparent that politicians have targeted higher education and educators (both k-12 and postsecondary, both private and public) and are using anti-DEI rhetoric as the means to do it. This has placed educators in a precarious position where some have to choose between teaching students about racism, white supremacy, patriarchy, cissexism and ways to resist them or continue receiving a paycheck from their institution. We hope that this workshop will provide guidance on how people can survive as educators within an increasingly aggressive and dangerous climate on and off campuses.

Budget Line

The DEI committee will propose a recurring budget line for our continuing activities. Most of it will fund the keynote workshops and the mixers. However, we also want this budget line to finance other ideas we may come up with in the future. We believe that creating a budget line not only helps the committee but also helps SSCA further cement its commitment to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These are the current items that the DEI committee is working on. We will keep you posted on our future events and developments!

COMMUNICATING BELONGING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleagues,

Preparations for the 94th annual meeting are well under way! 1st Vice-President Carl Cates is putting together an exciting program that covers a wide range of communication scholarship. The convention theme of "Communicating Belonging" is particularly relevant to the current state of higher education.

We are preparing to meet at a challenging time for higher educational institutions. A recent Gallup poll conducted in June 2023 revealed that only 36% of Americans have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in higher education. This poll reveals a 20% drop in confidence in higher education from eight years ago. Not surprisingly, changes in public perceptions of higher education are in line with the decline of confidence in public institutions as a whole.

As educators and scholars, we have a special responsibility to address public concerns with higher education. In fact, we are uniquely poised to counter declining perceptions of higher education by spotlighting how our work benefits the public and offer solutions that counter the growing belief that not all are welcome at higher educational institutions.

Our gathering in Frisco is testament to the belief that we can make a difference, and that we are committed to serving the needs of our students as well as the public. I look forward to seeing all of you in Frisco!

John Haas, PhD.
Executive Director, SSCA



John Haas
Executive Director

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

We appreciate your dedication and contributions to the SSCA community. Your time, effort and enthusiasm is central to SSCA's success. We look forward to seeing you in Frisco, TX!

Institutional Members

Florida Atlantic University
Georgia College and State University
Georgia Southern University
Sam Houston State University
Transylvania University
University of Montevallo
University South Carolina, Aiken
University of Texas- Permian Basin

Interest Groups

Association and Communication
Administration
American Society for the History of
Rhetoric
Ethnography
Burke Society
Language and Social Interaction
Philosophy and Ethics
State Associations

Divisions

Applied Communication
Augmentation and Forensics
Communication Theory and Methodology
Community College
Freedom of Speech
Identity, Inclusion and Social Justice
Gender Studies
Health Communication
Instructional Development
Intercultural Communication
Interpersonal Communication
Performance Studies
Mass Communication
Political Communication
Popular Communication
Public Relations
Rhetoric and Public Address

Premium Affiliates

Auburn University
Clemson University
East Tennessee State University
Furman University
Ohio University
Louisiana State University
Samford University
Tennessee Technology University
Texas State University
University of Alabama
University of Arkansas
University of Central Florida
University of Georgia
University of North Carolina, Wilmington
University of Memphis
University of Tennessee
Valdosta State University
Virginia Tech