

Rhetoric and Public Address Division
Business Meeting
Southern States Communication Association
April 10, 2026 | 4:15–5:15 p.m. | East L

Sara Baugh-Harris, Chair (In Absentia)
Lionnell "Badu" Smith, Vice Chair
Celnisha L. Dangerfield, Vice Chair-Elect
Alyson Farzard-Phillips, Secretary

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Call to Order

- Opening remarks
 - Sara not able to join, so Badu is going to be overseeing; meeting begins at 4:20pm
- Approval of agenda
 - Agenda is approved

2. Old Business

- Approval of 2025 Business Meeting Minutes
 - Minutes are approved

3. Officer Reports

- Chair's Report (presented by Lionnell "Badu" Smith on behalf of Sara Baugh-Harris)
 - Badu reads Sara's report, where she thanks him for taking our recommendations for program changes and reinvigorating our division through programming.
 - Encourage attendance to scholar-to-scholar contribution
 - Brandon Inabinet and Christina Moss will be leading a special session on Southern Colloquium on Rhetoric, continuing this tradition.
- Vice Chair's Report (Lionnell "Badu" Smith)
 - 2026 Convention overview (submissions, panels, acceptance rates)
 - **11 competitive panels overall for the division**
 - 20 paper submissions received and 16 accepted - 3 rejected; 1 reassigned to interpersonal division (84.2% acceptance rate)
 - 6 panel submissions received and 5 accepted (83.3% acceptance rate)
 - NEW* 10 extended abstracts (first year we've accepted these!) and 6 accepted (60% acceptance rate)
 - Two additional timeslots - (Scholar to Scholar and the Southern Colloquium)
 - 29 reviewers, everyone had 1-3 reviews to complete -- THANK YOU REVIEWERS (and chairs and respondents too!)
 - Wide range topics within contemporary rhetorical inquiry with themes such as (1) race, (2) AI, (3) historical and archival criticism, (4) new directions
 - Recognition of Top Paper Award Winners
 - **Top Faculty Paper:** Ryan Neville-Shephard (University of Arkansas): "On Rhetorical Paramnesia: January 6th Denialism and the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election."
 - **Top Student Paper:** Taylor Leigh Vanderveen (University of Georgia): "Victim Impact Statements Beyond the Legal Domain: A Rhetorical Analysis of Chanel Miller's Voice."
- Vice Chair-Elect Report (Celnisha L. Dangerfield)
 - Preview of the 2027 Convention
 - April 7-11, 2027

- Mobile, AL
- Theme: “Curiosity”
- Call for participation - “Pursuing any degree in communication is about embracing our curiosity, exploring deep questions... and refusing easy or tidy answers.” This is about interrogating the concept of curiosity - what it does, allow for, etc.
 - Oil, petro-masculinity, petro-politics
 - Water-related, waves, connections, shipping, “big ships”
 - Location of the first mardi-gras - something public memory related
 - Off-site session at the mardi-gras museum
 - Environmental rhetorics - dolphine island (just south of Mobile)
 - Huntsville is about to be the center of space research; Mobile is the port - center of national defense
 - Immigration awareness - modern forms servitude in hotel and hospitality industry for undocumented immigration
 - Mythologies of colonialism and native americans and reservations (depicted in media and movies); folklore etc
 - Hank Aaron and Satchel Paige both have ties here
 - Monuments and memories
 - Civil war fort
 - Gulf coast culture resonance - “white trash riviera” and the spatialization of race, class narrative; Cajun culture? Cultural curiosities
 - Lack of curiosity in our public discourse (problem to overcome)
 - War-time and AI generation, political curiosities
 - Oddities, things we don’t want to talk about, occult
 - Curiosity Rover (space)
 - Carceral rhetorics and correctional facilities; some reform to this area happening in the state
- Overall demonstrated desire for off-site meet-up. Cajun, public memory, mardi gras, etc. -- some sort of reception
- We’d like to see scholar-to-scholar section continue - student papers were the ones rejected, so it organically arose as a way to get more feedback and mentorship
- Do we want to do a poster session? Collaborate with other divisions or does each division have their own poster session. Something we can add in the call.
- Workshop session for those working on projects
- We had a discussion on if we should continue the special session on Southern Colloquium on Rhetoric, continuing this tradition? This turns into a larger question about leaving room for graduate students to work
- We want to encourage participation especially from graduate students?
 - Graduate posters?
 - Wandering scholars/roaming critics are planned so that there are people who volunteer to go around the poster session.
- We can always ask or plan for more slots beyond what we are given - Rank order them, and then the rest beyond the number we are given can still be added to the planner, if there are slots available
- High density session - 8 or 9 presentations; quick format, and then mingling and discussion. “Speed dating.”

4. New Business

- Elections:
 - Vice Chair-Elect - Alyson Farzad-Phillips (University of Tennessee)
 - Secretary - Two nominees
 - Wallace Golding - (Texas State University) Twelve
 - Margaret Ndwandwe (Berry College) - Nine
 - Sommelier - Johnathan Carter (Georgia Southwestern State University)
- Graduate Student Representative Position:
 - Proposal to extend current appointment
 - Sophia Flemming agrees
 - Discussion of formalizing the position in division bylaws
 - Badu will be looking at by-laws. This will be written and use google poll to membership. Will also look at the Sommelier
- Division updates / announcements
 - Membership vote to approval to rename the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee to “community building”
 - New strategic communication director
 - Approval to raise membership dues and conference registration. Looking at about a 15% increase and especially registration fees.

5. Officer Transitions

- Acknowledgment of outgoing officers
- Passing of the gavel
 - Sara Baugh-Harris becomes Past Chair
 - Lionnell “Badu” Smith becomes Chair
 - Celnisha Dangerfield becomes Vice Chair/Division Planner for the 2026

6. Good of the Order

- Open floor for announcements and comments
 - Come to the Memphis party - East Tower H.
 - Roseann is the chair of the NCA nominating committee; if you have interests, please go talk to her :)

7. Adjournment