

Southern States Communication Association
Mass Communication Division 2026 Business Meeting

The meeting was scheduled for 1615 in the Sheraton Hotel in Birmingham, Alabama. Noting the absence of the chair, the Vice Chair (Chris Toula) called the meeting to order at 1623. The chair was absent due to defending her dissertation. It was generally agreed that defending one's dissertation is something which scholars do. Also present were the secretary, Bill Harlow, who was not in the bar and did not have a drink in his immediate possession, as well as Melissa Smith, the immediate past chair. 13 other members of the division were present.

Dr. Toula began the meeting by collecting a list of volunteers to review papers for next year. As said commitment was, at that point, still many months in the future, the entirety of the room agreed as they could not imagine a scenario under which they would not actually review the upcoming submissions. Dr. Harlow dutifully collected the list and thanked the reviewers in advance for reviewing papers which he himself would likely be unable to receive due to the possibility of another government shutdown. Dr. Toula then read the minutes of the previous meeting, which were not written with the same sense of flair as these minutes, and they were unanimously approved. We then proceeded to the Chair's Report.

Chair's Report

Dr. Toula reported on the executive council meeting. Highlights included:

- SSCA has changed the DEI Committee to the Community Building Committee.
- SSCA will have increased fees for next year. This is the first fee increase since 2013.
- The 2030 conference will be in Myrtle Beach.

Dr. Toula then discussed conference submissions, paying particular care to ask participants to encourage submissions for next year. This year we had 16 submissions, all of high quality. 6 panels were also submitted.

We handed out the top paper and the top student paper award.

The acting chair asked for ideas on how to increase paper submissions for next year. Significant conversation ensued, the most significant bits of which are captured in the motion (below) to accept extended abstracts. We did not accept extended abstracts this year. Based on that conversation, the members present voted unanimously to accept extended abstracts for 2027 in Mobile with the following limitations:

- Extended abstracts should be 1000-1500 words exclusive of references.
- Authors must submit their full papers 30 days before the conference or it will be removed from the program. The vice chair will provide a specific date and will distribute those papers to panel respondents.

- Extended abstracts will not be eligible for awards.

We then moved to discussion of selecting new leadership for the following year. Srividya Karaturi was unanimously elected as our new Secretary and Vice-Chair elect. She was unanimously wished well and was promised abundant help which, sure, might actually happen.

New Business

There was no new business, with the relevant issues having been handled as part of the chair's report.

Old Business

There was no old business, save for the long scholarly tradition of arranging to meet one another at various formal and informal receptions to be held immediately after the meeting adjourned.

Speaking of, the meeting adjourned at 1706.