

Southern States Communication Association

Public Relations Division Meeting Minutes

Meeting: Public Relations Division Business Meeting April 2026

Location: Birmingham, Alabama

Time: 5:19 p.m.–5:55 p.m.

Attendance

Members in attendance included:

- Breann Murphy — Jacksonville State University
- Kelly Williams — University of West Georgia
- Davia LaGonita — University of North Georgia
- Chris McCollough — Kennesaw State University
- Michelle Groover — Georgia Southern University
- Brigitte Brunner — Auburn University
- Corey H. Hickerson — James Madison University
- Eldaricha Rolle — Florida State University
- Christie Kleinmann — Belmont University
- Tiffany McBride — Columbus State University

A sign-in sheet was maintained for the meeting.

Call to Order

Kelly called the meeting to order at **5:19 p.m.**

Approval of Previous Minutes

The **2025 meeting minutes were approved.**

Members acknowledged the strong panels and programming presented during the conference and expressed appreciation to the conference planner for their work. Members were also encouraged to attend **Pam's session the following day.**

SSCA Breakfast Updates

Updates from the SSCA breakfast included:

- Membership fees will increase.
- The **DEI Committee** will transition to the **Community Building Committee**.

Vice Chair Officer Report – Breann

Breann provided the Vice Chair report and reflected on learning more about the responsibilities and processes associated with the position and conference planning.

Conference programming included:

- **8 panel submissions**
- **6 paper submissions**
- **1 rejection**
- **4 panels and 5 papers** ultimately included, representing a combination of industry- and pedagogy-based topics.
- Session topics were well-rounded and represented a variety of interests within the division.

Breann reported a positive experience with the review process and noted that reviewers did an excellent job. A different approach was taken to recruiting reviewers this year, including:

- Recruiting volunteers through surveys.
- Issuing a call for reviewers that gathered information about reviewers' contacts, specialties, universities, and methodological expertise.
- Developing a process for reconnecting with potential reviewers each year.
- Securing enough reviewers for each reviewer to evaluate approximately two submissions.
- Utilizing social media and email marketing to promote division activities.

The **Division Dinner** was also successful, with approximately **11–12 attendees**.

The Birmingham conference flyer and related promotional efforts were also discussed.

Kate did not provide an officer update.

Old Business

No additional old business was recorded.

New Business

Google Drive and Institutional History

Members discussed issues related to the division's **Google Drive**, particularly the disappearance of the transfer-of-ownership function. The discussion emphasized the importance of maintaining the division's **institutional history** and ensuring that documents and records can be successfully transferred between officers.

2027 Conference – Mobile, Alabama

The 2027 SSCA conference will be held in **Mobile, Alabama**.

Members discussed ideas for the upcoming conference, including:

- Developing more **integrated panels**.
- Incorporating the conference theme of “**Curiosity**.”
- Exploring opportunities for local organizations to visit or participate.
- Kate will assist with conference planning.
- Breann will reach out to **travel and tourism organizations** regarding potential involvement.

Vice Chair-Elect Election

The Vice Chair-Elect will be responsible for planning the division's conference programming when SSCA convenes in **Memphis**.

Michail Vafeiadis of Auburn University was nominated for Vice Chair-Elect.

Corey made the motion, and Brig seconded the motion. The motion was properly moved and seconded.

Officer Engagement and Zoom Meetings

Members discussed ways to increase involvement and create opportunities for incoming officers and other members to learn more about division leadership.

Suggestions included:

- Bringing interested members into division meetings to provide opportunities to **shadow current leadership**.

- Holding approximately **one Zoom meeting per semester**.

2027 Executive Board

The following leadership structure was identified for 2027:

- **Chair:** Breann
- **Vice Chair:** Kate
- **Vice Chair-Elect:** Michail Vafeiadis
- **Secretary:** Tiffany McBride
- **Graduate Assistant:** To be determined
- **Chris:** Role to be confirmed
- **AJ:** PR Division/NCA role discussed

Pamela Bourland Davis Award

Members discussed establishing an award honoring **Pamela Bourland Davis** and recognizing her contributions to the field, particularly her commitment to **teaching, mentorship, and leadership**.

Brig motioned to create the award.

The working title discussed was:

Pamela Bourland Davis Award for Excellence in Mentorship and Leadership

The final name of the award will be determined at a later date.

Discussion regarding the award included:

- The award would focus on **faculty-to-faculty mentorship and leadership**.
- The award would primarily provide **recognition rather than monetary funding**.
- Breann will draft the call for nominations, using an existing SSCA award call as a model.
- The call is expected to be released in **mid-September**, following the conference paper submission deadline.
- The recipient will be selected and announced **prior to the conference**.
- The award is expected to be presented for the first time at the **2027 SSCA conference**.
- **Breann and Kelly** will take the lead on developing the award.
- Corey and Brig moved to proceed with establishing the award honoring Pamela Bourland Davis. The motion was **approved**.

Adjournment

Brig motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at **5:55 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Tiffany McBride

Secretary, Public Relations Division