“Embracing Opportunities”
November 20-23, 2014
Las Vegas, Nevada

After celebrating our centennial in Chicago, we turn our attention to the first conference of our next century as an association, with our 101st annual convention to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. Fresh from reflections about our past(s), in 2015, we (re)imagine possibilities for our future(s) with the conference theme, “Embracing Opportunities.”

Guided by this theme, we will consider ways in which we can “embrace opportunities” for thinking “out of the box” and for seeking creative and unique avenues for accomplishing our professional goals as members of the communication discipline. Ideally, this theme will spark conversations about innovative ideas for enacting our roles and fulfilling our responsibilities as teachers, scholars, administrators, practitioners, and community members. We invite submissions that inspire us to step beyond “what we have always done” and instead envision “what can be” as we interact with our students, establish ourselves as scholars, connect with colleagues in the discipline, partner with others beyond the academy, and juggle myriad personal commitments amid demanding professional obligations and expectations. A plethora of rich possibilities await communication scholars in our next century as we navigate increasingly fragmented, complex, and technologically-driven terrains of contemporary life within and beyond the academy.

We urge submissions that encourage us to tackle tough topics and engage in meaningful dialogues about issues that matter to us and to others who share our world. For example, how can we pursue additional forums for our discipline to participate even more in broader societal and political discussions about pressing problems such as bullying, health disparities, discrimination, violence, threats to our environment, etc.? As we look forward to our next century, how can we embrace opportunities for the communication discipline to “take a seat at the table” as a key stakeholder in issues of relational, local, and global importance?

A key part of this theme also involves exploring opportunities for enhancing professional relationships and partnerships within and beyond NCA. Along those lines, the informal slogan for our time together in 2015 will be “What Happens in Vegas SHOULDN’T Stay in Vegas!” We encourage sessions that will spark conversations and foundations for collaborations that could stretch into more long-term interactions involving mentoring, research, service, etc. How can we initiate projects and partnerships that can continue as we return to our respective campuses? How can we build networking infrastructures that enable us to promote opportunities in diverse academic, administrative, public sector, and service contexts? How can we more effectively tap technology to transcend barriers of time and space, expanding our options for virtual work sessions and enhancing our sense of community? In what ways can we share varied and finite resources more strategically? Thus, with the 2015 convention theme, we invite imaginative and thought-provoking paper and panel submissions that challenge us to examine how we can “embrace opportunities” for working together and making a difference in our educational institutions, our communities, our discipline, and our world.

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