

BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN STUDIES DIVISION  
OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION  
*Revised February 2016; Amended and Ratified November 2017*

ARTICLE I. NAME, PURPOSE, AND AUTHORITY.

Section 1. The name of this group shall be the American Studies Division.

Section 2. The basic purpose of the American Studies Division is to promote interdisciplinary research and teaching that focuses on the connections between communication texts and practices and American cultures. Inherently interdisciplinary, the Division embraces diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to research and theory-building relevant to studies within, between, and among the cultures and peoples of South, Central, and North America.

Section 3. All meetings of the Division, its committees, or other subsidiary bodies, shall be governed by the parliamentary rules and usages contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 4. All persons serving the Division in a leadership capacity (officers, committee members, special appointees, etc.) shall have or obtain reasonable access to technologies that facilitate the timely conduct of Division business.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General membership in the Division is open to any member of the Association who is interested in promoting the Division's purposes.

Section 2. The full membership of the Division shall be those persons who elect Division membership with their NCA membership.

ARTICLE III. MEETINGS

Section 1. A business meeting shall be held at the time and place of the annual convention of the Association.

Section 2. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the Executive Committee and may use appropriate communication technologies warranted by the task.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Section 1. An annual term of office or committee service shall begin December 1 and run through November 30 of the following year.

- Section 2. The officers of the Division shall be the First Immediate Past Chairperson, Second Immediate Past Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson-Elect, Secretary and Graduate Student Representative.
- Section 3. Each Immediate Past Chairperson shall serve a two-year term. During the first year of this term the officer shall hold the title of First Immediate Past Chairperson, and in the second year the title of Second Immediate Past Chairperson.
- A. The First Immediate Past Chairperson shall serve as the Division's representative to the NCA Nominating Committee. Additionally, during the first year the Immediate Past Chairperson shall serve as a member of the Division's Nominating Committee.
  - B. The Second Immediate Past Chairperson shall serve on the Division's Nominating Committee as its head.
- Section 4. The Chairperson shall serve a one-year term and succeed to the office of Immediate Past Chairperson the following year.
- A. The Chairperson shall preside over business meetings of the Division.
  - B. The Chairperson shall work with the Vice-Chairperson-Elect and the Graduate Student Representative in recruiting members for the Division.
  - C. In cooperation with the Awards Committee Chairperson, the Division Chairperson shall secure the services of three distinguished scholars to judge the Division's award nominations.
  - D. The Chairperson shall provide for a schedule of duties/mentoring of the Graduate Student Representative in consultation with appropriate Division and Association officers and chairpersons.
  - E. The Chairperson shall have primary responsibility for reviewing the Division's financial position and confirming those Division expenditures to be forwarded for reimbursement from Division funds.
  - F. The Chairperson shall be responsible for appointing persons from within the membership to serve as needed in capacities as specified in subsequent articles of these bylaws.
- Section 5. The Vice-Chairperson shall serve a one-year term and succeed to the office of the Chairperson in the next successive year.

- A. The Vice-Chairperson shall, in cooperation and consultation with appropriate officers of the Division and the Association, plan the program of the American Studies Division for the annual NCA convention.
- B. The Vice-Chairperson will head the Program Planning Committee and will be responsible for compiling the ratings and ranking for the papers submitted for competitive evaluation.

Section 6. The Vice-Chairperson-Elect shall serve a one-year term and succeed to the office of the Vice-Chairperson in the next successive year.

- A. The Vice-Chairperson-Elect shall serve as a paper evaluator and member of the Program Planning Committee in order to assist the Vice-Chairperson.
- B. The Vice-Chairperson-Elect shall attend training sessions provided by the NCA convention staff in-person and/or via appropriate technology.
- C. The Vice-Chairperson-Elect shall be responsible for membership recruitment efforts with the assistance of the Chairperson and the Graduate Student Representative.

Section 7. The Secretary shall perform the customary duties of that office and shall be responsible for internal communication among the members. The Secretary shall serve a two-year term.

- A. The Secretary shall prepare minutes for the Division business meeting to be distributed for review and preliminary approval by the Executive Committee within two months following the meeting, but not later than February 20. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that business meeting agendas and minutes, along with important announcements and newsletters, are made available via electronic media.
- B. The Secretary, in consultation with the Executive Committee will open, operate, maintain, and/or close the most relevant social media accounts to provide publicity for the Division.
- C. The Secretary shall send announcements, memoranda, and newsletter information to members of the Division via the Division's listserv and shall channel appropriate information to the Division's social media accounts, Division web page, and relevant NCA publications.

Section 8. The office of Graduate Student Representative shall provide an opportunity for leadership training and professionalization for sustaining future Division membership. The Graduate Student Representative shall serve a one-year term.

- A. The Graduate Student Representative shall assist the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson-Elect in recruiting Division membership.
- B. In consultation with the Chairperson, the Graduate Student Representative shall shadow and/or assist the other Division officers and Committee Chairpersons in the discharge of their duties.

Section 9. A group of Paper Evaluators shall be recruited from the Division membership to serve as members of the Program Planning Committee.

- A. The number of paper evaluators selected shall be determined by the Vice-Chairperson in consultation as needed with the appropriate Division and Association officers.
- B. The paper evaluators shall be approved by the Vice-Chairperson prior to the NCA submission deadline to serve a one-year term.
- C. The paper evaluators shall be responsible for rating and ranking competitive submissions.
- D. The Vice-Chairperson shall forward the top five ranking competitive, individual papers to the Awards Committee.

Section 10. A Chairperson for the Awards Committee shall be elected at the annual business meeting on even numbered years and serve a two-year term.

- A. The Chairperson of the Awards Committee shall be responsible for accepting nominations and coordinating the evaluation of award eligible materials, as well as arranging for approved memorial items to be presented to the winners at the annual business meeting.
- B. The Chairperson of the Awards Committee, in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Division, shall select three distinguished scholars in the field to evaluate the nominations and to select recipients based upon the nominated material's quality.
- C. In the event that a committee member's work is nominated, a new member will be appointed. In the event that a work authored or edited by the Chairperson of the Awards Committee is nominated, the Division Chairperson shall assume the Chairperson's role for the Awards Committee.
- D. The committee has the prerogative to hold nominations over until the following year if they feel nominations are insufficient in either numbers or quality.

E. The Chairperson of the Awards Committee or a designated alternate shall present the awards during the Division's business meeting at the annual NCA Convention.

Section 11. The Nominating Committee of the Division shall be comprised of the First and Second Immediate Past Chairpersons of the Division, headed by the Second Immediate Past Chairperson. The Chairperson of the Division shall appoint a third member of the committee from within the Division membership.

Section 12. The Membership Recruiting and Retention Committee of the Division shall be comprised of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson-Elect, and the Graduate Student Representative. The Vice-Chairperson-Elect of the Division shall act as its head.

Section 13. The Executive Committee of the Division shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson-Elect, the First Immediate Past Chairperson, and the Secretary. The Executive Committee shall serve as chief administrative authority of the Division between annual business meetings of the Association and the Division.

Section 14. Special committees or individual service positions with tenure ordinarily limited to one year and with specific duties appropriate to the needs of the Division shall be appointed by the Chairperson, with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee as needed, or shall be elected by a majority vote of individuals in attendance at the annual business meeting.

Section 15. The Division shall provide two or more representatives (as warranted by the the size of the Division) as delegates to the Legislative Assembly of NCA. The representatives shall be the Chairperson or her/his designate, and either the Vice-Chairperson, or the First Immediate Past Chairperson.

## ARTICLE V. ELECTIONS

Section 1. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of two names for each vacancy to be filled for the upcoming year. Additional nominations for officers can be made from the floor at the annual business meeting. Paper evaluator nominees shall be approved by the Vice Chairperson from the recruited Division membership.

Section 2. Elections shall be conducted either at the annual business meeting or by means of mediated balloting as approved by the Executive Committee, decided by a plurality vote, the results of which will be announced either at the business meeting or by means of the Division listserv.

Section 3. Should any elected officer become unable to serve, the Chairperson shall appoint a member of the Division to complete the duties of the office for the remaining

duration of the term or until the next Division business meeting, whichever comes first.

## ARTICLE VI. PROGRAM PROPOSALS AND CONVENTION PAPERS

Section 1. The Division shall accept individual papers, paper panel proposals, and roundtable discussion proposals for competitive review.

- A. The Vice-Chairperson, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall add or delete additional submission genres in keeping with current NCA goals and incentives, upon the condition that evaluation criteria appropriate to the genre is provided at the time of decision.
- B. The Vice-Chairperson shall assign submissions for review and determine the ranking based on criteria appropriate to its genre.

Section 2. Each genre of submission shall be rated separately.

- A. The following criteria shall guide evaluation of individual papers: (1) relevance to Division, (2) contribution, (3) execution, and (4) writing. All competitive paper submissions shall include full papers with abstracts.
- B. For paper panel proposals, the criteria are: (1) relevance to Division, (2) contribution, and (3) session design. Program proposals shall include a statement of the purpose of the panel, a rationale for presenting the panel, a list of the names, titles, and affiliations of participants, and a brief summary of each participant's paper.
- C. In the case of roundtable discussion proposals, the requirements are the same as for a paper panel proposal with the exception of the individual paper summaries.
- D. A newly added submission genre shall be rated by the criteria provided at the time of its approval. Any new genres that are to become permanent additions to the Division's Call for Submissions shall have their criteria amended to these bylaws as outlined in Article VIII.

Section 3. The Vice-Chairperson shall decide on the number of competitive paper programs and the number of panel proposals, in accordance with the directives of NCA. The Vice-Chairperson shall work with other Division planners and the first Vice-President of the Association to schedule programs.

## ARTICLE VII. AWARDS

- Section 1. The Division shall present an award for achievement to one book, one article or monograph, one Master's Thesis, one PhD Dissertation, and up to five individual competitive papers.
- Section 2. The nominees for all awards shall have completed or published their work within the two years prior to November 30 of the convention year.
- Section 3. The Awards Committee shall solicit submissions for consideration for the awards specified in subpoints A, B, and C by means of relevant media in consultation with the Division Secretary and in consideration of the deadline in Section 2.
- A. The winner of the best book award shall receive a plaque or certificate of recognition, dependent upon approval of the Chairperson in consideration of available Division funds. The award for best book may be named after a scholar selected by the Awards Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. If approved, the chosen scholar shall be amended to these bylaws using the procedure outlined in Article VIII.
  - B. The winner of the best article or monograph shall receive a plaque or certificate of recognition, dependent upon approval of the Chairperson in consideration of available Division funds. The award for best article or monograph may be named after a scholar selected by the Awards Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. If approved, the chosen scholar shall be amended to these bylaws using the procedure outlined in Article VIII.
  - C. The winner of the best Master's Thesis shall receive a plaque or certificate of recognition, dependent upon approval of the Chairperson in consideration of available Division funds. The award for best Master's Thesis may be named after a scholar selected by the Awards Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. If approved, the chosen scholar shall be amended to these bylaws using the procedure outlined in Article VIII.
  - D. The winner of the best PhD Dissertation shall receive a plaque or certificate of recognition, dependent upon approval of the Chairperson in consideration of available Division funds. The award for best PhD Dissertation may be named after a scholar selected by the Awards Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. If approved, the chosen scholar shall be amended to these bylaws using the procedure outlined in Article VIII.
- Section 4. The Awards Committee shall review the top individual competitive papers forwarded by the Vice-Chairperson to determine the number of honor designates for the convention program.

- A. Up to five top individual, competitive papers shall be designated in the program provided by the Division to NCA by the Vice-Chairperson, either by special notation or by inclusion on a “Top Papers” panel.
- B. The winners of top individual, competitive papers shall receive a certificate of recognition, dependent upon approval of the Chairperson in consideration of available Division funds.

Section 5. Dependent upon approval of the Chairperson in consideration of available Division funds, the Awards Committee may provide monetary awards to any of the designated winners.

#### ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be initiated by a majority of the Executive Committee, by a majority of the Division membership in attendance at a Division business meeting, or by a petition addressed to the Chairperson and signed by twenty-five members of the Division.

Section 2. The adoption of a proposed amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote of those either present at the annual business meeting of the Division, or a two-thirds majority vote of those members responding to a mediated ballot.

Section 3. These Bylaws shall become effective after ratification by a majority vote of the Division during the 2017 business meeting.