



N A T I O N A L C O M M U N I C A T I O N A S S O C I A T I O N

IDEA

2021

TASK FORCE REPORT



**AUTHORED BY THE 2021 INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND
ACCESS STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE**

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Part I: Background

FOUNDED IN 1914, the National Communication Association (NCA) has a long history of scholarship and activism dedicated to advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) in the discipline. As demonstrated in the “Timeline of Key IDEA Moments,” (*see Appendix I*) IDEA work has been omnipresent on myriad fronts for decades across the organization—often in direct response to calls for organizational change from within the membership. The dynamic relationship between resistance, advocacy, and change dates all the way back to the very beginning of NCA’s history wherein the organization was founded as an oppositional act in response to the “diminished importance of speech instruction within departments of English.”¹

For years, caucus members have called for NCA to proactively attend to its organizational structure through an IDEA lens in service to structural change that surpasses statements of support, resolutions, committees, task forces, and policies that lack accountability measures. While such endeavors are crucial to NCA’s long IDEA history and the march toward generating the 2022 IDEA Strategic Plan, they have not and will not result in consistently sustained IDEA organizational practices that: (1) withstand changes in leadership and (2) materially improve the NCA experience for our most disenfranchised members.

One of the ways that we know this to be true in the context of NCA’s very own history is because the 1988-1990 SCA Taskforce on Affirmative Action submitted a “Common Points of Agreement” that called for determining “the degree to which” the SCA Publications Board utilized the SCA Affirmative Action Statement in its recruitment processes and eventual recommendations for Editor appointments to the Legislative Council. Despite their decades of previous acknowledgment and intervention in the lack of diversity represented among editors, “editorial policies, practices, and programs governing SCA Publications,” NCA members called for change yet again via the 2018 “Lack of Diversity in NCA’s Journal Editorships and Editorial Boards.” In part, what the necessity of this renewed call to action reveals is that much of the IDEA progress that NCA has indeed made has not resulted in the removal of structural barriers that impede inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Moreover, when exclusionary structures remain in place (i.e., allowing some, yet limiting IDEA progress), organizational transformation is far more provisional than abiding. Therefore, this strategic plan builds IDEA infrastructure in service to removing structural barriers and sustaining progress.

Echoing generations of NCA members before us, the guiding principle of our task force and foundational assertion of this strategic plan is:

NCA can only achieve excellence as a learned society with perpetual organization-wide commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

Communication scholars and activists have enacted this principle in myriad ways throughout NCA history. That they have done so without consistent IDEA infrastructure within NCA is a testament to their determined intellectual and emotional labor to create a discipline in which scholars matter not despite our differences, but because heterogeneity fosters excellence far more so than rigid unspoken commitments to homogeneity, tradition, and normativity. Organizational communication scholar Brenda J. Allen reminds us that:

“If organizations deal effectively with difference and embrace it as a positive force..., they can optimize accomplishing their goals...Equally as important (if not more so), when we value differences, we can help to fulfill the United States credo of liberty and justice for all.”²

¹ National Communication Association, “A Brief History of NCA” <https://www.natcom.org/about-nca/what-nca/nca-history/brief-history-nca>

² Allen, B. J. (2011). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity* (2nd ed.). Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.

Similarly, Mohan Dutta calls for us to interrogate how the discipline maintains U.S. American hegemony in its values, beliefs, and knowledge production:

The study and practice of communication, in the originary narratives of the field, were deeply intertwined with the US imperial interests, creating markets for US capital, and generating geostrategic spaces of support for the empire globally. The centers of knowledge production in Communication Studies, located in the metropolises of the North, therefore, are constituted by inequalities in material infrastructures of knowledge production, and in turn, perpetuate these fundamental inequalities.³

NCA members who have incited awareness and transformation in service to IDEA values exemplify situating difference as a disciplinary strength partnered with a reflexive understanding of our discipline's positionality in the global world.

Such efforts originating from within NCA include:

- Founding of our caucuses to amplify the scholarship of “historically underrepresented demographic groups”⁴ who experience institutionalized disenfranchisement in not only our discipline but also societally and globally.
- Selection of culturally responsive convention themes and programming by NCA's elected officers. For example, in 2011 Richard West's theme was VOICE and the New Orleans, Louisiana convention included an exhibit of local artists of color. Additionally, Ronald L. Jackson II positioned diversity, equity, and inclusion as the bedrocks of his campaign for 2nd Vice President, “Our Legacy, Our Relevance” convention theme, and Presidential Address “[Markers, Monuments, Metaphors, and Memes: Charting NCA's Legacies.](#)”
- Formation of several task forces by NCA officers to address key IDEA concerns and social issues. Examples encompass: Steven Beebe's “Enhancing the Internationalization of Communication” task force in 2013; Kathleen J. Turner's “Inclusivity” task force in 2014; Carole Blair's “Political Economy of Higher Education and Academic Labor” taskforce in 2015; Christie S. Beck's “Anti-Bullying” task force in 2015; and Kent A. Ono's mentorship task force in 2018.
- 2014 Centennial archives that document IDEA scholarship and activism including “[1968-1977, The Decade that Changed the Face of the NCA](#)” and *Spectra* 100 Years: Reflecting on Continuity and Change 50(1 & 2).
- 2017 formation of The Social Justice Exchange by former NCA President Stephen J. Hartnett who calls for:

NCA to chart a new course: to acknowledge the desperate needs of communities not traditionally present at the convention or represented in our scholarship; to reclaim Communication's civic callings from decades of high-theory; to link Communication scholarship to grassroots, democratic practices; to point our teaching, research, and service in the direction of justice; and to dedicate our institutional resources and personal energies to addressing community needs.⁵

For a timeline of activism and history related to IDEA, please see Appendix I.

³ Dutta, M. (2020). Whiteness, internationalization, and erasure: Decolonizing futures from the Global South, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 228-235. DOI: 10.1080/14791420.2020.1770825

⁴ National Communication Association Bylaws, 2018 https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/pages/NCA_Bylaws_2018.pdf

⁵ Hartnett, S. J. (2017). Communication's civic callings: The social justice exchange and community engagement. National Communication Association. https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/pages/SJE_Online_Social_Justice_Exchange.pdf

While strategic plans are often presented as “final” and approved to greenlight action, they are also organic documents that should be revised as goals are met, gaps appear, and new strategies emerge. Relevant in disciplinary contexts ranging from classrooms to workplaces to conventions, Brenneise importantly reminds us of the need for reflexivity and adaptability when she says:

As communication experts reconsider the implications that are associated with potentially exclusionary frameworks, concepts and practices...the definition of acceptable and desired communication broadens and changes.⁶

Echoing Brenneise and others, IDEA progress occurs on a continuum of reflection, engagement, innovation, implementation, and resistance characterized by cycles of learning, unlearning, and relearning. Elemental to this continuum is engagement, described as “as a potentially inventive conversation between communities with differences.”⁷ Attending to mutuality and power amid dialogic processes, Deetz speaks to the disciplinary and real-world benefits of co-generative engagement across our many differences:

In everyday settings dealing with everyday problems we recognize that different forms of knowing and processes of finding out are differentially distributed across groups and individuals. Scholarship traditionally has produced knowledge that reflects distinctly white, middle-class, professional, male concerns and codifiable knowledge at the expense of others and other forms of knowing. Engagement shows others as simply different, not biased, unknowing or deficient. For many scholars significant identity costs and risks come with this. Talking about rather than from our knowledge is conversationally different...only in our relationships can we be co-generative for our mutual enrichment.⁸

ULTIMATELY, THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF THE IDEA STRATEGIC PLAN IS TO ALIGN NCA, IN ITS ENTIRETY, WITH IDEA VALUES.

Of importance to note is that any measures taken to serve our most marginalized and vulnerable members will function to the benefit of all of our members. The goal of the NCA’s IDEA work is to facilitate engagement, equity, and humanizing co-existence across our many differences throughout the discipline and organization.

CONVENING THE 2021 IDEA STRATEGIC PLAN TASK FORCE

The 2021 Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access (IDEA) Strategic Planning Task Force was convened by First Vice President Roseann M. Mandziuk in February 2021. This task force reflects a continuation of the scholar-activist momentum in our organization that has incited requisite transformation (*see Appendix I*).

Task Force Composition

The task force membership consists of long time IDEA innovators, leaders, and activists across the Communication discipline.

The task force membership was compiled based on applications submitted to First Vice President Mandziuk after her circulation of a call for applications (see Appendix II for the announcement of the original task force on COMMnotes). First Vice President Mandziuk appointed Dr. Rachel Alicia Griffin (University of Utah) and Dr. Teresa Maria Linda Scholz (University of California Santa Cruz) as co-chairs of the task force.

⁶ Brenneise, A. (2020). Presuming competence: Troubling the ideal student. *Communication Education*, 69(3), 2020, p. 331. 10.1080/03634523.2020.1770307

⁷ Deetz, S. (2008). Engagement as co-generative theorizing. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 36(3), 289-297, p. 296-297.

⁸ Ibid, p. 290.

In March 2021, concerns involving representation on the task force were brought to the task force’s attention. At this time, Dr. Scholz also had to step down as co-chair due to emergent responsibilities at her home institution. To ensure the task force composition was in line with IDEA values and principles, Dr. Ashley Noel Mack (Louisiana State University) was brought on as co-chair and Dr. Fatima Zahrae Chrifi Alaoui (San Francisco State University) was added as a task force member.

Task Force Mission

Based on our charge from First Vice President Mandzuik, and further instructions from NCA Executive Directors, our mission was to produce an IDEA Strategic Plan that marshals our organization’s history, mission statement, bylaws, policies, reports, and practices to delineate IDEA mission for the organization supported by clear definitions of IDEA values. The strategic plan should also provide goals, objectives, tasks, and assessment measures in service to achieving IDEA as standard NCA organizational practice.

This task force report details much of our efforts towards this goal.



Part II: Idea Policy and Mission

NCA’S CURRENT IDEA POLICY AND VALUES

To capture what we do as the learned society with the largest membership in the field of Communication,⁹ we first looked to NCA’s Mission Statement and Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for direction.

[NCA’s Mission Statement](#)¹⁰ reads as follows:

The National Communication Association advances Communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry.

NCA serves the scholars, teachers, and practitioners who are its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests in research and teaching. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems. NCA supports inclusiveness and diversity among our faculties, within our membership, in the workplace, and in the classroom; NCA supports and promotes policies that fairly encourage this diversity and inclusion.

Originally dating back to 1995, currently [NCA’s Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)¹¹ reads:

The National Communication Association defines diversity as a fair and just commitment to equity, access, and inclusion for all persons.

The NCA values the right to free and open communication for all people and groups.

⁹ As of October 2022, the NCA has approximately 5,800 members.

¹⁰ NCA’s Mission Statement, <https://www.natcom.org/about-nca/what-nca#:~:text=Dedicated%20to%20fostering%20and%20promoting,of%20knowledge%20about%20communication%20to>

¹¹ NCA’s Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (approved 1995, revised in 2012 and 2017), https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/Public_Statement_NCA_Statement_on_Diversity_Equity_and_Inclusion_2017_0.pdf

The NCA believes that disenfranchisement of groups in our society threatens and destroys the framework of open and free human communication.

The NCA believes that communication is essential for addressing social strife and challenging barriers to access.

The NCA believes that diversity enriches the academic understanding, analysis, and use of human communication, which can be understood only to the extent that ideas from diverse spokespersons and perspectives are heard and valued.

The highest quality criticism and research of communication requires an understanding and appreciation of diversity within and across cultures.

The NCA urges communication professionals to study and understand the diversity of U.S. and global cultures in order to more fully include in our teaching and research the range of human communication.

The NCA values diversity, inclusion, and access among our faculties, within our membership, in the workplace, and in the classroom.

We support just and fair policies that promote equity.

We believe that policies on admissions, financial support of students, leadership development, equitable access, and faculty hiring and retention can be used to advance the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The NCA opposes efforts to eliminate or restrict policies or actions that are designed to foster the goal of diversity.

Notably, NCA enacts its Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in numerous ways, ranging from events held at every annual convention, to foci of particular initiatives and workshops:

AT EVERY CONVENTION, NCA OFFERS SEVERAL EVENTS THAT HAVE FACILITATE/D ITS IDEA VALUES:

- Networking opportunities such as Scholars' Office Hours and the Intercaucus Reception
- Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture
- Interest Group and National Awards
- Caucus Business Meetings and Programming
- IDEA Council Programming

NCA ALSO REGULARLY FUNDS, FEATURES, AND SUPPORTS INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO IDEA:

- "Communication Matters" podcast
- [Resource Banks on Antiracism, Discrimination, and Anti-Bullying](#)
- Teaching Consortia
- Mini-Conferences
- Microgrants
- State-of-the-Art Communication Research Publications
- Center for Communication, Community Collaboration, and Change
- NCA and Communication University of China Conference

NCA'S NEW IDEA MISSION

In alignment with ethical imaginings of our national and global futures, the promise of communication inquiry, and the role of learned societies, the NCA's new IDEA Mission should be:


To exemplify and champion Inclusive Excellence.

This requires enacting IDEA values throughout our organization and the communication discipline. Mobilizing IDEA via an Inclusive Excellence framework necessitates that it is not positioned as secondary to the mission of any given unit nor as the sole responsibility of any singular unit or person. When IDEA is the primary focus, there is an integrated commitment throughout the organization that reinforces NCA's communal commitments to communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination towards a common purpose. To achieve excellence, institutions and organizations must build and sustain IDEA infrastructure toward the end goal of creating a respectful culture of belongingness across and among difference(s).

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE?

Coined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) in 2005, Inclusive Excellence (IE) is a philosophical framework that "seeks to bring about comprehensive educational reform."¹² As a continuation of decades long efforts to institutionalize "diversity," "multiculturalism," and "intercultural competence," the most unique aspect of IE in comparison to previous frameworks is the intentional positioning of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access at the core of an institution's pursuit of excellence.

In 2019, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) succinctly captured the core ethos of IE and what is at stake in the pursuit of transforming higher education:

 The humanities and social sciences will not thrive unless they reflect the diversity of the experiences they seek to interpret.¹³

In "Shaping Our Century: Strategic Priorities for 2020–2024," the ACLS outlines "six factors accelerating change in academia"¹⁴ as key priorities including:

- Inequality across institutions of higher education, nationally and internationally
- Financial constraints at many colleges and universities
- Challenges to the status and visibility of humanistic education and scholarship inside and outside academia
- An evolving, diverse population in the United States on a planet with increased levels of international exchange
- Availability of alternative methods of exposure to humanistic knowledge outside traditional educational and cultural institutions
- Calls from various sectors to reimagine academia



Notably, all six of the factors identified as essential are interconnected with IDEA.

¹² Williams, D. A., Berger, J. B., & McClendon, S. A. (2005). Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions. Association of American Colleges and Universities, p.viii.

¹³ American Council of Learned Societies. (2019). Inclusive excellence. <https://www.acls.org/Our-Work/Inclusive-Excellence>

¹⁴ American Council of Learned Societies. (2021). Strategic Priorities for 2020-2024. <https://documents.acls.org/About/Our-Work/Strategic%20Plan/ACLS-Strategic-Plan.pdf>



IDEA VALUES DEFINED

Inclusive excellence served as the guiding framework for our work on the proposed 2022 NCA IDEA Strategic Plan. To further clarify, we drafted definitions of the four core IDEA values: inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

I

INCLUSION ensures everyone has meaningful opportunities to participate and develop a sense of belonging. An inclusive organization must proactively create an environment of openness where structural barriers are removed in service to all members being encouraged and empowered to shape the organization. All members should feel respected, valued, and supported in every aspect of organizational decision-making.

Why this definition? To achieve Inclusive Excellence, NCA needs all of its members to be able to choose to create, maintain, experience, and extend the bonds of mutual respect and norms of reciprocity in organizational contexts including but not limited to: decision-making processes, publishing, recognition, awards, and leadership. We emphasize intentional action to pursue inclusion because it makes diversity consequential, “while a truly inclusive group is necessarily diverse, a diverse group may or may not be inclusive.”¹⁵

D

DIVERSITY embraces the presence and strengths of all forms of difference. Diversity requires meaningful representation and visibility of the full intersectional range of members’ intersectional identities, ideologies, institutional affiliations, and areas of scholarly inquiry. Diversity recognizes that people and groups of people differ and that those differences are sites of creativity and innovation that enrich organizations and institutions.

Why this definition? NCA’s membership is already diverse in its intersectional identities, ideologies, institutional affiliations, and areas of scholarly inquiry. Yet, diversity as an orienting value requires self-reflexivity and intentional practices to manifest variability across all NCA units.

E

EQUITY aims for fairness of outcome by identifying and overcoming disparities. Equity involves recognizing and resolving structural disadvantages that prevent the full participation of members. This process is characterized by a commitment to equitable treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all members at every stage of education and career development.

Why this definition? Until we achieve equity, our efforts at creating a diverse and inclusive organization will remain incomplete. Different from traditional diversity work, insisting on equity necessitates organizational accountability to actualizing IDEA values and measuring the degree to which efforts have materially resolved structural disparities. Different from equality, equity factors in the effects of past injustices and the persistence of subtle and overt biases, and advocates for the diligent intervention required.

A

ACCESS ensures equivalent use of services, resources, and entry into im/material spaces, networks, learning opportunities, and interactions. An organization that prioritizes access works proactively to improve the entry and success of all members, regardless of differences in ability and experience.

Why this definition? We highlight both entry and success in our definition because access demands both; entrance alone is inadequate if members are unable to belong and thrive, and an accommodating environment remains meaningless if only a narrow range of members can gain entry. Members of myriad backgrounds and experiences have varying needs and abilities, and an organization that facilitates all members’ entry into and success within its community benefits from this rich diversity.

¹⁵ D5. (2014). What is DEI? D5: Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in philanthropy. d5coalition.org



Part III: Structural and Interpersonal Barriers to Inclusive Excellence

THIS TASKFORCE IDENTIFIED MULTIPLE STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS that impede the previously defined IDEA values from being realized for our membership both organizationally and interpersonally. These barriers include ideological barriers; restrictive scholarly norms; weaknesses within NCA's current IDEA infrastructure (or the lack thereof); existing association processes and practices; appropriation; leadership gaps; and finally, a lack of accountability measures. In this section, we discuss each barrier in turn, and we conclude by describing the consequences of these barriers for members' NCA experience(s) and for the organization's standing and operations.

IDEOLOGY

First, myriad ideological barriers interfere with NCA's prospects for achieving Inclusive Excellence and the realization of IDEA values. First, there is a lack of a shared, organization-wide understanding of and responsibility for IDEA work. Without a sustainable organizational articulation of IDEA values and responsibilities, there is too little common ground for coordinated IDEA practices. NCA leaders and members may be highly adept at speaking in support of IDEA values, but actions achieving IDEA goals too often fail to materialize in enduring ways.

Oftentimes, this is because the absence of specified definitions, commitments, and responsibilities prevents meaningful uptake and embodiment. Moreover, widespread circulation of logical fallacies concerning IDEA generates skepticism of what IDEA initiatives are and who they serve. Such fallacies include the suggestions that IDEA simply represents a "trend" that will pass, or mere rhetoric that "sounds right," but fails to produce actual change. Opposition to IDEA values may come from fears that jobs are being "taken" from historically privileged groups or "reverse" racism and sexism now place them at a disadvantage.

The prevalence of "post-IDEA" rhetoric—the problematic notion that racism, sexism, cissexism, xenophobia, ableism, and other forms of systemic discrimination are relics of a past that society has moved beyond—further inhibits progress by discouraging the essential intellectual and political work needed to remove structural barriers that foster inequities. Likewise, contemporary discourses of "wokeness" and "cancel culture" have energized opposition to IDEA work as they gain social capital within and beyond the academy. In this context, as Calvente, Calafell, and Chávez (2020) remind us, "participating in the politics of inclusion feels like survival" (p. 203) for minoritized scholars in Communication.¹⁶

The preceding ideological barriers are compounded by *restrictive scholarly norms* that reflect and reinforce the marginalization of IDEA work in the discipline and higher education writ large. Put simply, what "counts" as scholarship is determined by normative standards and traditional exclusions of IDEA-oriented intellectual traditions, theories, and methodologies. For example, the [Howard Journal of Communications](#) was originally established because work about race and racism was routinely excluded from NCA's journals. More [recently](#), NCA established *Communication and Race*, a new journal devoted to studies of race and racism from a communication perspective. These journals aim to counteract the ongoing exclusions of scholars and scholarship related to race and racism from NCA's top journals,

¹⁶ Calvente, L. B. Y., Calafell, B. M. & Chávez, K. R. (2020) Here is something you can't understand: the suffocating whiteness of communication studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17 (2), 202-209. DOI: 10.1080/14791420.2020.1770823

as well as the suspicious questions scholars of color face around issues of “objectivity.” Still today, scholars such as Chakravartty and Jackson (2020) and Ng, White, and Saha (2020) continue to observe the exclusions of race scholarship in Communication research and teaching.¹⁷

Likewise, scholarship grounded in embodied research, community engagement, performance, activism, and creative work are too often dismissed within the NCA community as subjective, less epistemologically sound, or lacking rigor.¹⁸ Additionally, the hegemony of English in publishing and citational practices creates obstacles for international scholars and work that is not centered around U.S. American, Western, cisgender-hetero-patriarchal perspectives (e.g., Calafell, 2020; Dutta, 2020; Eguchi, 2020; McCann, Mack, & Self, 2020; Mukherjee, 2020).¹⁹ Absent robust translation resources and opportunities, NCA scholarship prohibits inclusive access for international scholars and readers. Such exclusions are perpetuated by the consistently homogeneous makeup and mindset of editorial boards, convention planners, search committees, and tenure and promotion reviewers that have been educated and professionalized by scholarly norms that do not value multidimensional, intersectional perspectives on communication.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Several features of NCA’s current IDEA infrastructure (or the lack thereof) inhibit IDEA work from emerging and gaining traction within the organization. NCA is structured around a laissez-faire faculty governance model that reproduces normativity without direct intervention because the proliferation of individual units allows for some interest groups to continue persistent exclusionary and discriminatory actions. NCA has historically attempted to pursue greater inclusivity by *adding* interest groups. While this resulted in the establishment of several much-needed caucuses and divisions representing marginalized members and IDEA scholarly pursuits, it has also resulted in a lack of organization-wide accountability and a failure to challenge the implicit and explicit claims that IDEA work is somehow outside of or irrelevant to particular areas of study.

We see this dynamic most frequently appear in the tensions between divisions and caucuses. Historically, the divisions were organized around a shared scholarly pursuit, while the caucuses were created for community, support, and activism. Although this was an important step in increasing the inclusivity of NCA, it had the unintended consequence of implying that disenfranchised members are “fine” in “their” space, while failing to require divisions that marginalize or exclude IDEA work to change their climate and/or address equity gaps. Moreover, NCA’s individualistic governance structure inhibits the full potential of Inclusive Excellence because the consolidation and dispersal of power creates hierarchies among units and members, typically favoring and empowering normative bodies and fields of study. IDEA efforts are thus often siloed and uncoordinated, leading to unnecessary duplication and ineffective uses of time and resources. The lack of organizational infrastructure and formal obligations of units to advance IDEA means that progress hinges on the individual leaders while they serve.

Additional obstacles to accomplishing IDEA goals result from NCA processes and practices that remain uninformed by IDEA values. There is inadequate assessment at nearly every level of the organization. For example, interest groups do not regularly assess their governance and award processes to identify

¹⁷ Chakravartty, P., & Jackson, S. J. (2020) The disavowal of race in communication theory. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(2,) 210-219. DOI: [10.1080/14791420.2020.1771743](https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1771743); and Ng, E., White, K. C., & Saha, A. (2020). #CommunicationSoWhite: Race and power in the academy and beyond. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 13 (2), 143–151. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcaa011>

¹⁸ Scott, J.A. (2020). *Embodied Performance as Applied Research, Art, and Pedagogy*. London: Palgrave MacMillan and Scott, J.A. (2020). And then I stopped trying to fit: A tale of white Visible/Disabled Scholar’s rejection of the religion of merit. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research* 9(1).

¹⁹ Calafell, B. M. (2020). Cisnormativity, whiteness, and the fear of contagion in academia. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 7(1), 68-74; Dutta, M. (2020). Whiteness, internationalization, and erasure: Decolonizing futures from the Global South, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 228-235. DOI: [10.1080/14791420.2020.1770825](https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1770825); Eguchi, S. (2020). The politics of queerphobias: In the communication discipline. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 7(1), 60-67; McCann, B.J., Mack, A. N. & Self, R. (2020) Communication’s quest for whiteness: the racial politics of disciplinary legitimacy. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 243-252, DOI: [10.1080/14791420.2020.1770822](https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1770822); and Mukherjee, R. (2020). Of experts and tokens: Mapping a critical race archaeology of communication, *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 13, (2), 152–167. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcaa009>

and resolve equity gaps or obstacles to access. Additionally, elections in units fail to recruit and retain candidates and nominees that reflect the vast diversity of the NCA community. Because many nomination and review processes rely on word-of-mouth recruitment and the activation of personal networks, they often neglect to engage members who have been historically excluded from NCA. This is particularly the case in the relationship dynamics between interest groups, the Leadership Development Committee, and the Nominating Committee, which do not yet consistently function in service to IDEA. Programming and convention practices often remain exclusive and inaccessible because materials and events are not offered in multiple languages to reach the full audience of existing and potential NCA members. Without actively scrutinizing processes and practices at every level, NCA ends up allowing unintended exclusions and structural IDEA barriers to persist.

In NCA's existing form, multiple leadership gaps add to the barriers in the way of achieving Inclusive Excellence. Primary among these is the lack of a Director for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA Director) for the organization. This IDEA Director would assume the role and responsibilities often carried out by a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), but we suggest that the CDO title no longer captures the full range of IDEA values driving this strategic plan. Without an IDEA Director, NCA fails to adequately assess and improve organizational climate, advance IDEA initiatives, and enact accountability measures within the organization.

An IDEA Director could be charged with collaborating with the national office, NCA leadership, and NCA membership, in addition to coordinating with the existing IDEA Council and any expansion of leadership roles related to IDEA. The lack of broad theoretical experience with or understanding of IDEA values among membership slows progress throughout the organization because individuals remain inadequately equipped to initiate and lead their own efforts in their units. And without a robust leadership development and mentoring pipeline, NCA fails to foster diverse future leadership capacity. This is exacerbated by the absence of NCA-provided coordination, education and training materials, resources, and publicity in support of IDEA work.

APPROPRIATION

An additional barrier to IDEA realization across NCA is that IDEA concepts, frameworks, and rhetorics can be appropriated by institutions as a means of maintaining the status quo of hierarchal dominance. NCA and its leaders must be ever mindful that this kind of work is always vulnerable to cooptation by the very forces whose exclusionary violence created the need for this strategic plan in the first place. Frequently, predominantly white organizations lay claim to IDEA work performed by minoritized, disenfranchised, and/or marginalized individuals/groups. Doing so often erases the labor and critical insights of those whose painful experiences generate the knowledge needed to confront racism, misogyny, and other forms of oppression. Cooptation also enables organizations to absolve themselves of their many exclusionary practices by proclaiming their own cosmopolitan virtue through the work of others.²⁰ The institutionalization of such work also glosses over specific kinds of oppression in favor of often-vacuous appeals to "multiculturalism" and "diversity."²¹ Although NCA's organizational infrastructure and resources provided important means for creating this strategic plan and seeking its endorsement, rank-and-file activists within the organization must be diligent in ensuring that leadership on such matters continues to come from the grassroots, or from the margins to the center.

In addition to cooptation, inclusion frameworks have proven insufficient and at times harmful. Ahmed pointed out that diversity and inclusion initiatives in higher education are often designed to undermine their articulated goal by seeking to include or diversify populations into an already existing system without challenging business as usual.²² Diversity work is a phenomenological practice, Ahmed argues, whereby in doing the work to transform institutions (by both not quite inhabiting its norms *and* by working to be

²⁰ Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

²¹ Jared Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

²² Ahmed, *On Being Included*.

more inclusive) we learn about institutions as formations. Ahmed writes that “each new strategy or tactic of getting through the wall generates knowledge of what does or does not get across.”²³ It is for these reasons that IDEA work should be understood as ongoing—it never “arrives” or ceases or finishes. It is through doing the work and coming up against structures in our efforts that new horizons are constantly established. This shifting horizon makes institutionalize IDEA work necessary, but fraught. By gaining insights into these dynamics of appropriation, NCA can work to adopt an openness to change and adaption in response to members’ evolving conceptions and experiences of IDEA.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Finally, a lack of measurable accountability jeopardizes the incremental progress that has been made in support of IDEA goals. Within NCA, there are too few measures that require leaders, units, and members to document and assess their professional development and accomplishments related to IDEA. As we have seen in the preceding discussion, absent specific accountability measures, the organization fails to recognize and resolve the various structural and interpersonal barriers that continue to hinder IDEA. NCA does not yet model best practices for IDEA policy and accountability, and therefore, these same structural barriers are replicated outside of NCA via routine processes like graduate admissions, job calls, search committees, and promotion and tenure review. NCA does not provide assessment or information about how member departments adhere to stated IDEA principles or fail to do so. As such, member departments are not held accountable in any formal or consistent way for violating NCA’s commitments to IDEA values.

The structural barriers outlined above continue to interfere with NCA’s ability to become an exemplar of Inclusive Excellence among learned societies. Leaving these barriers unaddressed threatens the integrity and reputation of the organization, as well as its ability to function ethically and in accordance with its stated IDEA commitments. The consequences of these structural barriers also affect historically marginalized members’ everyday experiences within NCA by resulting in harmful interpersonal practices that contribute to a culture of incivility and hostility, such as the following:

GLOSSARY OF IDEA BARRIERS

BARRIER	DEFINITION ²⁴
IMPLICIT BIAS	Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one’s tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.
MICROAGGRESSIONS	Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation and religious slights and insults to the target person or group.
SILENCING	The conscious or unconscious processes by which the voice or participation of particular social identities is excluded or inhibited.
SPOTLIGHTING	The practice of inequitably calling attention to particular social groups in language, while leaving others as the invisible, de facto norm.
STEREOTYPE THREAT	A situational predicament in which people are, or feel themselves, to be at risk of confirming a stereotype about their social group.
TOKENISM	Hiring or seeking to have representation such as a few women and/or racial or ethnic minority persons so as to appear inclusive while remaining mono-cultural.

²³ Ahmed, 175.

²⁴ University of Pittsburgh. [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary](#)

To achieve Inclusive Excellence, NCA has an obligation to address these discriminatory interpersonal practices, but it cannot do so by focusing on individual behavior alone. Instead, we urge the organization to recognize the relationship between the macro-structural forces we have explored in this section and the interpersonal practices that extend their harms into the everyday experiences and interactions of members. To accomplish this, NCA must invest in communicating its commitment to and promoting key IDEA practices.

GLOSSARY OF IDEA PRACTICES	
PRACTICE	DEFINITION ²⁵
ANTIRACISM	Being antiracist results from a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do. ... When we choose to be antiracist, we become actively conscious about race and racism and take actions to end racial inequities in our daily lives. ²⁶
JUSTICE	The establishment or determination of rights according to rules of law and standards of equity; the process or result of using laws to fairly judge crimes and criminality.
SOCIAL JUSTICE	A broad term that connotes the practice of allyship and coalition work in order to promote equality, equity, respect, and the assurance of rights within and between communities and social groups. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and society.

Part IV: Strategic Planning Process

The structural and interpersonal barriers we identified have kept IDEA work at the margins of our discipline for too long. No matter what disciplinary subfield(s) members identify with or what type(s) of research they carry out, the embodiment and enactment of IDEA must be fundamental to all communication scholarship. Professional respect, humanization, and equity are not merely or only “activist” issues, nor should they be relegated to isolated corners of the discipline. IDEA work must permeate the scholarship, teaching, service, and outreach of NCA, and we turn next to outlining specific steps for achieving key IDEA goals.

Utilizing Inclusive Excellence as a guiding framework and the IDEA values outlined in Part II of this report as grounding principles, the task force believes the NCA can work toward actualizing IDEA values throughout the organization through changes in policies and practices/norms that render the organization more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible. Such alterations should be responsive to the structural and interpersonal barriers outlined in Part III of this report, and to emergent barriers identified through new processes of data collection about NCA members called for in the strategic plan. We envision the implementation of this strategic plan on a five-year timeline from 2022–2026.

²⁵ University of Pittsburgh. [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary](#)

²⁶ National Museum of African American History & Culture. [Being Antiracist](#).

For the NCA to fully realize the IDEA Mission of Inclusive Excellence it must:

- Recognize that respect and professional ideals of “niceness” do not constitute belongingness, transformation, or activism.
- Decenter organizational silos that fuel tokenism and short-term change.
- Embed IDEA engagement, practices, and accountability across all units.
- Shift from a reactive to a proactive stance on identifying and eliminating structural exclusion and its subsequent harms.
- Practice transparency by exposing issues and harms that run counter to the NCA’s IDEA values and new IDEA mission to exemplify and champion Inclusive Excellence.
- Nourish a climate in which members whose research, teaching, service, and overall presence is characterized by historical disenfranchisement not only endure and survive, but also thrive and flourish.
- Build and reinforce mechanisms that prioritize agency, access, and belonging for all members.
- Create mechanisms of open exchange that allow NCA to grow and respond to the needs of historically marginalized members.

After five years, potential indicators of the success of the strategic plan include:

- IDEA values are firmly anchored and normalized into organizational structure through policy, practices, and processes of accountability.
- Members and non-members from historically marginalized populations consistently see and hear ourselves reflected in organizational units, initiatives, and communications from the NCA.
- NCA earns a reputation as a place for everybody, as opposed to a place for some and/or the “first, few, only” representatives of marginalized constituencies.
- International communities experience a sense of organization-wide belonging as well as NCA initiating global engagement and establishing long-term global partnerships.
- NCA becomes a role model for organizational courage and structural transformation regarding IDEA more than an organization in which members are consistently organizing/petitioning/struggling to rectify structural exclusion.
- NCA operates from a default position of transparency wherein organizational action and follow-through are not a behind-the-scenes scramble. Proactive processes would largely replace reactive processes.
- NCA deploys an omnipresent IDEA lens informed by research that stays consistent regardless of who is elected to office, serving in a position, hired, etc. A focus on IDEA would be a feature of every leadership team via infrastructure built into the officer rotation, executive committee, and national office. Metaphorically, IDEA would be part of NCA’s operational DNA.

NARRATIVE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The task force approached this strategic planning process with the goal of building IDEA infrastructure into NCA that will lead to the transformation of the organization and bring it in line with espoused IDEA values.

The task force, while convened by a member of the NCA executive leadership, saw this strategic plan as for the membership, by the membership. Such a plan has been requested by our caucuses (which have historically served to represent the members of our organization who are disenfranchised in society and within the organization), the IDEA council, and members of the LA.

The task force is made up of 13 individuals who have been leaders in NCA and performing diversity work

within and outside of the organization for decades, some of us for more than 40 years. Every member of the task force is from a historically marginalized positionality in the context of U.S. social relations (the primary context in which NCA exists). We know deeply the pain and harm of structural oppression and how it manifests in NCA, but also at our home institutions and in our lived experience.

In preparation for writing the plan, the task force researched what strategic plans are, read more than 50 different organizational IDEA plans, and investigated best practices for IDEA work across learned societies. We are also all members of NCA's caucuses, many of us multiple of them. Our knowledge as leaders in NCA infrastructure, individuals with embodied knowledge of historical marginalization at various intersections, and members of the caucuses provides us with unique insight into why NCA has functioned to be historically exclusionary, and how we might challenge it to transform. We chose to approach this plan with a desire to address multiple sites of marginality as they intersect, not just race, gender, and sexuality as single axes. Our focus was structural transformation in perpetuity.

The strategic plan we produced calls for the development and actualization of best practices based upon research and current standards of excellence in higher education. Best practices are "procedure(s) that have been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that [are] established or proposed as standard suitable for widespread adoption."²⁷ The plan also calls on each NCA unit to leverage expertise and leadership to design and implement area-specific IDEA infrastructure.²⁸

The strategic plan we present is not, however, perfect, and it will not solve or eradicate structural oppression. We are volunteers who have given hundreds of hours of our time to developing this plan and responding to myriad reviewers. We are also humans who make mistakes and likely have omitted something. We look forward to the many voices of the LA and our membership helping to address inevitable gaps in the plan. We invite and yearn for its revision and growth as a living document.

The process for bringing this strategic plan forward is multi-faceted because a task force has never presented a strategic plan they developed to be endorsed by LA before. In many ways, the process was developed as we progressed. Normal task forces only work for one year, we are now wrapping up our second year in service. We also faced difficulties as the national office went through major transitions while we were working.

An original draft of the strategic plan was developed between February 2021 and November 2021. In that time, the NCA National Office and Executive Committee offered feedback and circulated the draft to the IDEA council for review. In November 2021, the draft was conditionally endorsed by the EC (pending a review by legal and the new Executive Director). The task force presented the basic structure and some takeaways to the LA at the national convention in Seattle. We also held an open forum for NCA members to attend to learn about the plan, our process, and provide any insight. The task force worked to respond to concerns and comments brought up throughout these various reviews. In January 2022, we submitted a revised plan to the EC and they voted in February 2022 to endorse it in its entirety. At this time, the EC also voted to utilize the five goals outlined in the plan in the organization's overarching strategic plan that is currently in development. We agreed, if the labor and work produced by the task force (a group of historically disenfranchised and/or marginalized members/persons) was recognized and preserved.

BACKGROUND ON ANONYMOUS REVIEW PROCESS

In preparation for bringing the IDEA strategic plan forward for what will hopefully be its penultimate endorsement vote at the LA in November 2022 at convention, the task force worked closely in collaboration with the National Office and Executive Director Dr. Shari Miles-Cohen. We were instructed in June 2022 that NCA would like one additional round of reviews/revisions before we took the plan forward to LA for endorsement. This time, it was suggested that we do what is akin to an "anonymous peer

²⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Best Practice" <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/best%20practice>

²⁸ In this document and the proposed 2022 IDEA Strategic Plan the term "unit" is used in reference to all of NCA's interest groups, councils, executive committee, officers, task forces, national office employees, and subsidiaries.

review” of the document—sending it to communication scholars and organizational experts for review. The National Office coordinated this process. We were originally told we would get these reviews in July and have a month to finish the review. However, we did not receive the reviews until late September.

On September 22, 2022, the task force received anonymous reviewer feedback from the NCA National Office compiled into an excel file. The office asked that the task force respond to the grid so that the revisions could be transparent to the LA. The task force submitted the revised documents, a grid responding to reviewer’s comments, and a letter addressing the revisions on October 12th.

The review response letter and a grid of reviewer comments/task force responses can be found in Appendix V.



Acknowledgements

THE TASK FORCE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ADDITIONAL LABOR OF FOUR OF OUR MEMBERS IN RESPONDING TO REVIEWS

Shinsuke Eguchi
Rachel Alicia Griffin
Melanie Loehwing
Ashley Mack

**THE TASK FORCE IS ALSO THANKFUL TO THE ANONYMOUS REVIEWERS FOR THEIR CARE, LABOR,
AND COMMITMENT TO IDEA WORK.** This revision process helped to greatly improve the proposed strategic plan. While their anonymity was maintained during the review process, NCA provided us their names in the aftermath to offer our sincerest thanks for their labor.

ANONYMOUS REVIEWERS *(listed in alphabetical order)*

Vinita Agarwal
Bryant Alexander
Arredondo Advisory Group
Mohan Dutta
Lisa Flores
Shiv Ganesh
Tina Harris
Roseann Mandziuk
David McMahan
Kimberly Moffitt
Charles Morris
David Oh
Kristina Scharp
Stacey Sowards
Myra Washington

**FOR CONCEPTUALIZING AND ORGANIZING THE REVIEW PROCESS,
WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER OUR SINCEREST THANKS TO**

Dr. Shari Miles-Cohen

ALSO INTEGRAL TO THIS PROCESS

Chanda Ijames
Justin Danowski

We are proud to do this work together!



Appendix I: A Timeline of Key Idea Moments in NCA's History

THE STRATEGIC PLAN PRODUCED FROM THE LABOR OF THIS TASK FORCE reflects a continuation of our discipline's journey toward establishing inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) as paramount to the National Communication Association's organizational structure and culture. To honor the labor of named and unnamed leaders and situate this SP within our discipline's rich IDEA history, we offer a timeline that aims to be representative across the discipline, rather than definitive or exhaustive.

While a comprehensive archive of IDEA activism, service, teaching, and research in the communication discipline is beyond the scope of any singular task force report, the purpose of the cursory attempt at a timeline of IDEA activism is to make clear how long such efforts have been at work in and around NCA. In Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, we call for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive archive of NCA IDEA labor and activism, including but not limited to scholar-activist, research, teaching, and service endeavors.

- 1932** Henrietta Prentiss is the first woman elected Speech Communication Association (SCA) President.²⁹
- 1968** Jack L. Daniel chairs the ad hoc Committee on Social Relevance. This committee asked the discipline, "Are we a field aimed only at the perpetuation of white, middle class standards and concepts of spoken discourse?" via *A Manifesto to the Speech Profession*.³⁰ Other members of the original committee included: John C. Condon Jr., Frank E. X. Dance, Franklyn Haiman, Thomas Hopkins, Charles G. Hurst Jr., Rosa Lee Nash, Lyndrey A. Niles, Thomas Pace, Robley Rhine, Donald H. Smith, and Frederick Williams.
- 1969** Molefi Kete Asante, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Melbourne Cummings, Jack Daniel, Lucia Hawthorne, Lyndrey A. Niles, Dorothy J. Pennington, and Orlando Taylor found the SCA Black Caucus under the umbrella of the Commission on the Profession and Social Problems.
- 1970** A group of women gather in a stairwell at the annual meeting of SCA in New Orleans to discuss the discrimination against women throughout SCA. This meeting is considered by many to be the first meeting of the Women's Caucus.

²⁹ For clarity, please note that the Speech Communication Association (SCA) was renamed the National Communication Association in 1998.

³⁰ Jackson, R. L., & Givens, S. M. B. (2006). *Black pioneers in communication research*. Sage Publications, p. 112.

- 1971** The Taskforce on the Committee on the Status of Women in SCA is established and chaired by Carole Taylor.
- 1972** The Women’s Caucus is formally recognized by SCA with 29 members as an ad hoc committee chaired by Bonnie Ritter Patton.
- 1973** An Affirmative Action questionnaire is sent to all SCA members.
- 1974** The Black Caucus is formally recognized as an ad hoc committee by SCA and co-chaired by Dorthy L. Pennington and Michael Edwards.
- 1977** The Legislative Council acts to cancel four future conventions scheduled in states that had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.³¹
- 1977** *Women’s Studies in Communication* journal is founded by the Organization for Research on Women and Communication.
- 1980** Anita Taylor elected SCA President via a write-in campaign.
- 1980s** Affirmative Action Committee established and renamed the Affirmative Action & Intercaucus Committee in 1994.
- 1981** The Legislative Council adopts the first iteration of the NCA Affirmative Action Statement. This policy was revised in 1989, 1995, and 2012.
- 1988** The Caucus on Gay and Lesbian Concerns founded and chaired by R. Jeffrey Ringer.
- 1988-1990** The SCA Taskforce on Affirmative Action submits a “Common Points of Agreement” document that identifies “eleven topics...considered relevant by the caucuses.” Collectively, the 11 topics call for SCA “to determine the degree to which” the association’s leadership and governance utilize the SCA Affirmative Action Statement to foster the participation of “women and minorities” as necessitated by the Legislative Council’s 1981 adoption.
- 1990** La Raza Caucus founded and chaired by Joseph M. Ferri.
- 1992** Asian/Pacific American Caucus founded and chaired by Gordon W. Nakagawa.
- 1995** *Changing the Players and the Game: A Personal Account of the Speech Communication Association Black Caucus Origins* is edited by Jack L. Daniel and published by SCA.
- 1995** SCA passes its first “Policy on Diversity” in the discipline, which became the first iteration of NCA’s 2018 Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- 1996** Disability Issues Caucus founded and chaired by James Ferris.
- 1996** Diversity March in San Diego, California.
- 1996** The Caucus on Gay and Lesbian Concerns creates the Randy Majors Award. James W. Cheseboro is the inaugural award winner.
- 1997** James Cheseboro elected first openly LGBTQ President of SCA.
- 1999** Orlando Taylor elected first Black President of NCA.
- 2003** *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* journal founded by scholars including Douglas Thomas, E. Ann Chisholm, Kent Ono, Carole Blair, Barbara Biesecker, and Raymie McKerrow.³²
- 2004** The Caucus on Gay and Lesbian Concerns creates the Lambda Award and presents the inaugural award to Hayworth Press.
- 2005** The Caucus on Gay and Lesbian Concerns renamed to Caucus on LGBTQ Concerns.

³¹ The 1978 convention was moved from Chicago, Illinois to Minneapolis, Minnesota. The 1979 convention was moved from New Orleans, Louisiana to San Antonio, Texas.

³² Ono, K. (2020). The future of *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(1), 56-61

- 2008** The UNConvention is organized in San Diego, California, as an alternative for those unwilling to cross an active picket line of local workers and LGBTQIA+ activists protesting low wages and poor working conditions at the Manchester Hyatt, and anti- LGBTQIA+ donations made by the hotel owner. The UNConvention was organized by Angela Aguayo, Rob Asen, Adria Battaglia, Dan Brouwer, Karma R. Chávez, Dana Cloud, Katie Feyh, Michelle Hammers, Casey Kelly, Kristen Hoerl, Ashley Mack, Matt May, Sara Mckinnon, Bryan McCann, Chuck Morris, Tiara Na’puti, and Amy Young.
- 2010** Chuck Morris, Dan Brouwer, and Rob Asen established the annual Queer NoHost celebration to commemorate the UNConvention.
- 2012** The Affirmative Action and Intercaucus Committee revises previous iterations of the NCA Affirmative Action Statement into the NCA Policy on Affirmative Action and Discrimination.
- 2014** The first Intercaucus Reception is held at the annual convention; this event was created by Shawn D. Long.
- 2014** Shawn D. Long (chair of the AAIC), Justin Boren, and Rachel Alicia Griffin serve as key agitators against a bylaw change proposed by NCA Leadership. The change would have diluted the work of the Affirmative Action and Intercaucus Committee. The result of their advocacy was a new structure, which reformed and elevated the Affirmative Action and Intercaucus Committee to the Diversity Council, making the council chair a member of the Executive Committee
- 2016** *Spectra* Realizing the Promise of Diversity Volume 52(1) is published.
- 2017** The NCA Diversity Council is officially seated, composed of representatives from each caucus recognized by NCA. Justin Boren serves as the inaugural chairperson and a member of the Executive Committee.
- 2017** Anti-harassment policy created by the Diversity Council and approved by the Executive Committee, which included a “human resource specialist” hosted onsite for the first time at the 2018 convention to facilitate reporting.
- 2017** Trans activists at NCA advocate for NCA accountability to trans issues, including better infrastructure for recognizing pronouns and access to gender neutral bathrooms at convention.
- 2017** Kent A. Ono elected first APAC 2nd Vice President of NCA.
- 2018** Paula Chakravartty, Rachel Kuo, Victoria Grubbs, and Charlton McIlwain publish the “#CommunicationSoWhite” in the International Communication Association’s *Journal of Communication* Volume 68. This heuristic essay inspires several iterations.
- 2018** “Lack of Diversity in NCA’s Journal Editorships and Editorial Boards” petition is circulated and submitted to NCA by Bernadette Marie Calafell, Karma Chávez, and Cypress Reign. It received 124 Signatures.
- 2019** An open letter and petition addressing institutionalized discrimination against historically marginalized members at NCA, and specifically the Distinguished Scholars Award, is drafted and circulated online by Walid Afifi, Bernadette Marie Calafell, Karma Chávez, Lisa Corrigan, Fernando Delgado, Mohan Dutta, Ragan Fox, Bryan McCann, Ersula Ore, Srividya Ramasubramian, Armond Towns, and Anjali Vats. Communication Scholars for Transformation Facebook page established by the group to circulate the petition.
- 2019** NCA Taskforce on Inclusivity established and co-chaired by Brenda J. Allen and Raymie E. McKerrow.
- 2019** NCA Legislative Assembly adopts a resolution “Condemning White Supremacy in Political Discourse” authored by David C. Oh, Bryan McCann, and Kay Beckermann.

- 2020** NCA revises procedure for appointing Distinguished Scholars. Instead of the scholars being chosen by the Distinguished Scholars, an external committee now decides awardees. The first committee was chaired by Jimmie Manning, and Mark McPhail and Tina M. Harris served as committee members.
- 2020** Diversity Council is renamed Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Council.
- 2020** Indigenous Caucus founded following LaRoyce Batchelor’s proposal to the Legislative Assembly.
- 2021** Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access Strategic Planning Taskforce was convened in February by NCA First Vice President Roseann M. Mandziuk. The first draft of NCA’s IDEA Strategic Plan is submitted to the Executive Committee for review in August 2021 and a second revised draft is submitted to the Executive Committee for review in November 2021.
- 2021** Mental Health & Communication Taskforce is convened in May by NCA President David McMahan.
- 2021** Inaugural year for 3 NCA IDEA awards in the areas of engagement, scholarship, and program. These awards were advocated for by Jeanetta Sims and later proposed by Immediate Past NCA President Star A. Muir in the immediate aftermath of the Distinguished Scholars Award controversy.
- 2021** South West Asian/North African, including the Middle East, (SWANA) Caucus is founded.
- 2021** Caribbean Caucus is founded.
- 2021** Walid Afifi elected first SWANA 2nd Vice President of NCA.
- 2021** *Communication and Race* established as a journal of the National Communication Association, with Armond Towns serving as its founding editor.
- 2021** Dr. Shari Miles-Cohen hired as the first Black woman to be Executive Director of NCA.
- 2022** Marnel Niles Goins elected first Black woman 2nd Vice President of NCA.



Appendix II: Original Announcement of Task Force

**POSTED ON COMMNOTES
FEBRUARY 2, 2021, NUMBER 254**

NCA IDEA Strategic Plan Task Force Named
Roseann M. Mandziuk, rm07@txstate.edu

NCA is committed to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access and seeks to address how our association can be responsive and transformative in this historical juncture when questions of justice and representation dominate both our national conversations as well as our professional and institutional inquires and actions. The members of the NCA IDEA Strategic Plan Task Force were appointed on

February 1, 2020 with the charge to produce an IDEA Strategic Plan to be submitted to NCA's Executive Committee by February 1, 2022.

- Rachel A. Griffin, University of Utah, Co-Chair
- Teresa Maria Linda Scholz, University of California Santa Cruz, Co-Chair
- Justin P. Boren, Santa Clara University
- Shinsuke Eguchi, University of New Mexico
- Marnel Niles Goins, Marymount University
- Ronald L. Jackson, II, University of Cincinnati
- Michael Lechuga, University of New Mexico
- Melanie Loehwing, Mississippi State University
- Thomas K. Nakayama, Northeastern University
- Julie-Ann Scott, University of North Carolina Wilmington

Throughout the coming year the collaborative work to create the NCA IDEA Strategic Plan will take place using video conferencing and other electronic means of communication. Additionally, the Task Force will host a discussion forum at the 107th NCA Convention in Seattle in November 2021 to gather member input and to share their work to that point. Pending approval by the NCA Executive Committee in February 2022, the NCA IDEA Strategic Plan would be presented during our 108th Annual Convention in 2022 to the Legislative Assembly for approval, after which the Task Force will be disbanded.

We welcome your questions and suggestions as we undertake this significant initiative for NCA. Please direct your feedback to Roseann Mandziuk, NCA First Vice President, at rm07@txstate.edu, or to the Task Force Co Chairs, Rachel.a.griffin@utah.edu; tscholz@ucsc.edu.



Appendix III: Relevant Policy Statements

RESOLUTION CONDEMNING WHITE SUPREMACY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Adopted by the Legislative Assembly, 2019, for full text including citations [click here](#).

Endorsed by Activism & Social Justice Division, African American Communication & Culture Division, American Studies Division, Asian/Pacific American Caucus, Asian/Pacific American Communication Studies Division, Caucus on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns, Critical and Cultural Studies Division, Freedom of Expression Division, International & Intercultural Communication Division, La Raza Caucus & Latino/Latina Communication Studies Division, Rhetorical & Communication Theory Division

Whereas the National Communication Association’s Credo for Ethical Communication states, “We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred,”

Whereas the NCA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion states, “The NCA opposes efforts to eliminate or restrict policies or actions that are designed to foster the goal of diversity,”

Whereas white supremacist and/or white nationalist organizations oppress communities of color and, in some cases, support and enable the violent erasure of historically underrepresented, under-resourced, and/or vulnerable communities,

Whereas white supremacist and/or white nationalist organizations, as well as adherents to their ideologies, have used violence to pursue their ends,

Whereas organizations espousing discourse in support of and/or pursuing white supremacist and/or white nationalist objectives undermine the principles enshrined in the Credo for Ethical Communication and the Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,

Whereas such organizations are inconsistent with the principles of a thriving democratic culture,

Whereas, in the past several years, white supremacist and/or white nationalist groups have grown in size and become bolder in their public actions,

Whereas such groups perform a significant amount of their activity on college and university campuses,

Whereas the National Communication Association is a learned society of primarily academic professionals and students who work and learn on such campuses and, as such, are vulnerable to such activity,

Whereas the discourse and actions of white supremacist and/or white nationalist groups target vulnerable communities represented within the membership of NCA,

Whereas the public denunciation of hate speech and other such forms of communication is consistent with the NCA’s commitment to “freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent,”

Therefore be it resolved that the NCA condemns in the strongest possible terms white supremacist discourse by political leaders that argues for white people’s biological and/or cultural superiority and/or the biological and/or cultural inferiority of people of color and white nationalist discourse that argues for the physical and cultural segregation of people by race.



Appendix IV: Suggested Revision of “NCA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion”

BACKGROUND

Objective 3.1 of the proposed 2022 IDEA Strategic plan calls for a revision of the 2018 NCA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to bring the statement in line with the language and definitions of IDEA put forth in the strategic plan.

Below is a drafted revision. We kept a majority of the original statement, added some clarity of language, restructured it, and added the definitions of the 4 core values investigated and recommended by the task force: inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

CURRENT “NCA STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION”

(Approved by the SCA Legislative Council in 1995; revised by Legislative Assembly in 2012; Approved by the Legislative Assembly in 2017, Modified by the Diversity Council and Approved by the Legislative Assembly in 2018)

The National Communication Association defines diversity as a fair and just commitment to equity, access, and inclusion for all persons.

The NCA values the right to free and open communication for all people and groups.

The NCA believes that disenfranchisement of groups in our society threatens and destroys the framework of open and free human communication.

The NCA believes that communication is essential for addressing social strife and challenging barriers to access.

The NCA believes that diversity enriches the academic understanding, analysis and use of human communication, which can be understood only to the extent that ideas from diverse spokespersons and perspectives are heard and valued. The highest quality criticism and research of communication requires an understanding and appreciation of diversity within and across cultures.

The NCA urges communication professionals to study and understand the diversity of U.S. and global cultures in order to more fully include in our teaching and research the range of human communication.

The NCA values diversity, inclusion, and access among our faculties, within our membership, in the workplace, and in the classroom. We support just and fair policies that fairly encourage promote equity. We believe that policies on admissions, financial support of students, leadership development, equitable access, and faculty hiring and retention can be used to advance the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The NCA opposes efforts to eliminate or restrict policies or actions that are designed to foster the goal of diversity.

SUGGESTED REVISION OF STATEMENT

NCA STATEMENT ON INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

The National Communication Association values the right to free and open communication for all people and groups.

The NCA believes that disenfranchisement of groups in our society threatens and destroys the framework of open and free human communication.

The NCA believes that communication is essential for addressing social strife and challenging barriers to access.

The NCA believes that diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (IDEA) are core values within the Communication discipline and our organization. The NCA defines these core values as follows:

- **DIVERSITY embraces the presence and strengths of all forms of difference.** Diversity refers to the meaningful representation and visibility of a full range of intersectional identities, ideologies, institutional affiliations, and areas of scholarly inquiry across the communication discipline in the U.S. and globally. Valuing diversity within our organization and discipline includes recognizing that people and groups of people differ and that those differences are sites of creativity and innovation that enrich the organization, our research, and the discipline.
- **EQUITY aims for fairness of outcome by identifying and overcoming disparities.** Seeking equity within the organization involves recognizing and resolving structural disadvantages that prevent the full participation of members of the organization and wider discipline. Valuing equity is characterized by a commitment to fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all members at every stage of education and career development. Different from equality, equity factors in the effects of past

injustices, the realities of structural inequalities, and the persistence of subtle and overt biases. Diligent inquiry and measuring the degree to which efforts have materially resolved structural disparities is required.

- **INCLUSION** ensures everyone has meaningful opportunities to participate and develop a sense of belonging within the organization. An inclusive organization must proactively create an environment of openness where structural barriers are removed and all members are empowered to participate and shape the organization. All members feel respected, valued, and supported in every aspect of organizational decision-making and culture. While a truly inclusive group is necessarily diverse, a diverse group may not necessarily be inclusive.
- **ACCESS** ensures equivalent use of services, resources, and entry into material and immaterial spaces, networks, learning opportunities, and interactions. An organization that prioritizes access as a core value works proactively to improve the entry and success of all members, regardless of differences in ability and experience. Entrance alone is inadequate if members are unable to belong and thrive, and an accommodating environment remains meaningless if only a narrow range of members can gain meaningful entry.

Therefore, the NCA urges communication professionals to study and understand the diversity of U.S. and global cultures in order to more fully represent the depth and range of human communication in our research, teaching, and praxis.

The NCA supports just and fair policies and actions that seek to realize IDEA values in our organizational structure and culture, but also in the workplace and classroom. Innovative policies that address inclusion, diversity, equity and access in admissions, financial support of students, leadership development, equitable access, and faculty hiring and retention are needed to advance the discipline.

The NCA opposes efforts to eliminate or restrict policies or actions that are designed to foster the values and goals of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

NCA should take a leadership role in advocating for larger structural change guided by IDEA values that transforms the future of communication education and research.

LINE-BY-LINE BREAKDOWN OF SUGGESTED REVISIONS

Original 2018 version is in red, and suggested deletions are struck.

Additions are in green

~~NCA STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION~~

NCA STATEMENT ON INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

~~The National Communication Association defines diversity as a fair and just commitment to equity, access, and inclusion for all persons.~~

~~The NCA values the right to free and open communication for all people and groups.~~

~~The NCA believes that disenfranchisement of groups in our society threatens and destroys the framework of open and free human communication.~~

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U.S. and globally. Valuing diversity within our organization and discipline includes recognizing that people and groups of people differ and that those differences are sites of creativity and innovation that enrich the organization, our research, and the discipline.

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~~The NCA believes that diversity enriches the academic understanding, analysis and use of human communication, which can be understood only to the extent that ideas from diverse spokespersons and perspectives are heard and valued. The highest quality criticism and research of communication requires an understanding and appreciation of diversity within and across cultures.~~

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~~The NCA values diversity, inclusion, and access among our faculties, within our membership, in the workplace, and in the classroom. We supports just and fair policies and actions that fairly encourage promote equity. seek to realize IDEA values in our organizational structure and culture, but also in the workplace and classroom. We believe that Innovative policies on that address inclusion, diversity, equity and access in admissions, financial support of students, leadership development, equitable access, and faculty hiring and retention are needed to advance the discipline. can be used to advance the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.~~

The NCA opposes efforts to eliminate or restrict policies or actions that are designed to foster the values and goals of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

NCA should take a leadership role in advocating for larger structural change guided by IDEA values that transforms the future of communication education and research.



Appendix V: Task Force Response to Anonymous Reviewers

LETTER IN RESPONSE TO ANONYMOUS REVIEWS

October 2022

Dear NCA National Office, Executive Committee (EC), and Legislative Assembly (LA):

We, the 2021 IDEA Strategic Plan Task Force, write this letter to contextualize and explain the revisions and process that lead to the creation of what will be the final IDEA Strategic Plan for the National Communication Association (NCA), submitted for dialogue, revision, and endorsement vote with and by the LA in November 2022.

Throughout this process, some of us have expressed real skepticism at the possibility of the organization's ability to change. Others' have expressed concern—as did several reviewers—that the organization will not address IDEA adequately but simply appropriate the language of IDEA to maintain the status quo. While these fears are valid based on historical behavior, we also cannot turn away from trying to make the organization better in the present. The IDEA strategic plan, we do believe, will lay a foundation for long-lasting transformation of the organization. We aim for it to clearly articulate a framework for guiding IDEA work, definitions of IDEA values, and accountability structures that enable IDEA work to flourish across the organization.

We see our duty as one of stewardship not ownership. We were charged with producing an IDEA strategic plan for NCA and bringing it through the organizational structure so that it could be debated, negotiated, and hopefully endorsed by the LA. With the submission of this letter and final draft, the 2021 IDEA Strategic Planning Task Force now passes the stewardship of this document off to the Legislative Assembly—the governing body of our organization. We have done our best to steward this process forward with humility, hope, and a hunger for something better.

In what remains of this letter, we review some of the major changes made following this final round of revisions.

SPLITTING THE DOCUMENT

The draft of the IDEA SP that was sent out for review in Summer 2022 was unique in that it served as both a task force report and a draft of the proposed strategic plan. Historically, NCA task force reports are presented to the Executive Committee and then presented to LA in some form. They are not voted on or approved by LA. Additionally, NCA has lacked a consistent strategic planning process in the past. However, when they have developed strategic plans, they have been created by the NCA Executive Director or NCA staff and brought to LA for endorsement.

Based on reviewer and NCA staff suggestions, the task force decided to separate the document into two parts. Parts 1-6 of the original document sent to reviewers was shifted into a separate "Task Force Report." This document accounts for our charge, process, labor, and philosophy used in producing the final strategic plan presented to LA. Parts 7-8 became what is now the bulk of the proposed 2022 NCA IDEA strategic plan. The task force added new introductory language to make clear the proposed NCA IDEA mission and the definitions of IDEA values that guide the plan and proposed NCA IDEA infrastructure.

We made the choice to separate the documents for three reasons. First, it was more consistent with the historical precedent for passing strategic plans within the organization. Second, reviewer suggestions

strongly encouraged simplification and clarity of the plan before passage. Finally, splitting the task force report from the strategic plan allows for a more manageable document for the LA to review, debate, adjust, and vote on at convention. Task force reports are not approved or voted on by LA, they are presented. The IDEA Strategic Plan, on the other hand, can be debated, amended, and voted on by LA. We believe that the two documents are both stronger because of this adjustment. This change does not reduce the importance of the task force report—as it gives context, policy justification, and transparency of process to the strategic planning process.

LIST OF MAJOR REVISIONS

Reorganization

- Based on reviewer feedback, we drastically altered our approach to the strategic plan.
- Parts 1-6 of the Strategic plan sent to reviewers was shifted into a separate “Task Force Report.”
- Parts 7-8 became the final strategic plan. We added new language that introduces the purpose and mission of the plan and defines the central IDEA values that guide the plan.

Clarification and Simplification

- Removed redundant or repetitive language.
- Turned specified tasks into “tasks.”
- Turned “suggestions and considerations” into “suggestions.”
- Combined objective 1.1 and 1.2.
- Combined objective 1.3 into Objective 4 for clarity and to reduce redundancy.
- Added information that contextualizes the task force compilation, and charge.

Addressing exclusions or problematic language

- Added omissions on the IDEA timeline where necessary and moved the timeline to an Appendix of the Task Force Report.
- Removed “fellows” terms from IDEA fellows and replaced with “leaders.”
- Replace marginalized with disenfranchised throughout to be more accurate and reflect review suggestions.
- Added a paragraph addressing how IDEA values can be appropriated in the barriers to Inclusive Excellence section of the Task Force Report.
- Added suggestions from reviewers in “Suggestion” boxes where appropriate.

GRID OF REVIEWER COMMENTS AND TASK FORCE RESPONSES