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Thank You from the First Vice President

After a second year that challenged all of us in so many ways, my heartfelt thanks goes out to those of you who traveled to Seattle to attend our 107th Annual Convention. Following our virtual convention last year, we committed to return to an in-person format and I am so appreciative that you took the leap of faith to join us. Together we embraced the necessary masks and other health precautions with good cheer, and enthusiastically engaged with one another around our theme of “Renewal and Transformation.” I hope that you came away from the Annual Convention as hopeful and reinvigorated as I am regarding the future of our association and our discipline.

Special thanks to you for making this convention an extraordinary success, for sharing your insights through your submissions, presentations, panel discussions, and in our special series, including G.I.F.T.S, Short Courses, Teachers on Teaching, Research in Progress Roundtables, Scholar to Scholar sessions, and Preconferences. I especially wish to thank my fantastic planning team for their efforts in shepherding these special sessions so splendidly.

I also am so grateful for the commitment of the members who planned the four sessions that made up the “Renewal and Transformation” series, Democracy, Dissent, Disruption, and Discipline: Casey Kelly, Andre Johnson and Amanda Nell Edgar, Diana Ivy, and Jimmie Manning. Your creative efforts yielded four outstanding spotlight sessions.

Three additional highlights of the convention deserve special thanks and recognition. First, my deep gratitude goes to Tina M. Harris, Louisiana State University, for delivering the Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture, which challenged us to enact “Intentional Transformation in the Midst of Change,” and to Pearson for sponsoring this event. Second, my sincere thanks to the panelists in our Opening Session, Honoring Past and Present: Communication, Culture, and Change in Native Seattle, and to the session's sponsor, the Waterhouse Institute for the Study of Communication and Society. Last, but certainly not least, my thanks go to David McMahan for his outstanding Presidential Address, and to Routledge, Taylor & Francis for its sponsorship of this session.

Finally, my sincere thanks goes to all of you who also devoted your labors to the work of our association through your participation in the Legislative Assembly, Executive Committee, our Task Forces, Councils, and Committees, and in your unit leadership roles. And my deep gratitude also goes to our National Office staff for devoting their time and talents to making our Annual Convention a success.

We are a thriving and dynamic association because of the energy and commitment of our members! Thanks to all for your commitment to advancing our discipline and our association through your teaching, research, and service. I look forward to seeing you when we gather again in New Orleans for our 108th Annual Convention!

--[Roseann M. Mandziuk](#), NCA First Vice President, Texas State University

108th Annual Convention: Honoring PLACE: People, Liberation, Advocacy, Community, and Environment

For the 108th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, we return to New Orleans, LA, a city with a history that encapsulates so much of the rich fabric of the United States, as well as many of its struggles. Originally inhabited by Native American tribes including the Chitimacha and Choctaw, the city's indigenous name is Balbancha ("land of many tongues"), in reference to its status as a site for trade and exchange for many communities. It was colonized by both the French, who named it "La Nouvelle Orleans" (in honor of the Duke of the French city of Orléans, who was also the governor of French colonial expansions), and the Spanish (who continued the name: "Nueva Orleans"), before it was sold to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. In the years that followed, New Orleans became the largest slave market in the United States, ultimately witnessing the purchase and sale of more than 135,000 people. This complex colonial past, when juxtaposed against the present-day clarion call for antiracism, positions the City of New Orleans as one of the nation's sites of renewal, transformation, and healing. This can only take place by naming and recognizing the horrors of the past and the historical foundations of the present.

The image for the convention theme is of the Jazz Statue in Louis Armstrong Park, which is located in the city's historic Congo Square. Previously known as Place de Negres, the square is the location where slaves and free Black people gathered in the 19th century for meetings, open markets, and the African musical and dance traditions that ultimately shaped the development of jazz. It remains an active place of culture and is considered spiritual by many.

The history of place matters. New Orleans (aka, Balbancha) is the ideal location to explore this year's convention theme, "Honoring PLACE: People, Liberation, Advocacy, Community, and Environment." Both the centrality of place, and each aspect that makes up the acronym PLACE, speak to what our discipline *must* honor if we hope to broaden our practices beyond the white, ableist, heterosexist, U.S.-centric, cis-gendered, male-dominated, and colonial history upon which our nation and discipline were built.

I hope you submit your papers, panel discussions, or other proposals to the NCA 108th Annual Convention in New Orleans. As you work on them, I ask you to consider some or all of the following questions, among others related to the theme: How does the project speak to the experience of the people whose labor built the places, or lived on the land, in which we work (*People*)? How does this project give agency for members of communities in whose oppression we have been complicit (*Liberation*)? How do the scholarly and/or pedagogical practices that shape this project honor marginalized communities (*Advocacy*)? How does the approach to this project take seriously the need to center community voices and account for local forms of knowledge (*Community*)? How does the project contribute to a disciplinary climate in which we take seriously the historical, cultural, structural, and physical factors that shape the knowledge production and dissemination process (*Environment*)? And, in sum, how do the cultural and historical realities of *location* impact your analysis (**Place**)?

The NCA 108th Annual Convention will honor the rich history of the city that hosts us by centering these questions. Be prepared for a convention that challenges our past and holds promise for a more community-centered and inclusive future.

Submissions for the NCA 108th Annual Convention will open January 10, 2022. The submission deadline is March 30, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. Pacific.

--[Walid Afifi](#), NCA Second Vice President, University of California, Santa Barbara

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