

# Candidates for Legislative Assembly (At-Large Directors)

*Three will be elected to serve three-year terms beginning in January 2019*

- Ariel Gratch, Georgia College and State University
- Susanne Jones, University of Minnesota
- Kendra Knight, DePaul University
- Lara Lengel, Bowling Green State University
- Lana McDonnell, Texas A&M University-Kingsville
- Nicholas Zoffel, Sierra College

## **Ariel Gratch, Georgia College & State University**

In my 12 years of membership, I have experienced NCA as a student, as a contingent faculty member, and as a tenure-track faculty member. I have served as the Southern representative for NCA's Performance Studies division and I am actively involved in governance at SSCA. I have published in and reviewed for journals in our field, and I have published communication scholarship outside our field, helping to show how communication is central to all humanities based disciplines. I will draw on these experiences to contribute to the Legislative Assembly.



By following NCA's strategic plan the Legislative Assembly helps guide our organization. I appreciate the progressive impulses of our organization, and I believe more can be done to ensure that we meet our strategic goals of disseminating knowledge about communication and facilitating professional development for our members. While I aim to represent the concerns of all members at-large, there are two specific concerns I will work towards during my time as a member of the Legislative Assembly. First, I will work to make sure that students of communication have the support they need to excel as academics and/or as professionals outside of the academy. I believe a stronger contingent of professionals with graduate degrees in communication will benefit our organization. Second, I will work to make sure that contingent faculty and faculty that have to contend with oppressive anti-union laws will have the support they need to continue the work they do.

As president of my graduate student organizations at UNC Chapel Hill and Louisiana State University, I worked with my organizations to create transparency in graduate workloads and to achieve more equitable pay and benefits. As a faculty member at GC&SU, I have served on the President's Commission on Diversity and as a member of our Liberal Arts Renewal Project. In both these roles I drew on my communication background to address the changing needs of our students and of our academic institutions. In all of my governance roles, I take a holistic approach, and I plan on working similarly as a member of the Legislative Assembly. Above all, I hope to ensure that the direction and purpose of NCA remain focused on "fostering and promoting free and ethical communication."

Thank you for your consideration and, should I be elected, the ability to serve our organization in this capacity.

## **Susanne M. Jones, University of Minnesota**

I have always been proud to be a member of NCA, which promotes ethical, diverse, and inclusive communication through dissemination of information that emerges from research and advocacy of important social topics. NCA's Legislative Assembly (LA) votes on key decisions that impact divisions, members, publications, and the general governance of NCA. This makes LA an important governing entity in our discipline. As scholars, instructors, and advocates of our discipline, we are facing a critical time on many fronts in higher education and in research. Whether it be through explicit activism or everyday engagement with students, we all are by definition advocates of our discipline. The LA is



the governing body that most directly represents the diverse NCA populace. The LA is that body that gets to debate and discuss crucial issues—not always to everyone’s satisfaction, but democracy is messy and we need to participate. It is this democratic process I would like to be part of. I joined NCA as a graduate student in 1994 and have served on the Legislative Assembly (LA) in my role as a chair of the Communication and Social Cognition Division from 2003-2005. I am thus familiar with NCA’s constitution and bylaws, as well as the role and function of the LA. In my role as an at-large LA member, my charge is to “recognize emerging interests and critical problems and to achieve a balanced representation of teaching levels, ethnic and minority group interests, sex, age, and academic status.” (NCA Constitution & Bylaws, Article VI, Section 2). I would be honored to serve NCA in this function.

### **Kendra Knight, DePaul University**

I would like to express my interest in serving as an At-Large Representative to the NCA Legislative Assembly. I earned my M.A. and Ph.D. in Communication from Arizona State University, and I am currently an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at DePaul University. NCA has been an invaluable community and resource for me since my first convention in 2007. It would be my honor to support this community as an assembly representative.



I have previously served various divisions of NCA in the roles of paper reader and panel chair. Outside of NCA, my legislative experience includes a two-year term on the executive board of the International Association of Relationship Research. In this role I participated in the drafting and debate of legislation, review and revision of by-laws, and consideration of funding proposals. Were I elected, I believe that these experiences would enable me to serve the NCA legislative assembly in a measured and purposeful manner.

I also consider it important that At-Large representation reflects the diversity of teaching and research experiences within our discipline. Because my research interests span both Relational Communication and Work/Family, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with individuals across the Interpersonal Communication, Family Communication, Organizational Communication, Feminist and Women’s Studies, and Social Justice and Activism divisions of NCA. I have also taught at small, midsize, and large universities, both public and private, both research-intensive and liberal-arts-focused. Consequently, I feel I can connect with a relatively broad swath of the NCA membership.

I am continually inspired by the work of our organization, and I am prepared and committed to supporting it as we contend with the various challenges on our horizon.

## **Laura Langel, Bowling Green State University**

I am honored to be candidate for Legislative Assembly, At-Large. Since completing my Ph.D. (Ohio University, 1995), I have held tenure track positions at a private liberal arts college in London, England and a Ph.D.-granting program in the School of Media and Communication, at the doctoral/research intensive Bowling Green State University (BGSU). In 2009, I was promoted to Professor at BGSU, teaching and researching international and critical intercultural communication, focusing on social, economic, and environmental justice.



My shared governance and administrative experience includes serving as Department Chair, Faculty Senate Department Representative, and administrator of nearly \$500,000 in highly competitive federal grants from U.S. Department of State Bureau for Education and Cultural Affairs, Fulbright, USAID, and Council for International Education Exchange of Scholars, to co-develop/direct partnership programs with U.S. and Middle East and North African universities and media organizations. This experience, including serving on the Fulbright National Selection Committee, provides solid grounding in diverse academic organizations, contexts, and educational environments relevant to NCA.

Since I was an international NCA member in London, I have aligned with NCA's efforts to internationalize the communication discipline, and enhance our membership globally.

My commitment to NCA is evidenced by my elected positions: Vice-Chair Elect (2017-2019) and Secretary (2015-2017), Spiritual Communication Division (SCD); Secretary, International and Intercultural Communication Division (IICD) (2003-2005). I have reviewed for Activism and Social Justice Division, Feminist and Women's Studies Division, IICD, Short Course Division, and SCD, and have served as an invited reviewer for NCA's journal, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*. My research is published in NCA journals, *Text and Performance Quarterly* and *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, and in numerous others on the NCA list of journals publishing communication scholarship, the list which includes *Language and Intercultural Communication*, the journal I co-founded with colleagues in the UK and Europe.

I ask for your vote so I can assist developing structures, processes, and resources to carry NCA's mission into the future.

## **Lana McDonnell, Texas A&M University-Kingsville**

I am running for an At-Large position for the Legislative Assembly. I am Chair of the Feminist and Women Studies Division and enjoy working in leadership roles and am invested in social justice, especially related to the criminal justice system.

I have a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. I am currently an Assistant Professor of Communication and Director of Forensics at Texas A&M University- Kingsville. I have been



teaching communication courses at universities and colleges for more than 20 years.

I am a Faculty Senator at my university and serve on multiple committees related to Women's Studies, evaluation, distance learning, and curriculum. I have worked on accreditation with regional teams and academic institutions for ACCJC - Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and SACS-Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

This year has been a challenging year for our division especially when dealing with proposals in Texas and nationwide that attempt to silence the voices of our membership and those without much power. We have been working in collaboration with community groups and NCA leadership to ensure that those voices are heard. We are also dealing with the aftermath of hurricanes, flooding, and other catastrophes that have left many without the tools to cope. Our discipline can be of assistance in material and supportive ways in these times.

If you were to elect me to legislative assembly, some of the things you would see me fight for are more resources and support for contingent faculty, more access for faculty working in community colleges, more support for marginalized voices, and more collaborative efforts among divisions.

Please vote for me for the Legislative Assembly. I would love to continue to serve.

## **Nicholas Zoffel, Sierra College**

Hi, I am Nic, a professor at Sierra College in Rocklin, CA. I earned my PhD from BGSU in 2007. Service to the discipline is a fundamental priority for me. My first NCA conference was in 1999 where I presented as an undergraduate, and by 2002, I made an intention decision to become a Life Member very early in my career. Since 2005, I served NCA, its journals, and other professional organizations like WSCA, and AAC&U as an officer, reviewer, respondent, participant, and program planner. Most recently, I participated on the editorial board for Communication Teacher. I believe it was because of these experiences and my commitment to equity, agency, and voice, that I was invited to participate as a founding member of NCA's Unit Structures Task Force in 2009 and the Resolutions Committee in 2011. I also served as Chair to the Community College Section, as we developed opportunities to highlight our work (often underrepresented within higher education) and outcomes of community-based research. In these disciplinary roles and within my community engagement and non-profit work, I collaborate directly with leaders to restructure, advocate, and develop policies that we believe guide stakeholders towards greater equity and representation. I believe that my insight from these experiences is integral to reviewing, deliberating, and voting on Association matters within the Legislative Assembly.



I believe NCA and Legislative Assembly requires representatives to do more than simply exercise their right to vote. If elected, I will strive to provide agency for members in meaningful ways during the legislative process. Legislative Assembly needs people who respect the nuances of communication and can engage with temperance in critical discourse regarding policy, committee visioning, the needs of Divisions, Interest Groups, and Caucuses, as well as understanding differing academic cultures.

Thank you for the opportunity to stand for election.