

# National Office Report

November 2025

## Governance Department

### Staff Members

Jennifer Fletcher, Organizational Development Manager

Monica Yang, Strategic Projects Associate

### Staffing Update

In January, the Governance Department welcomed Jennifer Fletcher as the Organizational Development Manager.

### Interest Group Awards

2025 marked the first official year that all Interest Group awards were facilitated through the National Office. The policy was approved by the Executive Committee in 2023, with an optional pilot in 2024. In its inaugural year for Interest Group awards, we saw:

- 52 Interest Groups hosted awards through the online platform, OpenWater
- There were nearly 250 award categories combined
- Received **X** nominations
- We recognized over 200 award recipients

In 2026, we will focus on optimizing the award procedures and ensuring efficient communication and training with all relevant volunteers.

### National Awards

The National Awards program received strong engagement this year, with over 190 nominations submitted across more than 30 award categories. A total of 31 award recipients were selected and will be formally recognized during the Presidential Address and Awards Presentation on Saturday, November 22, at 5:30 PM in Colorado Ballroom A.

### Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee, composed of 78 members and chaired by David McMahan, completed its work to identify nominees for Second Vice President (2nd VP), the Legislative Assembly (LA), and the Leadership Development Committee (LDC). There were more than two nominees for the 2nd VP position, prompting a primary election within the Nominating Committee.

The nominees standing for election for 2<sup>nd</sup> VP are Dr. Srividya Ramasubramanian, Syracuse University, and Dr. Katherine Thweatt, State University of New York at Oswego. The general election for NCA membership will run from December 2 to December 31 via the NCA website.

## Leadership Development Committee (LDC)

The LDC, chaired by Immediate Past President, Marnel Niles Goins, continues its work to finalize the slate of 50 leadership and governance positions for the upcoming term. Progress is ongoing, with efforts focused on ensuring diverse representation across the association membership.

## Affiliate Renewal

One affiliate renewal has been submitted for Legislative Assembly approval for 2026: Phi Kappa Delta. NCA currently maintains a total of 32 active affiliates.

## 2026 Priorities

### *Promoting Leadership Opportunities*

The department will focus on expanding leadership pipelines and creating clearer paths to volunteer leadership within the Association for scholars at all stages of their careers. We also aim to promote the value of volunteering and serving in leadership roles within the Association.

### *Volunteer Leadership Training & Orientation*

We will work with National Office staff to standardize training for volunteers, ensuring they have the knowledge, resources, and support to succeed in their roles. The goal is to enhance volunteer agency, foster greater engagement, and build leadership skills that contribute to both individual growth and the strength of the Association.

### *New Awards/Grant Management Software*

In October, the National Office signed a contract to implement a new Awards and Grant Management platform, **Reviewr**. The platform touts itself as “by us, for us,” with many of its staff, including the founders, having served on Association award committees themselves. We are excited about the ways this software will streamline the process for submitters, award committees, and staff. The platform is scheduled to launch in February 2026, coinciding with the start of Interest Group and National Awards.

# Convention and Meetings Department

## Staff Members

LaShawn Duckett, Director of Convention and Meetings

Aliyah Hyman, Convention and Meetings Associate

I am pleased to present the Convention Department's report to the National Communication Association's Legislative Assembly. This report outlines our preparations for the upcoming annual convention, scheduled for November 19-23, 2025, in Denver Metro, and highlights significant activities and initiatives undertaken by the Conventions & Meetings Department.

## Annual Convention Overview

The 2025 Annual Convention in Denver Metro is anticipated to be a highly engaging event. As of October 24, we have successfully registered 2,861 participants, representing strong momentum toward our attendance goals. Notably, this year we received 4,436 convention submissions—the highest in the past four years and a 5% increase from 2024—reflecting the continued vibrancy and growth of our scholarly community.

### Key details include:

**Theme:** "Communicate to Elevate"

### General Sessions:

- **Carroll C. Arnold Lecture:** [Suturing Solidarities that Sustain our Capacities to Imagine](#)  
Speaker: Mohan J. Dutta, Massey University
- **Opening Session:** [Lifting as We Climb: Extending the PhD Pipeline and Elevating the Next Generation of Communication Scholars](#)  
Chair: Ronald L. Jackson II, University of Miami  
Speakers:
  - Javon Johnson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
  - Scott Bandy, Bethune-Cookman University
  - Priscilla Cotton, Georgia State University
  - Kimberly P. Johnson, Tennessee State University
  - Precious Johnson, Texas Southern University
  - Marquese McFerguson, Florida Atlantic University
  - Kelly Merrill Jr., University of Cincinnati
  - Yulani Rodgers, New York University

### First Vice President Sessions:

#### Friday

- Framing Palestine: Surveillance, Authorization, and Agency
- Elevating Our Field to New Heights: Honoring Brenda J. Allen's Contributions
- CP3 4TH Dynasty Fellows Orientation: Preparing Black Graduate Students for the Communication Professoriate
- The Hanks Knocking at the Door: Black Speculative Thought as a Critical Lens into the Soul of "Sinners"

### **Saturday**

- Elevating Palestine: Intersectionality, Solidarity, and Resistance
- Celebrating the Career of Thomas K. Nakayama
- Elevating Community Engagement on AI: An NCAi Collaboratory Working Town Hall
- Elevating Challenges: Navigating the Multiple, Dynamic, and Fluid Frameworks of Mentoring

**Workshops and Panels:** A diverse lineup of over 980 sessions featuring over 5,005 unique names in the [program](#).

**Marketing Efforts:** We have actively promoted the convention through various channels, including monthly newsletters, social media campaigns, CommNotes, and targeted email blasts.

## **Sponsorship & Exhibits Initiatives**

Building on our 2024 success in developing enhanced sponsorship benefits and categories, we have continued to diversify our revenue streams and create meaningful partnerships with industry leaders. This year's sponsorship program features four major sponsors supporting key convention experiences:

### **Annual Convention Sponsors:**

- **Kendall Hunt** – Day of Service
- **Taylor & Francis** – Presidential Address Awards Presentation
- **Waterhouse Family Institute** – Headshot Studio & Networking Lounge
- **W.W. Norton & Company** – Ribbon Wall

Additionally, we have secured 13 advertisers and confirmed strong participation in our exhibit and recruitment programs:

- **Exhibitor Booths:** 19 booths sold, representing 15 exhibiting companies
- **Graduate School Open House:** 65 institution participants
- **Career Fair:** 8 confirmed participants providing robust recruitment opportunities

These partnerships provide attendees with valuable resources while generating important revenue to support convention programming and member experiences.

## Enhancements and New Initiatives

Informed by our 2024 convention survey results—which showed an impressive 82% overall satisfaction rate (a 17% increase from 2023) and 86% recommendation rate—we have introduced several new initiatives and continued successful programs to enhance attendee engagement and experience:

### Day of Service Expansion

This year's Day of Service, sponsored by Kendall Hunt, will feature two participation options on Wednesday, November 19, from 3:00-6:00 p.m., supporting Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Denver:

- **Option 1: Onsite Snack Pack Assembly** – Drop in anytime to help assemble snack packs for distribution throughout the Denver Metro area (no registration required)
- **Option 2: Boys and Girls Club Visit** – Visit a local club to directly assist children during their after-school program (transportation provided, pre-registration required)

### Enhanced Networking and Wellness Programming

- **Mentoring Meetups:** Drop by anytime (Thursday-Saturday) to connect with mentors and fellow attendees in informal conversations about professional development, research, teaching, and career pathways
- **Karaoke Night:** New social event for informal networking and community building (held immediately following the Welcome Reception)
- **Silent Disco:** New Saturday night event offering a unique social experience for attendees
- **Prayer/Meditation Room:** Dedicated quiet space for spiritual and mindfulness practices
- **Networking Lounge:** Sponsored by Waterhouse Family Institute, providing a dedicated space for professional connections
- **Early Morning Tea Chats:** Continuing informal networking opportunities including Death Café and Mindfulness, Meditation & Well-being Café
- **Midday Chair Yoga:** New lunchtime wellness session added to our exercise options on Saturday

### Student Support Initiatives

- **Student Lounge:** Dedicated space for students to relax, recharge, and share experiences, fostering a sense of community (Thursday-Saturday)
- **Student Volunteer Meal Vouchers:** Continuing our Sponsor a Student Meal program to address food insecurity. Interested sponsors can contribute during registration or via the NCA store. Each student volunteer receives a \$15 meal voucher when checking in at the convention.

## Volunteer Program Enhancements

- **Comprehensive Volunteer Resources:** Created a volunteer manual and virtual orientation for volunteers before the convention
- **Real-Time Communication:** Established a GroupMe platform to communicate with volunteers during the convention
- **Streamlined Signup Process:** Implemented SignUp Genius for improved volunteer registration and coordination

The impact of these improvements was evident in our October 22, 2025 volunteer training: we had 185 registrants with 146 live attendees (79% attendance rate), compared to 2024's 153 registrants with 100 live attendees (65% attendance rate). This 21% increase in participation and 14-point improvement in attendance rate is attributed to the new SignUp Genius registration process and enhanced volunteer communication strategies.

## Logistical Improvements

- **Ground Transportation:** Providing shuttle service between overflow hotels and the Gaylord Rockies (host hotel & convention center)
- **Dedicated Lunch Period:** No sessions scheduled during lunch, allowing attendees to take breaks. Food trucks will be available on-site.
- **Badge Reprint Policy:** To reduce waste and streamline operations, the first badge reprint is free, with a \$15 fee for additional reprints

## Family Programming

**Camp NCA:** Following the overwhelming success of Camp NCA in 2024, we're excited to bring back our partnership with KiddieCorp. As one attendee shared: "This was a game changer for our family!"

## Sustainability and Innovation

- **Digital Handouts:** Continuing our transition from print to digital handouts, begun in 2024, to reduce environmental impact
- **Print Programs Available for Purchase:** To promote sustainability, print programs are now available for purchase rather than provided to all attendees
- **Enhanced Mobile App:** Continuing to implement the convention app to facilitate networking and information access for attendees

## Teaching and Scholarship Resources

- **GIFT Resources:** Supported the Research Team's GIFT initiative by integrating data collection tools into the abstract management system, enabling identification of submitters interested in sharing innovative teaching practices for an annual resource booklet

## NCA Hub/Booth

Continuing to enhance our booth, providing a space for attendees to connect with NCA staff, learn about available resources (including celebrating the 10-year anniversary of NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication), take headshots, and win prizes. Based on 2024 feedback, we are working to increase awareness of the Hub, as 77% of visitors were satisfied with services, but 67% of non-visitors were unaware of its existence.

## Technology and Process Improvements

The department has made significant strides in modernizing our technology infrastructure and streamlining processes to improve the experience for both attendees and program planners:

### **Association Management System (AMS) Integration**

As part of NCA's organization-wide transition to a new Association Management System, we implemented a new registration platform that enables the display of appropriate convention rates based on member type, providing a more personalized and accurate registration experience.

### **Abstract Management System Enhancement**

Successfully integrated the abstract management system with the AMS to create a single sign-on and streamlined process, simplifying submission and review workflows. Additionally, we developed new [reviewer resources](#) based on planner feedback:

- Best Practices for Effective Reviews
- Essential Review Components
- Feedback Templates for NCA Reviewers

We are currently working with the Convention Committee to create resources for chairs and respondents for rollout in 2026 or 2027.

## Strategic Meetings and Future Planning

To ensure the success of the 2025 Convention and plan for future years, I have engaged in regular strategic meetings and site planning:

### **2025 Convention Coordination**

Regular weekly meetings with the First Vice President, Executive Director, Convention & Meetings Associate, Communications & Marketing Department, and contractors and vendors to coordinate all aspects of convention planning.

### **2025 Leadership Events Successfully Completed**

- **Annual Leadership Retreat & Executive Committee Meeting:** February 4-7, 2025, Washington, DC
- **Annual In person Executive Committee Meeting:** July 30-August 2, 2025, Washington, DC

## Future Convention Planning

- **2026 Annual Convention:** Instituted regular meetings with the Second Vice President to align on convention logistics and programming
- **2030 and 2031 Site Selection:** Site visits were conducted and presented to the Convention Committee. The committee reached consensus to select San Francisco for 2030 and Chicago for 2031. Contracts for both years have been signed.
- **2026 Leadership Events:** The 2026 Annual Leadership Retreat and Annual August Executive Committee Meeting are in early planning stages

## Conclusion

The Conventions & Meetings Department has made significant strides in preparing for the 2025 Annual Convention while simultaneously advancing strategic initiatives that will benefit NCA for years to come. With record-high submission numbers, robust registration momentum, enhanced technology infrastructure, and innovative programming informed by member feedback, we are well-positioned to deliver an exceptional convention experience in Denver Metro.

I am grateful for the Executive Committee's support and the collaborative efforts of the NCA team, our volunteers, sponsors, and partners. I look forward to welcoming our members to what promises to be an outstanding 2025 convention and to our continued work together in service of the National Communication Association's mission.

# Academic and Professional Affairs Department

## Staff Members

Rachael Purtell, Research Associate

Since the 2025 NCA convention, the academic and professional affairs staff have successfully fulfilled their usual responsibilities as well as taken on new tasks. New from March to October 2025 was Research Associate Dr. Rachael Purtell, who helped plan/coordinate Video Learning Opportunities (VLOs) on Zoom. The department also planned and produced two Public Programs, one of which (on rhetoric and democracy) was the year's most popular online NCA event (about 150 registered and 100+ attended). The department advised hosts for two summer programs (NCA Doctoral Honors Seminar [DHS] at Tennessee, NCA Institute for Faculty Development [IFD]), both of which were attended. The department began working on a new format for the 2026 NCA Department Chairs' Institute.

## Items of Interest

- *Spectra* magazine was published three times in 2025, featuring more diverse content than in previous years.
- Since the 2024 convention, the department has produced 24 semi-monthly Communication Currents reports on new NCA journal articles.
- Completed the annual jobs/PhDs report.
- Completed the annual Profile of the Doctorate report.

The department is working closely with other NCA staff on writing and distributing (and analyzing results of) a convention survey (in Dec. 2025) and a membership survey in Jan. 2026 (the latter previously having been outsourced).

The department worked closely with the Teaching & Learning Council on administering NCA's pedagogy grant, the Research Council on research cultivation grants, and this year's new Presidential L.I.F.T. grant. Additionally, it collaborated on the Advancing the Discipline Grant subcommittee, the Dale Leathers Fund committee, and all aspects of the Student Caucus Travel Grants.

The department helps facilitate other work by the Research Council, Publication Council, Teaching & Learning Council, Committee on International Discussion and Debate (CIDDD), Taylor & Francis publishing, and the president's Task Force on Academic Freedom and Tenure (report released Oct. 31, 2025).

Other journal-based tasks in the department include assisting with the convention's annual Editor's Workshop, advising editors, reviewing reprint requests, annual individual editors' meetings, and producing journal mailing lists for publisher Taylor & Francis.

The department continues to work on new NCA website content, including on-campus advocacy materials and the authoritarianism/fascism resource. Additionally, the department is actively working to update and expand content from NCA's former website, such as the Ph.D. programs database, NCA's history, and foundational course materials.

In 2026, the department will begin managing the PhD Pipeline program, established by former President Ron Jackson, and assist with the biennial NCA Midcareer Scholars Writing Retreat, in addition to the DHS and IFD.

# NCA Communications & Membership Department Annual Report – 2025

## Staff Members

Alexis Rice, Director of Communications and Membership

Patrick West, Web & Digital Strategy Manager

Annie Stephens, Communications Assistant

Brianne Haynes, Membership Associate

## Department Overview and Summary

In response to NCA's evolving needs, the Communications and Membership Department was created in 2025 to better support outreach, engagement, and member services. The department leads the development and execution of strategic communications initiatives that strengthen NCA's visibility, brand identity, and connection with members. Through integrated messaging, coordinated outreach, and a focus on delivering value across all communication channels, the department plays a central role in advancing NCA's mission and enhancing the member experience.

The department is responsible for communication strategies that elevate NCA's programs, events, and member value. Its work promotes transparency, cohesion, and engagement across digital, print, and social platforms, ensuring that NCA's messages are clear, consistent, and aligned with NCA's strategic organizational and IDEA goals and priorities.

## Core Department Functions:

- **Content Development & Messaging:** Creates high-quality communications across e-newsletters, member updates, press releases, reports, and promotional materials to inform and connect the NCA members and stakeholders.
- **Membership Growth & Retention:** Leads targeted outreach that highlights member value and supports recruitment and retention, plus member database.
- **Brand & Editorial Consistency:** Ensures cohesive messaging, visual identity, and editorial standards across all materials.
- **Digital Strategy & Analytics:** Guides NCA's digital presence by managing website content, evaluating performance data, and improving user experience and accessibility.
- **Social Media & Community Engagement:** Strengthens NCA's visibility and connection with members, scholars, and students.
- **Collaborative Campaigns:** Partners across departments to plan and execute integrated communication and marketing campaigns.

## 2025 Growth and Success:

### Membership Increases

Membership increased by 3% from 2024 to 2025, supported by targeted outreach and improved digital engagement.

### Honor Societies Spotlight

Lambda Pi Eta (LPH) and Sigma Chi Eta (SCH) represent more than 400 active chapters nationwide.

## Website Launch and Performance

The redesigned natcom.org website launched in January 2025, representing a significant advancement in NCA's digital transformation. The improved navigation, accessibility, and content presentation provide members and visitors with a more intuitive and informative experience.

## Top 10 Most Visited Pages on natcom.org (2025)

Convention and membership-related content continue to drive the most engagement.

| Rank | Page Title                                    | Pageviews |
|------|---|-----------|
| 1    | National Communication Association (Homepage) | 111,501   |
| 2    | NCA 111th Annual Convention                   | 89,644    |
| 3    | Call for Submissions                          | 46,042    |
| 4    | Become a Member                               | 31,729    |
| 5    | COMMNotes                                     | 25,917    |
| 6    | What is Communication?                        | 19,944    |
| 7    | Convention Hotel & Travel                     | 18,011    |
| 8    | Call for Reviewers, Chairs, & Respondents     | 16,970    |
| 9    | Interest Group Directory/Webpages             | 16,765    |
| 10   | Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society                   | 13,461    |

## Device Usage

| Device  | Share of Sessions |
|---------|-------------------|
| Desktop | 78.1%             |
| Mobile  | 21.3%             |
| Other   | 0.6%              |

## Geographic Distribution

| Country       | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|
| United States | 78%        |
| China         | 6%         |
| Singapore     | 2%         |
| Philippines   | 2%         |
| Germany       | 1%         |

## Traffic Acquisition Sources

| Channel        | Sessions | Percentage |
|----------------|----------|------------|
| Organic Search | 227,390  | 47.56%     |
| Direct         | 168,761  | 35.3%      |
| Referral       | 62,526   | 13.08%     |
| Unassigned     | 8,906    | 1.86%      |
| Organic Social | 7,996    | 1.67%      |

## Mass Email Communications Highlights

- COMMNotes reached more than 14,000 subscribers
- Inside & Out maintained a strong readership
- Coordination and analytics improved campaign targeting.

**Mass Email Performance Year Over Year:**

- 6,002,972 emails sent (+734,377 YOY)
- 5,364,344 delivered (+427,002 YOY)
- 53% open rate (+2% YOY; +17% above industry)
- Click rate +2% above industry averages.

**Social Media Overview**

Instagram and LinkedIn saw the strongest growth and engagement in 2025, while Facebook and X grew more slowly and saw lower engagement. NCA will explore BlueSky and Mastodon in 2026 to diversify digital engagement.