



National Communication
Association

NCA Editor's Information Report

To: NCA Legislative Assembly

From:

Stacey K. Sowards, Ph.D., Department of Communication Studies, The University of Texas at Austin (Editor)

And

Casey Ryan Kelly, Ph.D., Department of Communication Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Editor-Elect)

Journal Title: Quarterly Journal of Speech

This report reflects the following time period: July 31, 2024 to August 1, 2025 (the current editor's term and the first year of the editor-elect position).

MANUSCRIPT ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION RATE:

Data from Taylor and Francis:

1. Number of new manuscripts received during this period: 134
2. Number of revised manuscripts received during this period: 81
3. Total number of manuscripts accepted for publication: 51
4. Number of manuscripts returned for revision and resubmission: 75
5. Number of manuscripts rejected: 68
6. Acceptance rate: [(3) divided by (1+2)]: 24%

Note: These data are somewhat questionable, as they include book reviews and forum essays that are not part of the regular submission and/or peer review process. In the editor's review of the Taylor and Francis data, it was determined that the data for regular manuscripts submitted only includes 11 total manuscripts accepted for publication for the time period indicated. The editor-elect had not made any accept decisions at the end of the time period indicated.

The acceptance rate also includes some double counted manuscripts, for example, a manuscript that was new, then revised and resubmitted, then accepted for publication is doubled counted in both the new and revised manuscript categories. In a review of the list of manuscripts it is clear that 6 of the 11 manuscripts accepted for publication were also both new and revised during this period. It is difficult to reconcile the Taylor and Francis data to determine an actual acceptance rate because the numbers in 1-6 above seem to include all forum articles, book reviews, and

original manuscripts. See Casey Kelly's report below with his analysis of his own data and acceptance rate.

Editor's Goals and Progress Toward Meeting Those Goals:

The main editorial goals include:

- 1) Expand the kinds of authors who submit and reviewers who do work for the journal, especially in terms of inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility.
- 2) Mentor early career scholars, particularly those who are working in IDEA spaces/topics.
- 3) Invite doctoral students to work with more senior reviewers to learn the review process as well as doctoral students to serve as editorial assistants.
- 4) Extend the scope of what counts as rhetoric beyond the traditional, especially public address, in areas such as environment, gender, sexuality, race, and culture.

Strengths:

We have worked extensively with every author whose paper has been accepted. That is, we have made comments, edits, and clarifications in each essay moving forward to production so that it appears in its best form, both in terms of the content and the quality of the writing.

We have done really excellent work to expand the scope of the meaning of rhetoric to include some non-traditional analyses, including field methods, various theories, and especially attention to IDEA matters (see below). We have published at least six forums to address underrepresented topics in the field (eg, on the environment, immigration, trans and queer rhetoric, Latine imaginaries, and caste). We also published a special issue on abolition. Guest editors helped tremendously in moving these forums and the special issue forward.

We have a fast turnaround. Decisions are usually made within 8 weeks (60 days) after submission in cases of both new and revised manuscripts. Our average turnaround time is 42 days, from first submission to decision on manuscript.

We also have published all pending/backlogged articles, so that the editor-elect has been able to work on his own set of manuscripts; no pending manuscripts were passed over the editor-elect.

Areas for Improvement:

Recruiting submissions is difficult, unless someone has already finished a paper. We have been able to invite some scholars to submit their already completed work who hadn't thought of *Quarterly Journal of Speech* as an outlet for their scholarship, and several of those authors have been successful with essays already in publication or about to be published (and others still in the review process). We have also invited people to submit, but their work wasn't finished enough for submission, so that remains an area for improvement. One approach to recruiting submissions that has been successful is through forums. We have expanded outreach through the various

forums and the special issue, including authors that might not have submitted to the journal otherwise.

Another challenge is finding good reviewers for every essay that needs reviews. In trying not to overburden some reviewers, it means that the best reviewers for a certain essay may not be available. Recruiting more reviewers are certain topics is one way to make sure that QJS has excellent and super qualified reviews for each essay. Expanding the editorial board has helped a lot in that regard, as one of the only ways to give credit to reviewers is by providing them an editorial board line.

Some issues with Taylor and Francis persist. As noted above, it can be quite difficult to calculate acceptance rates because of the way manuscripts are categorized, as mistakes are made, placing forum articles into the original research category as one example. Authors report some trouble in getting manuscripts past the administrative inbox on the Taylor and Francis side. For example, a manuscript that is at the “accept, pending revisions” stage still must include an anonymous document to be uploaded, which confuses authors and adds to their workload.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts:

1. Staff: Our staff consists of women of color from various backgrounds, theoretical perspectives, and traditions. Paulami Banerjee, Ashley McDonald, and Cynthia Marentes have served as editorial assistants. Toniesha Taylor is our book review editor. Each has brought excellent work and ideas to the journal.
2. Reviewers and editorial board: Not only have we worked to include diverse scholars as reviewers, but we also have expanded the editorial board to give credit for such reviewing practices, particularly adding a large number of diverse people from other countries, and various backgrounds/trainings related to IDEA.
3. Special issues and forums: Our special issue appeared in the November 2024 issue on Abolition and Rhetoric, with guest editors Omedi Ochieng and Amber Kelsie (University of Colorado). We also have published forums on radical rhetorics at the end of the world, trans and queer rhetorics (edited by guest editor E Cram), immigration rhetorics (edited by guest editor Lisa Flores), caste and rhetoric, and Latine imaginaries (edited by guest editors Sara Baugh Harris and Diana Martínez).

Editor-Elect Report (Casey Kelly)

Below is the submission data since I began receiving manuscripts in January 2025. This data only includes submissions I have received and does not reflect the manuscripts Dr. Soward’s worked with during this time. This data does not come from Taylor and Francis, but my own tracking of all submissions received. “Desk rejects” and book reviews were not included.

1. Number of new manuscripts received during this period: 58
2. Number of revised manuscripts received during this period: 0
3. Total number of manuscripts accepted for publication: 5

4. Number of manuscripts returned for revision and resubmission: 25
5. Number of manuscripts rejected: 25
6. Acceptance rate: $[(3) \text{ divided by } (1+2)]$: 11.6

Continuing Dr. Sowards's excellent work with the journal, my additional goals for the journal include:

1. Increasing the readership of the journal within and outside of the discipline
2. Mentoring early career authors through the review process, including openness and transparency about my decision-making process.

Although I am still early in my editorial role, my forthcoming editorial statement and call for papers emphasizes that rhetorical criticism and theory can offer significant theoretical insights into contemporary political, economic, and social forces. Inspired by Dr. Marina Levina's editorial statement for CCCS, I believe that it is imperative that rhetorical scholars continue to produce free and fearless inquiry in the face of stifling authoritarian attacks on higher education. To that end, I have commissioned a special issue for issue 2 of 2026 that addresses the rhetoric of fascism and will continue to invite work that contributes the interdisciplinary theoretical conversations on the anti-social and authoritarian impulses that threaten democracy and the future of the planet.

Thus far, the submissions have been incredibly diverse, in terms of topic area but also career stage, institution, and demographic background. There is an increase in submissions from international authors, for which Dr. Sowards deserves much credit. One challenge this has created is the need to expand the reviewer pool to include more international experts, which has required recruiting reviewers outside of the editorial board, particularly scholars who have expertise on West African politics and Chinese culture and history. One concern I have is taxing the editorial board members who can review work outside of the U.S. or North American context or relying on reviewers outside of communication studies. Like Dr. Sowards, I am committed to maintaining diverse editorial board, which I believe accounts for increasing diversity of authors submitting to the journal.