

## **Mentoring With Momentum: Advancing NCA's Strategic Goals**

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2026 Presidential Initiative**

Mentoring is a cornerstone of academic and professional development. It shapes the ways scholars grow, connect, and contribute to the discipline, while also providing critical guidance in navigating teaching, research, and service, while also fostering a sense of community and belonging. **Mentoring With Momentum (MWM)** builds on this foundation by formally identifying and strengthening NCA's existing mentoring practices and pathways. By bringing greater visibility, structure, and intentionality to these efforts, the initiative seeks to leverage mentoring as a key mechanism for advancing the communication discipline and supporting members across all stages of their careers.

MWM positions mentoring as a central strategy for strengthening the National Communication Association by cultivating scholarly excellence, expanding member engagement, advancing equity, parity, and belonging, and fostering a vibrant and responsive organization. Mentoring is foundational to every aspect of academic life. Each of us has either served as a mentor, benefited from mentorship, or wished for guidance while navigating the complex terrain of higher education. By centering mentoring as a shared responsibility and collective investment, this initiative affirms mentorship as a critical pathway for sustaining our discipline and supporting the success of our members.

MWM is directly aligned with and advances the four goals of the NCA strategic plan. It supports **Goal 1** by creating (and identifying existent) conditions that empower members through structured mentoring that enhances scholarly excellence, engagement, and ethical professional development. It advances **Goal 2** by preparing members to articulate and demonstrate the value of communication scholarship in addressing pressing societal issues and informing public discourse. It fulfills **Goal 3** by embedding inclusive and equitable mentoring practices that promote access, belonging, and the success of scholars from historically underrepresented communities. Finally, it contributes to **Goal 4** by cultivating a thriving and responsive organization through leadership development, collaborative networks, and sustained member investment in the future of the association.

### **GOAL 1: CREATE CONDITIONS TO SUPPORT AND EMPOWER MEMBERS**

#### **1.1 Support excellence in Communication-related scholarship, pedagogy, and service**

Mentoring With Momentum will advance and support excellence in research, teaching, and professional service by identifying ways to connect members across career stages with experienced mentors who can provide guidance on publishing, pedagogy, leadership, and professional development.

### **1.2 Enhance member access, engagement, and sense of ownership in the association**

Mentoring initiatives will increase opportunities for members to engage with NCA through cross-divisional mentoring networks, mentoring circles, and professional development programs that deepen members' sense of belonging and investment in the association.

### **1.3 Maintain ethical standards for research, teaching, and service**

Mentoring programs will emphasize ethical mentoring practices and provide guidance on responsible scholarship, inclusive teaching, and professional integrity, reinforcing NCA's commitment to ethical standards across the discipline.

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## **GOAL 2: PROMOTE COMMUNICATION'S VALUE**

### **2.1 Enhance public awareness and understanding about the value of the discipline**

Mentoring With Momentum will support scholars and educators in communicating the public value of communication research, pedagogy, and engagement, helping members translate their work for broader audiences.

### **2.2 Promote Communication's significance in challenging existing structures and fostering meaningful change**

Through mentoring relationships, scholars will be encouraged to develop research and teaching that address pressing social issues and demonstrate how communication scholarship contributes to social transformation.

### **2.3 Advocate for Communication-informed institutional and public policies**

Mentoring will prepare members to engage in leadership and policy advocacy by helping them connect communication research to institutional practices and public policy conversations.

## **GOAL 3: EMBRACE AND ENACT INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS**

### **3.1 Provide tools for members to promote inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access**

Mentoring With Momentum will incorporate culturally responsive mentoring practices that equip members with strategies to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and access within their teaching, research, and professional environments.

### **3.2 Improve structures, programs, and practices that allow all members to thrive**

Mentoring initiatives will intentionally support scholars from historically underrepresented and marginalized communities by providing access to mentoring networks, leadership development opportunities, and professional resources.

### **3.3 Promote inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access in the field of Communication**

Mentoring programs will amplify diverse voices within the discipline and strengthen NCA's commitment to inclusive scholarship, equitable professional development, and community building.

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## **GOAL 4: CULTIVATE A THRIVING AND RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATION**

### **4.1 Support an energetic, collaborative, and engaged membership**

Mentoring With Momentum will foster intergenerational connections among members, strengthening collaboration, knowledge sharing, and leadership development across the association.

### **4.2 Foster reflexive governance and informed decision-making**

Mentoring relationships will help prepare future leaders of the association by cultivating thoughtful leadership, reflective governance practices, and strategic decision-making.

### **4.3 Collaborate with communities to advocate for Communication-informed change**

Mentoring initiatives will encourage scholars to connect their work with community engagement and public scholarship, reinforcing NCA's commitment to communication-informed solutions for societal challenges.

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## **Conclusion**

Mentoring With Momentum aligns directly with NCA's strategic goals by:

- **Supporting member success**
- **Advancing the public value of communication scholarship**
- **Promoting inclusion, diversity, equity, and access**
- **Strengthening the vitality and leadership of the association**

Through sustained mentoring initiatives, NCA can cultivate a scholarly community that is **connected, empowered, and positioned to lead the discipline into the future.**