



NCA and Its Partners in China and the ASEAN Region Celebrate Global Communication and Cooperation

This report is co-authored by Dr. Shaunak Sastry, First Vice-President of NCA and Dr. Stephen Hartnett, Past President. In line with the increasingly global nature of NCA's membership, Drs. Hartnett and Sastry both endorse a more global vision for NCA. In his campaign for NCA office, Dr. Sastry actively ran on a platform for NCA to be more active in the globe and for challenging the parochialism of the "national" at NCA. Similarly, Dr. Hartnett's tenure at NCA led to the cementing of long-lasting international collaborations between NCA and educational institutions outside of the US. In this brief report, we highlight why such a global vision for NCA is critical at this historical moment through a case of exemplary global partnership with NCA at the forefront.

Since returning to the White House in January 2025, the Trump administration has declared war on higher education, obliterated federal funding for research, and closed America's borders, in a strategic attempt to turn what was once the world's most diverse democracy and productive educational ecosystem into a homogenous enclave marked by suspicions of internationalism, collaboration, and one policed by masked and murderous ICE agents. Joining several other academic and scholarly societies, the National Communication Association (NCA) stands strong in defending international collaborations, free speech, and the production of knowledge via intercultural partnerships. Faced with institutionalized racism and ignorance pumped out by the White House, the NCA responds by turning to the world with open hearts and open minds—hence the NCA co-hosting the 2026 Xiamen Summit on Global Communication, in Xiamen, China, on May 29-31, 2026.

Founded in 1921, Xiamen University serves over 45,000 students. A gorgeous campus perched along Xiamen's curving and rocky coastline, you can look out of classroom windows to see supertankers churning through the South China Sea. Situated at the heart of a greater metropolitan area of more than 10,000,000 souls and featuring dense

tropical vegetation, Xiamen is one of the main cities in China's Fujian Province. Featuring hundreds of minor islands, tidal inlets, peninsulas, and coves, Fujian's waterways served for centuries as the epicenter of regional piracy and political intrigue; now the city's immense ports command the shipping routes connecting China to its southern neighbors and beyond. It is therefore fitting that the NCA partnered with Xiamen University to co-host the Summit on Global Communication, as Xiamen sits at the crossroads of international trade, culture, and communication.

The conference focused on communication patterns, gaps, and opportunities with colleagues representing the United States, China, Australia, and colleagues from ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations. Founded in the summer of 1967 as part of a global tide of postcolonial nationalism, ASEAN now includes 11 nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. In contrast to the atmosphere of cultural chauvinism and vulgar nationalism fomented by the current US administration, the 2026 Xiamen Summit on Global Communication offered a model to create opportunities for the practice of international communication committed to building pathways of peace and understanding.

Alongside our Chinese and ASEAN partners, the NCA contingent included scholars from Bowling Green University; Georgia State University; Regis University; the University of Colorado, Denver; the University of the Pacific; the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School; the University of California, Santa Barbara; the University of Texas, Austin; and the University of Washington. From NCA's participants, vice president Shaunak Sastry offered a ceremonial welcoming speech on behalf of NCA's increasingly global membership. Stephen Hartnett, Guobin Yan, and Jack Linchuan Qiu offered keynote addresses merging historical and contemporary perspectives. Patrick Shaou-Whea Dodge, Qingwen Dong, Louisa Shu-ying Ha, and Emily Stones served as respondents to presentations and, in an after-dinner session, Dodge, Dong, Ha, and Yang offered coaching advice to 40+ BA, MA, and PhD students. Reinforcing personal and professional bonds built across 12 years of such international collaborations, the Xiamen Summit embedded NCA colleagues at the heart of international and intercultural communication and pedagogy.

Including 141 presentations, a poster session with 23 projects represented, and an evening film festival, the Summit celebrated written, visual, and oral communication, often in multiple languages. For example, when Dr. Aprilianti Pratiwi rose to speak about environmental activism in Indonesia, she began by acknowledging her Xiamen hosts in Mandarin, then greeted her colleagues from the Universitas Pancasila (near Jakarta) in Indonesian (the modernized version of Malay), and then, in a nod to the NCA guests, delivered her research in English. NCA's Dodge, Dong, Ha, and Yang effortlessly code-

switched between English and Mandarin while vice-president Sastry, to the thrill of the opening plenary audience, delivered the opening lines of his greeting in Mandarin.

Presentations, panels, and workshops asked questions like “Will AI Increase Communicative Efficiency or Produce Global Cultural Homogenization?” “Can Emerging (and Contested) Models of Transnational Governance Work?” “What Roles do Colonial Traumas Play in Post-Colonial Nationalism?” “What does Risk Society Mean in an Age of AI-Generated Disinformation?” and more. Students addressed environmental quandaries, gender confusions, and political hot-topics. In a closing workshop, Dr. Guo Ke from the Shanghai International Studies University announced an online Global Communication Repository (globalcomm-repository.org) wherein he and a team of colleagues hope to archive syllabi, case studies, scholar profiles, and more, creating a living repository of scholarship about international communication.

Trump’s “America First” xenophobia has cowered some campuses and academic organizations into preventive compliance, leading them to cut programs in diversity, commitments to international studies, and investments in transnational educational opportunities. The NCA’s work at the 2026 Xiamen Summit shows a different course of action: That standing firm on the principles of academic freedom and international collaboration can open pathways to intercultural understanding and friendship, hence strengthening the bonds that will sustain America’s global engagements after the wrecking crew in the White House slouches into ignominy.