

Jason Wrench's Candidate Statement

I am deeply honored to be a candidate for ECA First Vice President Elect-Select. As the oldest communication organization in the United States, ECA has a history of scholarship, service, and teaching rooted in tradition and shepherded by some of the top names in the discipline. Although there are many academic organizations within our field, ECA has been and will always be my academic home.

Over the years I've had the opportunity to serve ECA in a number of different capacities. My earliest form of service was as secretary for the Human Information Technology Interest Group. Additionally, I've chaired three different interest groups (Communication and Technology, Instructional Communication, and Organizational Communication), sat on the Executive Council, worked as ECA Marketing Director for three years, organized the first and third James C. McCroskey and Virginia P. Richmond Undergraduate Scholar's Conference (USC), and served as a member of the ECA Committee of Scholars.

My scholarly contributions to ECA include service as an associate editor and editorial board member for *Communication Research Reports* and as an editorial board member for *Communication Quarterly*. I've presented 22 competitively selected papers (10 of which were on top paper panels), and participated on numerous panels as chair, panel participant, or respondent. I've also taught a handful of short courses over the years. I think it is important to be a teacher-scholar and these activities evidence my commitment to this belief. In 2012, I was selected to become an ECA Distinguished Teaching Fellow.

I believe in encouraging my students to attend ECA and present their original research. I've also worked with undergraduates in our association in other capacities. Along with another colleague, I had a three-year opportunity to organize what was then the Lambda Pi Eta competitive paper panel at ECA. I think it was this dedication to my own students and the students of others that led me to coordinate the first and third annual USC.

As a result of these past experiences, I have been able to get an inside look at ECA's organizational structure. I've worked closely with five different first vice presidents and three executive directors. I believe that I am now prepared to engage our membership, plan our 2016 convention, and help move ECA forward on multiple fronts.

If elected there are four specific areas I would like to see strengthened:

First, I want to see an increased use of social media in a manner that is consistent with the organization's values and in-line with best marketing practices. As someone who both teaches about and utilizes a wide variety of communication technologies, I see our lack of social media use in association activities as problematic for the future.

Second, I want to start a dialogue exploring how to take the scholarship of ECA beyond the walls of our organization. Every year there are countless studies presented during our conventions or published in our journals that have significant national or international implications. We should develop strategies that promote this research in a manner that takes it beyond the organization

itself. In the past we have issued press releases informing local media outlets about top paper panels, but this is a single strategy and we need a multi-strategy approach to increase the awareness of scholarship within our organization.

Third, I want to broaden the participation and member base for the association. We all know of one or more colleagues at our own institutions who do not attend ECA. There are many institutions within our region that send no one to ECA at all. For our continued growth, I think we should pay special attention to sustaining current members and encouraging new members to join. We need to become more vocal about what we can provide ECA members and why participating in our organization is vital to members' needs and continuing professional growth.

Lastly, I want to see continued strides in the area of undergraduate and graduate student development. As someone who is deeply dedicated to the promotion of undergraduate creative activity and scholarship, I think the ECA USC only has room for growth. In fact, in the last couple of years our overall convention participation has grown because of the influx of undergraduates and this unique program. We also need to consider how we are helping graduate students. We should look at the desirability and possibility of creating graduate-student focused events to encourage their ongoing development. Today's students are tomorrow's ECA members and leaders. We have a rich tradition of including graduate students, but I think we need to explore other ways to integrate them and make them feel at home at ECA. Many of ECA's members started coming to ECA as graduate students. And even though they may leave the ECA region, many of them are still coming back year after year because they feel at home within our association.

I am excited about the prospect of taking on the ultimate challenge of ECA leadership. I want to give back to this amazing organization that has already given me so much. I would be honored to serve as First Vice President Elect-Select. Thank you for your consideration.