

The field of communication opened a door to possibilities that I never thought of in relation to my future. I was so fortunate to have been introduced to Dr. Mark Hickson by a coworker. She said, “You have to take his class!” I did and for the first time, I saw a professor who loved his content. He believed in his content. To him, communication was as integral to our functioning as physics and chemistry. Dr. Mark Hickson inspired in me a love for our field.

Initially, I meant to get my M.A. in communication at West Virginia University and return home to Alabama. I stayed for my doctorate and from there my story unfolds in a way that makes this a perfect time for me to serve as your Vice President Select-Elect. This ‘perfect timing’ involves my current position as Graduate Director of Strategic Communication at SUNY Oswego. I have come full circle from an academician who worked in medical research and corporate quality of care to a Graduate Director who works in academe to prepare students for the applied setting or continued scholarship. This opportunity to serve ECA allows me to combine my academic knowledge and my applied experience to our association’s 110th Annual Convention in Providence, RI the “The City that Works” in 2019. I am honored and humbled to be nominated for ECA’s First Vice President Select-Elect.

My vision for our field is that we share our host city’s lead by recreating ourselves in such a way that we are seen as the field that works to *create* better education, to *create* an understanding of relationships and how to make relationships successful, to *create* organizational communication that is efficient and profit driven, to *create* health care communication to increase patient quality of life and provider job satisfaction, just to name a few. My vision is that we will take our rightful place among fields that have earned the type of credibility we are striving to develop in external audiences while maintaining our traditions of excellent scholarship, teaching and service.

My vision for our field comes from participating in and serving our field since 1996 when I first became a member of ECA. My experiences with and service to ECA make me a highly qualified candidate to serve you and our association. My first act of service to ECA was to serve as Administrative Assistant to Dr. Melanie Booth Butterfield in planning our conference in Baltimore, Maryland in 1997. I learned how the conference functioned from every perspective ranging from calls for submissions, to the number of interest groups, to panels per interest group, to the yellow rose tradition for the Past Officer’s Club to conference program development to conference program execution. I then served ECA in the following capacities on many occasions throughout the years

- Interest Group Representative to Executive Council
- Interest Group Secretary
- Interest Group Chair
- ECA Representative to the NCA Nominating Committee
- Marketing Director
- 2nd Vice President
- Chair of a Presidential Taskforce

In addition to serving ECA, I have participated in ECA by presenting refereed papers, serving as a panelist on special topics, panel chair and panel respondent. My participation in ECA from the

administrative and participant perspective makes me a highly qualified candidate, but adding to the strength of my qualifications are my accomplishments in the federal and corporate setting. I was Project Manager for two HSR&D trials while working for the Veterans Health Administration, Clinical Trials Manager, Senior Manager of Clinical Quality for the nation's third largest Medicare Part D sponsor (MemberHealth) and Associate Director of the VA's National Quality Improvement Initiative for which I assessed all quality improvement initiatives across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. My leadership responsibilities at MemberHealth won my organization two national awards in Pharmacy Benefits Management. We took the URAC Gold Award for increasing medication adherence in HIV patients. Under my leadership, we earned a national award for our work in increasing Ace Inhibitor utilization in our diabetic patients. At the foundation of each of these awards was sound applied research utilizing the scientific method.

Due to my experiences, it is my contention that we are ready to go beyond our walls to make scholarly work available, more frequently, in the applied world in a more purposive way. We have successfully mastered our scholarly abilities and we must now transform ourselves and use our knowledge to create solutions!

Through my work with and for ECA, I have carried on my family's commitment to service. My parents served as great role models in doing for others and doing so humbly. In the many years I have witnessed my parents' service, I have never heard them speak of their service. They simply do for others with no expectation of personal gain. This is also the tradition of ECA from my experience. When we serve ECA, we do so because we want to continue the tradition of mentoring new members and fostering academic and professional growth. In serving others, we are creating opportunities for others to carry on the traditions we have grown to treasure. I have always been amazed at the visible excitement in young members who are elected to a volunteer role! If elected to serve, I will ensure that our traditions are preserved while we strive to thrive in our rapidly changing environment. I will follow in the humble footsteps of those who led before me.

In addition to preserving our traditions, my plan for ECA 2019 is to create a conference that is structured upon inviting applied work that adheres to the scientific method. Of course, the applied work would be nothing without our traditional research so I will challenge our membership to engage in traditional research, as well, that will lead to transforming our environments. The work that we do should be making a difference in the lives of those around us. As a field, we should be asking questions about issues we face and solving those issues through communication. In addition, I will engage in continued encouragement of undergraduate scholarship. I will also work with current officers to continue documenting our processes and procedures so that future leaders have a platform from which to work. Finally, I will work with our current officers to focus on our continued fiscal health. We are financially healthy and we must consider how our fiscal strength can be maintained while simultaneously benefiting our membership.

If elected to plan ECA 2019, I will challenge each and every member of ECA to begin working on applied and traditional research projects to be presented in April 2019. I will challenge our memberships to align with the mission of the "City that works" that is hosting our conference.

We must be open and accessible. Our theme will be about being accessible and open to the world around us. If elected, I will proudly serve.