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## Welcome from the First Vice President

The NCA 108<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention is right around the corner. Current registration numbers suggest that approximately 4,000 of us will be coming together for Honoring PLACE: People, Liberation, Advocacy, Community, and Environment in New Orleans. The virtual portion of the convention kicked off October 6 with our first-ever pre-convention virtual series. The six-part series concludes today with Dr. Amber Johnson's presentation "[If We Want to Heal, We Must Tell the Truth: Truth, Reconciliation and Racial Justice in the Midst of Ahistorical Narratives.](#)"

For those of you who cannot attend the convention in person but are registered for the [virtual attendee](#) option, you can still participate in nine hybrid sessions offered during the convention. They include two must-join sessions on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, the first, "[The Accessible Panel Project](#)," starts at 12:30 p.m. CT, with the goal of modeling a maximally accessible panel. The second, "[Publishing Race Scholarship in Communication Studies](#)," begins at 2:00 p.m. CT.

On Friday, November 18, there is a powerful set of sessions and events that focus on the Black experience in New Orleans:

2 p.m. CT; "[Honoring PLACE: Revisiting the Train Tracks Where Plessy v. Ferguson Began and Plessy AND Ferguson Celebrated People, Liberation, Advocacy, and Community](#)," with descendants of Plessy and Ferguson joining Communication scholars in discussion. This will also be live-streamed.

3:30 p.m. CT: "[Spitting Fire: Honoring PLACE through Spoken Word Poetry](#)," includes poet scholars and celebrated Black local poets performing poetry linked to the convention theme.

5:00 p.m. CT: Ronald L. Jackson II, University of Cincinnati, will present the [Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture](#), "Antiracism and the Complexity of Woke Politics."

Following the Carroll C. Arnold Lecture is the sold-out dinner event at Dooky Chase, the legendary New Orleans restaurant that was at the center of the Civil Rights Movement. Finally, a free shuttle will leave from the Sheraton hotel, in a loop starting at 7:15 p.m., to take convention attendees to the center of New Orleans Jazz, Frenchmen St., where several world-class jazz bands will be playing across multiple venues.

On Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, at 3:30 p.m. CT, we are fortunate to be joined by Dr. Beverly Wright, founder and executive director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice in New Orleans. Dr. Wright, a preeminent environmental justice scholar, will discuss "[The Color of Place: Influences on Democracy, Environmental, and Climate Change](#)" in another not-to-miss session.

The [NCA Presidential Address and Awards Presentation](#), sponsored by Routledge, Taylor & Francis, will take place at 5:00 p.m. CT. There, NCA President Roseann Mandziuk, Texas State University, will address "Enacting Conscience and Communicating Presence: Crafting NCA's Future." Please be sure to attend and celebrate your colleagues outstanding achievements in research, teaching, and service.

Finally, every night of the convention, from 8:00-9:00 p.m. CT, there will be an alcohol-free event hosted in the Iris/Muses room, 8th floor of the Sheraton. Thanks to Narissra M. Punyanunt-Carter, Texas Tech University, for organizing these activities. Additional details can be found later in this newsletter.

I hope the many opportunities to join enriching scholarly conversations and invigorating social spaces help you feel connected to PLACE.

--[Walid Afifi](#), NCA First Vice President, University of California Santa Barbara

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## **NCA Day of Service**

Please join us in supporting the educational mission of the New Orleans-area school districts by participating in the [NCA Day of Service](#)! On Friday, November 18, from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., we will gather to create classroom supply kits and giant scrabble boards for local schools. In an additional show of support, we will be writing encouraging notes to local teachers thanking them for their work, especially during these challenging times.

These fun, hands-on activities will take place in the Acadia Ballroom, in the NCA Exhibit Hall. You are welcome to come by and help for as long as you would like. Even an hour of your time would be a great way to show support for this worthy cause. We'd like to thank [Kendall Hunt](#) for sponsoring our Day of Service activities and for their dedication to supporting the next generation of great communicators.

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## **Visit the Exhibit Hall**

Visit the Exhibit Hall and speak with publishers, educational product vendors, and other Communication-related associations. For a full list of exhibitors and booth assignments, visit the [Exhibitor/Sponsor](#) section on NCA Convention Central. The Exhibit Hall will be open as follows:

- Thursday, November 17: 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

- Friday, November 18: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 19: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

This year, NCA will also host an Exhibitor Showcase which will feature author discussions, technology demonstrations, and feature new and innovative books.

Thursday, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m. W.W. Norton & Co. presents "[Contemporary Public Speaking by Gehrke and Foley](#)" and 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Pearson will share "[Engage your students with Shared Media inside Revel.](#)" Please note that the Pearson session will also be presented again on Friday from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Also on Friday, W.W. Norton & Co. will feature "[The Norton Field Guide to Speaking by Engleberg and Daly.](#)" From 2:00 - 3:00 p.m., Kendall Hunt will present "[A Strategic Approach to Business & Professional Communication.](#)"

The Exhibitor Showcase will conclude on Saturday with a final session from W. W. Norton from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m., "[It's Interpersonal by Panches and Ramos Salazar](#)" and a session from Yoodli, "[Using AI to improve your public speaking.](#)" from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

We encourage all registrants to visit the Exhibit Hall during the convention. In booth receptions, showcase sessions, and other activities will take throughout so each visit will provide a new experience!

## Graduate School Open House and Career Center

The complete list of schools participating in the Graduate School Open House is now available on the [Department Information](#) webpage. The Graduate School Open House is Thursday, November 17, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., in the Acadia Grand Ballroom of the Marriott.

The complete Job Fair position list is also available on the [Department Information](#) webpage. The Job Fair will be held in conjunction with the NCA Career Center on Friday, November 18, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the Acadia Grand Ballroom of the Marriott. Prepare your [elevator pitch](#) and bring your CV and/or business cards to hand out to representatives, as extended conversations may not be possible. In addition to the Job Fair, the NCA Career Center will also feature three dynamic PrepTalks, professional headshots, and the CV Consulting Corner.

Both events are open to all registered attendees. [Click here for more info.](#)

## NCA Welcome Reception

All participants are invited to attend the [NCA Welcome Reception](#) on, Thursday, November 17, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in Mardi Gras Ballroom Salon E of the Marriott. This reception is a great place to meet and reconnect with friends and colleagues. The event will begin with a lively New Orleans style kick-off following the [NCA Opening Session](#), a not to be missed event!

## Evening Events

Every evening of the convention there will be alcohol-free events. The following activities and events will be held on the 8th floor of the Sheraton.

Thursday, November 17, [NCA Zumba](#) will get your blood pumping. Zumba is a cardiovascular fitness program with participants doing Latin-inspired dance steps and aerobics. This session will be 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. in Iris/Muses.

Also on Thursday, NCA Executive Director Shari Miles-Cohen will be hosting a game night from 8:30 - 10:00 p.m. in Proteus/Zulu.

Friday, November 18, we will host a [Death Café](#). Death Cafés are gatherings for attendees to talk philosophically, physically, or metaphorically about death and dying. Each small group will have a facilitator. This session will be 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. in Iris/Muses.

Saturday, November 19, [Bags to Beds](#) will teach attendees how to make plarn (plastic yarn) from plastic bags. We will hand-crochet the plarn into to make sleeping mats for those experiencing homelessness. Participants are encouraged to bring their own plastic grocery bags, but no other supplies are needed. This session will be 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. in Iris/Muses.

These events are open to all registered attendees. Also available to all attendees, on Friday night from 7:15 – 11:00 p.m. NCA will be providing a free shuttle, departing from the front of the Sheraton on Canal St. to the Frenchman Street area. Frenchman Street, and surrounding blocks, is home to many live music venues. Most venues are 21+ and some may require a cover charge.

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## Health and Safety Resources

When registering for the convention, all attendees agree to an [Anti-Harassment Code of Conduct](#) to support the safety and security of all convention attendees. NCA has contracted with a human resources professional who will be onsite during the convention to address violations of this Code of Conduct. To report a concern, please e-mail [codeofconduct@natcom.org](mailto:codeofconduct@natcom.org). This e-mail is not monitored outside of the convention.

Please note, if you experience or witness behavior that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to public safety, or if you believe you may have been physically assaulted during the convention, please dial 911 and report the incident to law enforcement officials.

We encourage all convention attendees to follow the following safety tips when traveling around New Orleans:

- Use the buddy system by walking in groups or with a friend or colleague, especially at night.
- Stick to well-lit and well-traveled streets and be aware of your surroundings. Keep your eyes up and not on your phone.
- Communicate your plans or itinerary to others.
- Be conscious of your belongings when exploring the city and attending sessions. Do not leave your belongings unattended, even in NCA sessions.
- Remove your NCA Annual Convention badges and leave your convention tote bags back at the hotel while exploring the city.

Please visit the [Hotel and Travel](#) webpage for additional [health and safety resources](#) including COVID-19 testing sites.

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## Registration Desk

The NCA registration area, located in the Preservation Hall Foyer at the Marriott, will be open during these hours:

- Wednesday, November 16: 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday, November 17: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, November 18: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 19: 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The registration area will not be open on Sunday, November 20. Prior to entering the registration area and receiving your materials, all attendees will go through the on-site vaccine verification process, also located in Preservation Hall Foyer. All registered attendees are strongly encouraged to [upload the required information](#) prior to the convention to facilitate a quick and easy process on-site.

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## **NCA Annual Convention and COVID-19**

**If you are attending the convention in person, and have not already done so, please [upload your COVID-19 vaccine verification information](#) prior to arriving in New Orleans for an expedited check-in process.**

All attendees must go through the on-site verification process prior to attending any sessions. Verification will be done in Preservation Hall foyer of the Marriott:

- Wednesday 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Friday 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday 7:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Once verified, attendees will be given their badge to wear for the duration of the convention. Additional information is available on our [COVID-19](#) webpage. While we encourage all attendees to utilize CLEAR Health Pass for an expedited check in process, those who would prefer to have their information visually checked on-site can do so. Please allow additional time to navigate that process.

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## **Navigating the Convention Space**

Please review the following information to help you navigate around the Marriott and Sheraton in New Orleans. Convention programs will be held in both hotels. NCA registration and Exhibit Hall will be in the Marriott. General sessions will be in the Sheraton.

### **Navigating the Marriott**

The Marriott has two towers, River Tower and Quarter Tower. The lobby, second floor, and third floor are connected across both towers. Accessing the fourth and fifth floors meeting space requires using the River Tower elevators. Note, there are meeting rooms named Bacchus at the Marriott and the Sheraton. Both hotels also have a Grand Ballroom. The Grand Ballroom at the Marriott is listed as the Acadia Grand Ballroom in the program and will be the venue for NCA Exhibit Hall.

### **Navigating the Sheraton**

All meeting rooms at the Sheraton are in a single tower. While there are meeting rooms located on the second floor, that space is not part of the NCA convention. Note, there are meeting rooms named

Bacchus at both hotels, however, the Bacchus room at the Sheraton will serve as the designated lactation room for attendees. Both hotels also have a Grand Ballroom. The Grand Ballroom at the Sheraton is listed as Grand Ballroom A, Grand Ballroom B, etc. in the program. Grand Ballroom C will be the venue for general sessions each night.

Please see the [floor plans](#) for additional information. The hotels are not connected via an enclosed walkway but are located directly across the street from each other. Please utilize caution at the crosswalk, when crossing the street. There will be crossing guards to assist attendees as they travel back and forth.

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