IDEA

2022

STRATEGIC**PLAN**

NCA

AUTHORED BY THE 2021 INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

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Part I: Introduction

Building upon the momentous labor of both named and unnamed NCA members who embody IDEA practices[1]—to whom our discipline owes much gratitude—this Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Strategic Plan marshals our organization's history, mission statement, bylaws, policies, reports, and practices to delineate IDEA goals, objectives, tasks, and assessment measures in service to achieving IDEA as standard NCA organizational practice.

NCA'S COMMITMENT TO IDEA

NCA's commitment to IDEA flows from its mission statement, and also, it's various policy statements adopted by the Legislative Assembly (See Part II, Appendix III, and Appendix IV of the 2021 IDEA Strategic Planning Task Force Report). NCA's IDEA commitment also emerges from an organizational desire to reckon and respond to our past failures as an organization so as not to repeat them.

NCA seeks to cultivate an organization in which all members feel valued and respected. Our mission as an organization calls on us to do our best to support all individuals to explore their professional interests in teaching, research, and service.

NCA's framework for IDEA acknowledges how individuals and groups differ, while also focusing explicitly on historically underrepresented/underserved persons/groups in the categories of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, citizenship status, ability, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and their intersections.

NCA's (re)new commitment to IDEA is:

> To exemplify and champion Inclusive Excellence.[2]

To exemplify Inclusive Excellence, IDEA values should guide our organization and the communication discipline. Building organizational infrastructure, inciting consistent IDEA best practices, targeted goal identification and completion, and engaging in assessment and process improvement via accountability (i.e., incentives, rewards, and penalties) form the bedrocks of institutional courage and transformation. All individuals who are NCA members, National Office staff, or leaders should feel a responsibility to make our organization more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible.

NCA's IDEA VALUES [3]

NCA believes that diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (IDEA) are core values within the communication discipline and our organization.

NCA defines these core values as follows:

- **DIVERSITY embraces the presence and strengths of all forms of difference.** Diversity refers to the meaningful representation and visibility of a full intersectional range of identities, ideologies, institutional affiliations, and areas of scholarly inquiry across the communication discipline in the U.S. and globally. Valuing diversity within our organization and discipline includes recognizing that people and groups of people differ and that those differences are sites of creativity and innovation that enrich the organization, our research, and the discipline.

- **EQUITY aims for fairness of outcome by identifying and overcoming disparities.** Seeking equity within the organization involves recognizing and resolving structural disadvantages that prevent the full participation of members of the organization and wider discipline. Valuing equity is

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[1]   See Appendix i of the 2021 IDEA SP Task Force Report
[2]   See Part II of the 2021 IDEA SP Task Force Report
[3]   D5. (2014). What is DEI? D5: Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in philanthropy. d5coalition.org

characterized by a commitment to equitable treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all members at every stage of education and career development. Different from equality, equity factors in the effects of past injustices, the realities of structural inequalities, and the persistence of subtle and overt biases. Diligent inquiry and measuring the degree to which efforts have materially resolved structural disparities is required.

- **INCLUSION ensures everyone has meaningful opportunities to participate and develop a sense of belonging within the organization.** An inclusive organization must proactively create an environment of openness where structural barriers are removed, and all members are empowered to participate and shape the organization. All members feel respected, valued, and supported in every aspect of organizational decision-making and culture. While a truly inclusive group is necessarily diverse, a diverse group may not necessarily be inclusive.

- **ACCESS ensures equivalent use of services, resources, and entry into material and immaterial spaces, networks, learning opportunities, and interactions.** An organization that prioritizes access as a core value works proactively to improve the entry and success of all members, regardless of differences in ability and experience. Entrance alone is inadequate if members are unable to belong and thrive, and an accommodating environment remains meaningless if only a narrow range of members can gain entry.

Utilizing these IDEA values as a guiding light, we can work toward exemplifying and championing inclusive excellence throughout the organization.

NCA supports just and fair policies and actions that seek to realize IDEA values in our organizational structure and culture, but also in the workplace and classroom. Innovative policies at Universities and Colleges that address inclusion, diversity, equity and access in admissions, financial support of students, leadership development, equitable access, and faculty hiring and retention are needed to advance the discipline of communication. NCA should take a leadership role in advocating for larger structural change guided by IDEA values that transforms the future of communication education and research.

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN BUILDS A FOUNDATION FOR CENTRALIZING IDEA VALUES IN OUR ORGANIZATION AND DISCIPLINE. TO DO THIS, THE STRATEGIC PLAN SEEKS TO:

1. Advance NCA's processes of data collection about our members and their needs so we can respond to emergent IDEA concerns.

2. Create accountability structures within NCA to ensure IDEA work is ongoing and prioritized.

3. Offer pathways forward towards transformational structural and organizational policies and practices that prioritize IDEA.

Part II: Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

IN THIS SECTION, WE DETAIL FIVE IDEA GOALS AND SUBSEQUENT OBJECTIVES AND TASKS required to achieve these goals. These goals, objectives, and tasks are designed to be completed over the next five years.

We have highlighted the urgency of each of the tasks in the categories **Low, Medium, High** to signify the emergent need for items.[4] Additionally, estimated costs are scaled at **Low, Medium, High costs**.

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[4]   This should not be interpreted as ascribing an explicit timeline, as that will be directed by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee of NCA. Some objectives and tasks are marked with more urgency because they are foundationally imperative and achievable earlier on. Certain items may indeed be foundationally imperative but may take longer to complete so are marked with a lower urgency.

Best practices, when referenced, are understood as "procedure(s) that have been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that [are] established or proposed as standard suitable for widespread adoption."[5] Tasks are expected to be addressed over the next five years. While Suggestions are additional insights or potential pathways for achieving goals and objectives.

We fully acknowledge that NCA staff, volunteers, and leadership may need to adjust the timeline of this plan or reassess priorities to respond to immediate concerns and needs. IDEA work requires accountability, but also flexibility to identify urgencies, address emergent priorities, and adjust plans as obstacles arise. Although this strategic plan has been endorsed by the Executive Committee of NCA and will be officially endorsed by the Legislative Assembly, it should also be considered a living document.

NCA LEGAL DISCLAIMER: This document is aspirational in nature and does not create any legal obligation. It is not intended to and shall not be used to support a cause of action or legal claim.

GOAL 1 — ASSESS AND IMPROVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE OF NCA FOR HISTORICAL DISENFRANCHISED MEMBERS.

OBJECTIVE 1.1   Develop a biennial organization wide membership survey designed to assess organizational climate and identify emergent needs related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access across the organization.

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee
Budget—Medium

Tasks

- Create a survey to collect data on our membership and assess organizational climate.
- Collect data from the survey and analyze the results to identify longstanding and emergent equity gaps.
- Following each survey, the EC must produce a report that includes a summary of results that is accessible to members, the IDEA Council, and Legislative Assembly. This report should provide recommendations for specific actions to resolve equity gaps.

Suggestions

- The survey tool should be theoretically developed based on IDEA research in communication and related disciplines, utilize diverse methodologies beyond standard social scientific methods, and identify current obstacles to IDEA values and emerging needs.
- Give respondents an opportunity to report on each unit of which they are a member. Then, pair this data with reports from unit leaders on equity gaps.
- Identify persistently reported barriers and challenges and determine the appropriate personnel to be tasked with resolving them, whether at the member, unit, committee, or institutional level.
- Enumerate solutions to be pursued in the two-year interval between the report and the next membership survey. Solutions should be explained in terms of how they address both the reported experiences of members and the root causes of the problems they aim to solve.
- Determine resources needed to support the meaningful implementation of the proposed solutions.

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5   Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Best Practice" https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/best%20practice

- Justify the priority given to the barriers addressed by the proposed solutions. Since a single membership assessment cannot identify and address all existing concerns, the report should explain why it is prioritizing the resolution of certain issues as opposed to others.
- The report should also revisit previous IDEA recommendations and assess the progress made towards achieving them (or explain the lack of progress).

OBJECTIVE 1.2   Create an assessment protocol for all NCA units to identify equity gaps and develop innovative solutions to resolve those gaps.

Urgency—Medium
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee, IDEA Council, Director of Membership and Governance, NCA Unit Leaders
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Design a process for interest group leadership to identify equity gaps and implement solutions.
- The EC shall be responsible for creating a report specifically assessing the EC, National Office, and NCA Councils. The resulting report should be provided to Legislative Assembly.

Suggestions

- It is highly suggested that all current units must perform an assessment of their missions, bylaws, processes, and practices to make sure they are in alignment with IDEA values and principles.
- Annually, units should identify equity gaps within the unit and articulate an action plan to address those gaps in the next year.
- Implement online infrastructure to easily submit reports alongside annual unit and EC reports.

OBJECTIVE 1.3   Create an IDEA Leader Program to support a mentorship pipeline for NCA members interested in pursuing IDEA work.

Urgency— Medium to low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee, IDEA Council, Director of Membership and Governance, Publications Council, Research Council, Leadership Development Committee, Teaching and Learning Council, NCA Office Staff
Budget—Medium to High

Tasks

- Design an IDEA Leader Program to support NCA members in pursuing IDEA work within NCA and/or externally in their communities, on their campuses, and in their research.
- Secure funding for stipends/honoraria for IDEA Leaders.
- Develop a formal process for applying and being accepted into the IDEA Leader program.

Suggestions

- Potential responsibilities include presenting work on an IDEA Leaders panel at national convention, mentoring NCA members with IDEA interests or ambitions, participating in NCA programming to ensure dissemination of IDEA work, or pursuing an IDEA related project on their campus or in their communities.

CREATE AN IDEA ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE THROUGHOUT NCA THAT FOSTERS TRANSPARENCY AND RESPONDS TO MEASURABLE DATA.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Hire an IDEA Director to serve as NCA's Chief Diversity Officer.

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, National Office, Executive Council, IDEA Council
Budget—High

Tasks

- Design a permanent staff position in the national office for an IDEA director.
- Develop and implement a national search to hire the IDEA director.

Suggestions

- Include the IDEA Council in the process to ensure the hiring committee is respondent to minoritized member's needs.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 Develop and initiate a process to hold NCA units accountable.

Urgency—Medium
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, National Office, Executive Council, Legislative Assembly
Budget—Low

Tasks

- The EC must develop a transparent accountability process to help NCA units respond to identified equity gaps and IDEA concerns in their annual reports (see Objective 1.2)
- Routinely examine and improve assessment procedures in consultation with NCA members and units to ensure the process remains useful and productive.

Suggestions

- NCA units who fail to follow IDEA assessment processes and policies implemented in response to this plan should be held accountable, perhaps by losing convention slots or other penalties. The accountability structure should be transparent, simple, and be applied consistently. For example, if the unit leadership does not submit the IDEA assessment (alongside additional annual reports), then the unit's funding from NCA could be withheld until all required assessments are completed.
- Establish a publicly accessible page on the NCA website that archives all units' annual reports for maximum transparency.

OBJECTIVE 2.3 Increase the capacity of NCA leadership to respond to crises and conflicts, including discriminatory incidents at organizational events and in online forums.

Urgency— High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Council, IDEA Council, Publications Council, Research Council, Teaching and Learning Council, Leadership Development Committee, NCA National Office Staff
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Develop a Code of Conduct for the National Convention that goes beyond sexual harassment to include other forms of harassment (such as racist, homophobic,

transphobic comments or other micro aggressive behaviors towards marginalized members). Such a Code of Conduct allows NCA leadership and staff to quickly identify inappropriate behavior and make swift decisions to hold those who enact harm accountable.

- Develop a clear, direct, and publicly accessible process (with options for anonymity and within all relevant legal restrictions) for submitting IDEA grievances concerning individuals/NCA units and potential violations of the convention Code of Conduct to the EC.

Suggestions

- Require ongoing professional development and training for all NCA leaders and staff who interact with the public to respond to crises and conflicts with integrity, empathy, institutional courage, and transparency. The American Council on Education (ACE) identifies three key skills such leaders and staff need to build: active listening, speaking from the heart, and acting with constituents. Such communication also requires an attunement to the perspectives of the marginalized.
- Develop a framework that considers pathways for offering organizational support to Communication scholars that are targeted for their teaching, research, and public scholarship surrounding IDEA.
- Develop operational procedures for effective and timely communication with constituents to ensure that crises are addressed promptly and that members are well-informed on the events unfolding, the organization's response, and the ways in which IDEA values guide the corrective actions that will be taken.
- Institute regular assessment of the effectiveness of communication with members, particularly after crises.
- Create space for members to express anger, distrust, fear, and fatigue. As the ACE report reminds us, "Leaders, who despair a divided [organization], romanticize the myth of a time when everyone felt included, embraced, and valued. Wishing everyone could just get along reflects values of white fragility and the need to make the white community comfortable. By acknowledging and taking responsibility for racism, hatred, microaggressions, and pain, and directly accepting criticism, leaders stand for anti-racist values that can support [an organization] through the crisis." (p. 27)
- Build robust formal and informal two-way communication channels across multiple media. These should include opportunities for public dialogues and forums with clear ground rules and well-trained moderators.

OBJECTIVE 2.4   Strengthen policies that create accountability to IDEA in the hiring and evaluation of National Office staff.

Urgency—Medium
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Executive Director's performance goals should be revised to include an assessment for moving IDEA goals and praxis forward within the organization.
- Evaluation of all National Office staff should include additional positive accolades for professional development and/or accomplishments related to IDEA work.

Suggestions

- Hiring committees for National office staff positions should reflect the diversity of our organization.
- An IDEA advocate should be appointed on any established hiring committee to ensure an IDEA lens is prioritized. An IDEA advocate can be any member of the hiring committee, appointed by the Executive Director.

OBJECTIVE 2.5   All new NCA Interest Groups must center IDEA values in their
                 processes and policies.

                 Urgency— High
                 Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, National Office, Executive Committee,
                 IDEA Council, Legislative Assembly
                 Budget—Low

Tasks

- Proposals for new Interest Groups must include a clear articulation of how they plan to center IDEA values and put forth a clear plan for how they will institutionalize IDEA values into their processes, such as elections, leadership structures, and awards.
- The Legislative Assembly must consider whether a proposal for a new interest group meets and adheres to IDEA values.

Suggestions

- Proposals for new Interest Groups could be reviewed for endorsement or non-endorsement by the IDEA Council and Executive Committee before being brought to the Legislative Assembly for a vote.

OBJECTIVE 2.6:   NCA must build IDEA practice into elected National officer leadership responsibilities
                 to ensure long standing accountability.

                 Urgency— High
                 Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, National Office,
                 Executive Committee, Legislative Assembly
                 Budget—Low

Tasks

- Create and maintain three separate branches of IDEA leadership. In addition to the proposed IDEA Director (national office staff position) and the current IDEA council (membership representation to oversee and review IDEA practices and policies) NCA must create a pipeline for elected offers to be accountable for completing IDEA work.
- The elected Second Vice-President of NCA should be tasked with moving the IDEA strategic plan forward and overseeing the IDEA Leaders Program.

Suggestions

- Revise NCA bylaws as needed to clarify the relationship between these three branches and instantiate the role of the Second Vice President. GOAL 3: Equip all NCA leaders and members to carry out IDEA vision and initiatives within and beyond NCA.

GOAL **3** **EQUIP ALL NCA LEADERS AND MEMBERS TO CARRY OUT
IDEA VISION AND INITIATIVES WITHIN AND BEYOND NCA.**

OBJECTIVE 3.1   Develop and circulate common IDEA definitions.

                 Urgency—High
                 Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, Legislative
                 Assembly, NCA Communication Department, IDEA Council, Teaching and Learning
                 Council, Publications Council, Research Council
                 Budget—Low

Tasks

- Host reoccurring opportunities for NCA decision-makers (ED, EC, Councils, and LA) to engage with NCA members and stakeholders in the ongoing development of the living definitions of IDEA values (e.g., via webinars, convention panels, publications, teaching & learning resources).
- Work to ensure that NCA messaging is consistent with up-to-date IDEA values. Consistent language across internal and external documents is necessary. This includes but is not limited to bylaws, policies, manuals, awards, and public statements.
- Revise NCA's mission to center IDEA values in the Communication discipline.
- Revise the 2018 Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to provide consistent definitions of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (as defined in this strategic plan). See Appendix III of the 2021 IDEA Strategic Plan Task Force Report for a draft of this revision.

OBJECTIVE 3.2   Require annual IDEA education and training for all leaders in NCA.

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director,
Legislative Assembly, NCA Staff, IDEA Council, Teaching and Learning Council,
Publications Council, Research Council, NCA Units
    Budget—Low to Medium

Tasks

- Develop a virtual "Introduction to IDEA" training course specific for the Communication discipline or identify an already existing course that meets the discipline's specific needs.
- All members serving in elected and leadership positions in NCA units must complete the "Introduction to IDEA" training. This is including but not limited to the Executive Committee, the Legislative Assembly, Editors-Elect, and the Executive Board or equivalent for every NCA unit.

OBJECTIVE 3.3   Center IDEA values in our communication strategy.

Urgency—Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, Legislative
Assembly, NCA Staff, NCA Communications Department, IDEA Council, Teaching and
Learning Council, Publications Council, Research Council, NCA Units
Budget—Medium

Tasks

- Develop an IDEA hub on the organization's website that provides information, resources, tools, and research bibliographies rooted in NCA's IDEA values and communication research. Such materials will help NCA units, as well as departments, institutions, and individuals to carry out IDEA practices. It will also work to advocate for the Communication discipline's central role in creating positive change that supports IDEA values.
- Create organization-wide guidelines for inclusive language. These guidelines will address gender pronouns but also other language and inclusive language issues such as capitalization, hyphenation, pronouns, identities, abilities, agency of subjects, and people-first language.

Suggestions

- Create a 3-minute YouTube training video about implicit bias featuring Communication scholars.

- Create a 3-minute YouTube training video about microaggressions featuring Communication scholars.
- Create a short YouTube training video about communication and decolonization featuring Communication scholars.
- Create a Best Practices for Hiring Guide for the Communication discipline.
- Create an IDEA-Based framework for evaluating research and scholarly productivity that can be utilized by member departments, schools, and colleges of communication.
- Create a Best Practices for Graduate Admissions Guide for the Communication discipline.
- Create a Best Practices for IDEA in Departments Guide for the Communication discipline.
- Create a virtual training for department chairs that emphasizes institutionalizing IDEA principles, organizational resilience, and institutional courage.
- Create guidelines for offering inclusive presentations.
- Create guidelines for anti-racist and anti-imperial communication practices.
- Provide advocacy resources for those at the institutions that fall short of NCA's IDEA policies and practice. Suggestions for how to approach Chairs, Deans, etc. to make IDEA changes.
- Suggest that all units contribute educational tools, such as IDEA pamphlets, educating how their specific area of inquiry teaches and upholds IDEA principles (i.e. how can the Public Relations Division offer educational tools about its investments in IDEA mission/objectives).
- Create guidelines for Interest Groups to initiate proactive IDEA work (e.g., creating a new officer position, an IDEA subcommittee, review or grievance procedures, or IDEA assessment measures).

OBJECTIVE 3.4   **Align infrastructure and processes for external job advertisement with NCA so that these processes reflect and embody IDEA values.**

Timeframe—Year 2
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, NCA Staff, IDEA Council
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Assess and improve infrastructure and processes for job advertisements posted on NCA's website and CommNotes listserv to be consistent with IDEA values.
- Create a Best Practices for Job Advertising Guide for the Communication discipline that centers IDEA values.

Suggestions

- Develop an IDEA certification program that individual search committees in Communication departments may elect to complete. The certification program will consist of an online training video and a quiz. If all members of the search committee complete the training, their job advertisement will have a special insignia placed on the advertisement on COMMNotes. They are also welcome to include their certification in the wording of the job advertisement. The IDEA certification program will not eliminate job advertisements from being advertised via NCA if they elect not to participate. Rather, this program helps signal to potential applicants a search committee's IDEA practices and reward department's for completing the training.
- Provide all members with training on how to write "IDEA Statements" as applicants and how to evaluate "IDEA Statements" as search committee members.

- Require institutions that advertise available jobs through NCA to disclose whether their employee benefits provide gender-affirming healthcare (including top surgery, gender affirmation surgery, hormone replacement therapy, and expansive reproductive health care).

OBJECTIVE 3.5　**Increase and promote the importance of IDEA strategic planning across the discipline.**

Urgency— Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, NCA Staff, IDEA Council
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Identify how NCA can serve as a reflective and empowering partner in the discipline and humanities for IDEA strategic planning.
- Implement communication and advocacy strategies to promote IDEA strategic planning across the discipline.

Suggestions

- Establish a strategic planning liaison whose duty is to connect with regional and international Communication learned societies to facilitate a better dialogue throughout the discipline on IDEA principles. Both the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) and the Eastern Communication Association also have IDEA strategic plans in development.
- Develop a guide for IDEA strategic planning housed on NCA's website that can be used by Communication departments.
- Develop training for IDEA strategic planning at the annual NCA Chair's Retreat and Hope Conference.

OBJECTIVE 3.6　**Create an NCA archive specifically for IDEA histories and materials to preserve ongoing and past efforts of the global community of communication scholars.**

Urgency— Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, NCA Staff, IDEA Council
Budget—Medium

Tasks

- Secure funds to support the development of an IDEA archive.
- Designate a curator for the IDEA archive and/or identify an academic library with which to partner for the creation and curation of the archive.
- Determine how to make the archive's collection, preservation, and availability practices consistent with IDEA principles.

Suggestions

- Collect artifacts and documents from NCA units and members for inclusion in the archive.
- Collect oral histories of members and key figures in NCA's IDEA history.

EXPAND NCA MEMBERS' ACCESS TO FACILITATE FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE DISCIPLINE ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS OF SPACE, BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES, LANGUAGE, AND MATERIAL RESOURCES.

OBJECTIVE 4.1 Commit resources and expertise to ensure that full participation is not solely defined by or reduced to social acceptance or accommodation.

Urgency—Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, NCA Communication Department, Teaching and Learning Council, Publications Council, Research Council, NCA Units
Budget—Medium

Tasks

- Create and promote Universal Design for Learning through the Teaching and Learning Council resources. This includes developing communication specific teaching and learning resources on Universal Design for Learning to be distributed and used by NCA members and units.
- Provide a land acknowledgement statement for panelists at the Annual National Convention.
- Continue to create opportunities for virtual and hybrid events to increase access to under-engaged and underserved populations.

Suggestions

- Train NCA staff and convention volunteers to ensure they understand and implement best accessibility practices when hosting NCA events.
- Create resources for units and members to examine their own habits and practices for inherent inaccessibility (e.g., social events that primarily or only center alcohol; presentations that do not use a microphone; events promoted and conducted solely in English; lack of access to virtual options for participation; networking opportunities that take place in spaces that require participants to spend money to attend).
- Invest in interpretation staff, equipment, and software to support multilingual access at NCA events where needed.
- Continue inquiring with Taylor and Francis about options and possibilities for Open Access publishing for NCA journals.
- Research and implement more practices and procedures that support neurodiversity. "Neurodiversity refers specifically to the limitless variability of human cognition and the uniqueness of each human mind."[6]
- Circulate instructions for a visual impairment statement that calls for participants and speakers to include brief descriptions of appearance for those with visual impairments and/or face blindness to visualize and/or identify us.

OBJECTIVE 4.2 Prioritize and annually enhance convention site accessibility in terms of space.

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Convention Planner, Convention Committee, Unit Program Planners, IDEA Council, Executive Director, Executive Committee
Budget—Medium to High

Tasks

- Continue the practice of assessing convention site accessibility each year and refine this practice to target specific issues that are commonly raised from one convention to the next.

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[6]   Judy Singer, "NeuroDiversity 2.0" https://neurodiversity2.blogspot.com/p/what.html

- Identify best practice accessibility criteria to be considered in the future contracting of hotel convention sites. How is accessibility being valued in the decisions? How is access guaranteed? How is preference for new sites weighed against accessibility needs?

Suggestions

- Assess and amend current delivery mechanisms of conference materials to ensure they match principles of University Design for Learning (UDL).
- Circulate accessibility reports prior to the convention so that members can prepare for any potential accessibility issues and request necessary accommodations.
- Ensure that everything a hotel or conference center vendor includes in the "accessibility tour" is available and included in NCA's convention package.
- Create a list or "key" in convention programs that identifies networking events with and without alcohol, food, etc.
- Encourage interest group business meetings to be held virtually or in hybrid formats.
- Create an easily accessible mechanism and process for attendees to submit individual accommodation requests for convention, and for those needs to be addressed.

OBJECTIVE 4.3   Increase the recruitment of new members from historically disenfranchised groups.

Urgency—Low
Personnel Responsible—Convention Planner, Convention Committee, Executive Director, Executive Committee
Budget—High

Tasks

- Identify barriers to membership and active participation for historically disenfranchised individuals and groups.
- Examine current promotional efforts (such as public-facing materials, event structures, advertising and social media strategies) to identify gaps in representation and outreach.
- Partner with other scholarly organizations serving communities of scholars that are underrepresented in NCA to create special events or opportunities for collaborations across memberships.

Suggestions

- Amplify and reward the efforts of units that make documented progress in recruiting and retaining members from historically disenfranchised groups, potentially through access to additional funds, panel slots, and publicity.
- Create a report detailing how Western/US/European practices of research and knowledge production have historically functioned to disenfranchise peoples/groups from participating equitably in shared knowledge generation through publication, engagement, and inclusion in traditional modes of inquiry. Offer resources for addressing such practices in Communication scholarship.

OBJECTIVE 4.4   Identify and address cost-prohibitive requirements, practices, and expectations that create access barriers for members struggling with fiscal insecurity.

Urgency—Low
Personnel Responsible—Convention Planner, Convention Committee, Executive Director, Executive Committee
Budget—High

Tasks

- Assess national convention's affordability for various subgroups of NCA membership, based on factors like income, academic rank, and institutional support.
- Revise pricing structure for convention attendance to remove financial barriers to participation.
- Identify and secure options for increasing access to food and decreasing costs of food, such as discounts at local restaurants or a box lunch program.
- Create and implement options for virtual conferencing to reduce cost of attendance and increase access to the national convention.

Suggestions

- If financially feasible, create an annual convention micro-grant program for financial accessibility for all NCA members to address convention costs (e.g., food insecurity, pre-conference fees, conference attire, etc.). Commit $60,000 each year to the financial insecurity micro grant program. Create an annual matching fund for donations from individual members and donors to support the micro grant program. Incentivize donations from individual members and departments. e.g., accumulative rewards program.
- The 2022 Future Conventions Task Force will issue a report on options for virtual conferencing for the NCA Leadership to implement.
- Educate all members on how to advocate for increased funding resources from various constituencies based on accessibility needs.
- Research what happens to food that is thrown away at convention and attempt to develop practices to utilize this food to reduce food insecurity.

OBJECTIVE 4.5   Work toward eliminating access barriers related to language.

Urgency— Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee, Publications Council, Research Council, Convention Planner, Convention Committee, IDEA Council, NCA Communications Department
Budget—High

Tasks

- Research how other organizations have addressed language access barriers.
- When gathering information from members and non-members during registration for NCA's conferences, inquire about the language needs of constituents.
- Using measurable data, develop financially responsible and creative solutions to eliminate language access barriers.

Suggestions

- Support the provision of translators on an as needed basis at the convention and other NCA events.
- Inquire with Taylor and Francis about options and possibilities for publishing NCA journals (or at least article abstracts) in additional languages.
- Continually be conscious about reproducing a hierarchy of languages. The most widely used or common languages are those that are likely to be chosen to be translated, yet lesser-used language needs might persist.
- Create a micro-grant program for translation of articles published in NCA journals. NCA members can apply for the micro-grant program to translate key NCA articles. Keep a publicly available archive of these articles available on NCA's website.

OBJECTIVE 4.6   Work toward internationalizing NCA on myriad sustained fronts including leadership, membership, and practices.

Urgency—Medium
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee, Publications Council, Research Council, Convention Planner, Convention Committee, IDEA Council, NCA Communications Department, Nominating Committee, Teaching and Learning Council
Budget—Medium to High

Tasks

- Beyond current initiatives to cultivate internationalization, NCA should recruit and promote work and pedagogy that examines international contexts and centers international epistemologies from multiple contexts.
- Investigate ways for NCA to support international travel to the US for the convention, possibly through assisting with the visa process.
- Create and implement options for virtual conferencing that occur simultaneously with conferences.
- Maintain practice of hosting international scholars' reception at NCA annual convention.

Suggestions

- NCA should continue to assess and be conscious of the varying financial disparities that face international graduate and undergraduate students studying in the U.S., while working to find practical solutions to help these students.
- The Publications Council should work with Taylor and Francis to develop a book series that publishes scholarship on international contexts, communication, theories, and methods.
- While moving towards internationalization, NCA must refuse to embrace the violence nationalist ideologies can enact on undocumented and stateless people, people marginalized by nation-states because of their gender identity, or people who have had human rights restricted due to nationalist endeavors, both in the U.S. and abroad.
- NCA should center the voices, experiences, and research of the Global South along with underrepresented peoples and cultures traditionally excluded from U.S./European paradigms.
- NCA should seek partnerships with journals that publish primarily the work of international scholars.
- NCA should establish collaborations with international organizations that feature communication scholars from around the globe who have been historically excluded including but not limited to the International Communication Association and the World Communication Association.
- NCA should feature on the front page of NCA's website scholars and collaborations with international scholars and organizations.
- NCA should establish a task force, primarily of international scholars, to focus on specific plans and processes for promoting continual internationalization.

GOAL 5

EVALUATE AND RESTRUCTURE THE ORGANIZATION TO RENDER NCA A MORE INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE ORGANIZATION.

OBJECTIVE 5.1   Assess how power is created and circulated by NCA's organizational structure, interrogate how those structures serve to reify power, and develop strategies to reshape these power dynamics to be more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible.

Urgency—Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, Legislative
Assembly, IDEA Council, Research Council, Publications
Council, Teaching and Learning Council, NCA Staff
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Create a power flow and organizational chart that details how power and authority flow through the organization. How are hierarchies established and reinforced?
- Assess the power dynamics of the organization and whether we need to restructure NCA and revise bylaws in ways that reflect IDEA values and practices. Review the bylaws and make policy recommendations to the Legislative Assembly for changes that may be needed.
- Document the formal and informal governance procedures that NCA councils/committees and National office staff use to identify gaps that limit broad participation and collective governance.
- Develop long-term strategies to reshape organizational power dynamics to be more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible.

OBJECTIVE 5.2   Increase diversity of nominees for leadership positions throughout NCA units.

Urgency—Low
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, Legislative
Assembly, Leadership Development Committee, NCA Staff
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Assess effectiveness of current communication and publicity practices for disseminating information regarding running for elected and nomination-based leadership positions at NCA.
- Develop and implement an improved communication strategy to inform members about election processes and leadership opportunities at the national level and in individual units.

Suggestions

- Create an accessible infographic for members at all levels of the organization that details how to become a leader throughout NCA. Require Interest Groups to do the same to educate members about how to pursue leadership in the group and beyond.
- Create an online tutorial for getting more involved with NCA that shows how election and leadership processes work and when people generally make such moves at various stages in their career. Include information about key aspects of each leadership position.
- Expand leadership opportunities at the interest group and organizational level, which could include requiring student representatives for each Interest Group.
- Create additional convention events that allow interested members to network with current leaders and learn about leadership positions and opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 5.3   Institutionalize transparency, access, and consistency in all NCA leadership elections and processes.

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, Legislative
Assembly, NCA Staff, Leadership Development Committee, NCA Unit Leaders
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Create an Inclusive Excellence Best Practices plan for election processes that every NCA unit can choose to adopt and implement or craft their own to adopt and implement (because agency at the unit level is essential and equity gaps are unit specific).
- NCA Executive Committee sessions should be public and accessible. At minimum, NCA should require that EC sessions be transcribed and available to NCA legislative assembly and members by written request.

Suggestions

- Potentially require each unit to assess and report diversity representation on their executive committees or in their leadership structures.
- Potentially eliminate the Nominating Committee through a bylaws change and shift its functions to the Leadership Development Committee and the other national councils as necessary. The Leadership Development Committee will oversee any additional responsibilities previously held by the Nominating Committee. NCA leadership retreat will dedicate time to all councils assessing the nomination pool to ensure diverse candidates, recruit additional candidates if necessary, and vote to confirm the pool is adequately diverse before sending it to the Legislative Assembly for confirmation.
- Potentially consolidate and standardize nominations and election processes across the organization.
- NCA second VP could be an open election (anyone with a certain number of member signatures can run). This would potentially reduce structural barriers for those seeking to run for second VP.
- Develop online election processes and infrastructure for NCA units.

OBJECTIVE 5.4   Cultivate an equitable and transparent process for award nomination and selection at the NCA and unit level.

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Committee, Executive Director, Legislative Assembly, NCA Staff, IDEA Council, Leadership Development Committee, NCA Unit Leaders
Budget—Low

Tasks

- Create an Inclusive Excellence plan for awards processes that every NCA unit can choose to adopt and implement or craft their own to adopt and implement (because agency at the unit level is essential and equity gaps are unit specific).
- Continue assessing and potentially restructuring the NCA national award committees.
- NCA units should place their award procedures on their unit website.

Suggestions

- Awards should include IDEA as at least one evaluative area of all awards' criteria.
- Each unit should individually assess and report representation of diversity with regards to nominees and awardees. All units should annually track, update, and publicly post lists of all awardees.

OBJECTIVE 5.5   Cultivate a practice of responsible stewardship of the lands on which NCA convenes for its national events (conference, honors seminars, etc.)

Urgency—High
Personnel Responsible—Executive Director, Executive Committee, IDEA Council, National Office
Budget—Low to Medium

Tasks

- Cultivating a practice of responsible stewardship of the land on which NCA convenes requires that the organization develop a plan for learning and engaging with local communities and histories in advance of the convention.
- Assess NCA's current procedures and practices for responsible stewardship and develop practices that reflect IDEA values.
- The National Office should produce a digital pamphlet or newsletter to be sent out to attendees of each national event (conference, honors seminars, etc.) no more than a month ahead of the event. In the pamphlet, members would find information about original Indigenous stewards of the lands on which the event will take place along with information about where those people are active today. The digital pamphlet should also include information on treaties, land grants, and other aspects of land dispossession directly related to the sites where events are held. The pamphlets should also, where relevant, describe ecological and environmental challenges facing residents of the sites where NCA visits. The pamphlets should list suggestions for businesses where members can spend their money to support IDEA communities (i.e., Queer-owned, Black-owned, Indigenous-owned business) while at the events.

Suggestions

- The National Office could submit the final draft of the pamphlet to the IDEA council for review.
- Each unit should create an intentional and ongoing campaign to communicate NCA's Land Acknowledgement at all events.

Part III: Assessment and Accountability

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT ROUTINE ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY by the National Communication Association. This section defines both terms and provides an overview of the process of assessing accountability regarding the IDEA strategic plan's implementation.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the systematic process of collecting and interpreting measurable data to help inform opportunities for improvement. This process is ongoing and involves establishing clear, measurable outcomes in alignment with the stated Mission and Vision.

IN THIS STRATEGIC PLAN, WE HAVE:

- Articulated a new IDEA Mission for NCA, defined NCA's IDEA values, outlined goals and objectives, and assigned tasks to begin to work towards achieving these goals.

- Identified a timeline of prioritization and estimated costs.

- Called for institutionalizing assessment procedures throughout the organization infrastructure in service of achieving the outlined goals and objectives of this plan. This includes biannual membership surveys, annual IDEA assessments for all NCA units, the hiring of an IDEA Director, and the establishment of an IDEA Leader program.

AS OBJECTIVES AND TASKS ACTUALIZE, THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS WE RECOMMEND INCLUDES THREE PHASES:

PHASE ONE consists of launching the strategic plan and beginning of the assessment cycle with the development of, at minimum, quantitative and qualitative measures to generate data.

PHASE TWO entails the: 1) implementation of the strategic plan, 2) administration of a mid-cycle assessment in preparation for an annual report, and 3) updating and building upon the plan needed.

PHASE THREE comprises the: 1) conclusion of the assessment cycle, 2) production of an annual report that reviews and summarizes NCA's organizational wide IDEA progress, and 3) beginning of identifying and integrating new goals, objectives, tasks, and overall strategies for implementation.

AFTER FIVE YEARS, POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF THE SUCCESS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN INCLUDE:

- IDEA values are firmly anchored and normalized into organizational structure through policy, practices, and processes of accountability.

- Members and non-members from historically disenfranchised populations consistently see and hear ourselves reflected in organizational units, initiatives, and communications from the NCA.

- NCA earns a reputation as a place for everybody.

- International communities experience a sense of organization-wide belonging.

- NCA becomes a role model for organizational courage and structural transformation.

- NCA operates from a default position of transparency wherein organizational action and follow through are proactive not reactive.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability includes both positive recognition of successful implementation of new strategies and progress towards Inclusive Excellence, along with a clear articulation of consequences if there is persistent lack of follow-through on working towards achieving goals and objectives.

Detailing how units, leaders, and the organization will be held accountable is necessary to secure the success of the plan. The goal of accountability structures must not be overly punitive; rather, accountability should be leveraged to foster growth and development for NCA members, leaders, and units to incorporate IDEA values swiftly and effectively into their practices and processes.

- The EC has been tasked with constructing a fair accountability process for NCA units (see Goal 2/Objective 2.2).

- A three-branch accountability structure has been suggested to be built into the leadership infrastructure of NCA (See Goal 2). The IDEA Director will serve as the Chief Diversity Officer (Objective 2.1). The Second Vice President of NCA will be tasked with moving the IDEA values and vision forward during their first year in officer rotation (Objective 2.6). Finally, the IDEA council will continue to represent the interests of the caucuses and serve in an advisory capacity to the officers and office staff, while also working on their own projects that advance IDEA throughout the organization.

- Annual NCA IDEA Awards will reward members, units, and programs who aid in the advancement of IDEA values and this strategic plan.

- Multiple public reports and assessments throughout the strategic plan's duration offer opportunities for public accountability and member feedback regarding the organization's progress at all levels.

- The EC will commit to updating the IDEA strategic plan every 5 years.