

Alexander Lancaster's Candidate Statement for ECA First Vice President Elect-Select

Introduction

Hello to my fellow ECA members, and thank you for taking the time to read this candidate statement. My name is Dr. Alexander Lancaster, and I am a Professor of Communication at Weber State University. I am honored to be nominated for the position of First Vice President Elect-Select of the Eastern Communication Association, where I am a proud lifetime member. I am excited at the chance to serve ECA in this, and the subsequent leadership positions, at the executive level. I have been a member of ECA since 2013, when I attended for the first time in Pittsburgh, PA, a short drive from West Virginia University, where I was a PhD student from 2012 to 2015. I looked forward to attending the ECA convention each year, and I began my disciplinary service, while still a graduate student, as secretary of the Applied Communication Interest Group, before later moving through the other positions on that interest group's executive team.

Although I live and work in Utah now, I still consider ECA to be my home regional association, and I regularly attend the convention almost every year. I consider myself a teacher-scholar, and I focus on scholarly work connected to community engagement, public safety, and message design. I am confident that my experience gained from service in the discipline in multiple roles, and as a faculty member at a comprehensive university, have prepared me to take on the roles and responsibilities of executive leadership within ECA. As I humbly ask for your vote, allow me to share how I have prepared to take on this position, in service of the Association, and my vision for ECA.

Preparation for ECA Executive Leadership

I have prepared to take on the responsibilities of leadership at ECA through my service to, and leadership in, professional associations in the Communication discipline and at my institution. At ECA and NCA, I have served as secretary, vice chair-elect, vice chair, and chair of the respective Applied Communication Interest Groups. I learned key program planning and budget maintenance skills in these positions, and fostered strong professional relationships with Association leaders, who mentored me and prepared me to take on larger service and leadership responsibilities. In addition, I have served as a reviewer for several interest groups at regional, national, and international associations, as well as being a current member of the Communication Research Reports editorial board.

At my institution, I have served and lead in a variety of positions, including Faculty Senate, standing University-level tenure/promotion/retention and assessment committees, faculty fellowships with our Center for Community Engaged Learning and the Office of the Provost, and the University Planning Council. Through these experiences, I have developed skills in strategic planning, fostering community partnerships, program assessment, and large-scale event planning and coordination. I also have learned how to organize people and prioritize projects, delegate tasks, and work effectively with university and community stakeholders to fully realize initiatives and strategic plan elements.

Taken together, my experience and service at the discipline and institutional levels has prepared me to effectively manage the demands and responsibilities of executive leadership at ECA. I am committed to continuous learning and growth, and I am excited at the prospect of using my existing knowledge and skills to serve my fellow Association members.

Vision

I share the perspective of my fellow members, who often mention how ECA is the best regional association, and who consider it to provide the best regional convention experience in the Communication discipline. As the oldest regional association, ECA has stood the test of time, and I believe is in a position to continue flourishing in the future. My vision for ECA centers on supporting the organization through responsible financial stewardship, membership growth, and offering members resources and support at, and beyond, the annual convention.

Beginning with responsible financial stewardship, ECA is in a strong fiscal position, thanks to the leadership team members who consistently strives to minimize operational costs, always provides an excellent convention experience for members, and ensures access to high-quality publication outlets for all interested scholars in the three Association-sponsored journals. My vision for continued financial stewardship is to work cooperatively with the executive director, the finance committee, and the leadership team to ensure the Association remains financially viable, and uses membership dues and registration fees responsibly and transparently. Doing so will keep ECA financially healthy and ready to serve new and existing members for decades to come.

My vision for ECA also includes strategic membership growth initiatives, especially for graduate and early career professionals. I would realize this vision in three ways. First, I would work with the Association leadership to program a networking-based social gathering, for graduate students and early career faculty, to build connections and community. Second, I would introduce a spotlight segment for new graduate student and early career members at the awards and keynote presentation to further welcome and encourage continued membership with ECA. Third, I would explore new membership sponsorship opportunities to encourage additional graduate students and early career faculty to join ECA, and maintain their membership.

Keeping with the theme of membership, my vision further extends to offering additional resources and support for members, beyond the annual convention. I would seek to expand resources provided through ECA, to include monthly teaching and scholarly writing webinars open to all members and hosted by experts in the field. In addition, I would continue and grow the commons area that was offered at ECA 2026, dedicating a space at the convention site with seating and food and beverage options to encourage conversations, and provide a space to work and/or relax during the day. Finally, in support of new members, I would start a mentor program that links junior faculty and graduate student members with mid- and advanced-career faculty, who can mentor and encourage participation and service to ECA. I believe doing so will positively impact members' experience at, and beyond, the annual convention, and will encourage more service and participation with the Association.

Concluding Remarks

I would be honored to serve the Eastern Communication Association as its next First Vice President-Elect Select, and in the subsequent leadership positions that follow. I am dedicated to serving ECA, and I would remain committed to effectively working with the leadership team to provide the best possible experience at and beyond the annual convention to all members. I want to see ECA grow and always remain the premier regional Communication association for decades to come, and I will work diligently to ensure our Association sees continued growth and success into the future.