

Candidate Statement: **Tracey Q. Holden** (University of Delaware).

I am deeply honored to have been asked to run for First Vice President Elect-Select of ECA. I attended my first ECA in Saratoga Springs in 1998 and stayed involved until moving west in 2003. When I returned to the East Coast in 2010, I was delighted to rejoin ECA. ECA has been an important organization for me, helping me to connect to the community of scholars in the region, develop my research and teaching, and continually expand what it means to be a communication scholar and teacher. ECA has shaped my scholarship and my teaching in more positive and productive ways than I could have imagined. As I considered being a candidate for this position, I realized again just how influential our chosen organizations are in our lives, and how much I have benefited from ECA. If elected, this new role would offer me the opportunity to give back to an organization I value, and continue to promote the strong traditions, dynamic engagement, and unique spirit that constitute the Eastern Communication Association.

In the years that I have been involved with ECA, I have worked with many different aspects of our organization. As Secretary, Vice-Chair and Chair of the Political Communication Interest Group, I participated in program planning (including the 2012 Wine and Spots session), paper review and the running of business meetings. For the 2015 Philadelphia convention, I served on the planning team and co-coordinated the biannual Basic Course pre-conference focused on strengthening the “front porch” of our discipline (with credit to Steven Beebe). For several years I have coordinated awards sponsored by the University of Delaware for the Undergraduate and Graduate Poster Sessions, and seen the amazing talent of these young scholars. I represented the Political Communication interest group at Executive Council and last year I was elected to EC as our 4-year college representative. Every one of these roles has contributed to both my

professional and personal growth. Working with the members and leaders of Eastern at all levels, I developed a deep admiration for ECA and its organizational ethos, dedicated to fostering its members and helping us thrive in our chosen profession. My research in political and organizational rhetoric has been enriched by the comments and conversations at our conferences, as has my teaching and professional development. I am always amazed and enlightened by the scholarship of our members, and have learned invaluable lessons from the mentoring of students. Eastern offered connections to a network of colleagues and friends who have helped me with myriad aspects of my scholarship, teaching, and balancing professional and personal life. Attending the meetings of the Executive Council, I have learned even more about how Eastern works and the consideration of our membership that is crucial to our organization. If elected, I would work to enhance and enrich the benefits of membership in ECA to our members, and expand our connections within our region, especially to our graduate student members. I believe that Eastern can do more to support all of its members at all levels of participations and career points. ECA continues to strive to meet the needs of our members and to advance the role of communication in scholarship, teaching, and our society, with a vibrant energy and innovative approaches, with hard work, strong friendships and lots of fun. I am willing and would be honored to serve the organization as 1st Vice President.

As for the future; when I think about ECA and what I would like to see the organization focus on over the next few years, I think about **support, sustainability** and **service**. We have all seen the challenges of recent years, with budget cuts at nearly every campus, the loss of research and travel support and a loss of public confidence in public discourse. Our colleagues at community colleges are stretched to their limits and too often ignored when education funding is meted out. Our students are seeing program resources and job openings shrink, and universities moving to hire more adjunct

instructors to teach more and more classes with less support. We cannot stand idly by; we have to address the issues, support our colleagues, and serve as a champion for communication on every front. We need to work to increase ECA's positive and respected presence in our discipline and across our region. We need to work to keep ECA fiscally strong at a time in which many of us will have fewer resources, and we need to work so ECA can more actively seek new ways to support our current and new members. If I am elected as 1st Vice President Elect-Select, I will work with ECA leadership to ensure our sound financial standing and provide improved member services. I will also work with ECA leadership to do more to celebrate the accomplishments of our current members, increase opportunities for leadership and recognition, and connect to the faculty members, students and departments who have yet to join. The vigor and vitality that have long been at the core of ECA must be developed and extended, so that ECA can meet all of our varied needs and advance our collective interests. I am honored by this opportunity to work with you in this effort – and I hope you will support my candidacy.