

Candidate Statement: Annette Madlock Gatison

The Eastern Communication Association is the premier regional communication association in the United States, with membership and participation that spans across regions. I was introduced to ECA during the first year of my Ph.D. program and was quite intimidated and overwhelmed at the prospect of the entire experience. But what I found was a group of professionals, teachers, researchers, and theorists who welcomed me into ECA and encouraged my participation, scholarship, and teaching.

I am running for the position of First Vice President-Elect of the Eastern Communication Association because I am committed to the historical legacy of ECA and its future longevity. I am an active life member of ECA and consider the ECA my academic home. I want to take a moment to broadly share a couple of ideas for ECA and tell you a few things about me and my preparation for office.

ECA has woven itself into my professional life and has helped to shape my identity as a civic-minded scholar and educator through service, professional networking, and mentoring. With the encouragement of faculty mentors during and after the completion of my Ph.D. program at Howard University, I was encouraged to participate in ECA first via paper and panel submissions. ECA is where I was provided an opportunity to present ideas and receive constructive feedback.

Next, I was encouraged to serve in the roles of a reviewer, chair, respondent, and program planner—roles in which I continue to serve. Specifically, I have had the opportunity to serve ECA in the following capacity:

- Member of the Finance Committee
- Interest group Executive Committee representative
- Program Planner and reviewer for Applied Communication, Health Communication, and Voices of Diversity interest groups
- Reviewer for the Intercultural Communication interest group

I have also served in the National Communication Association as Finance Board Director, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Member of the Nominating Committee, Chair of the African American Communication & Culture Division, and Parliamentarian for both the African American Communication & Culture Division and the Black Caucus.

Service to any organization is an investment that takes valuable resources, tangible and intangible, that include time, skill, and money. I have chosen often to invest my resources in doing the work of ECA for the long term. This labor of love to serve has helped me to develop professionally as a leader and organizer. I have had the opportunity to work with and navigate alongside diverse groups of people to assess, strategize, and grow programs and organizations in and out of higher education. Diversity is defined beyond race and ethnicity but includes a variety of thoughts, ideas, and everything in between. The position of First Vice President requires the tenacity and skillset to navigate and work with people. Communication is a hard science, as much as we like to categorize and generalize people as changing variables. I am

prepared to work with the many constituents and stakeholders that make up this wonderful organization.

A Couple of Ideas

We are well aware of shrinking travel budgets and the many choices for conference participation and professional development that we all have. ECA is challenged, as are many professional organizations, to identify new ways to expand membership while continuously designing creative and relevant programming. Always remembering to build on the success of the past by continuing what works and adding a few ideas to the present to help grow our membership.

Student Experience

- Student Fellows Program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. A sponsor would be approached to support this endeavor. Four students are competitively selected from the poster sessions. The students would then be paired with an ECA research or teaching fellow and shadow them for a year. A virtual shadow that would go beyond academic and professional mentoring, but includes research collaboration.

Educational Technology Fair

- Invite educational technology companies to provide a specialized exhibit hall experience and to sponsor events at ECA. Special workshops on the latest technology related to qualitative and quantitative analysis tools, data analytics, and classroom teaching technology would be available.

Day of Service

- Institutionalize the day of service for ECA with local co-sponsors for the event. In this way, we can always consistently plan to serve the community where we are hosting our conference.

A Few Things About Me

Here are a few things about me that will provide you with an overview of the skills and experiences that have prepared me for the position of First Vice President. Currently, I hold the position of Professor of Strategic and Personal Communication in the School of Communication and Digital Content at a private Christian university. The job was an unexpected opportunity that has allowed me to work with graduate students and to be on the ground floor in the development of a new Ph.D. program in social media. Right now, I am launching a newly developed online course in communication theory and research for this program. This is in addition to serving on the university's Institutional Review Board, Center for Research and Scholarship, Technology Committee, and as a research-intensive course evaluator.

Before my current position, I was a tenured associate professor of communication at Southern Connecticut State University. My relevant university administrative experience by election or appointment included serving on the Diversity Council, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, Chair of the Graduate Council Online Curriculum and Standards Committee, School of Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate Treasurer, Faculty Senate Finance Committee Chair, University Budget and Planning Committee, University Strategic Planning and Resource Committee, and Technology Committee.

Between my academic appointments in Connecticut and Virginia, I relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to spend time with my family creating new memories. While in Minnesota, I had the opportunity to work with colleagues in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities campus as part-time faculty. At the urging of a great friend, I also worked as a reserve teacher for special needs students for the Minneapolis Public School System. Working as a reserve teacher was an opportunity for me to work closely with students of varying abilities and to walk in the shoes of fellow educators.

No matter where you find me, I am an avid community volunteer. I provide mentoring and a listening ear to women who are transitioning out of the sex trade. I lead support groups with women who have suffered medical trauma or those who seek tutoring as they work to finish their GED. You might also find me with a group of middle and high schoolers working on polishing their public speaking and debate skills on a Saturday afternoon.

My academic career has been at teaching institutions that have encouraged service to my discipline and to pursue a personal research agenda in women's health. This has resulted in a fraction of peer-reviewed publications and presentations at local, national, and international levels. The following publications and presentations reflect my work as a scholar and women's health advocate:

- Five books - three single-authored, one edited, and one forthcoming co-edited volume
- Four book chapters
- Five journal articles
- Twenty-one invited encyclopedia articles
- Thirty-eight competitively selected presentations
- Twelve community workshops facilitated
- Several blog posts for the Breast Cancer Consortium

The highlight of past years has included the opportunity to bring students to academic conferences to showcase their work. As an educator, I work to encourage students to critically think about new ways to engage the entirety of their academic course work and not compartmentalize information by course. I encourage them to stretch their minds and to think outside of the confines of how they currently see things, giving them the go-ahead to be creative about how they make sense of the world with all the new information they are learning. I love it when students make a critical observation that is relevant to how they communicate. One indication that I have done my job effectively is when students have made the connection from theory to application. These students are the future of our society and organization.

If elected First Vice President-Elect Select, I will work alongside others on behalf of the organization to grow, develop, and prosper ECA. I seek your support in my effort to continue in service to ECA in this capacity. Your vote is important.

If you want to learn more about me please visit me on Facebook @thepinkandtheblackproject or LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/in/annettemg2017.