

2024

Colin Kearney

I am humbled and honored to be nominated as a candidate for First Vice President Elect-Select of the Eastern Communication Association. I was first introduced to ECA as an undergraduate student at George Mason University. My service to the Association started in 2011 as a student assistant to then First Vice President Cindy Lont for her conference in Arlington, Virginia. That experience opened my eyes to a future in academia first as a graduate student at the University of Delaware and ultimately to my current faculty position at Hampton University. Throughout each step my academic journey, ECA has been a guiding light. As a life member, I have a steadfast commitment to the Association and believe my journey places me in a unique position to connect with all members. One of my primary goals, if elected, is to promote underserved voices to ensure they are fully represented in the ECA community.

My research areas examine the intersection of media communication and political communication with specific interests in media and political communication history and representation. In addition to presenting over a dozen panels and paper presentations in these divisions, I have served leadership roles in each; in Media Communication, I served two years as Executive Council Representative. For Pol. Comm., I served as Wine & Spots planner, Program Chair, and Executive Council Rep.

In addition to divisional service, I consistently review papers and panels for the Undergraduate Scholars Conference, G.I.F.T.S. sessions, and have served as judge for undergraduate and graduate poster sessions. Currently, I serve on Executive Council as ECA's Director of Digital & Social Media with the primary responsibility to promote ECA on social media platforms. Through this position, I have highlighted the Association's successes, reached new and potential members of ECA, as well as keep current members up to date with important information about interest groups, deadline reminders for submissions, and updates during each year's conference.

I highly value ECA's position at the crossroads of teaching and scholarship which brings together scholars and teachers alike who can bring new teaching tips and research ideas to the table. I consider myself to be a teacher-scholar; in my positions held at institutions, I frequently teach 4-5 courses per semester. I have presented many teaching ideas in G.I.F.T.S. sessions as well as picked up new ideas from colleagues in panels and short courses. In ECA's future, I would like to see more synergy between the research and teaching; in other words, how can a scholar's new research idea be the foundation of a class lecture or activity or how can an instructor's course exercise invoke a new idea for a research project?

I firmly believe the strength of ECA is the people who put the work and dedication to see its continual success. I would continually seek their support in guiding the Association while additionally bringing a few new ideas. First, I would work to promote greater outreach to

programs and institutions in the ECA region, particularly with those that are within driving distance of our annual conference. As university budgets continue to tighten, ECA can benefit from being in the backyard of numerous institutions in metropolitan areas. I enjoy connecting with first-time ECA-goers at the conference who are delighted by what ECA has to offer and note their excitement to return the following year; ensuring that colleagues and students throughout the region are aware of ECA and our opportunities is of utmost importance for the growth and stability of the Association.

Additionally, I would seek to increase opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to have agency in the Association. As someone who was introduced to ECA as an undergraduate student, I was welcomed into a home in the early stages of my career, which is why I fully consider this my primary conference. I would love to replicate that for future scholars and teachers. Creating an experience at ECA where students not only feel welcomed to present their scholarly research and teaching tools but also have opportunities for leadership roles and specific identified interest groups, I hope, would promote a culture of inclusivity for all members.

I would also like to promote ECA as an Association that is “more than a spring conference” each year. While our annual convention is a great time to reconnect and share research and teaching over the various sessions, and our three journals provide timely scholarship on a regular basis, I believe there are other ways we can learn and grow from each other during the year. From creating short teaching tip videos for new instructors to pop-up Zoom panels on timely topics such as political elections to afternoon boot camps on a new statistics software or grant writing basics, many members of ECA have knowledge to contribute that can make ECA a hub for year-round learning and academic growth.

Ultimately, I hope to continue a legacy of ECA as a place of welcoming presence of scholarship, teaching, and service to all. Our annual conference is a highlight of my academic year, and, if elected, would continue that unwavering enthusiasm and sense of joyful purpose for the Association for years to come.