

My first ECA was almost 20 years ago. Attending that conference was one of the best long-term career choices I ever made. My journey has had many turning points, opportunities, and plot twists; yet one thing remained constant in my story. That common theme is the mentorship and guidance I continue to receive from my colleagues and friends in the Eastern Communication Association.

My name is Robin Smith Mathis, and I began my communication and theatre teaching career in a rural east Texas high school when I took the debate team to camp in Oklahoma, July 2000. A few years later, I moved to Austin, TX and began my graduate school journey at Texas State University. This is where I was introduced to the Eastern Communication Association. I continued attending ECA through my PhD program at Texas A&M University, earning my first ECA Top Panel Paper in 2007 (Applied Communication Interest Group). After transitioning from secondary education, I have been the communication studies department's academic advisor and taught at two community colleges. Previously, I held teaching positions at Mercer University and the McCoy College of Business Administration at Texas State University as the business communication coordinator. My varied teaching career appreciates the diversity of ECA and all that has to offer communication educators.

Currently, I am Interim Associate Director for Strategic Communication and Assistant Professor of Communication in the School of Communication & Media at Kennesaw State University. I am a qualitative researcher and ethnographer with a focus in instructional communication and exploring the communication processes within human resource development. More specifically, my focus is on [socially tainted professions](#) and the communication challenges that influence their work experience. Currently, I am analyzing narratives within state senate hearings and exploring women in law enforcement and the communication tensions and contradictions. I have published in *Communication Education*, *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, *Journal of Workplace Learning*, and *Advances in Developing Human Resources*. I am on the editorial board for *Communication Teacher* and a registered mediator with the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution. I serve my community on the Board of Directors for the City Springs Theatre Company in metro Atlanta.

In 2021, I chaired the organizational communication interest group and will chair again in 2025-26. I am also an ECA Distinguished Teaching Fellow. I wouldn't have survived the valleys and challenges of my career without my professional family, the ECA membership. ECA has been a constant support to me. Over the past twenty years, it has been the ECA membership that has mentored, critiqued, and celebrated me. I owe so much to ECA that I must give back when called. If the membership elects me as Vice-President Elect-Select, I will continue to build on the initiatives that have made ECA an organization that educates and develops the whole educator at every level, cultivates scholars, and advances the scholar-practitioner that distinguishes the Eastern Communication Association from the rest. My story will continue with the role ECA has had in shaping my career and professional identity, and I humbly ask for your vote to expand ECA's story of innovation to our discipline.