



# The Newsletter

## Election Supplement

## Meet Your 2020 Candidates

### TIFFANY R. WANG - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's election time, CSCA! To help you with this important process, newsletter editor Sara Baker Bailey, in consultation with Executive Director Tiffany R. Wang, have put together this special insert to help inform you in your voting decisions. Included are descriptions for each office, photos and statements provided by the candidates, and information about the voting procedure.

You will receive an email informing you when the polls are open. We will also post reminders about voting on the organization website (<http://www.cscs-net.org>) as well as on our official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CentralStatesComm>). In short, we will do all we can to keep you informed about the process and to help you vote in this year's election.

As a final note, the CSCA office would like to thank the 2020 Nominating Committee for the work they have done in recruiting this year's nominees! This committee has the essential task of encouraging members to apply for officer positions, carefully reviewing their credentials, and ultimately putting forth candidates to the membership. It takes time, energy, and social capital – and we are so fortunate that members volunteer their time and service to the organization.

# Meet the Candidates

## MEMBER AT LARGE

The duties of the two Member at Large positions include attending and participating in all Executive Committee meetings. There they serve as a voice for CSCA members. Members at Large also assist the Executive Committee in carrying out the work of CSCA. The person elected to this position shall serve a two-year term. Candidates are presented here in alphabetical order. Each candidate provided the statements and photos presented here.



## Sandy Pensoneau- Conway

**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CARBONDALE**



Greetings!

Thank you for allowing me space to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway, and I am a candidate for CSCA's Member-at-Large. I am currently an Associate Professor in and chair of the Communication Studies Department at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I am excited at the possibility of serving as your M-A-L, and I'd like to briefly lay out why you might consider voting for me.

CSCA is my home; I have been a member since 2001. CSCA is the place I go to be intellectually refreshed and inspired, to be challenged and involved. My very first conference experience was the 2001 convention in Cincinnati. I remember the name of my first presentation; I even remember what I wore. That kind of impact speaks to who we are as an organization. We matter to our members, and we must continually work to find new and innovative ways to bring colleagues into our CSCA family (continued on p. 3).

Over my nearly-20 years with CSCA, I have sought to increase my conference participation, actively looking for ways to serve the Association and its members; one of the first things I did as I neared tenure was to express to Association leadership my desire to serve CSCA beyond the interest group level. The following provides a snapshot of my service to the Association.

- Vice-chair, Jack Kay Award for Community Engagement and Applied Communication Scholarship 2020
- Nominee, Warren Mentorship Award 2019
- Secretary-Chair, Communication Education Interest Group 2017-2019
- Recipient, Service Award 2018
- Member, Editor Recruitment Committee *Journal of Communication Pedagogy* 2018
- Review board member, *Journal of Communication Pedagogy* 2017-current
- Member, Outstanding New Teacher Award Committee 2017
- Pre-conference facilitator 2017, 2013
- Submission reviewer, Undergraduate Honors Research Conference 2016
- Secretary-Chair, Basic Course Interest Group 2014-2016
- Member, Cooper Award Committee 2013-2014
- Secretary, Part-Time Faculty Caucus 2005-2007

In addition, I have reviewed for the following interest groups and caucuses: Basic Course, Communication Education, Ethnography, Intercultural Communication, and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Caucus. Not including this past 2020 conference, I have engaged in more “regular” conference participation in the following roles: Panel chair (9); Panelist (13); Respondent (9); Discussant (11); Spotlight panelist (1); Top paper panel (1); Performance panelist (1); Short course participant (3); and Paper panelist (1).

However, what I am most proud of is the ongoing Inclusive Conference Spaces project, for which I serve as the producer and organizational lead. At the 2017 conference in Grand Rapids, MI, CSCA held its second Forum on Diversity and Inclusion. Part of that conversation entailed the challenges faced by minority scholars and women scholars upon entering majority-dominated conference spaces, particularly for those who are newer to conference activity. In other words, participants at the Forum expressed that minority scholars and women scholars aren’t made aware of the potential feelings of unbelonging, under/misrepresentation, and isolation that can happen in a space governed by (often unspoken) norms of the academy, norms that are largely shaped by dominant discourses and patterns of communication. At that Forum, I suggested ways to make these norms explicit, and was subsequently invited to take the lead on such a project. Along with a team of similarly committed members, and with the support of the Association, the Inclusive Conference Spaces Project has been part of CSCA’s ongoing commitment to taking a hard look at itself, and asking “what should be done differently?” We debuted one video at the 2019 conference and look forward to premiering even more material at the 2021 conference (continued on p. 4).

But what I have done may not be as important as what I plan to do if elected. I have four distinct (yet related) goals:

(1) I will continue to reflexively ask how CSCA can—at both an association level, and at a member-to-member level—understand the complexities of difference and create even more inclusive spaces. While this goal will never be realized, because “difference” and “inclusion” are ever-changing concepts, it remains the penultimate goal for me. Beyond continuing to ask, though, I hope to actively create spaces for a diversity of knowledge, voices, standpoints, and identities. One way to do this is for CSCA to develop leadership development opportunities for women and minority members.

(2) As Member-at-Large, I aim to be available for CSCA members through holding open office hours at the annual conferences during my tenure. The role of M-A-L is to be a representative voice, and I cannot do that unless I engage with members on an individual level.

(3) As a member of the CSCA Executive Committee (EC), I will contribute to an already solid tradition of association accountability, openness, and forethought. I will steadfastly represent members’ ideas and perspectives to the EC.

(4) I have always found CSCA to be a welcoming place, especially for newer and budding scholars. A “first conference presentation” is significant, and so I want to celebrate those milestones for our new presenters. This might entail intentional Association leadership attendance at “first” presentations of members, reaching out to offer words of encouragement, and even giving a small token of congratulations to “first presentation” scholars.

I am most thankful that when you vote this year for Member-at-Large, you cannot go wrong. Dr. Young and I both come with experience, energy, and enthusiasm. We will both work hard, as evidence shows; we are both committed people who will do our best to represent you and your interests. I don’t just know this about Dr. Young because I’ve heard it from others; we have known one another for quite some time and so I have first-hand experience. I can’t put it any more succinctly—you cannot go wrong.

The potential opportunity to serve as Member-At-Large very much animates me. When I had that first presentation nearly 20 years ago, I can’t say that I envisioned the possibility of serving the entire membership in this way. However, given how much CSCA has meant to me, I can’t think of a better way to say “thank you.” I humbly appreciate your consideration.





# Stephanie L. Young

SOUTHERN INDIANA UNIVERSITY

I attended my first Central States Communication Association conference in Cincinnati in 2010. I remember nervously presenting my paper on the gender controversy of South African runner Caster Semenya. I remember meeting people, having conversations, and attending thought-provoking panels on communication and civic engagement. And I remember that at that conference, a friend nominated me, and I became Secretary for the Rhetorical Theory and Criticism Interest Group. I was so excited. On the drive back home, I knew I had found my conference home. I had found not only a scholarly community, but also a network of generous mentors and life-long friends. For me, CSCA was where I felt I belonged.

But this has not always been the case for everyone. And that is why I am running for CSCA's Member at Large position. I believe that the position plays a vital role in the growth, development, and future of the Central States Communication Association. According to CSCA bylaws, the Member at Large "serves as a voice for Association members." I believe to be that voice for our members, the first step is to listen to the voices of our members, including those who may have not been heard.

If elected as Member at Large, I hope to continue work in promoting mentoring and networking programs such as the Next Leaders Network (NLN) that supports new and early-career members and facilitates networking between and among new members. I would also like to reach out to the leadership of each caucus and interest group to learn more about what unique challenges they face. Specifically, I would like to reach out to our members of color, our international members, our LGBTQ members, and to any of our members who feel marginalized. What can CSCA do to serve you?

When it comes to growing our membership, with your help, I want to look for innovative ways to promote CSCA. One of the most fulfilling service opportunities for me has been being conference paper reviewer and respondent for the Undergraduate Honors Research Conference (continued on p. 6).

I am always so inspired by these creative, hard-working, and intelligent young scholars. But the question is—what can we do to support our undergraduate and graduate students on their academic journeys?

I believe that my previous experiences serving CSCA in multiple capacities, my passion to work with the organization's leadership, and my commitment to listen and to speak with and for our diverse membership provide me with the necessary skills and capabilities to serve as Member at Large. I have been an active member of CSCA for the past ten years and believe that my record speaks to my dedication to service. I have served on a number of award committees including as chair of the Cooper Award Committee, as a member of the Federation Prize selection committee, and, as a member of the Outstanding New Teacher Award Committee. Importantly, these committees have allowed me to recognize how CSCA members excel in the areas of mentoring newer scholars, producing outstanding scholarship, and encouraging exemplary teaching practices.

I have previously served in several programming units, including as chair for two units, the Rhetorical Theory and Criticism Interest Group and the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Caucus. I am also Chair-Elect for the Popular Culture Studies Interest Group. I have also chaired and responded to a number of panels and have reviewed for several interest groups including Rhetorical Theory and Criticism, Media Studies, and Performance Studies and Autoethnography. I have also presented papers and have been an invited panelist for various panels for interest groups including Popular Culture Studies, Communication Theory, Communication Education, and the Women's Caucus.

Currently, I am serving on the CSCA Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to address issues of structural inequity and marginalization. As Member at Large, I would continue my work with this committee in finding ways not only to bring new members who might feel like outsiders or might otherwise be left behind, but also to help to reexamine policies and practices to improve inclusiveness and diversity within the association. These are some critical issues not only for some but for all members and for the health and growth of our association.

For me, the strength of Central States Communication Association has always been our people. Our association has been about the interpersonal relationships that we build together. We have a wide range of interest groups and caucuses that reflect our diverse members. In these challenging times, we need to create a space where we can come together with empathy for connection and support. In so doing, we will be an organization that thrives.

In sum, I am honored to have been nominated to serve as Member at Large for the Central States Communication Association. With your vote, I hope that you will give me the opportunity to listen to your voices and continue to serve our association. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Be well, be safe, be kind, Stephanie L. Young

# Meet the Candidates

## SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

The Second Vice President shall serve for one year, and then succeed to the office of First Vice President. The First Vice President shall serve for one year, and then succeed to the office of President for one year. The President shall serve for one year, then succeed to the office of Past President for one year. Specific duties include planning a pre-conference and serving as an Executive Committee member during the Second Vice President year; planning a full CSCA meeting during the First Vice President year; and presiding over organizational business. The person who is elected to this position will also select standing committee chairs. Please see the organizational bylaws for full details about other officer duties. Candidates are presented here in alphabetical order. Each candidate provided the statements and photos presented here.



## Katherine J. Denker

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY



Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to be nominated to be the 2nd Vice-President of the Central States Communication Association. This association was home to my first academic conference in 2003. Since that first conference, I have enjoyed so many opportunities through this organization, and I will never forget the impact of the early career conversations that each and every CSCA conference have offered.

I know I am not alone in receiving the benefits of being a CSCA member. Some of the moments that stand out to me the most include watching the wonder and excitement of graduate students at their first conference, including my own, as they present their work, meet their academic heroes, and receive encouragement and support from a variety of members (continued on p. 8).

Even as a mid-career faculty member I continue to learn and grow from my CSCA experiences, and I suspect that I am not alone in recognizing these benefits. I want this experience for all current and future CSCA members; and my goal is that as I move through the presidential rotation I create more inclusive and welcoming experiences for a wide diversity of students, professors, and practitioners; maintain the many strengths CSCA has as an organization; and build on the many initiatives that are currently in progress and that will benefit so many CSCA members.

To the point of facilitating more inclusive and welcoming experiences for CSCA members: For those of us who feel welcome at CSCA and call it our home, it is our job as members of the organization, to facilitate the same wonder, excitement, encouragement, and support that we feel for those who might feel left out, ignored, or unrepresented in the organization.

As your elected Member-at-Large, I worked with Tiffany Wang to establish initiatives to retain, promote, and move forward new generations of scholars via the Next Leaders Network, a mentoring program and series of sessions aimed at developing diverse scholars at every level. If elected, I would have the space to further our work on mentoring new scholars through the continued development of the Next Leaders Network – making it not just an outlet for welcoming new members and helping them to find their way in the organization; but also as a way of reflecting on the larger principles and practices of the organization and how we must continue to make structural changes that will benefit the organization.

Many elements of CSCA already indicate a support for diversity and inclusion, including our caucuses and recently-developed awards to recognize a more-diverse body of research and a more-diverse sense of who is creating valuable work. We still have room for growth, and I am committed to ensuring that growth continues.

I have been so fortunate to serve this organization in a variety of ways, and this has taught me that in so many ways CSCA is a thriving organization:

As the search chair for the most recent editor for the *Journal Communication Pedagogy*, I learned how supportive a committee could be of ensuring that inclusive editor-selection processes could be put in place. I also learned more about the strength of our journals, and if elected I would also seek to continue making *Communication Studies* one of the central-most and well-respected journals in the field.

In my time in interest group leadership, I also had the opportunity to plan divisions and meet more of the CSCA family. This experience has allowed me to meet so many of our members and realize that they are a vital strength of the organization. So many people are committed to and feel pride in their involvement with CSCA (continued on p. 9).

When I served as exhibit hall coordinator and as Member-at-Large, I also learned that in so many ways that CSCA is a strong organization with a vision and how we can further this work with others to support that vision. Since my time as a member started, so many leaders have taken a variety of actions that will benefit the organization for years to come.

Even in my service opportunities with the National Communication Association and the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender—where I have worked in division leadership, served on legislative assembly or as a board member, chaired awards committees, and now work as a conference planner—I have heard people comment on how forward-thinking CSCA is and ask questions about all the amazing initiatives that we have successfully executed in the past decade. People recognize CSCA as forward-thinking and vital; and I want to take my service experiences and use those insights to continue pushing our organizations forward.

In short, I accepted this nomination because now is the time for us to focus on what is next. We have all seen the scholar who hedges on the outskirts of conversation, who is new to the conference, or who does not see themselves or their work reflected in the programming. We must ensure that those entering the organization do not perceive gatekeepers, but instead are afforded invitational leadership and the sense that, if they desire, they could be a part of CSCA leadership as well. This focus does not mean ignoring the many aspects of CSCA that are already thriving – but, rather, it means making all of those aspects even stronger as CSCA becomes an organization for all communication teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

I started this work, at least in a formal sense, when I was fortunate enough to be elected as your Member-at-Large. I am motivated to continue that work now. Even if I am not elected, I pledge to continue advocating and doing the hard work that will make CSCA thrive even more as it embraces possibilities for inclusivity. To that end, I invite you to contact me now to share your ideas and thoughts. I also invite you to vote for me as your 2nd Vice-President. I promise to do the work needed in this position and make your vote count.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Kathy





# David Wendt

IOWA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

## Who Will Tell Our Story?

One of the fundamental rhetorical questions of the musical *Hamilton* is who will tell your story. As CSCA evolves, who will tell our story? Recent leadership teams have strengthened CSCA into a formidable organization leaving the younger members only to hear the tales of a roller coaster, tumultuous past. CSCA must continue to maintain the financial stability and expected integrity. As our field continues to innovate and expand, new divisions must be welcomed for research and discussion. I believe that my long and varied service to the communication field has helped me be approachable by the membership and pragmatic in my decision making. Hopefully as a leader for CSCA, I will continue to tell our story.

### 1. I believe CSCA must continue to focus on inclusion and diversity.

Recent actions within our country have heightened the focus of racial and economic disparity. CSCA has been a leader in inclusion within the communication community. I envision CSCA to be THE organization for all members across the country and hopefully the world. As a participant in the CSCA video project of Sandy Pensoneau-Conway several years ago, the clear message stresses that all groups deserve a seat at the leadership table and must have a feeling of empowerment. Teaching at the only MSI (Minority Serving Institution) and HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) in the state of Iowa, I observe on a daily basis the positives of a culturally diverse environment. Each day I walk to class in anticipation of the various languages in my English and Communication courses as I add English into the mix. One of my prized possessions is a paper with my name written in 20 languages prepared by my students. Two personal highlights of the last academic year were directing *For Colored Girls* as their first university theatrical production since 1987 and chaperoning a group of IW students on a Civil Rights Spring Break trip to Birmingham, Montgomery, Selma and Memphis (continued on p. 11).

**2. I believe that CSCA must provide premium Customer Service to all members and potential new members.**

I believe that Covid 19 has proven CSCA to be strong financially and fundamentally. However, this pandemic stresses the importance of quality customer service to enhance customer experiences and expectations. CSCA must continue to upgrade their website and information center. All communication should adhere as much as possible to the old phrase “the customer is always right”. When the cancellation announcement occurred for the 2020 convention, many members including myself were worried about the financial implications. However, the leadership acted quickly and effectively to relieve our concerns. This quick action allowed the focus to the 2021 Cincinnati convention. I believe that this moment in time proves that we are strong. As a current local school board president and professor at a small financially unstable institution, I have been working consistently to navigate unsure budgetary constraints. Fortunately, all of these institutions are steadily surviving the implications of the virus.

**3. I believe that CSCA must unite K-12, Community College, small liberal arts universities and large research institutions.**

Each of these stakeholders can complement areas of pedagogy, instruction and research that can intersect positively. Initially, each group seems separate, but actually are integral as the field of communication continues to evolve. We must be the organization where all members feel welcomed and valued. We must be the organization where everyone should feel “at home”. We must be the organization that celebrates versatile programming. We must be the organization where the undergraduate or graduate student presents their research for the first time to the communication icon who is discussing their groundbreaking research for the 50th time. This collaboration was proven evident during my term on NCA Educational Policies Board, as Chair of NCA Elementary/Secondary Division and currently as Co-Chair of NCA GIFTS Division. Data on high attendance numbers from GIFTS sessions at all levels indicates that members want this collaboration of research and pedagogy to support their classroom activities.

**4. I believe that CSCA must continue to be open to innovative programming.**

With diminishing travel funds, increasing health concerns and various theories of our “new normal”, CSCA must be open to new ideas in convention formats, marketing/branding and surveying the ever-changing membership needs. Virtual meetings have recently become an everyday event for most of society. 2020 NCA will combine virtual and face-to-face meetings for the first time on a serious level. Perhaps CSCA needs to investigate the options for members who lack the funds, fear for their health or can only attend the convention virtually. One of the few positives of the pandemic is simply that society has been forced to reflect on current models of problem solving (continued on p. 12).

My current position as the Director of the Communication Center in the Student Success Center allows me to work predominantly with athletes and international students. My course load includes Introduction to Public Speaking, Introduction to Theatre, Acting One, Fundamentals of English, Conversational English, Introduction to Tutoring, Freshman Orientation and Academic Support. My adjunct teaching included the basic course, Interpersonal, Introduction to Public Relations, Oral Interpretation, Foundations of Education and Teaching Exceptional Learners. This wide variety of courses has forced me to be aware of the trends of the communication field as a whole and has given me a keen sense of time management and organization.

As Past Chair of the Nominating Committee, States Advisory Council, Community College Division, Instructional Resources Division, Adjunct/Temporary Division, Communication Education Division and currently Vice Chair of Sports and Communication Division; I believe that I can effectively understand and embrace the story of CSCA.



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# Executive Director & Staff



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