The Central States Communication Association Code of Conduct

Approved by the CSCA Executive Committee on March 29, 2023

The Central States Communication Association Equity & Inclusion Committee

(**CSCA- EIC**) has been charged with developing a code of conduct for conferences.

In this document, **EIC** underlines a code of ethics, equity and inclusion that is

sensitive to the diverse needs of the CSCA members and staff; and whose intent is

to guide action and implementation in areas such as assessment, praxis, and

accountability.

We gratefully acknowledge the ethics, equity, and inclusion documents of the

Eastern Communication Association, the National Association of Colleges and

Employers, the National Communication Association, and the Western State

Communication Association. The initiatives of these organizations provide a

foundation for the endeavors of the Central States Communication Association.

Statement of Equity and Inclusion

CSCA recognizes the need to address systemic exclusion and marginalization. To

paraphrase the National Association of Colleges and Employers, attention to equity

should result in efforts to address the consequences of systemic biases towards

marginalized communities. Accordingly, this document lays the foundation of

inclusive practices based on listening, dialogue, and empathy geared towards the

needs of the diverse membership. The document will guide CSCA's commitment

towards equity and inclusion by addressing the processes and practices of conference planning, hosting, and attendance. The hope is to create a space for widened diversity of ideas, expressions, and member participation.

A Code of Professional Ethics, Equity and Inclusion

CSCA activities encompass a multiplicity of events, including but not exclusive to, an annual conference. This annual conference is a process of pre-conference planning and preparation by the Executive Committee officers, the CSCA data manager, conference planners, local staff and volunteers, hotel personnel and employees, and IT support staff. The conference event is the collective lived experience that occurs over several days and involves many interactive events, such as panels, presentations, poster sessions, social events, and business meetings; as well as the post-conference reflection which moves forward ideas, initiatives and decisions generated during the conference. The **principles** that follow are specific to the annual conference, but the **EIC assumptions** should apply to all CSCA-sponsored events.

General Assumptions of Ethics, Equity, and Inclusion at CSCA

The assumptions of EIC are rooted in NCA's statement regarding communication ethics, equity, and inclusion. It notes, "ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others" (National Communication Association,

2017). The following assumptions underlie and guide all CSCA organizational activities.

1. Ethics govern both communication processes and organizational practices. Ethical communication fosters dialogue, truthfulness, fairness, responsiveness, responsibility, and respect for self and others. For this reason, we encourage invitational rhetoric, ethics of care and equity-oriented approaches that include and center marginalized voices.

2. Equity focuses on fairness and justice by making sure that resources are distributed in a way that all individuals have access to what they need to be successful (Bell, 1997; Sanford, 2020). The existence of visible or invisible structural and systemic barriers negatively impact access and opportunities for some individuals (Hagman, 2021). As such, the organization is committed to identifying and eliminating barriers while creating practices and an environment that provide equitable treatment, opportunity, and access for all.

3. Inclusion encompasses creating, fostering, and sustaining practices and procedures that provide a sense of belonging and meaningful opportunities to engage. This means developing a space where individuals can be authentic, speak safely, and can expect to be heard regardless of background, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age,

national origin, religion, or lifestyle. Inclusive practices also entail continual

efforts to identify and break structural barriers; thereby constructing

processes that foster equal opportunities for involvement at all levels. A

renewed focus on diversity, equity, and inclusivity will sustain a climate of

allyship among members where all feel respected, valued, and supported

(Feitosa et al., 2022).

Principles

The following sections are guided by the assumptions listed above and deal with ethics, equity and inclusion. The first section outlines general principles that apply to all volunteers and organizational participants. The sections that follow are specific to the positions or roles within the organization that carry additional responsibilities.

Section I: Volunteers & Participants

CSCA heavily relies on the contributions of its members. The form and function of the association come from the thoughtful volunteers who give their time and talent, and uphold high professional standards. CSCA members and affiliates should:

- Engage in communication and professional conduct that is guided by honesty, integrity, accuracy, prudence, reason, and appreciation of diversity.

- "Move over" from center stage. In cases when one's privilege may work to silence, intimidate, or make invisible the contributions of others, be mindful of the volume and impact of one's contributions, avoid speaking for others when others may do so for themselves, and encourage polyphony, a plurality of voices and perspectives.

- Listen with empathy to understand and respect the contributions of others before evaluating and responding to their messages, and practice respectful conversational turn-taking.

- Create a climate of inclusion that recognizes and acknowledges the value of different ideas, perspectives, and styles, even when one disagrees.

- Practice interaction, argumentation, and debate that are devoid of personal attacks.

- Employ inclusive and bias-free language. Use the language that supports individuals' expressed identities (e.g., preferred name, gender labels).

- Respect privacy and confidentiality of others' contributions.

- Embrace constructive critique in the matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Feedback and corrections to the CSCA's code of ethics, equity, and inclusion are welcome.

- Speak up when you see members engage in practices that do not support equity and inclusion. Silence can be perceived as acceptance.

- Follow the general rules and guidelines set up by CSCA that are outlined in The Constitution and By-laws. This includes gathering information related to the responsibilities that accompany a service role and ensuring that adequate time can be given to fulfill the assignment before agreeing to serve; carrying out service responsibilities promptly, professionally, and to

the full extent one is capable; and notifying appropriate leadership immediately when support is needed or the individual is unable to fulfill volunteer responsibilities.

Section II: Submitters & Presenters

The CSCA annual convention provides a forum to communicate, share, and celebrate the scholarship of its members. Adhering to the following ethical guidelines will ensure that the annual convention is conducted in a fair, open, honest, responsible, inclusive, equitable, and professional manner. Participants should:

- Respect and follow the timelines and other guidelines set by the program planners and the chairperson of conference sessions. Restrict presentations to the allotted time so that others have equal opportunity to present, listen, and participate.

- Present material in a way that promotes inclusiveness and accessibility for audience members. For example, use a microphone if it is available; subtitles with media files; accessible fonts and colors; and other available accessibility techniques.

- Respond to questions, criticisms, and challenges to one's work in a manner that respects the opinions of others.

- Follow the general rules and guidelines for submitters that are outlined in the respective interest group(s). This includes engaging in ethical research, including but not limited to full reporting of study details, proper referencing and citation, and maintaining institutional review board standards; submitting a paper, poster, or panel to a single interest group at a time and only if one intends to attend the conference; disclosing when a paper, poster, or panel presentation has been presented or published elsewhere, identifying a substitute to cover a presentation and other duties if attendance at the conference becomes impossible; and registering for the conference where one is presenting one's work.

Section III: Reviewers

Serving the CSCA regional journals and assisting in programming the annual conference constitutes an honor and a responsibility. In addition to the principles previously described, individuals who serve the CSCA in these ways should follow the inclusive and ethical principles noted below as well as general principles of research ethics.

Those who serve as reviewers for the CSCA journals and conference should:

- Commit to maintaining high quality regional journals that provide timely, thoughtful, and thorough reviews of manuscripts.

- Evaluate all submissions equally by applying the same assessment criteria to all.

- Uphold the anonymized review process by maintaining the confidentiality of manuscripts under review. Abstain from reviewing manuscripts for which the identity of the author(s) is certain or with whom any conflict of interests exist.

- Support scholarship of inclusivity by practicing invitational rhetoric in the calls for submission. Such calls should explicitly encourage early career scholars, graduate students, and scholars of diverse identities to submit their work. Submit reviews in a timely manner. In the event of a delay notify the editor or planner.

- Notify the editor or planner of any elements in the submission that may be unprofessional or of questionable validity.

Section IV: Officers

Although the success of the association relies on the engagement of the body of membership, special responsibility for promoting the goals of the association (including equity and inclusion) is placed upon those serving in leadership positions. Thus, officers agreeing to accept these positions commit themselves to performing in the best and most ethical manner for the greater good of the organization.

Officers have an obligation to:

- Make policy and day-to-day decisions in a way that is ethical and enhances diversity, promotes equity, and is inclusive.

- Conduct organizational business in a way that creates equal opportunities for members to get involved. Be mindful of processes that promote the involvement of some groups over others and support processes that create paths for all to serve the organization.

- Create an environment in which people feel that they can request accommodations, and where those accommodations are given due consideration and fulfillment when possible.

- Perform officer duties in a transparent manner. Provide association leadership and membership with information regarding the values, principles, and criteria that guide decisions.

- Engage in inclusive decision making that impacts others by seeking a plurality of perspectives and providing opportunities for input.

- Uphold and reflect a spirit of goodwill, assisting fellow officers with support, ideas, and encouragement, particularly in the free and open sharing of expertise with successors.

- Program planners: notify and discharge upon completion all relevant duties to the incoming program planner, including attendance at relevant planning

meetings, adherence to timelines and guidelines, and facilitation of future sessions, so that all conference proceedings are conducted in an organized, professional, and timely manner.

- Executive Committee: be mindful of the accessibility of buildings, rooms, tech support and locations where the conference takes place.

Section V: Technological

As communication professionals, we recognize and respect the potential for technology to empower and extend human communication. Accordingly, we seek to use communication technologies in ways that respect the rights of people who create, use, and are subject to our use of these technologies. All CSCA members should use technologies with integrity and refrain from using them in disrupting and distracting ways during professional activities; and strive to maintain the same standards of civility and care that would be expected in face-to-face interactions.

Reporting Incidents

Central States Communication Association is committed to high standards of ethics, equity and inclusion. In the case of discriminatory acts and unethical practices, an individual is encouraged to report the incident to the CSCA executive committee. CSCA should make every effort to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

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