

Ohio Communication Journal

A publication of the Ohio Communication Association

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Guidelines for Manuscript Submissions

The *Ohio Communication Journal* publishes original scholarship bearing on the breadth of the field of communication studies. Within this broad purview, it welcomes diverse disciplinary, conceptual, and methodological perspectives, especially:

- Manuscripts covering topics from every facet of the field
- Debut papers from undergraduate and graduate students
- Essays on teaching excellence
- Book reviews

The *Ohio Communication Journal* believes that research must be carried out in an ethical fashion, so we subscribe to the National Communication Association Code of Professional Ethics for Authors and we expect submissions to reflect these guidelines (see <http://www.natcom.org/Default.aspx?id=135&terms=ethics>). These guidelines enjoin authors to use inclusive and non-defamatory language.

In addition, submissions should be accompanied by a cover letter attesting that the author has met professional standards for any of the following principles as may apply:

- (1) The manuscript is original work and proper publication credit is accorded to all authors.
- (2) Simultaneous editorial consideration of the manuscript at another publication venue is prohibited.
- (3) Any publication history of the manuscript is disclosed, indicating in particular whether the manuscript or another version of it has been presented at a conference, or published electronically, or whether portions of the manuscript have been published previously.
- (4) Duplicate publication of data is avoided; or if parts of the data have already been reported, then that fact is acknowledged.

(5) All legal, institutional, and professional obligations for obtaining informed consent from research participants and for limiting their risk are honored.

(6) The scholarship reported is authentic.

Full-Length Manuscripts

The *Ohio Communication Journal* publishes extended, complete studies that generally do not exceed 30 double-spaced pages (including references), except in cases where “thick description” of qualitative/ rhetorical data may require a slightly extended length. The *Ohio Communication Journal* is committed to an eclectic approach and to the publication of high quality articles from a variety of different areas within the field of communication including: critical studies, state of the art reviews, reports of topical interest, supported opinion papers, and other essays related to field of communication. Manuscripts may be philosophical, theoretical, methodological, critical, applied, pedagogical, or empirical in nature.

Brief Reports

The *Ohio Communication Journal* publishes brief articles (approximately 10 double spaced pages or less including references – 2500 words) on a wide variety of topics pertaining to human communication. Appropriate topics include studies of small group, relational, political, persuasive, organizational, nonverbal, mass, interpersonal, intercultural, instructional, health, aging/life span, family, and computer mediated communication. Authors should provide a sentence to a paragraph outlining the theoretical framework guiding the brief empirical report. In sum, theoretical rationale should receive modest coverage in the research report (1-2 paragraphs) along with a brief review of the representative literature on the topic, with the main portion of the paper devoted to a thorough reporting and interpretation of the results.

Book Reviews

The *Ohio Communication Journal* publishes reviews of books and non-print media on a broad range of topics related to communication. Reviews should not exceed 1000 words, although longer essay reviews of several related works may be considered.

Manuscript Submission Process

After removing all identifiers in the properties of the document (go file-properties-summary and delete your name and affiliation), authors should submit one electronic double-spaced copy of the manuscript and one separate title page in Microsoft Word (preferred). See the Ohio Communication Association website under “Journal” for specific submission guidelines.

All manuscripts should conform to the most recent edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Style Manual. The cover page must contain: (1) the title of the manuscript; (2) the author’s name, (3) author’s institutional affiliation, (3) the mailing address, (4) the author’s phone number, and (5) author’s e-mail address. The second page of the manuscript must include the title and a 50-100 word abstract.

For more information about the *Ohio Communication Journal*, please visit the Ohio Communication Association website at <http://www.ohiocomm.org>.

A Note from the Editor

It is an honor to be a part of this special edition of the *Ohio Communication Journal* commemorating the 80th anniversary of the annual Ohio Communication Association conference. Serving the OCA through involvement on the Editorial Board for the past four years and now as Editor has been an amazing learning experience. As the saying goes, “it takes a village,” and there are many people who deserve acknowledgment.

I would first like to thank Nicole Blau for her continued mentorship as the Past-Editor and for helping me with this volume. I would also like to thank Assistant Editor Dariela Rodriguez for her tireless work preparing for the online journal volume that will follow this edition in just a few short months. I would like to acknowledge the members of the Review Board for their dedication to the organization and to the journal; we simply could not operate without their service.

Lastly, I would like to thank the authors who contributed their perspectives and experiences to this volume. You have each served the Ohio Communication Association in many ways throughout the years; your dedication and service is what helps make OCA great. It has been a pleasure working with you.

Here’s to the future celebrations of Ohio scholarship and fellowship!

Amber L. Ferris, Ph.D.
Editor, *Ohio Communication Journal*

Ohio Communication Journal

Volume 54 – October 2016

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Introduction to the Special Edition: The Roots and Branches of the Ohio Communication Association

Stefne Lenzmeier Broz

As the longest-serving editor of the *Ohio Communication Journal*, I am honored to contribute an introduction to this very special issue highlighting the valuable role of the Ohio Communication Association in the professional development of homegrown Communication scholars. As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of this organization's annual conference, this is a good opportunity to reflect on the many ways it has inspired and encouraged academics young and old to engage with their discipline at the local level. The talented and well-known scholars who have contributed essays to this volume offer compelling considerations of what OCA has meant to them personally and professionally while making a case for how and why all Ohio scholars can contribute to and benefit from this organization.

Dr. Jerry Feezel provides historical context for understanding how the Ohio Communication Association developed its mission and increased its influence through the careful work of dedicated colleagues. Dr. Jeffrey Tyus focuses on the significant value of the OCA conference in providing a showcase for undergraduate students' work and exposing them to the discipline early in their studies. Dr. Erin Hollenbaugh notes the importance of OCA experiences for graduate students who are seeking professional opportunities and experiences ahead of seeking employment in the discipline. Dr. Nicole Blau discusses

Stefne Lenzmeier Broz (Ph.D., The Ohio State University, 2003), is an Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Communication at Wittenberg University.

the useful role that involvement in OCA can play early in a scholar's career, in terms of scholarship and leadership opportunities, to help build one's tenure case. Dr. Liane Gray-Starner and Cody Clemens explore the various ways that OCA contributes to pedagogy within our discipline. Dr. Adam Earnhardt challenges Ohio scholars to investigate the power of networks in promoting the discipline and the organization. Finally, Dr. Matthew Smith describes some of the many benefits OCA provides to Ohio scholars, suggesting a bright future for an organization that plays such a valuable role in developing scholars in our field.

As part of their discussion of these topics, our contributors to this special issue note their personal connection with the Ohio Communication Association and the annual conference, and my story is similar to many of theirs. I attended my first OCA conference in 2005 as part of a panel assembled and proposed by my fellow Wittenberg colleague Matthew Smith. The welcoming atmosphere and the strong communal belief in the value of this small organization led to my immediate involvement as I was asked to take on the role of Journal Manager for OCA's *Ohio Communication Journal*, and later to serve as an Editorial Board member. I continued to attend the annual conference, sometimes with students, and contribute in various ways. I also served as Co-Editor of the journal with Dr. Jason Wrench, and then as Editor. I value all of the people I have met along the way and all the things I have learned from them about being a good scholar and a good colleague.

Serving as Editor of *OCJ* for five years was highly rewarding. I had the privilege of reading over 150 manuscripts representing the hard work of colleagues from across the state and around the country. Each one was an important and humbling opportunity to help a scholar develop in some way. A noticeable number of the journal submissions had originated as presentations at the annual conference, where the author(s) received valuable feedback and encouragement; this further attests to the importance of this conference in the growth of the scholars who attend and present their work there. I am deeply grateful to all of the Editorial Board members who served, taking the time to provide careful and

constructive feedback as we sought to be good stewards of the journal and foster the development of quality scholarship.

I hope you enjoy reading the following essays as much as I did. And I hope you will continue to support the Ohio Communication Association in whatever ways you are able, to ensure it continues to play a valuable role in the development of Communication scholars in the state of Ohio and beyond.

Exploring Our Roots

Jerry D. Feezel, OCA Archivist

When I was young, I did not have much interest in tagging along with my parents to family reunion visits in the area of our family roots. I guess I was “young and foolish” then in my parents’ view. Fortunately, I outgrew that attitude and came to appreciate the insights and discoveries of people and events that came before me. An African proverb says that “if we stand tall it is because we stand on the shoulders of many ancestors.” In 1976, Alex Haley popularized the term “roots” in following this proverb with his book, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. Likewise, as a former President of what was then SCAO, I find value in tracing the chronicles of the people upon whose shoulders we have built OCA. Thus, I took on the task of building upon the work of many others to archive, explore, and organize our organization’s records.

An Overview of OCA History

Tracing the history of OCA through the documents left behind is an ongoing project. However, it is apparent so far that the “roots” of OCA were in 1923 (or even earlier) as the Ohio Association of Speech Teachers, becoming the Ohio Association of Public Speaking and the Speech Arts in 1926, and then the Ohio Association of College Teachers of Speech in 1932 (OACTS). However, comments in other research documents suggest we derived from other groups in the 1800s - perhaps 1871. These are undocumented comments though and not confirmed with evidence in the records found so far.

Officers were noted for 1926, so perhaps that is when the OCA formally began as the Ohio Association of Public Speaking

Jerry Feezel (Emeritus Professor, Kent State University) is a past president of SCAO (1980-81). He also thanks OCA Executive Committee members Doug Switzer and Shawn Starcher for their assistance with the Archives display and presentation at the 2015 OCA Conference.

and the Speech Arts. It seems to have existed through World War I. Then in 1932, records show meetings of 51 members from 19 colleges & universities in Ohio; these 51 men and women, meeting as the Ohio Association of Speech Teachers, perhaps could be considered the “Founders,” although the constitution of OACTS was not adopted until April 5, 1940. In 1964, with approval of a new constitution, the OACTS became the Ohio Speech Association (OSA). This designation continued until 1971, when the association was renamed the SCAO (the Speech Communication Association of Ohio).

Subsequently, in 2005, we became the Ohio Communication Association (OCA). At a retreat on February 24, 2004, the change of name was proposed and subsequently passed at the Fall 2004 conference. The changes in name over the years closely shadowed changes of nomenclature at the national level and preferred identities to many scholars in the field. Starting as public speaking focused, then broadening to speech and subsequently further broadening to communication were trends marking both NCA and OCA. Hence, the Ohio Communication Association has reflected with its name and structures the evolution of our field. One might ask whether Ohio has not just reflected but has been a leader in this evolution—an interesting question that might be researched in the archives.

Not just name changes but structural ones as well are chronicled in the constitutions. A significant change in the constitution created by the SCAO was a new organizational structure with presidents alternating between high school and college/university levels; the constitution also created a balanced membership of high school and college representatives on the Executive Committee. In fact, the first SCAO president for 1971-72 was Arlene Akerman of Kettering South High School. Arlene was a very prominent high school teacher and forensics coach. This balanced leadership structure continued for over two decades, maintained in constitutional changes in 1975, '77, '80, '83, '84, '92, and 1998. It appears the attempt at balance continued until declines in high school members occurred due to licensure changes and other factors.

Even aside from formal structures, the membership and leadership has shifted over the decades. Some eras were

highlighted by active dominance of the four-year research universities, but the smaller public and private colleges have always had a major presence in OCA. The more recent years of SCAO and now OCA are marked by the decline in secondary education teachers and the increased leadership of community colleges and regional campuses of the universities.

In the early decades, some names stand out. There were back in the early years some prominent leaders who are considered by many to be distinguished national leaders in the communication field. Just as the NCA began with some renowned communication teachers among the 17 founders, the OCA had some remarkable folks as founders. Among the names on the early documents are Earl W. Wiley (First President of OACTS in 1932 from Ohio State University), Lionel Crocker, Loren C. Staats, John Black, James N. Holm (all early presidents), and later J. Jeffery Auer, and Paul H. Boase. These are just a few of the names I saw in the records and I am surely overlooking some prominent leaders. There are many other names that may have been locally or regionally prominent but not as renowned nationally. Readers may want to consult the archives to see names of early leaders from your institutions.

Comparison to Other State Associations

Using a Google search of the terms “state speech communication associations” and “state communication associations,” I reviewed the websites that were identified. The search results required distinguishing from the speech and hearing associations that are disorders related. From my online research of state associations, so far I have not found any originating before 1923 (Texas) and some with origins in the 1920s & 1930s (Oklahoma 1929, Arkansas 1930, Florida 1930, Pennsylvania 1939). In addition to these five, others reviewed as found online are North Dakota, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Carolinas, California, Minnesota, and Mississippi. Although over 700 listings resulted from the Google search, many were not specifically related to state associations in our field. I am aware from personal contacts that other such state organizations exist; however, they apparently do not have a web-presence. According

to the 1991-92 Speech Communication Association (SCA) Directory, there were 29 state associations listed (including Wyoming H.S. Speech Assoc.) plus the SCA of Puerto Rico. This is the most recent listing available but it is probably out of date. Another online site (published by Cool Fire Technology, 2004) lists 31 Active “State Communication Associations,” plus 14 Inactive organizations. However, all of the web pages were bad links, so it’s apparent that these listings are out of date. So far I have not found specific history or dates of origin yet for most state organizations. Even the exact date of the origin of OCA remains in controversy. Nevertheless, my conclusion at present is that we are among the oldest state communication associations, if not the oldest.

The OCA Archives

The history of the OCA has been stored in many boxes that are passed on from leader to leader. My involvement in establishing formal archives began with boxes that Erin Hollenbaugh had accumulated as Executive Director. Subsequently, I discovered another collection in the possession of a past SCAO officer. Perhaps there are other materials in other hands; I hope that this article brings to light such historic items that we may include them in the archives.

Wading through these boxes, we have found collections that were assembled by others before me. Various assembled in binders and file folders, these artifacts have been sorted and arranged chronologically. In some cases, deteriorating containers have been replaced, sensitive historic documents have been scanned to digital form, and more protective plastic file boxes have replaced old cardboard boxes. The materials are being organized into (1) a box of items to consider for disposal (having personal IDs or expired records not necessary to retain), (2) organized boxes of records to be maintained by the Executive Director for a period of years, and (3) boxes of history to protect, digitize, and maintain in a permanent Archive (housing has not yet been determined). A table at the end of the article provides a listing of the archive contents at present. The listed items are in various binders, notebooks, plastic envelopes, and file folders, partially

organized into four covered plastic file boxes for protection of documents. I am listing them here for general documentation of sources and to invite colleagues to use them for research projects. For example, there are references to the association during the war years and postwar issues that could be an interesting source for research. The evidence here is that “fledgling” groups (Ohio Association of Speech Teachers 1923 and Public Speaking and the Speech Arts 1926) existed after World War I until OACTS formed in 1932. Also, the latter organization continued to function during World War II.

As the Archives exist now there is redundancy with multiple copies of some items (as is apparent in the tabled listing of items). These materials have been compiled and organized by a number of people over the decades. Especially, the Akron MA thesis by Kristan Leedy Endress appears to be the only comprehensive history study that has been undertaken. Therefore, it is a seminal work to include in the Archives for consultation and use. Other items are missing for some years and indexing of other records is incomplete. Additionally, some of the materials especially susceptible to deterioration I have scanned to digital files stored on a dedicated flash drive. We, in fact, would like to have the entire collection digitized for protection and ease of use by others.

Much research is possible using the records of the Archives. Analyses could be conducted with the data to investigate many questions. These include questions pertaining to trends in the organization:

- *What was the membership per year and what were the largest member years?*
- *What were the levels of membership throughout the years—high school, community college, university, on-academic careers?*
- *How has the structure of the organization changed over the years?*

Other analyses can be related to outside events in the records:

- *How did World Wars I and II impact the organization?*
- *Were areas of the association involved in the wars?*
- *What were the changes in forensics over the years?*

- *What broadcasters had connections to the association?*
- *How were the media used for news and publication?*
- *How did school certification/licensure changes impact the organization?*
- *What impact did college schedule changes (e.g., quarters to semesters) have on the organization?*

There are probably many other areas of research that I have not identified here.

It is interesting to explore how our association has evolved over many decades. Formal names and structures have changed as well as shifting areas of leadership. Educators from secondary schools, community colleges, small and large universities, as well as non-teaching career professionals have all contributed to this durability. As one of the oldest state communication associations in the nation, it has nevertheless survived and thrived. A number of such state groups have not survived or have gone dormant for a time. Sure, OCA has had its ups and downs in membership, finances, and conference attendance. However, it has continued with apparently no period of inactivity—even continuing during wars. To all of you who are or have been at some time members and participants, you have played a part. Take pride in your role in the history of the Ohio Communication Association.

OCA Archives Table of Contents

1. OACTS Records 1932-1945 with handwritten notes on meetings & officers 1923-31.
2. Records of OACTS 1932-1939.
3. College Notebook of Original Records 1932-1940.
4. Newsletters 1938 to 1945.
5. OACTS Records 1945-49 & other items (tentatively in two manila file folders)
6. OACTS Records 1945-1950.
7. OACTS Constitution & Records 1940-on.
8. OACTS Records 1949-53.
9. OACTS Records 1950-58 (tabbed by Academic Yrs.).
10. SCAO Journal Subscription records for 1973-74.
11. File folders (in 10 file hangers) of membership & financial records for 70s & 80s.
12. SCAO Bumper Stickers “Teaching Speech Is Sound Business” (1979, 10 copies).
13. Kristan Leedy Endress MA Thesis, *The Development of the Speech Communication Association of Ohio: An Historical Study*, University of Akron, 1984.
14. Financial and membership records for 2002.
15. Financial records for 2002-2005.
16. Records & correspondence of 2006-07.
17. Financial records for several recent years up to 2008.
18. Copies of Conference Programs for each year.
19. Copies of the Journal for each year.
20. Cassette audiotapes of speeches and interviews by members.

Untapped Potential: The Role of Faculty and State Associations in Developing the Undergraduate Student Researcher

Jeffrey Tyus

It begins like a rite of passage every semester: junior students transition from freshman/sophomore level courses to the more important and rigorous junior/senior level courses. These are the primary courses that are preparing them for their targeted future in their desired area of Communication (broadcasting, social media, journalism, etc.). At Youngstown State University, one of the first courses students tend to take is our Designing Communication Research class. This course will set the stage for how students perform in their other junior/senior level courses, as they learn principles of conducting research that they will use when constructing research papers in other Communication courses, as well as in other facets of their education (Rodrick & Dickmeyer, 2002).

While students take this course with some trepidation (because who wants to learn about methodologies and qualitative/quantitative research techniques), I've found a few strategies to encourage students to embrace Communication Research. One primary goal when teaching this course is to get our undergraduate students to present their research within a supportive, professional environment. State associations, and in our case, the Ohio Communication Association (OCA), offer the perfect opportunity for undergraduate students to experience a blend of both scholarship and professionalism. This article examines four ways I have taught Communication Research and mentored undergraduate students to become valued members of the Ohio Communication Association.

Jeffrey Tyus (PhD, Ohio University, 1999) is associate professor in the Department of Communication at Youngstown State University and a recipient of the 2013 Distinguished Professor award at YSU. He served as President of the Ohio Communication Association from 2004-06.

Group Learning

The first step begins with the approach I take when teaching the Communication Research class. I remember sitting in a Communication Research class as an undergraduate wondering if I would ever grasp the material. I had heard from those who had taken the course previously that it was difficult to comprehend in terms of things like statistics and various terminologies. When I started teaching the course, I could see that same look of confusion on my students' faces. The comprehension of important principles, like quantitative vs. qualitative research, was poor. As a result, I decided to teach the class in a format where students conduct research projects in groups, and thus, could also learn various principles from and with one another.

The successful group project papers are then submitted to OCA to be reviewed, hopefully accepted, and then presented at the annual conference. By doing this as a group assignment, it allows several students to experience the opportunity to share their research with others. The students would be presenting their GROUP papers, and thus there was less pressure on them as opposed to presenting individual papers. In fact, many of them agreed to submit and participate because their peers in their group had also agreed to participate—they wanted that experience. I am not sure that would have been the case had I asked them to complete and submit an individual paper. Furthermore, OCA has Top Undergraduate Paper awards that feature cash prizes, providing more incentives for students to conduct research and submit them to the state associations. Lastly, as Nelson (2000) states, there are several categories that constitute undergraduate communication research, from scholarship of discovery that is geared towards peer-reviewed publications to application scholarship that examines new technologies, uses, or methods. Sometimes students have a hard time conceiving topics that are considered Communication research. However, there are several avenues these groups can take to explore research topics they may find appealing, yet also contribute to the field of Communication as a whole. This leads me to my next point, getting students to see value in their contribution to the field of Communication.

Valuable Contributions

A second way I encourage students is by highlighting the contributions they could make to the field of Communication. In the Communication Research course I teach, the group project assignment is entitled “Let’s Get Published.” Students are taught to research topics that are unique in some aspect, where they would be advancing new knowledge or perspectives and not continuing to research topics that have been exhausted. Too often my students choose to study topics that have been studied to death (If I have to hear one more “Use of Facebook to establish relationships” research projects, I am going to scream!). Therefore, by challenging students to go above and beyond what has already been researched, we are also encouraging them to leave their imprint on the field of Communication. Rodrick and Dickmeyer (2002) argue that having undergraduate students engage in Communication research can be beneficial on multiple levels, from the student, to the faculty mentor, to the department and university, and ultimately to the field being investigated. As their faculty mentor, I want my students to take what they learn in Communication Research and apply it to the research papers they conduct in other courses, like Media Relations Campaigns and Organizational Culture courses. The benefit for OCA comes in the diversity of paper submissions and the subjects they cover. That takes me to the third step—getting students to OCA!

Showcasing Student Research

The third step is to inspire my students to take their research project and present it on a grand scale. Students are used to presenting their research among their peers in the classroom because these are individuals whom they have taken multiple courses with and with whom they have developed a comfort level. Therefore, presenting on a “grand scale” means they are taking their research and presenting it in front of people they have never met before, both established professionals and graduate and undergraduate peers at other colleges and universities in the state. For most undergraduate students, this could be a very uncomfortable and intimidating experience.

OCA, through their leadership, has done a good job of advocating for undergraduate research. The call for proposals encourages submissions from faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. When I think back to when I started with OCA in 2002, it was an organization of mostly faculty and graduate students. After serving as President from 2004-06, I started thinking about who was missing from the association I spent the last four years serving. Clearly, we had not done a good job of getting undergraduate students involved. Since then, OCA has grown as an organization because of the involvement of undergraduate students from colleges and universities like Youngstown State University, Ashland University, and Findlay University. As a result, OCA can offer information tables at their annual conference to better inform undergraduate students about graduate programs in the field of Communication at universities from across the state. Therefore, by offering an opportunity to present research projects that they have worked hard on, and by offering an opportunity to interact with peers from other universities, and finally by offering an opportunity for undergraduate students to learn about graduate school options, OCA has provided a supportive climate for undergraduate students to get involved.

Furthermore, due to funding issues at most colleges and universities, undergraduate students are more likely to present research papers at a state or regional conference than they are at a national conference. My transfer to Youngstown State University in 2007 provided me an opportunity to get my students involved in submitting their research papers to OCA. Because OCA offers a low-cost option for undergraduate students to present at a professional conference, some institutions like Youngstown State University are willing to pay the full cost for students who are presenting their research. This cost includes hotel rooms, gas, meals, and conference fees. I encourage my colleagues at other institutions, within Ohio and across the United States, to speak with campus administration regarding funding undergraduate student travel to present research at local conferences. It stimulates the college student experience, gets students excited about engaging in research and contributing to their field of study, and from a university standpoint, it provides exposure for the university and the type of students they attract.

In 2012, I took several students to the annual Ohio Communication Association conference at Kent State University. There were four undergraduate group papers submitted and accepted. Two of those papers were nominees for Top Undergraduate Communication Research Paper in the state of Ohio. At the conference, it was announced that one of those papers won the Top Paper award. The students who won Top Undergraduate Communication Research Paper offered positive exposure for Youngstown State University and the Department of Communication, providing an excellent example that could be used when recruiting future students to our program/institution. My colleagues and peers everywhere should strive to use this type of undergraduate research opportunity as a means of gaining university support for student travel to state association conferences. This will help lead more undergraduate students to enter graduate school.

Transitioning to Graduate School

Finally, if we nurture undergraduate students to embrace research, scholarship, and presenting at professional conferences, then it leads to more of our undergraduate students choosing graduate school as a viable option moving forward post-graduation. Rodrick & Dickmeyer (2002) state that one benefit of a renewed focus on undergraduate communication research “is that it provides an opportunity to produce students who are more prepared for major graduate programs” (p. 49). At Youngstown State University, our Master’s program is in its infancy, yet a large number of our graduate students were homegrown through our undergraduate program. In my Communication Research class, I discuss graduate school because I want students to embrace research at the undergraduate level if they wish to succeed at the graduate level. By providing that reality check at the undergraduate level and providing opportunities to develop an excitement for Communication Research within OCA, my hope is to see that excitement extended to the graduate level.

In closing, undergraduate Communication students provide a valuable voice for our discipline, one that needs to be guided and encouraged. Too often, our state Communication

associations model the National Communication Association, tailoring itself towards professionals in the field and graduate students who are on the verge of transitioning into professionals. The cost to attend the national conference naturally tends to place undergraduate students on the outside looking in. Therefore, state associations provide the perfect low-cost structure and opportunity to allow undergraduate contributions to our discipline to be spotlighted. Furthermore, the individual and institutional exposure state associations provide offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between the undergraduate and graduate school experience. Each step mentioned in this article highlights the fact that oftentimes undergraduate communication research begins with faculty-student mentoring, which helps to produce scholarly research, which state associations can provide an outlet for that research to be shared with an appropriate audience (Hakim, 2000; Rodrick & Dickmeyer, 2002). It's time for both faculty and state associations to step up to ensure a more well-rounded and rewarding undergraduate research experience.

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Getting your Feet Wet: Graduate Students and the Ohio Communication Association

Erin E. Hollenbaugh

Like many Ohio Communication Association (OCA) members, my introduction to the organization was as a graduate student, preparing to deliver my debut conference presentation. During my first year as a master's student at Kent State University, I submitted one paper to the National Communication Association (NCA) and one to OCA for consideration at their fall conferences, and to my surprise both were accepted. Although both were intimidating to say the least, the sheer size of NCA was especially daunting. Thankfully, the OCA presentation was first, and my faculty mentors assured me it would be a supportive and encouraging environment in which to "get my feet wet."

My first OCA conference (October 2004 at Otterbein University) delivered all that was promised to me, and more. Dr. Jerry Feezel, now Emeritus Professor at Kent State University and former President of OCA (1980-1981), helped guide me through the conference, introducing me to scholars, past and present OCA leaders, and fellow graduate students from across the region. Finally, I understood what networking really looked like. College career counselors talk about networking, but to see it in action in a way that is not forced or too focused on a specific goal, such as acceptance into one's doctoral program of choice, was invaluable. My presentation was well received by a small, but engaged audience. I could hardly believe that my research sparked interest in actual scholars, and may have even taught them something new.

I arrived at Otterbein University's beautiful campus that day nervous, scared, and feeling a bit like a fraud. I was no scholar! Why would anyone want to listen to me? However, I left with a small seed of confidence in myself and in my research. What's more, I had a better sense of what the academy looked like outside

of my home institution. A clearer understanding of the communication discipline in higher education continued to develop year after year on the first Saturday in October. As a graduate student, I sustained my involvement in OCA through regular conference presentations, which helped develop my networks and build my *vitae*.

I share this story not as a means of indulging my own ego, but as a way to identify what seems to be a common theme in graduate student membership at OCA. It is not *my* story, but one of *our* stories – indicative of the important role that OCA plays in the academic life of a graduate student. I believe the relationship between OCA and graduate students is mutually beneficial. Graduate students can reap many rewards from membership, and the organization gains a great deal from its graduate student members.

Benefits to the Student

In my experience, membership in OCA and regular conference participation offers a number of benefits well beyond what the “brochure” may promise. First, and for many foremost, OCA membership and conference participation builds one’s CV through research presentation opportunities, awarded recognition, and service. Graduate students have the opportunity to turn course papers and projects into conference presentations, as well as organize discussion panels based upon course topics. It has become increasingly difficult to gain panel acceptance at national conferences, whereas OCA is an appropriate forum for these kinds of engaging panels. As students consider the important research “line on the *vitae*,” please take note that OCA offers something unique compared to other organizations’ conferences. Namely, there are opportunities to disseminate one’s research in an environment that is supportive and developmental. I have found less and less constructive feedback on my research at large conferences, yet at OCA, presenters can gain valuable suggestions and ideas – if they are open to them, of course – in a slower-paced, smaller environment. Furthermore, students can hone their presentational skills within the welcoming environment of OCA.

Along with research presentations, posters, and discussion panels, OCA recognizes excellence through top paper and poster awards, as well as special awards to recognize distinction among students and student organizations. Finally, students' CVs can be strengthened through service to the organization. The constitution calls for elected graduate student representatives, who are immersed in the inner workings of the organization. Through service, either as a representative or by volunteering for special projects, graduate students can learn more about the inner workings of an academic organization and develop communication skills.

In OCA, graduate students can build more than their CVs. They can also build meaningful and natural connections throughout the region. These connections are not only made with scholars in the field, but also amongst fellow graduate students who will one day be contemporaries in the discipline. Serving on panels with one another, meeting at the awards reception, or chatting over a muffin and coffee on Saturday morning all provide opportunities for socialization into the discipline. In recent years, the OCA Executive Board made a renewed effort to extend opportunities for networking and involvement outside the conference cycle through our active social media and our newly redesigned and reimagined website.

Finally, participation at the OCA conference is more affordable than many other conferences, and therefore more doable for the typical graduate student. As most graduate programs offer limited travel funding to their students, and most graduate students are quite limited in their own discretionary funds, the relatively short drive and one-night stay at OCA are much more affordable than larger conferences (not to mention the organization feeds you!). I am sure that many will attest that OCA can be very valuable to graduate students, but graduate students also offer important contributions to the organization.

Benefits to the Organization

In its current form, OCA is highly reliant on the active participation of graduate students to achieve its goals. Graduate students offer a sort of "fresh blood" insight that is vital for the

organization to adapt and thrive. Graduate student presentations, posters, and panels often spark lively discussion about creative and innovative research ideas, which I can say are personally and professionally valuable for the faculty in attendance. Our graduate student representatives give voice to the student perspective, which is strongly considered when contemplating new ideas or evaluating existing programs and practices within OCA. I have found that graduate students are often the most eager to serve the organization by chairing panels and assisting in special projects, such as the recent archives work being done. Without the energy and new ideas from graduate students, I fear this organization would stagnate.

Another important way OCA benefits from the involvement of graduate students is through the investments made in the best and brightest of the region. Whatever OCA gives to a graduate student in terms of research, constructive criticism, networked connections, and even mentorship, the organization reaps 10-fold through the future contributions that scholar will make to the organization and to the discipline. Whether area graduate students stay local, helping to retain the “best and the brightest” in the region, or ultimately earn tenure halfway across the world, those students carry the OCA name with them. They make us look good!

Conclusion

In this paper, I have outlined what I see to be the primary benefits that graduate students and OCA gain from graduate student membership. Now back to my story. While in graduate school, I was fortunate to experience the many advantages of OCA membership, from earning a top graduate student paper award, building a regional reputation, cultivating valuable connections with well-established scholars, and, of course, enjoying the discounted membership and registration rates. Following my doctoral program, as a junior faculty member at Kent State University at Stark, I made the transition from “graduate student member” to “regular member.” It was time to return the favor, and serve the organization that had given so much to me. A few years into my faculty appointment, I served as a regional representative,

and then later as Executive Director (2013-2015). I believe my story is an example of the symbiotic relationship between graduate students and OCA; we need each other to thrive, and thankfully today that relationship is strong.

The Long Road to Tenure: How the Ohio Communication Association Can Help

Nicole Blau

Picture this: You are a new faculty member fresh out of graduate school. As the academic year begins, you are working to “find your way” in your new institution while worrying about how to balance your teaching load, service, and establish a new line of research. One day a colleague shares with you information about the state convention to be held in a city near you and advises you to submit a paper. You think, “Why not?” and submit recent research conducted in your final year of graduate school. Unpredictably, this one-day conference turns into years of service, education, and professional growth. In short, your willingness to attend a conference and share your work could ultimately impact your tenure case in a positive way.

Similar to the scenario above, I was a first-year faculty member advised by a colleague to submit a paper to the annual Ohio Communication Association (OCA) convention. To be honest, this was when I first learned of OCA. It was my initial introduction to my state association, which would eventually become my “home” association. That year, I attended my first OCA conference, and during that same convention I was approached to take on the newly formed position of Assistant Editor for the *Ohio Communication Journal*. Wow! A leadership position in OCA – I was beyond thrilled! As a junior faculty member, I could never say “No,” so began my service to the Ohio Communication Association. More importantly, this was the impetus of the invaluable lessons I would learn on my tenure journey. My teaching, service, and research would all be positively impacted by my work in this association.

Nicole Blau (Ph.D., University of Kentucky, 2008) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Ohio University Lancaster.

As any academic knows, teaching, research, and service are considered the three pillars of a faculty member's job. As Albert Einstein stated, "The only source of knowledge is experience." There are many lessons we learn in graduate school as we prepare for a profession in academia, but the majority of learning comes as we embark in our new roles as a faculty member. Moreover, as we work toward tenure, we experience and learn.

This journey to tenure, however, should not be a "solo" expedition. Just as an athlete training for the Olympics depends on mentors, coaches, and supporters; an untenured faculty member often finds support from colleagues and mentors. The mentorship I found via OCA was invaluable.

OCA and Teaching

State associations – as opposed to regional or national associations – are oftentimes more intimate. As a result, if a state association holds an annual convention, it likewise is smaller - comparatively speaking. The Ohio Communication Association hosts an annual convention every October. While the official call for submissions is likened to any other convention, one could argue that a large majority of submissions (at least within the past decade) are centered on pedagogy. Because of this, the OCA annual convention is a great place to seek out support with regard to teaching.

As an untenured faculty member, I was consistently seeking out innovative teaching methods. Short courses, panels, poster sessions, and research often focused on innovative teaching methods that I was able to easily integrate into my classroom. For instance, one year I attended a short course on "Enhancing Millennial Student Learning." This presentation engaged me as an educator and the discussion in this short course really helped me gain a vision for my own teaching. Though I had taught as a graduate student for many years, as we all know, students seem to change from decade to decade. Working with colleagues on ideas specific to this "new" student generation was truly helpful in finding strategies to implement into my own classes. Likewise, over the years

I attended many short courses and panels that were contributors to my own teaching. For example, “Capitalizing on Technology in the Communication Classroom,” “Teaching Students how to Write in Communication Classes,” and “How to Integrate Service Learning Projects into the Communication Classroom” all presented novel ideas on how to provide innovative teaching in an intimate space where colleagues can truly hold meaningful discussions and share ideas to integrate in the classroom.

The institution for which I work is primarily teaching-oriented; our primary mission is teaching. In effect, the lessons centered on teaching I received at OCA were appreciated as I worked toward tenure. As part of my tenure case, I had to demonstrate that I was open to new ideas and constantly working toward a novel, innovative curriculum. Furthermore, I was required to show that I was making an effort to consistently improve my coursework and integrate innovative teaching methods. The work presented at the Ohio Communication Association conventions helped me to enhance my own course curriculum. At larger conventions, such as NCA, I often learned about the newest research in the field, so I relied on the more intimate OCA conference to hone my teaching skills. As any educator knows, the ability to teach is rewarding beyond words. That being said, it is a common truth that one cannot achieve tenure without research. Thus, we now turn to how the Ohio Communication Association contributed to my research efforts.

OCA and Research

As a junior faculty member, establishing a new line of research can be tough. Yes, you work on publishing a dissertation, but where does one go from there? How do you apply for grants? Where do new ideas come from? To which journals should I submit my work? These are typical questions that run through a junior faculty member’s mind time and time again.

Soon enough we learn that a common practice in academia is to collaborate on research projects with others in the field. Collaboration can frequently make the research process a bit more

manageable while you are still learning your role as an untenured faculty member. Smaller associations such as the Ohio Communication Association are excellent venues to network and establish working relationships. Once you begin networking, you may find common research interests and create collaborations.

As mentioned earlier, sessions at state conventions are usually smaller than regional or national conferences, which lend to greater discussion. This academic conversation can potentially generate research ideas. Personally, I have had the opportunities to talk with others about shared research interests much more at OCA than at any other convention I attend. I have built strong working relationships through OCA that have lasted for years.

Another asset of OCA is the journal, *Ohio Communication Journal*, sponsored by this organization. Dependent upon one's tenure requirements, a publication can certainly be a great addition to your curriculum vita. Not all state associations have journals, so we are fortunate to have an outlet for our research. Not only is the *OCJ* a great place to share our work, it is a great resource to learn about current research in the field and learn what others - specifically colleagues within the state of Ohio - are publishing.

Finally, an incredibly important contribution to my research was the mentorship I received over the years. Any faculty member can tell you that mentorship in the research process is meaningful. While we began learning about the process in graduate school, as a faculty member you are without specific teachers and advisors to guide you through. The Ohio Communication Association has always been a great place where mentors truly support junior faculty members and guide them through the research process. In addition to teaching and research, professional service is a key component in a faculty member's work.

OCA and Professional Service

Perhaps the most significant impact in which the Ohio Communication Association can benefit an untenured faculty member is the "service" area. First, there are many service opportunities in OCA as a student and/or faculty member. As I mentioned, I was appointed to a service position early on in OCA.

Because the association is smaller than the National Communication Association or a regional association, the workload is also relatively less. This is helpful for a faculty member trying to work toward tenure, yet still engage in professional service.

Service is not only a “vita hit” or a “mark” in the tenure report card, but also a great way to network with others in the field. As a graduate student you can run for a Graduate Student Representative position or volunteer to help with the annual convention. As a faculty member there are always numerous service opportunities including District Representatives, working with the *Ohio Communication Journal*, coordinating the annual conference, serving as Communications Coordinator, and so much more. These positions can help an untenured faculty member “get their feet wet” and gain invaluable experience. This professional service, however, is not only beneficial to the faculty member, but to the association. In order for any association to grow and evolve, new leadership and fresh ideas are needed – new faculty members can bring these things to the organization. The Ohio Communication Association would not be celebrating 80 years without the hard work and devoted service of its members.

Conclusions

I have now served in several positions for the Ohio Communication Association for nearly a decade. It seems like I just joined this organization yesterday. I have had the opportunity to watch the organization evolve and play an incremental part in shaping its future. As a faculty member who submitted my case for tenure a few short years ago, I can confidently state that my involvement in OCA strengthened my tenure case. Not only in terms of “vita hits” or lines on my evaluation reports, but in the experience I gained in my years at the Ohio Communication Association.

In addition to being a part of a wonderful organization and gaining valuable experience, the true backbone of OCA is what helped me the most – the members. The members in this organization are mostly local (geographically) and always willing

to lend a helping hand. The mentorship available via this association is, perhaps, the greatest benefit offered to a new faculty member.

As we celebrate 80 years of the Ohio Communication Association, I am honored and privileged to be a part of such a great organization. I am confident that we can expect great things in the next 20 years of this organization if we continue to grow together. In the words of Walt Disney, "*We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.*"

Roots and Branches of the Ohio Communication Association: Perspectives on Pedagogy

Liane M. Gray-Starner
Cody M. Clemens

This article focuses on tracing the roots of the Ohio Communication Association's (OCA) contributions to pedagogy, while exploring future branches of teaching and learning. As co-authors we have experienced pedagogy in distantly different eras. As a Master's student at Western Kentucky University in 1985, and even as a Ph.D. student at Ohio University in 1994, the predominate methods of teaching differed in significant ways than the pedagogy of today. Mr. Clemens' experience as a Ph.D. student at Bowling Green State University is informed by new theories and new methods of both teaching and learning. The goal of this article is to trace some of the dedication to pedagogy made by the members of OCA while providing a brief review of the state of pedagogy in the communication discipline. Further, this article will acknowledge the rise of andragogy as an increasingly favored teaching method. Finally, we will suggest that perhaps it is time we, while embracing pedagogical roots, further our research in the branch of which shifts the focus of the teacher as 'locus of control' to a more learner-centered paradigm.

Before launching into our discussion, it is worth noting the reasoning behind the theme for the 2016 conference. This year

Liane Gray-Starner (Ph.D., Ohio University) is Vice President of the Ohio Communication Association. She is also the President & CEO, as well as a Senior Trainer at Gray Star Communication.

Cody Clemens (M.A., Duquesne University) is a Graduate Teaching Assistant, Instructor, and Doctoral Student in the School of Media & Communication at Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, OH). Please direct all correspondence to cmcleme@bgsu.edu.

marks the 80th anniversary of the OCA conference. As the Executive Board discussed possible conference themes, we wanted to note the extraordinary landmark we have reached. After a search of anniversary traditions, we discovered that while not common in the United States, in the United Kingdom, oak is considered the traditional gift and nomenclature of the 80th anniversary. The rationale behind this tradition is that the oak tree takes a long period of time to reach full maturity.

Oak is considered one of the strongest wood types in the world. Further, oak has been discussed as representing wisdom and longevity. It is able to withstand the extreme pressures that come with many years of life. The Ohio Communication Association, and our conference, have similarly been able to survive many challenges to emerge as the strong and healthy organization it is today. Through the commitment of our members, past and present, we embraced our 2016 conference theme, “Strong Roots-Branches of Communication.”

Our Pedagogical Roots

According to Arthur P. Bochner (2012), “Academic life involves reading, observing, thinking, and writing. We learn to conduct research and write monographs by reading and studying the work of our predecessors and mentors” (p. 7). Although Bochner’s argument was focused around research and publication, we believe he could make the same argument focused solely around pedagogy. In order to become the most effective educator, it is critical to study the work of our predecessors and learn from the mentors we have in our lives. Looking back at and utilizing the work individuals have created in the past is the only way we have been able to continually move forward and progress through the years. This especially holds true to the values upheld by the Ohio Communication Association.

According to the archives of the Ohio Communication Association, the roots of communication pedagogy under auspices of our association began in 1923 as the Ohio Association of Speech Teachers (Feezel, 2016). In the 1939 Program of the Ohio College Association, the Ohio Association of Teachers of Speech section of the program detailed the following presentations:

“Discussion of speech education in elementary schools” presented by Professor Marie Mason of Ohio State University, and “Secondary schools, speech teachers from various sections of the state” presented by E. Turner Stump of Kent State University (“Program,” 1939). These presentations and others demonstrate a clear focus on pedagogy at all levels.

Pedagogy and the communication discipline are inexorably linked. As noted above, a central focus of our Association was traditionally the methods most effective for the teaching of communication. According to Long (2012), learning occurs as the result of an intentional process of action and critical reflection (i.e. pedagogic innovation). As noted in the 1939 program of the Ohio Association of College Teachers of Speech, “The Committee on Teacher Training under the able chairmanship of Prof. W. Roy Diem of Ohio Wesleyan has been especially active” (“Program,” 1939). Meaning, from the early years of the association, OCA has continually strived to promote an association focused around teaching and education.

As Sprague (1992) states, “When teachers recognize they are intellectuals, they can choose to act as transformative intellectuals” (p. 8). OCA has strived to encourage its members to act as transformative intellectuals, and it has been deeply rooted in the science and art of pedagogy. The focus of our research on both graduate and undergraduate levels has long been a hallmark of our association. Fostering a culture where both graduate and undergraduate students can submit their work to the conference has been important to the growth and development of our association. Investing time into the development of our students has been critical for maintaining the longevity of the association. Further, action research, which utilizes a collaborative and transformative focus is an important method for developing creative practice pedagogy (Long, 2012). Through promoting G.I.F.T.S. (Great Ideas for Teaching Students) at the OCA conference, we have been able to see action research at work. Encouraging educators to share the methodology they use inside of their own classrooms has been extremely beneficial to the members who attend the annual OCA conference.

Our Andragogic Branches

Over the years, the Ohio Communication Association has not only strived to promote communication research practices, but it has also placed a strong emphasis on adult education. Malcom Knowles (1980) began identifying his work in the field of adult education as *andragogy* in the 1960's. Andragogy is when the instructor acts as a guide in the learning process, encouraging student participation by connecting students' own experiences to the classroom content (Blackley & Sheffield, 2015; Leigh, Whitted, & Hamilton, 2015). Knowles (1984) observed that when instructors incorporated the interests of learners, the result was a better educational experience for both the instructor and the learner. Also, Carney (1985) discusses the importance of utilizing andragogy in the classroom, as opposed to pedagogy, because of the individualized needs of student learners.

Forrest and Peterson (2006) advocate that andragogy focuses on the adult learner and creation of an independent, adaptable individual. Based upon Knowles (1984) work, Forrest and Peterson (2006) suggest there are four assumptions underpinning andragogy: a self-directing self-concept; use of experience; a readiness to learn; and a performance-centered orientation to learning. Though pedagogy and andragogy are both focused around educating and bettering students, the terms themselves do have differences in their meaning that need be acknowledged.

While Knowles (1980, 1984) framed andragogy as having little in common with pedagogy, his perspective evolved over time. It seems clear that as a communication discipline, we have yet to fully apply Knowles work in our research. A small group of scholars have included Knowles' concept of andragogy in our research on teaching and learning in communication studies (Murray, 2014). Engleberg (1984) states that "It is the professional obligation of the speech profession to understand and embrace the world of adult education" (p. 17). This quotation from Engleberg does not mean that we do not have an understanding of the world of adult education, but it does mean that as educators within the speech profession we have to continually work to improve our educational practices.

As an organization, the Ohio Communication Association has always promoted pedagogical practices, but recently it has started to make a shift to promote more andragogic practices. OCA encourages participants to submit “Short Course” submissions to its conference. Short courses are where presenters bring demonstrations of the methodology they use inside their classrooms, but at the same time they allow the participants or adult learners in the audience to also contribute to the conversation. Meaning, there is an exchange in dialogue where the adult learners offer examples of how they have similarly taught courses of their own. Short courses are great ways for individuals to embrace andragogic practices across the discipline.

Our Strong Future

As an Association, we have much of which to be proud. We welcome scholars and practitioners at all stages of their professional journey. We have persevered to become one of the oldest (if not the oldest) state associations of communication. From both a current professor and a future professor, we acknowledge the tireless work of those who have provided us the opportunity to extend our own branches. Here’s to the next 80 years and beyond!

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Ohio Networks: Roots in Community, Culture and Communication

Adam C. Earnhardt

Digital and mechanical networks are defined by their systems of interconnected wires, whereas other networks are defined by their systems of connected computers and devices (e.g., the World Wide Web). In the communication discipline, however, we are deeply invested in the intricacies of more complex human networks as they are defined by groups of people, communities, organizations and work groups, whether exclusively or inclusively linked, to achieve goals. As humans, we are *born* into our first networks (e.g., families). Society forces us into networks (e.g., primary school education), we are indoctrinated by other networks (e.g., religion, politics), and select or are selected by other short-duration, long-duration, and lifelong networks (e.g., friends, clubs, workplace).

In 21st century communication scholarship, researchers have identified the importance of new media networks for their social and cultural contributions (Edwards, Edwards, Wahl, & Myers, 2016; Wood & Smith, 2004), primarily in terms of information gathering, analyzing and sharing as well as initiating, cultivating, and maintaining relationships. However, traditional social and behavioral scientists know that networks are far more expansive and elegant than modern day “social” media would lead one to believe. While the study of networks has become less reliant on physical geography, it is still important to note that Ohio is the nexus of many influential, elaborate, and sprawling networks. As a discipline, communication researchers have only begun to understand the power of digital media access on traditional and emerging social networks. Inspection of the vast Ohio-oriented

Adam C. Earnhardt (Ph.D., Kent State University) is associate professor and chair of the Department of Communication at Youngstown State University. He previously served as executive director and conference coordinator of the Ohio Communication Association.

networks reveals there is much work to do, as evidenced by insufficient scholarship related to these systems.

As an association, the Ohio Communication Association (OCA) is poised to advocate for more research into these networks. This advocacy is only possible because of OCA's strength and endurance as a network of scholars. For decades, OCA has facilitated networking opportunities for scholars interested in communication research, and for professionals teaching and working in communication-related fields. For nearly a century, the State's premier network of communication scholars and educators, the OCA (formerly known as the Ohio Speech Communication Association) has brought together scholars to discuss original research and advancements in the communication discipline at the annual conference (typically in early Fall). Evidence of the strength of the OCA can be found in its longevity in that it is one of the oldest, state-based scholarly associations for the communication discipline. Furthermore, Ohio is one of some 20 states to maintain an active network for communication scholars. Couple this endurance with the contribution of OCA's long-time publication the *Ohio Communication Journal*, and it is easy to appreciate the importance of this network and its many contributions to the discipline.

Some of the discipline's most prolific scholars have at one time or another called Ohio home, which is understandable considering that the state has more than 140 four-year and two-year, private and public, community colleges, universities and regional campuses. Although some of these scholars have left the state, they have extended Ohio's network of communication scholars. They promote exploration of important networks through the prisms of group and organizational communication, and by expanding applications of traditional behavioral and social scientific theories. To be sure, our disciplinary network has borrowed from many established networks in sociology and psychology. Our scholars have applied rules theory, social exchange theory, structuration theory, symbolic convergence theory, systems theory and other sociology- and psychology-based theories to understand the functions of, membership in, and implications for groups and networks. Of course, this theory list is

not meant to be exhaustive, but it does showcase the various avenues of examining Ohio's networks.

Thus, this article is meant to serve as not only a celebration of the networking opportunities afforded to OCA members, but also a call for Ohio's communication scholars to consider exploring some well-known, but rarely examined networks through the prisms of community, culture, and communication.

Community Networks

Community networks are often defined by geography and industry. Most of Ohio's 11.6 million residents live in the major metropolitan areas of Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus, the state capital (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Smaller metro regions include Akron-Canton, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown-Warren. Ohio ranks as the 7th most populated state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The majority of Ohioans identify as Caucasian (83 percent), followed by African American (13 percent), and Hispanic/Latino (4 percent). However, examining the geodemographic data provides only a narrow glimpse of the diverse social networks of Ohio. Cultural and religious groups, workforce and educational institutions, and entertainment and sports connections provide a richer perspective of Ohio's social networks (Earnhardt, 2011a).

The history of Ohio's community-based networks predates immigration and the Westward Expansion. For example, Native American culture is abundant throughout Ohio. Features of Native American communities are found throughout the state and at numerous Indian burial groups, noted by the earth wall enclosures, geometric patterns, and mounds of various shapes and sizes (Woodward & McDonald, 2002). The grounds attract diverse networks of visitors including Native Americans, historians, and anthropologists. For example, the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park is home to some of the oldest burial grounds. The term *hopewell* is used to describe, in part, the network of spiritual beliefs among Native American groups. Beyond Hopewell, there is evidence of ancient burial mound building in Columbus, near the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers, and throughout more rural areas of middle Ohio.

Many social networks have developed around the major cities and regions of the state, based primarily on the leading industries of those areas. Workforce networks centered on the production of rubber were created in Akron, for jet engine production in Cincinnati, for automobile assembly and parts in Cleveland, and for steel in Youngstown. Although Ohio was once a leader in steel and manufacturing, these jobs have declined due to shifts in economic policy and trade regulations (Buss, 1983). Because of this downturn in manufacturing, Northeast Ohio is considered to be part of the *Rust Belt*, the informal term used to describe the line of closed, rusting mills that stretch from Cleveland to Youngstown and beyond. These harsh economic conditions fractured working-class networks, displaced networks of families and friends, and led to the creation of new community networks for the poor and disadvantaged.

Another notable community network that has been in decline for the last half century is farming and agriculture. Somewhat related to the deterioration of manufacturing networks, areas of western and central Ohio are considered part of the *Corn Belt*, a term used to describe the prairie region states and the networks of grain farmers that populate those areas. Declines in these agribusiness and manufacturing networks led to moderate increases in educational networks, primarily in higher education for the unemployed and working-class retraining (Earnhardt, 2011a).

Cultural Networks

Cultural networks are defined by systems of values and beliefs, but also by the arts and other creative endeavors. These networks of expression may focus on the arts, humanities, and other intellectual achievements including dance, literature, music, painting, philosophy, and theater (e.g., live theater, film). Members of cultural networks meet together and with other cultures to refine understandings or appreciations for cultural differences and similarities. Communication scholars, anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists have long been interested in the functions of intracultural, intercultural, and

cross-cultural communication for purposes ranging from simple decision-making techniques and outcomes to complex coexistence (Sieck, 2010). Ohio serves as a center for many of these important cultural networks, suitable for investigation. From large-scale cultural events to museums to sporting networks, Ohio provides access to some of the most important and relevant cultural networks in the world.

For example, Ohio is home to many music and cultural festivals that attract networks of fans, enthusiasts, and activists. Not to be confused with a community network, the music festival ComFest, short for Community Festival, is considered one of the largest music and art festivals in the nation. It is first and foremost a cultural event, networking groups of individuals who may never otherwise communicate for the purposes of understanding and celebrating different cultures. “We recognize that there are primary attitudes which divide and oppress people. These attitudes are usually shown by prejudice against people on the basis of age, class, ability, income, race, sex and sexual preference/orientation. *We seek to eliminate these attitudes,*” (ComFest, 2016). Aside from numerous art vendors and musicians, social and political organizations attract like-minded networks to discuss issues and celebrate diversity. One example of this is ComFest’s annual Gay Pride Parade that connects members of the GLBT community. Other notable music and art festivals in Ohio include the annual Bunberry Music Festival (Cincinnati), Columbus Art Festival, Jamboree in the Hills (Morristown), MasterWorks Festival (Cedarville), Nelsonville Music Festival (Nelsonville), and Rock on the Range (Columbus).

Another interesting cultural network centers on the celebration of twins. Each year in Twinsburg, Ohio, over 1,800 sets of twins and other multiples come together from around the world for Twins Day (Earnhardt, 2011a). Started in 1976, the festival celebrates local and extended networks of twins, including identical and fraternal twins of all ages and their families. The festival is considered one of the largest gatherings of multiples in the world. From a social scientific perspective generally, and human communication scholarship interest specifically, Twins Day serves as an important event for gathering data for various communication studies as well as biological, anthropological,

psychology and sociological research (Davis, 2014). Other notable Ohio-based cultural events important for network analyses include the Dublin Irish Festival. Networks of foodies, a term used to describe food enthusiasts, descend on Ohio each summer for the Banana Split Festival (Wilmington), Barnesville Pumpkin Festival, and Sweet Corn Festival (Millersport).

Areas of southern Ohio are known for their membership in the *Bible Belt*, a term used to describe a section of the U.S. in which networks of evangelical Christians, primarily of Protestant faith, dominate cultural, political, and economical structures. Although this region is mostly comprised of southern states, church membership and attendance across southern Ohio is considered strong. Additionally, beyond Ohio's Bible Belt region, the Christian music fan network celebrates at large festivals including Alive (Mineral City) and theFEST (Wickliffe).

Other music fans observe the creation of Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an important milestone in the recognition of their network. Opened in 1995, more than 600,000 fans signed a petition in favor of building the Hall in Cleveland over several other locations, including Los Angeles and New York City. Many music fans and critics recognize former Cleveland disc jockey Alan Freed's creation of the term rock and roll in their rationale for locating the Hall on the Lake Erie shores in Ohio. Freed is also credited with coordinating the first rock concert in Cleveland (Fisher, 2009). Fans of the inductees network with each other during visits to the Hall for museum tours, concerts and other events, and through online social networks such as Facebook, which often attract the museum and musical artist enthusiasts (George-Warren, 2011).

Ohio sports draw worldwide networks of fans (Tyus & Earnhardt, 2011). Professional sports franchises in Ohio's three major cities (Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus), amateur, and intercollegiate athletics enjoy expansive fan bases. The Cleveland Cavaliers have broadened their fan network beyond Northeast Ohio through acquisition of players from other countries including Australia, Brazil, Lithuania, and Russia. The online forum RealCavsFans.com boasts over 7,000 members who post

messages and questions about players, trades, rumors, game strategies, and statistics.

Other professional teams, including the Cincinnati Bengals and Cleveland Browns (National Football League; NFL), Cincinnati Reds and Cleveland Indians (Major League Baseball; MLB), Columbus Blue Jackets (National Hockey League), and Columbus Crew (Major League Soccer) garner similar fan networks, particularly in baseball, hockey and soccer due to their ability to sign players from other countries and, by proxy, attract a broader fan network (Earnhardt, 2011b). On the collegiate level, large networks of students and alumni-rooted fans follow the sports teams of their alma maters. Ohio State University football represents the largest of these fan bases, evidenced by the throngs of tailgaters that come together before home games and by the size of the Ohio Stadium, also known as the Horseshoe, that holds over 100,000 spectators (Earnhardt, 2011a).

The Pro Football Hall of Fame, located in Canton, brings together legions of fans to celebrate the accomplishments of the league's more prominent teams, players, coaches, owners, and officials (Earnhardt, 2011c). New members are enshrined in front of fans in early August each year, and the ceremony is typically followed by the Hall of Fame Game, an exhibition game that serves as the unofficial start to the new NFL season.

A Call for Communication Scholar Networks

This article calls on Ohio's communication scholars to do more to understand the complexity of our state-rooted networks. Although there is much to do to fully understand and appreciate the functions of Ohio's networks, OCA scholars are best positioned to conduct these studies because of our vast network of association members, current and past. Thanks, in part, to the Internet and social media, OCA's members are no longer bound by physical geography, allowing for scholars beyond our state to connect with other scholars to examine the influence of Ohio's networks on the world.

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“You’re Going, Aren’t You?”: An Encomium for the State Association

Matthew J. Smith

“You’re going, aren’t you?” asked Dr. Candice Thomas-Maddox in reference to that fall’s meeting of the Speech Communication Association of Ohio (SCAO). I had known Candice from my time as a graduate student at Ohio University and after my return to the state to accept a position at Wittenberg University, she invited me to join her on a panel at the annual conference at Otterbein University in Columbus. I had attended at least one SCAO meeting while I was in graduate school, and to be honest, getting to another conference was not high on my priority list. In fact, it wasn’t on my list at all. I was a member and regular attendee of the Eastern Communication Association and the National Communication Association, and I figured those affiliations met the professional needs that I as an upcoming assistant professor had quite nicely, thank you. But as anyone who has ever worked with her knows, it’s difficult to say no to Candice Thomas-Maddox. And so my response to her question was a seemingly inevitable, “Sure, I’ll be going.” Little did I know how prophetic that promise proved to be and that I would be going and going and going to conferences and events sponsored by the SCAO—which of course was subsequently renamed the Ohio Communication Association (OCA)—for the next decade and more.

As was the case with me early on, I have heard many other colleagues over the years explain why participating in the state

Matthew J. Smith is the Director of the School of Communication at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. While a professor at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, he served as a regional representative (2004-2006), vice-president (2006-2008), president (2008-2010) and past president (2010-2012) of the Ohio Communication Association. In addition to affiliations with OCA, ECA, and NCA, he is a founding member of the Comics Studies Society.

association seems to be less of a priority, particularly for those who already engage with regional, national, or international associations. They have told me that there simply isn't the draw, the time, or the resources—among other reasons—to get involved. Given my own lengthy affiliation with Ohio's state association, I clearly beg to differ and offer here the reasons why I believe in the opportunities associated with a state association like OCA are so valuable.

My first SCAO upon returning to Ohio was a whirlwind experience. I presented on a panel that morning and by lunch I was asked to run and was elected to the Executive Committee. I saw old friends from graduate school and met new colleagues at nearby schools. I was taken by the vision of incoming president Jeff Tyus to grow the association and energized by the spirit of untapped potential within the organization. It was an intellectually, socially, and professionally meaningful experience, and I wanted more. Thinking back on it—and my subsequent tenure with the association—I believe that there were several good reasons for me to want to be a part of OCA and reasons why others find affiliating with state associations rewarding. As I detail below, state associations serve a vital role in promoting scholarship, creating professional networking opportunities, developing leadership skills, recognizing accomplishments, and enculturating students into the professional, all within a low cost/low stress context.

Advancing Scholarship

Like all other academic associations, state associations exist to help promote scholarship. In OCA, this is manifested most visibly in the sponsorship of an annual conference and the publication of an annual journal. The very reason we choose to come together is a shared desire to better understand the phenomena of communication and to better promote that understanding. As an organization, we focus on how to make new insights into our field accessible to one another and to the wider discipline.

As both an officer of the association and a member of its journal editorial board, I've had the chance to review a lot of the

scholarship that has been submitted for conference presentation and journal publication. Admittedly, not all of it has been “ready for primetime,” but a good deal of it is solid, professional work. Some of it is even rather impressive. Although quality inevitably varies in any open forum, the fact that the state association not only creates spaces for sharing scholarship but provides a process for peer review of that material is noteworthy. This process benefits the scholars who submit their work, either by finding a venue for its expression or from receiving constructive criticism for its refinement. It also benefits those of us participating in the review process, as we learn from the submissions and reaffirm among ourselves the standards for scholarly competence. Ideally, it ultimately benefits the reading audience who enjoy the final products. In this way, both the process and products of review benefit the community of scholars.

Networking with Peers

When I began attending my first state conference, I was newly returned to the state, and although I found a number of former faculty and graduate students from my alma mater involved, I also got to meet people who I would not have otherwise encountered. That’s a bit sad considering we live and work in the same state. But the virtue of a state association is that you do get to know the people in your neighborhood, relatively speaking, and you get to know their programs and their institutions by extension. Moreover, you get to interact with people who are at dissimilar kinds of institutions: people who work at community colleges, private four-year colleges, large state schools, non-profits, and others. They all may know and love communication, but many are working with it in different contexts, which brings an even wider appreciation of the applicability of the phenomena we study.

There is also the virtue of having and utilizing connections in the field when one needs them and being of help to others when they need you. I’ve called upon my OCA connections to help me as guest lecturers on topics I’m presenting in class, and I’ve been able to help others by serving as an outside reviewer on promotion committees, all due to the connections I was able to establish

through our state association. No one advances in the profession without some form of collaboration with one's peers, and the state association is one vital venue in meeting and developing relationships with those fellow professionals.

Developing Leadership Skills

More broadly than their much larger counterparts, state associations make available opportunities to develop one's leadership skills. Indeed, because of the demands of keeping the association running, its viability depends on successive waves of volunteers to step up and assume leadership positions. The value of this kind of professional development extends beyond its vital contribution to the association itself. Such experience is essential preparation for those seeking even larger responsibilities, such as offices at the regional, national, or international level. It also comes back into the mix in one's home institution, as one grows into leading others as a part of one's "day job."

As a former officer in OCA, I was always amazed at how much energy we got from people who were giving of their time and expertise to the betterment of the association without being directly compensated financially for their contribution. Because we operate on such a modest budget, we could never hope to compensate them for the value of the time and talent that they invested in the association's affairs, be that conference planning or journal editing or serving on the Executive Committee. The payoff I found in my own experience was in the way such leadership helped to develop me as a professional and prepared me for future leadership opportunities. The skills I learned in managing volunteers have proven to be valuable in managing contracted employees, as both want to feel valued and affirmed for their contributions to the enterprise.

Recognizing Accomplishments

State associations also possess an ability to recognize professional accomplishments at a more prestigious level than one's home institution can. Certainly, one's home institution can

acknowledge accomplishments in research, teaching and service, but there is something particularly meaningful in having peers from across the state recognize a job well done. During my tenure as an officer of OCA, we expanded the slate of awards to further recognize accomplishments in the craft of teaching. It wasn't that we needed to attract more teaching professionals to the association, though. It just seemed like the kind of thing we'd want to do and affirm the good works being done by so many of our members. Teaching is, in my opinion, the most intrinsically rewarding job one can have; the state association has the ability to make those rewards more extrinsic by spotlighting our state's best efforts. This benefits not only the individual recipient but also the wider discipline, which can point to examples of accomplishment and excellence for administrators and peers in other disciplines.

Enculturating Students

State associations are a convenient vehicle for enculturating our most promising students into the discipline. Being able to have students bring their best work before an external audience and show them that such work is valued by academics greater than an "N" of one is a welcomed opportunity for those of us who want to encourage the next generation of scholars, teachers, and professionals to pursue the discipline further. It also helps for them to see the variety of work being conducted across the discipline and to ascertain a wider scope on the field and the opportunities within. Taking undergraduates to conference seems to be particularly valuable, especially when they can meet with representatives of graduate programs, size up those programs, and consider applying to them for further graduate study. The association also affords undergraduate and graduate student representatives the opportunity to serve on its governing board, thus developing their leadership skills as well.

I've always admired colleagues who have packed groups of students into a van and carted them across the country to conferences. The beauty of the state association is that travel to and from the conference is typically much shorter—and less expensive a project, opening access to larger numbers of talented

students than not. Nothing has been more satisfying to me as a professional than to see students who we nurtured through our undergraduate program following in our footsteps and enter the professorate, and our state associations are an important venue for making those introductions possible. (Dr. Laura Russell of Denison University, one of my former students—and an OCA attendee in her formative years, recently made me especially proud when she joined the OCA Executive Committee.)

Providing a Low Cost/Low Stress Alternative

Participating in the state association is of course, not only a less expensive prospect for students but for faculty and professionals as well. Quite frankly, all of the virtues listed heretofore can be derived from a regional, national or international association to one degree or another, but those larger organizations come with heftier costs, brought on by their own expansive overhead and sizeable travel costs to and from their convening sites. As travel budgets for academics stagnate or shrink, the sheer value of the state association is a virtue unmatched by its sibling organizations.

State associations also offer a degree of intimacy that larger organizations lack. At the OCA conference we have a tradition where following the keynote all registered attendees sit down for lunch together. It's a wonderful moment to gather as a community of thinkers, break bread, and conduct the business of the association. For those who express frustration with the overwhelming nature of conferences with thousands of attendees, the comparatively smaller OCA event with hundreds feels accessible and welcoming in a way that more expansive events cannot.

And I like that. I like feeling part of a community and not lost in the crowd. Of course, I understand the prestige associated with attending national or international events, but I believe good things happen on the local stage, too. The discipline is well served when we support our state associations. A strong state association is an indicator of the vitality of the discipline within the state, and those institutions participating in its activities are praiseworthy

stewards, living into the sage adage, “Think globally, act locally.” As the small engines of the discipline, state associations do their part to advance scholarship, provide networking opportunities, develop leadership skills, recognize accomplishments, and enculturate students, all within a low cost/low stress context.

Given these virtues, I have to ask, “You’re going, aren’t you?”

A Postscript towards the 100th Annual Meeting

Those who heed that invitation contribute to sustaining OCA as a vital organization. While higher education continues to change in myriad ways, from the shifting reliance on adjunct instructors to the rise of online institutions, I believe that there will continue to be a desire among those individuals who teach, research, and practice communication to connect with others who share their craft. In my experience, few people are as successful going it alone as those who go forward with the companionship of others. If that understanding is borne out, then OCA will continue to be relevant for the next 20 years—and beyond.

While the need for an organization like OCA is likely to persist, its actual relevance will depend upon the continued investment its membership places into it. I have seen OCA thrive in recent times because of the time, talent, and sheer creativity devoted to it by hard-working professionals. Having a membership in general and leadership in particular who are putting forth the effort to be visible, to be adaptive, and to be professional will make all the difference in the continuation and growth of the association.

Personally, I always believed that OCA had the potential to be the most vibrant state communication association in the nation. Not only does the state boast an inordinate number of institutions of higher education, but they are of inordinate quality. Moreover, the state’s size, infrastructure, and geography make it conducive to more frequent meeting and collaboration opportunities. I would love to see OCA live in to that potential as it realizes its 100th annual meeting.

At that historic meeting OCA might be able to lay claim to a membership of several hundred, with an annual meeting spanning multiple days of high quality programming, and a slate of online publications that highlight the works of seasoned and emerging scholars. It might also boast a membership that welcomes more professional communicators whose interests in the field has extended beyond their formal education. It might also be even more of the premiere showcase for graduate programs and a hub of recruitment for undergraduate attendees. And more. . .

But that vision can only be realized with continued participation and investment by thoughtful professionals across the state and beyond. I am heartened that the prospects of that vision being realized is more likely than not at this time. I continue to see new members and new leadership step up to the opportunities that the association presents. So long as OCA continues to be a welcoming—rather than an exclusive—association, the potential for it to not only survive but thrive to and beyond its 100th meeting is bright indeed.