

**A Draft for a Code of Professional Ethics for the
Eastern Communication Association**
November 2008

We gratefully acknowledge the work of the National Communication Association in its Code of Professional Responsibilities for the Communication Scholar/Teacher, which itself owes a debt to the American Sociological Association's definitions of ethical behavior.

Section I: Volunteer Ethics

The strength of our association is founded upon the willingness of our members to give of their time and talent and doing so in ways that pursue the highest standards of professional conduct. The volunteer ethics principles outlined below were constructed to serve the regional association so that they are broad enough to cover a variety of service roles and yet also result in positive consequences and outcomes when followed. By adhering to these principles, individuals will carry out their duties in an admirable manner and leave their volunteer roles knowing they have served the association well.

Those who volunteer for the Eastern Communication Association (ECA) should:

- Gather all information related to the roles, responsibilities, rules, and deadlines that accompany the capacity of service in which the individual is interested;
- Ensure that adequate time can be given to fulfill volunteer assignments and responsibilities before agreeing to serve the association;
- Carry out volunteer responsibilities for the association promptly, professionally, and to the full extent to which the individual is capable;
- Engage in scholarly critique that is judicious but avoids personal attacks;
- Notify appropriate regional leadership immediately when support is needed or the individual is unable to fulfill volunteer roles, responsibilities, or assignments; and
- Act with discretion in situations calling for confidentiality (e.g., blind review of competitive papers), most especially in situations where the disclosure of such information would jeopardize individuals or a stronger good for the organization as a whole.

Section II: Officer Ethics

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

Officers have an obligation to:

- Fulfill officer duties in a fair and open manner by providing association leadership and membership with information regarding the values, principles, and situations guiding decisions;
- Uphold and reflect a spirit of goodwill, assisting their fellow officers with support, ideas, and encouragement, particularly in the free and open sharing of expertise with successors; and
- Maintain open lines of communication, tempered with professional respect for one another and value for the unique contributions each individual makes to the common good of ECA.

Section III: Reviewer Ethics

Serving the ECA regional journals and assisting in programming the annual conference constitute an honor and a responsibility. Individuals who serve the ECA in these ways should also follow the ethical principles laid out in the general volunteer ethics section. Similarly, authors who submit work to ECA are bound by general principles of research ethics.

- Those who serve as reviewers for the regional journals and conference should:
- Adhere to the highest research ethics, including but not limited to full reporting of study details, proper referencing and citation, and maintaining institutional review board standards;
 - Commit to maintaining high quality regional journals that provide timely, thoughtful, and thorough reviews of manuscripts;
 - Uphold the blind review process by maintaining the confidentiality of manuscripts reviewed and not reviewing manuscripts for which they are certain of the identity of the authors;
 - Submit reviews in a timely manner or notify the editor or planner why a delay is necessary;
 - Notify the editor or planner of any elements in the submission that may be unethical, unprofessional, or of questionable validity;
 - Acknowledge any factors that might unfairly influence the assessment of a submission and promptly return that submission so that it may be sent to a different referee; and
 - Engage with authors of manuscripts in a collaborative, helpful, and detailed manner—devoid of personal attacks—to strengthen the quality of research conducted in the communication discipline.

Section IV: Convention Ethics

The annual convention held by the Eastern Communication Association provides a forum to communicate, share, and celebrate the scholarship of its members. The principles that guide our conduct as presenters, program planners, and reviewers should be framed within the larger code of ethics that governs ECA.

Adhering to the following ethical guidelines will ensure that the annual convention is conducted in a fair, open, honest, responsible, and professional manner. Participants should:

- Submit a paper, poster, or panel submission to a single interest group at a time and only if they intend to and can financially support going to the conference;
- Respect and follow the timelines and other guidelines set by the program planners and the chairperson of conference sessions;
- Disclose when a paper, poster, or panel presentation has been previously presented or published;
- Register for the convention and avoid using convention badges from previous years to attend the convention without current registration;
- Identify a substitute to cover the presentation and other duties if an emergency comes up and attendance at the conference is not possible;
- Restrict presentations to the allotted time so that others also have the opportunity to present their work;
- Notify and discharge upon completion all relevant duties as a program planner to the incoming program planner, including attendance at relevant planning meetings, adherence to timelines and guidelines, and facilitation of future sessions, so that all conference proceedings are conducted in an organized, professional, and timely manner.

Section V: Technological Ethics

As communication professionals, we recognize and respect the potential for technology to empower and extend human communication. Accordingly, we seek to use communication technologies in ways that respect the rights of people who create, use, and are subject to our use of these technologies. All ECA members should:

- Observe the guidelines of copyright law, refraining from unlawful infringement on copyrights through the misappropriation of technologies, such as illegal downloading, file sharing, or pirating;
- Recognize that certain technologies possess vulnerabilities, which can lead to distorted communication and erroneous conclusions through unauthorized access or manipulation, and thus refrain from exploiting these vulnerabilities for either personal benefit or even to test the limits of safeguards, without proper clearance; and
- Respect recipients of our messages, striving to maintain the standards of civility and consideration of others as would be expected in face-to-face interactions and by not using technology in disrupting and distracting ways during professional activities.