

National Communication Association
Executive Committee Proposal
June 2024 Meeting

Proposal: Division Name Change for Philosophy of Communication Division

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Summary

This proposal requests the Executive Committee to approve a change to the name of the Philosophy of Communication Division.

Current name: *Philosophy of Communication Division*

Our proposed new name: *Philosophy of Communication, Theory, and Critique*

Strategic Priorities Relevant to the Proposal

We the authors consider this proposed action to be relevant to all current goals of the NCA Strategic Plan. (Goal 1) This includes the support and empowerment of members for greater inclusion in our division. (Goal 2) It promotes our Division's relevance to the value of communication, understanding philosophical accounts of communicative phenomena and theories about them to be integral to influencing policy agendas in multiple organization. (Goal 3) It signals the commitment of the Division leadership to align our work with the IDEA goals and strategies of NCA. (Goal 4) It locates our Division's work within the culture of a thriving organization – that is, NCA.

Financial Implications

None that we can identify.

Recommendation

The authors recommend that the Executive Committee approve this proposal for a name change for our Division. It will align our Division further with the goals of NCA regarding IDEA and it will connect the work of the Division both to the rest of NCA and

to other scholarly organizations exploring this subject matter. This will, consequently, boost the profile of NCA as an exemplar of relevant scholars connecting philosophy, using multiple methodological approaches, to contemporary life.

Motion

To approve the Interest Group name change from Philosophy of Communication Division to Philosophy of Communication, Theory, and Critique Division.

Background/History

Prior to the 2023 business meeting for the Philosophy of Communication Division, a discussion was had among current members to change the name of the Division. A suggestion was made by a Division member to change the name of the division for multiple reasons. These included:

- a broadening of the brand of our scholarship to the rest of NCA
- a clarification of how our scholarship reflects NCA's commitment to IDEA scholarship
- addressing how multiple papers discussing philosophers and philosophical content are submitted to other Divisions instead
- addressing a perceived need for support to increase our submissions overall

The Division leadership, agreeing with this suggestion, presented the proposal for a name change of the Division to the members in attendance at the 2023 NCA business meeting in accordance with the guidelines of our Division bylaws. We followed the guidelines of the bylaws to conduct a vote among the membership. After an extended exchange with members present at the business meeting, the group agreed on the thoughtfully worded new name: *Philosophy of Communication, Theory, and Critique*. (We even discussed the comma placements). A motion was offered and a vote was held in accordance with the Division bylaws. The motion passed.

To complete this transition, we offer the following responses to demonstrate how this course of action addresses the *Strategic Priorities* of NCA for 2023-2024.

Goal 1: Create Conditions to Support and Empower Members

1.1 Support excellence in Communication-related scholarship, pedagogy, and service.

The Division name change intends to attract an even more diverse base of scholarship to enrich the current literature base of philosophy and communication overlap, and to create further opportunities for students who engage in varied philosophical inquiry into communication.

Further, it expands the scope of the Division to reflect philosophical inquiry within communication and its subfields as it exists in *other* organizations known for scholarly excellence. The primary example is the *International Communication Association*, which has a philosophy Division

with the same name. This boosts the standards and influence of scholarship emerging from the Division and, subsequently, from NCA.

1.2 Enhance member access, engagement, and sense of ownership in the association.

This change signals the welcoming of a broader array of scholarship from across the U.S., allowing diverse engagement that reflects the multiple perspectives of its members.

1.3 Maintain ethical standards for research, teaching, and service.

This change further clarifies that the Division welcomes multiple methodologies in its submission, though this standard is already promoted in the Division description listed on the NCA website.

Goal 2: Promote Communication's Value

2.1 Enhance public awareness and understanding about the value of the discipline.

This change alerts the Association, both scholars and practitioners, to the broad array of philosophical approaches to communication in the scholarship. Its increased specificity extends awareness about the value of its scholarship to broader conversations in the discipline.

2.2 Promote Communication's significance in challenging existing structures and fostering meaningful change.

Theoretical engagements with structures, policies, and other architectonic forces shaping communicative practices are at the heart of philosophical inquiry. This change more clearly signals the relevance of our Division's scholarship to these conversations.

2.3 Advocate for Communication-informed institutional and public policies.

This change reveals how Division scholarship gives theoretical ground toward policies of higher education and public life, including governmental, non-profit, and corporate entities.

Goal 3: Embrace and Enact Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access

3.1 Provide the tools for members to value and promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and access within all disciplinary spaces and societal practices.

Critical philosophers have long examined the ground that Western thinkers use to conceive of the human experience, including but not limited to accounts of identity and community central to understanding communicative phenomena, such as dialogue, monologue, communicative engagement, and organizational practices. This proposed name change expands what is already listed in our organizational mission statement – diverse methodologies that address IDEA concerns, to clarify the potential contribution of such methods to our Division.

3.2 Create and improve structures, programs, practices, and policies within NCA that ensures all members are able to engage in the association and thrive in their professional pursuits.

This name change reaffirms the commitment of the Division and its leadership to practices that embody IDEA scholarship in its panel submissions. It expands the relevance of the Division brand to foster diverse involvement in Division leadership and business meetings.

3.3. Promote and advocate for inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access in the field of Communication and within NCA

This name change acknowledges that our Division has more work to do to promote IDEA scholarship and affirms our commitment to do so. As philosophers of communication, we are in a unique position to understand the ground of inclusivity as driving professional excellence.

Inclusive communities of scholars drive more diverse, broader, and stronger standards of excellence by reflecting multiple goods. The leaders of this Division understand that we have always included multiple schools of thought and methodology, from the ancient, medieval, modern, and postmodern periods, as is noted in our Division description on the NCA website. But there is more that can be done to bridge the gap between our discipline and the critical voices prevalent in our other Divisions. Considering contentious events transpiring within the membership of NCA over the past decade, this name change strengthens the commitment of this Division to fostering IDEA values within NCA.

Goal 4: Cultivate a Thriving and Responsive Organization

4.1 Nurture and support a membership, volunteer leadership, and national office staff that are energetic, collaborative, and engaged.

4.2 Foster reflective governance and administrative practices and informed decision-making.

4.3. Collaborate with impacted communities to advocate for Communication-informed policies and structures.

While nomenclature may not seem central to achieving administrative goals, the name change of our Division combines elements of philosophy and the humanities in general to promote further the reach of our scholarship to impacted communities. It suggests new possibilities for how philosophical inquiry can reach and shape communities that need support.