

Dear Texas Speech Communication Association Colleagues:

Greetings!

First, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you, the membership, for making the October 2009 convention at the Omni Mandalay in Irving, Texas a success. It could not have happened without the talent, determination, creativity, commitment, generosity, and dedication of the membership on all levels. Often times at convention, it may appear to be the "Executive Officer Show" however, I assure you that every officer on the dais is keenly aware that it is you, the interest group chairs, committee chairs, panelists, and attendees who truly make this organization work.

Therefore, thank you committee chairs for keeping the organization's focus and goals on the proper path. From making sure that the by-laws and finances are in order, to addressing credit and curriculum concerns, the committee chairs and members keep the heart, soul, financial, legal, and educational components of TSCA aligned. As a special side note, it cannot go unmentioned the absolutely fantastic job done by the Local Arrangements Committee headed by Jane Boyd and Robert Shepard.

Thank you interest group chairs for submitting an array of programs to address the professional development of the membership. With panels addressing effective teaching and coaching strategies, state level curriculum changes and concerns, as well as the always delightful sessions such as "Meet the Author" we, the membership left the convention with a new sense of purpose and a few new tricks to use whether we are in the "old dog" or "new dog" category.

Additionally, thank you to the presenters who took their time to develop and present the panels at the convention. This convention had one of the largest slates of program submissions in organizational history. We were fortunate that the Mandalay had the capacity to allow for so many to be presented. Without the membership attending these breakout sessions the panelists' work would have been for naught. So, thank you members for going to the sessions and supporting your fellow speech professionals.

Furthermore, thank you TSCA officers for your part in making the convention a success. Lois Davis, you presided with efficiency and flair. Mike Jones, you made the brutal financial facts understandable. Kandi King, your efforts to secure vendors produced a record number in attendance. Brent Hinkle, your ability to herd this many "cats" every year through the registration process in a calm and consistent manner is the stuff of legend. Jana Riggins, keeper of the artifacts, you always make sure that the organization's legacy is secure with prodding of the forgetful to submit items for the archives. Amy Tilton Jones, by proxy, you made us aware of the importance of the newsletter as a means for keeping the membership in the know. Shawn Wahl, your commitment to keeping the TSCA journal content at the level of excellence that it has held for years ensures that the TSCA journal remains at the forefront of state organization publications. And last, Barbara Mayo, our pinch hit parliamentarian, thank you for keeping us procedurally correct in the conducting of TSCA business matters. *BTW, the fact that I managed to spell Aimee Kasprzyk correctly 99.9% of the time her name appeared in print is a major feat as producer of the convention program 😊.*

Looking forward it is a new year in our discipline both chronologically and academically.

The big concern at the 2009 convention was the fate of the Communication Applications class in the public school graduation requirements. This as you know is a State Board of Education issue. In early November, Kandi King, Jana Riggins, Janet Melton, Charlotte English, and I along with others, spent the day in Austin attending the board meeting and presenting TSCA's position on the proposed change to the speech curriculum. The basic result of that hearing was that Communication Applications will remain on the books as one option for fulfilling the .5 credit of speech for high school graduation. The other result was that the Professional Communications class presented by the Career & Technology Education contingency will count as well. This change is applicable to all three graduation plans in Texas public schools. As you know, the State Legislature mandated that the SBOE create more flexibility in the high school curriculum due to the earlier implementation of the 4X4 requirements for graduation. Adding the Professional Communications class was one of the ways the SBOE chose to fulfill this mandate. The field of math and science was impacted in a similar manner as the SBOE also chose to add course equivalents for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of math and science.

It is important that the membership understand that Professional Communications is not being viewed by the SBOE, and subsequently TEA, as a substitute course but as an equivalent course. This was made very clear to me and Kandi by a number of TEA staff members in the preparation of our board testimony. **Therefore, with this in mind, TSCA must now lobby the State Board of Educator Certification to assure that the Professional Communications course, now listed in education code as an equivalent course for Communication Applications, is taught by a certified speech teacher.** The requirement could very well be that a certified speech teacher has to get a CTE endorsement. As an organization we should also lobby that CTE faculty must acquire a speech endorsement. The TEKS for the Professional Communications course can be found on the TEA website under Business Management. The course description is housed under Arts-Audio/Video Technology and Communications.

The link is <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/teks/cte/CH130/Chptr130C.pdf> Scroll to p.48. *Note: the pages here are not numbered in the traditional footnote pagination format. This information is basically the last section of the document. You will see the **bolded 130.99. Professional Communications (One-Half Credit)** as designation of the entry. You may also watch the page counter in the menu bar at the top of the program screen on your computer.*

Despite this SBOE decision, I cannot express enough gratitude to Virginia Myers and Maridell Fryar for their extensive work in researching, preparing, and shaping the information we used to state TSCA's case for retaining Communication Applications in the graduation requirements. Their efforts to support the organization and our discipline are and continue to be legendary.

As for the convention this October . . . Houston look out! The Local Arrangements and Public Relations Committees are working in tandem exploring ideas to make the 2010 gathering a most successful affair. So ink the dates of October 6-9, 2010 on your calendar for a convention that will allow you to rekindle friendships, expand your teaching methodologies, and support your fellow teachers, professors, lecturers, thespians, orators, and competitors as we explore the theme:

**Cultural Communication: Creating Chaos or Community?**

With sincere appreciation all of my TSCA colleagues,

Ralph Long

President, TSCA 2009-2010