



**International
Communication
Association**

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Introduction

As the 21st century continues to usher in transformative change in the global communication landscape, The International Communication Association (ICA) community is at the forefront of research, teaching, service, and engagement that contribute to the understanding of, and solutions to, the communication challenges and opportunities facing contemporary society. ICA is an organization of communication scholars whose mission is to advance the study of communication by encouraging and facilitating excellence in academic research worldwide. The purposes of the Association are to:

- (1) Provide an international forum to enable the development, conduct, and critical evaluation of communication research;
- (2) Facilitate inclusiveness and debate among scholars from diverse national and cultural backgrounds and from a multiplicity of disciplinary perspectives on communication-related issues;
- (3) Promote a wider public interest in, and visibility of, the theories, methods, findings, and applications generated by research in communication and allied fields; and
- (4) Sustain a program of high-quality scholarly publication and knowledge exchange that enhances scholarship, science, and the public good, including consideration of how our scholarship can be used in socially responsible ways, meet social needs, and be broadly accessible.¹

ICA upholds principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. These are central to what we do currently and inform our aspirations for our future. These fundamental values and principles infuse our scholarship and practice, recognizing diversity in all its forms as being crucial to the advancement of the communication field. We believe promoting mechanisms to enhance global inclusion in ICA is intrinsic to our mission. Our commitment to these

¹ <https://www.icaheadq.org/page/MissionStatement>

foundational values has been important for this strategic plan and remains a central goal within the plan.

This document represents a draft of the ICA strategic plan for 2024-2029. The purpose of the planning process was to gather the dedication, ideas, energy, and inventiveness of the leadership and members of ICA, and to translate them into an aspirational yet feasible organizational strategy that clarifies our identity, advances and reinvigorates our mission, connects and supports our members in multiple ways, sets important and nimble directions for the future, and secures ICA's long-term sustainability and impact.

The plan includes five specific goals reflecting ICA's priorities: (1) global leadership in communication scholarship, (2) community, inclusivity, and access, (3) global representation and engagement, (4) transformational professional growth, and (5) sustainable resourcing. The goals will drive decision making and resource allocation by ICA leadership and create a framework for ICA's initiatives and collaborative endeavors. Goals are followed by objectives, the quantity and order of which do not imply relative importance, but rather reflect the interconnected nature of the plan. Taken together, these goals and objectives are designed to build upon ICA's multiple strengths, envisioning new initiatives that connect and extend the association's support to our global membership throughout the year. The strategic plan is designed to enhance ICA's prominence in the support, promotion, and advancement of original and innovative communication scholarship of the highest quality across the globe, establishing new approaches across multiple modalities and cultural contexts.

Methods

ICA partnered with Keeling & Associates, LLC (K&A), a consulting and professional services firm, to facilitate the process of developing the strategic plan. K&A worked closely with ICA's Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF)²; SPTF membership was drawn from all of the global regions where ICA has a presence. Together K&A and SPTF worked to complete the activities of the process, including:

- September - December 2023: Design and Development of the Planning Process, Background Research, and Community Engagement/Information Gathering:

² SPTF membership included Cynthia Stohl (co-Chair), Karin Wilkins (co-Chair), Pablo Boczkowski, Caleb Carr, Claes de Vreese, Shinsuke Eguchi, Francois Heinderyckx, Shiv Ganesh, Sr. Agnes Lucy Lando, Eun-Ju Lee, Jasmine McNealy, Padma Rani, Rabindra Ratan, Silvio Waisbord, and Thomas Hanitzsch. See Appendix for institutional affiliations.

- K&A worked closely with the co-chairs to articulate a detailed plan for the strategic planning process. SPTF was established and began monthly planning meetings led by the co-chairs.
 - K&A reviewed data and documents available publicly and shared by the co-chairs as foundational information, including information from previous planning efforts, annual reports, relevant journal articles, policies and procedures, budgets and financial data, organizational structure and staffing information, annual conference data, property information, and previously collected member survey data.
 - K&A conducted interviews with each member of the SPTF, members of the Executive Committee (EC), Chairs of Divisions and Interest Groups, the Publications Committee, all members of the ICA Staff, Standing Committee and Task Force Chairs, former leadership not currently on the EC, and Students and Early Career (SECAC) members. In total, K&A met with 53 individuals over 32 meetings; interviewees represented 11 divisions, 5 interest groups, and 9 standing committees. K&A met with several members of the SPTF, EC, and headquarters staff more than once.
 - K&A administered and analyzed the results of an online survey open to all members; 615 members responded, yielding a 12% response rate, and representing all Divisions and Interest Groups.
- January - April 2024: Analysis and Synthesis of Information and Draft Goals:
- SPTF continued to meet monthly for extended 90-minute sessions in which they reviewed and discussed findings from the information gathering process.
 - At the end of January, K&A met with the EC for an in-person extended 3-hour discussion, in which the EC reviewed and responded to findings and emerging themes from interviews and surveys and articulated their priorities and directions for the strategic plan.
 - SPTF continued to meet and establish priorities, set directions, and thoughtfully debate and draft the goals and objectives in the plan, weighing and incorporating the priorities of the EC throughout the process.
 - SPTF members exchanged frequent emails with the co-chairs regarding the content and structure of the draft plan between meetings; feedback, input, and directions were incorporated into successive drafts. The lively and productive debates advanced the probability that the many and varied constituents within ICA would see their views reflected in the plan.

- K&A worked closely and iteratively with the co-chairs on successive drafts of the plan between meetings.
- May 2024: The final draft of the plan will be delivered to the EC for review and comment and K&A will refine the draft and prepare it for delivery to the full Board.
- June 2024: The Board will vote on the final strategic plan.

The strategic plan has emerged from this process. It describes the necessary goals and objectives that should be met to strengthen ICA's mission and set the stage for a dynamic future for the Association.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

1. Global Leadership in Communication Scholarship

Scholarly excellence is the guiding light of our association. ICA strives to cultivate and support the highest quality research practices and collaborative activities, focusing on the rigorous and inclusive production and promotion of innovative scholarship around the world. We seek to enrich our intellectual community by convening, connecting, and engaging scholars from diverse perspectives and areas of expertise across global regions. ICA's intellectual leadership will be positioned both internally, within the field of communication, and externally, by disseminating and leveraging the impact of our members' works to broader audiences.

Objectives

ICA will...

- a. Foster, maintain, and develop multi-modal outlets and forums to disseminate and engage communication scholarship with global communities and focused networks.
- b. Increase public engagement of our members and their research through legacy and emerging platforms, to promulgate evidence-based information and elevate the field's standing in the public realm.
- c. Amplify our recognition as a home for the best scholars, content experts, and scholarship in communication, both by members of our field and in our broader communities.
- d. Create additional mechanisms for member engagement in focused networks.

- e. Assess and enhance current practices for supporting and compensating those taking leadership positions within ICA journals.
- f. Assess and enhance current practices for supporting those taking leadership positions within divisions and interest groups.
- g. Identify areas that would benefit from greater engagement and outreach with non-academic practitioners.

2. Community, Inclusivity, and Access

ICA upholds diversity, inclusion, and access as fundamental values and principles infusing every aspect of our work and our community. We work towards inclusiveness, alleviating the limitations faced by many scholars from diverse regions, identity groups, and circumstances who have struggled for visibility and recognition of their work. Our focus is on knowledge sharing as a mechanism for facilitating community access and information exchange among experts representing a broad range of groups, perspectives, and practices. ICA's commitment to Open Access in publishing is just one manifestation of our promise to enhance accessibility, engagement, transparency, and accountability of knowledge we produce.

Objectives

ICA will...

- a. Proactively engage scholars representing a comprehensive spectrum of nationalities, cultural identities, research interests, and methodologies involved in communication scholarship to be a part of the ICA community.
- b. Establish opportunities for global members to contribute and lead our efforts to enrich existing and new scholarly publications, conferences, and initiatives.
- c. Increase the speed with which we are converting our publications to Open Access beginning with an existing and a new journal.
- d. Develop a process to launch a second Open Access journal by 2027 that responds to our prioritization of global inclusiveness.

3. Global Representation and Engagement

ICA is committed to amplifying support for the evolving goals and interests of current and future members by de-centering our global presence, simultaneously maintaining a

physical location in our current headquarters while revisioning and expanding staffing responsibilities across the world. Regional and local activities, such as chapters, will further accentuate connections between ICA and geographically-dispersed scholars, build and strengthen communities of scholars within regions, and deepen the base of shared knowledge.

Objectives

ICA will...

- a. Reimagine a global structure and distribution of organizational responsibilities that enables the inclusion of diverse cultural perspectives.
- b. Through assessment and review of current practices, expand, support, and formalize ties to regional chapters and/or other initiatives that promote reciprocal knowledge sharing and mutual engagement of ICA members.
- c. Through assessment and review, determine a feasible structure for increasing cross-membership between regional initiatives and the Association.
- d. Develop a formal plan and criteria for increasing our global presence via regional chapters and regional conferences.
- e. Commit to flexible and innovative formats for our annual conference and additional smaller conferences to increase access and opportunities to build community for scholars across the globe.
- f. Strengthen regional constituencies and their activities, such as regional chapters, through professional mentoring for members by members to support the capabilities and capacities of their members and their organizations.
- g. Create multiple pathways for ICA leadership experiences for ICA members, including members of regional chapters and other such initiatives.
- h. Increase publishing capacity and support for legacy and new ICA journals to enhance quality as well as better serve the needs of members.

4. Transformational Professional Growth

ICA is dedicated to supporting our members at each stage of their careers, enhancing the resources and opportunities available for professional and academic development, integrating opportunities for pedagogical exchange, leadership development, mentoring, network building, and training activities.

Objectives

ICA will...

- a. Develop and convene association-wide initiatives that serve members at various stages of their careers and professional development by learning from and leveraging current programs hosted by Divisions and Interest Groups.
- b. Further enhance a program for student and early career members that will provide a structured orientation to ICA and ongoing assistance in networking, navigating the annual conference, and accessing professional support opportunities.
- c. Support the development of member-generated, interest based-networks for scholarly, pedagogical, and professional purposes.

5. Sustainable Resourcing

ICA is steadfast in its pledge to steward our resources with accountability, incorporating environmental, social, and governance considerations into all decisions. This approach is critical to ensuring our financial sustainability as a thriving organization committed to principles of global environmental sustainability and enriched public discourse.

Objectives

ICA will...

- a. Continue to delineate, assess, and choose options that leverage and expand our current resources and investments to meet our fiduciary responsibilities in a sustainable and equitable manner.
- b. Evaluate, enhance, and diversify the expertise and roles of staff in a continuous process of mapping responsibilities to the evolving forms of ICA as it seeks to advance and achieve the aforementioned goals.
- c. Further develop environmental, social, and governance criteria, as well as financial thresholds regarding costs to and access for members when choosing sites for our conferences and for regional chapters.
- d. Identify and assess complementary activities beyond our annual conference—including but not limited to smaller, multi-site, and hybrid opportunities.

Appendix: Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) Membership

- Cynthia Stohl, *UC Santa Barbara, SPTF co-chair*
- Karin Wilkins, *University of Miami, SPTF co-chair*
- Pablo Boczkowski, *Northwestern University, Former Fellows Chair*
- Caleb Carr, *Illinois State University, Communication and Technology Committee Chair*
- Shinsuke Eguchi, *University of New Mexico, co-chair of the IDEA Standing Committee*
- Shiv Ganesh, *University of Texas, Former BOD Member*
- Thomas Hanitzsch, *LMU Munich, ICA President-Elect-Select*
- Francois Heinderyckx, *Université libre de Bruxelles, Chair of Social Media Task Force*
- Sr Agnes Lando, *Daystar University, Former BOD Member*
- Eun-Ju Lee, *Seoul National University, ICA President*
- Jasmine McNealy, *University of Florida, Former Communication Law and Policy Division Chair*
- Padma Rani, *Manipal Institute of Communication, Regional Endeavors, Affiliate Conferences, & Hubs Committee Member*
- Rabindra Ratan, *Michigan State University, co-chair of the IDEA Standing Committee*
- Claes H. De Vreese, *University of Amsterdam, ICA General Secretary*
- Silvio Waisboard, *George Washington University, ICA President-Elect*