



39th Annual
Maryland Communication Association Conference
“Academic Freedom:
Let’s Talk about Higher Ed”
Saturday, October 21st, 2023, 10 am – 1 pm, Online
[Free Registration Here](#) by October 20th, 5 pm ET

The 39th Annual Maryland Communication Association (MCA) conference theme “**Academic Freedom: Let’s Talk about Higher Ed**” examines academic freedom in institutions of higher education. Contemporary attacks on the value of higher education and academic freedom are increasing in the US. Multiple states are considering proposals to eliminate tenure from universities, potentially infringing on faculty teaching and research subjects. At the same time that college students have become the most diverse in US history, some institutions and legislatures fight against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. This conference invites a civil dialogue about freedom in modern higher education. We invite submissions that address the topic of freedom as it relates to education, speech, media, civil and human rights, identity politics and belonging, choice, beliefs, dissent, safety, discrimination, and opportunity. We can continue the conversation at the 109th National Communication Association Annual Conference at the National Harbor in Maryland, November 16-19, 2023, with the theme, “[Freedom](#).”

Conference Schedule

Keynote Address and Discussion

10:00-10:10 a.m.: Welcome and Introduction

Dr. Chrys Egan, MCA President, Professor of Communication and Associate Dean of Liberal Arts, Salisbury University; Co-editor of *Pathways into the Political Arena: The Perspectives of Global Women Leaders*

10:10-10:40 a.m.: Keynote Address “Academic Freedom: *The Communication Solution*”

Dr. Stacy Smulowitz, Associate Professor and Department Chair, University of Scranton; Executive Director, Eastern Communication Association; Author of *The Communication Solution: Leading Successful Change in Higher Education*

10:40-11:00 a.m.: Facilitated Discussion

Communication and Academic Freedom Scholarship Panel

Moderator: Dr. Colin Campbell, Frederick Douglass Communications Teaching Fellow, Shippensburg University

11:00-11:15 a.m.: How Can an Inclusive Teaching Pedagogy Help Achieve the Goal of an Anti-Racist Institution: Reflections and Interpretations from the Classroom

Dr. Laura Dorsey-Elson, Director, Center for Innovative Instruction and Scholarship Morgan State University; and Dr Omowale Elson, Communication Faculty, Montgomery College

This presentation reviews some pedagogical approaches to inclusive teaching and learning and bridges the goals of inclusivity with those of building an antiracist institution. Although primarily theoretical, it uses captured discourse from classroom and faculty meetings on what happens when the teacher becomes a learner and when students engage students and faculty around social identity and belongingness issues.

11:15-11:30 a.m.: The Chilling Effect of Social Media on Academic Freedom

Prof. Sheri Trivane, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Communication Studies Coordinator, Community College of Baltimore County; Prof. Sherry Tucker, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Communication Studies Coordinator, Community College of Baltimore County; Prof. Brooke Bognanni, Professor of Communication Studies and Online Communication Studies Coordinator, Community College of Baltimore County

Amid the digital era, the pervasive influence of social media on communication and self-expression is undeniable. While it offers avenues for engagement and knowledge exchange, it concurrently presents pronounced challenges to academic freedom. This presentation delves into the chilling impact of social media on academic freedom, focusing on the ramifications of educators sharing content both online and in physical classrooms.

11:30-11:45 a.m.: Pirate Villainy and Modern-Day Rioting

Nathan Crissman, Ph.D. Student, Regent University

In 2020, American society experienced an intense number of riots in protest of societal racial relations. These riots attempted to communicate frustration and a need for change. In order to better understand the American riots of 2020, the 1717 speech of Sam Bellamy to Captain Beers on the deck of the Whydah is examined through cluster criticism.

11:45 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.: Facilitated Discussion

Great Ideas for Teaching Students (G.I.F.T.S.)

Moderator: Dr. Amy Oneal-Self, Professor of English, Wor-Wic Community College

12:00-12:15 p.m.: Social Justice Week: Balancing Free Speech and Safety in a Time of Increased Polarization

Prof. Denise Gilmer-Knudson, Professor and Chair of Communication, College of Southern Maryland; Prof. Michelle Christian, Professor and Coordinator of Communication; Prof. Lisa Lynk, Professor and Chair of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Teacher Education, College of Southern Maryland

12:15-12:30 p.m.: Utilizing Engaging Online Activities to Promote Collaborative Learning

Prof. Trevor Setvin, Associate Professor, of Communication Studies, Community College of Baltimore County

12:30-12:45 p.m.: Facilitated Discussion

12:45-1:00 p.m.: Closing Remarks

Dr. Lee Krähenbühl, MCA First Vice President, Professor and Chair of Communication, Director of the Graduate Program, Stevenson University

About Us:

The Maryland Communication Association is a collective of communication educators, students, and professionals, who are active teachers, trainers, researchers, authors, practitioners, and leaders. Our roots are in the Maryland Communication Cooperative, formed in 1973. Among our accomplishments is our pivotal role in the shaping and adoption of statewide competency standards for Communication courses in General Education programs and our participation to facilitate articulation agreements in Communication in the State of Maryland.

Contact Us:

- Email: mdca1997@gmail.com
- Web: <https://www.marylandcommassociation.com/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MarylandCommAssociation>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MarylandComm>

Executive Board:

- Dr. Chrys Egan, President, Salisbury University, cnegan@salisbury.edu
- Dr. Lee Krähenbühl, First Vice President, Stevenson University
- Dr. Dara Phillips, Secretary, Wor-Wic Community College
- Dr. Amy Oneal-Self, Treasurer, Wor-Wic Community College
- Dr. Colin Campbell, Immediate Past President, Howard University
- Sherry Tucker, M.A., Past President, Community College of Baltimore County
- Denise Gilmer-Knudson, Past President, College of Southern Maryland

Join Us: [Details online here](#)

Conference Registration

- \$30 Full-time Faculty/Staff Member
- \$20 Part-time Faculty/Staff Member
- \$10 Student

Individual Memberships

- \$30 Full-time Faculty/Staff Member
- \$20 Part-time Faculty/Staff Member
- \$10 Student

Institutional Memberships

- \$100 Institutional Membership
- Membership for 5 people
- Institution's name and logo on conference materials

Membership Benefits

- Opportunities to network with communication professionals, academics, and practitioners throughout the State of Maryland
- Subscription to the MCA newsletter
- Access to professional development opportunities
- Voting rights
- Opportunities to participate in MCA leadership roles