

GEORGIA COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION



2025 CONFERENCE

University of West Georgia

Carrollton, Georgia

Thursday 2/6 - Saturday 2/8

GACOMM.ORG

WELCOME

Welcome, friends, to the 2025 Conference of the Georgia Communication Association! This year, it is my pleasure to welcome you not only as President of GCA, but as site host here on the beautiful campus of University of West Georgia. I am looking forward to a fulfilling and fun weekend of scholarship, fellowship, and friendship.



We have much to analyze and discuss: an ever-changing media landscape, the intersection of political rhetoric and social media, information literacy and artificial intelligence. These and many other topics await you in our sessions. While it is impossible to attend them all, you will find value and inspiration in those you do attend.

In addition to our paper sessions, panels, round tables, interactive sessions, GIFTS, and film festival, this year we will again have our “Networking and Grad Fair,” allowing our undergraduate student participants an opportunity to learn more about the graduate programs in our state.

Thanks are due to our host institution, University of West Georgia, and especially to Erin Brannon and Dr. Bradford Yates, Dean of the School of Communication, Film, and Media, who have so graciously welcomed us and worked to make this conference successful. And huge thanks are due also to Steve Stuglin, our Vice President, and Christian Norman, Vice President elect, who have done an amazing job with their part of the planning, while also keeping me on track with mine. Additional thanks are due to all the GCA Executive Board members: Treasurer Richard Lindner, Secretary Cameron Kunzelman, Administrative Director Joe Dennis, and our representatives Anna Deeb, Brian Kline, Meredith Ginn, and Q McElroy. This conference would not have come together without them.

Once again, welcome, we are so glad you have joined us to create this community of scholarship. Thank you!

Warmest regards,

Warmest Regards,
Amy Mendes, Ed.D.
President of GCA

The 2025 event at University of West Georgia is the 95th meeting of the Georgia Communication Association.

UWG

Since 1906, University of West Georgia has been home to those who are eager to embrace opportunities and define their own paths. With more than 100 programs and locations in Carrollton, Douglasville and Newnan, we've come a long way since then. Today, we're a regional powerhouse with rich culture and a commitment to excellence, making a difference in the lives of our students, our neighbors and the world. The one thing that's never changed: amazing things happen when you Go West.

NURSING

Completed in 2013, this 60,000 s.f., two-story facility includes training rooms, lecture halls, classrooms, and conference rooms. The mechanical system consisted of two 110-ton chillers installed in parallel with primary and secondary chilled water loops. Three large air handling units with medium and low-pressure ductwork provided supply air to terminal units located throughout the building. The heating system consisted of a high efficiency gas-fired boiler and circulating hot water pumps.



M.S. IN DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, FILM, AND MEDIA

Earn Your Masters In Just 10 Courses!

Courses are taught by experienced practitioners and educators who give you the tools you need to advance your career, whether you're an aspiring creator or a currently working professional.

- Digital Storytelling
- Digital Strategy
- DSMC Capstone
- Seminars in Digital and Social Media
- Social Media Analytics and Evaluation



INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTION WITH PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Explore contemporary digital and social media communication issues and challenges throughout the program, and learn practical applications of theories and concepts that get you ready for enhanced responsibilities or new positions in various digital media industries.



Learn more about M.S. in Digital and Social Media Communication by contacting the School of Communication, Film, and Media using this QR code or by emailing scfmgrad@westga.edu.

Limited graduate assistantships are available.

ADVANCE YOUR MEDIA CAREER

Earning the M.S. in Digital and Social Media Communication equips you with specialized knowledge and in-demand skills that will create opportunities for advancement in exciting new careers, such as:

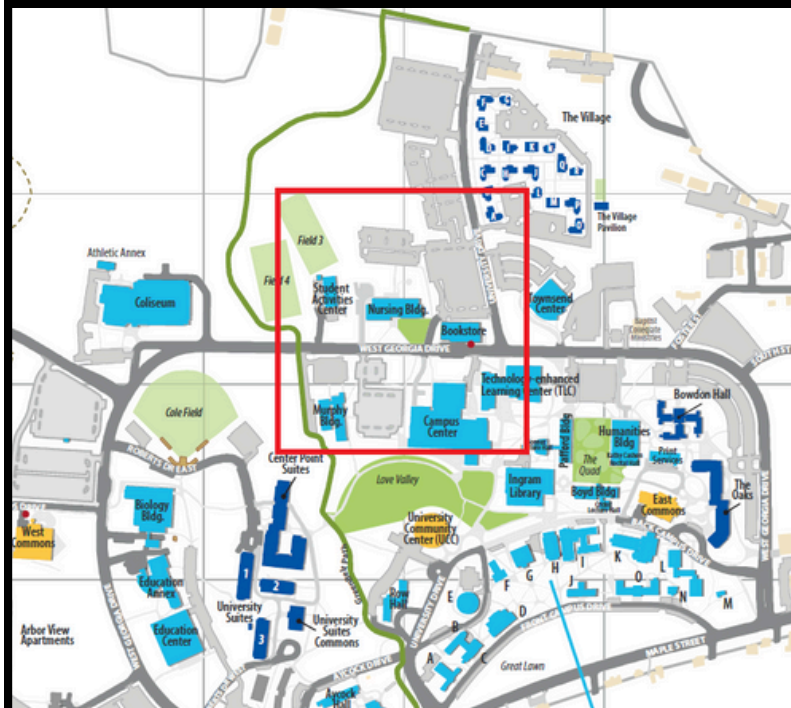
- Audio/Video Editing, Podcast and YouTube Creator
- Content Creator
- Digital Asset Coordinator/Manager
- Digital Content Manager
- Digital Media Specialist
- Director, Digital Strategy
- Senior Manager, Podcast Growth Development
- Social Media Analyst



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

SITE MAPS

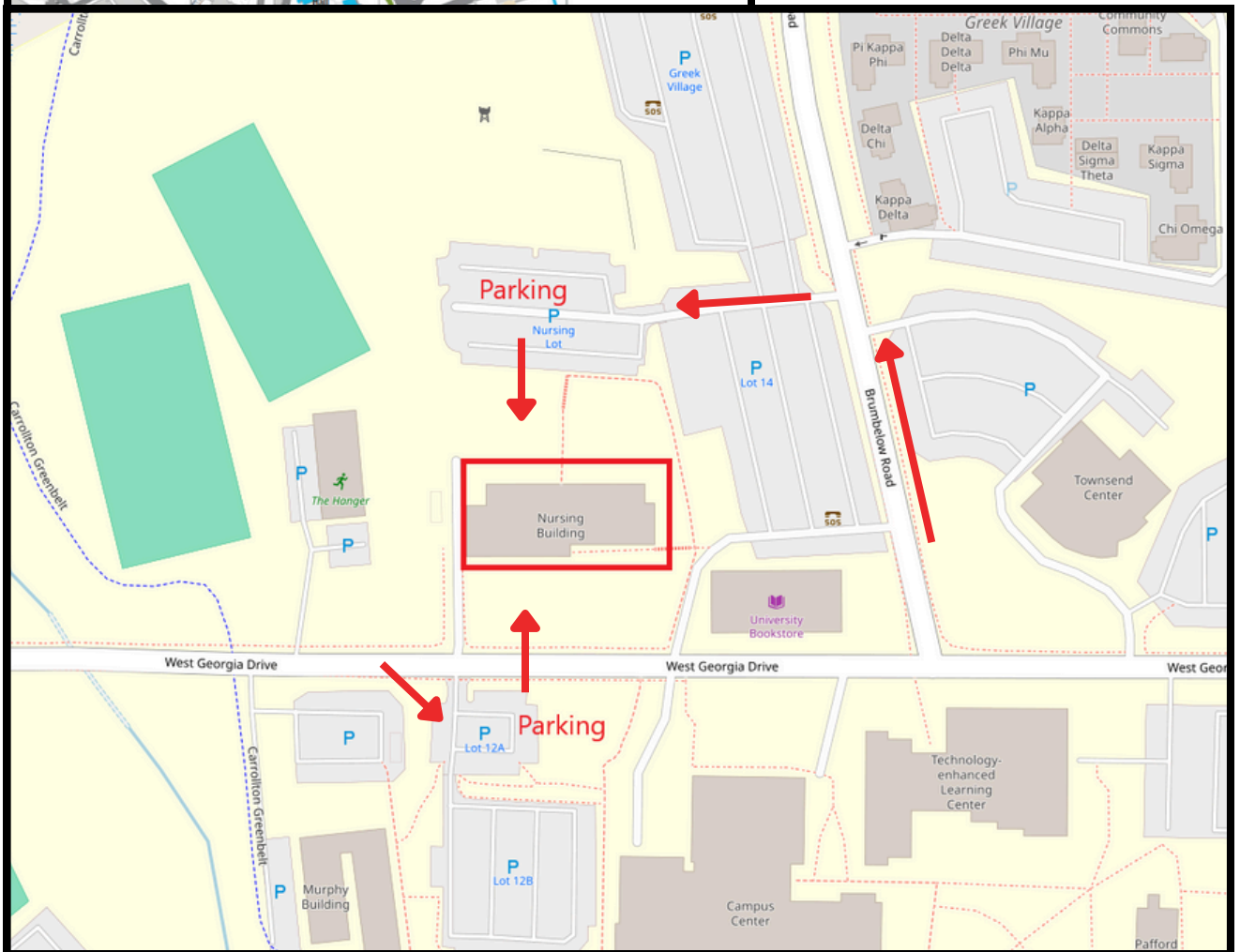
SITE MAPS



All conference events will be held in the UWG Nursing Building:

305 W Georgia Dr, Carrollton, GA 30117.

Parking is available in the 'Nursing Lot' and in 'Lot 12A' across West Georgia Drive.



Thursday 2/6

6:30-9pm Welcome Back Social

Friday 2/7

8:15am Registration Desk Open

9:00-9:50am Sessions A1, A2, A3
10:00-10:50am Sessions B1, B2, B3
11:00-11:50am Sessions C1, C2, C3

12:00-12:45pm Welcome, Social Lunch
12:45-1:15pm Keynote Address
1:15-1:50 Business Meeting

2:00-2:50pm Sessions D1, D2, D3
3:00-3:50pm Sessions E1, E2, E3
4:00-4:50pm Sessions F1, F2, F3

6:00-6:50pm Film Festival Screening
7:00-8:00pm Dinner, Film Festival Awards

Saturday 2/8

8:15am Registration Desk Open

9:00-9:50am Sessions G1, G2, G3
10:00-10:50am Sessions H1, H2, H3
11:00-11:50am Sessions I1, I2, I3

12:00-12:30pm Reception, Conference Awards

Thursday 2/6

6:30-9pm

Welcome Back Social

Start off the 2025 event with a no-host social at Brown Dog Eatery, just around the corner from the conference hotel. *You are welcome to stop in for any part of or the whole time.*

Friday 2/7

8:15am

Registration Desk Open

Pick up your conference badge and enjoy a light continental breakfast while you mingle with colleagues.

9:00-9:50am Sessions A1, A2, A3

A1 - Room 110 - Thinking Through Games and Communication

- *Communication Through Visual Design and Interactivity in Video Games*; Rajwol Chapagain & Maret Mcwhorter, Mercer University
- *Vote Red, Vote Green: An Exercise in Power, Societal Psychology, and Groupthink*; Ryan J. Gautreaux, Georgia State University
- *Narrative Gameplay in On the Edge*; Lucy Roach & Katie Volz, Mercer University
 - *Respondent*: Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College

What Worked? What Didn't?

Throughout the program of papers and presentations, we welcome your input. Use the QR code here (also available in every session room) to evaluate each presentation. The form asks for your rating in 5 areas and allows for comments.



Help GCA planners to improve for next year by telling us what you think about the programming in 2025!

A2 - Room 121 - Twice as Good: Black Women and the 2024 Election

- Laura Lane, Georgia State University
- Davia Rose Lassiter, Georgia State University

A3 - Room 115 - How to Use the Media and Media Training to Teach Public Speaking

- Melissa Jackson, Piedmont University

10:00-10:50am Sessions B1, B2, B3

B1 - Room 110 - It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine): Teaching During and In Crisis

- David Nelson, Valdosta State University
- Holly Buglewicz, Valdosta State University
- Danna Gibson, Columbus State University
- Arrington Stoll, Valdosta State University
- Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College

B2 - Room 121 - Deliberations on Gender, Sexism, and Power

- *Marsyas, Figured*; Nathan Bedsole, Georgia College & State University
- *Lesbian Separatist TERFdom: A Look into Transgender and Transmisogynistic Discourses in Second-Wave Feminism*; Ophelia Jones, Mercer University
 - Moderator: Q. McElroy, University of Georgia

B3 - Room 115 - Public Speaking Primer for Public Relations Students

- Caitlin Wills, University of North Georgia

11:00-11:50am Sessions C1, C2, C3

C1 - Room 110 - Embracing Generative AI in the Classroom: Uses for Faculty and Students

- Andre Nicholson, Middle Georgia State University
- Sheree Keith, Middle Georgia State University
- Christian Norman, Middle Georgia State University
- Michael North, Middle Georgia State University

11:00-11:50am Sessions C1, C2, C3 (continued)

C2 - Room 121 - Beyond Traditional Media Writing: Integrating Social media Shows to Bridge Professional Writing Skills

- Angela Criscoe, Georgia College & State University
- Madelyn Agostini, Georgia College & State University
- Amy Bishop, Georgia College & State University
- Jailey Ferrer Negrón, Georgia College & State University
- Liberty Klopp, Georgia College & State University

C3 - Room 122 - Transformative Tech Tools: Improving Student Engagement Through Industry-Relevant Assignments

- Sarah Johnson, Kennesaw State University

12:00-12:40 Social Lunch

Atrium - Please join us for a formal welcome to the event by GCA President Amy E. Mendes and representatives of the University of West Georgia, immediately after which you are welcome to enjoy an included lunch and socialize with friends and colleagues.

12:45-1:15 Keynote Address (Atrium)

Shavonne Reed, Wellness Champion & Author, a UWG alumnus, is a highly acclaimed internationally traveled speaker and award-winning entrepreneur and marketing executive.



She is a trained journalist and has published many thought-leadership articles and hosts the Future Health NOW podcast. She has expertise across eCommerce, health maintenance organizations, mass media, digital media, government agency program implementation, communications, dental and medical device manufacturing, employee engagement, and marketing and sales.

Shavonne is the founder & CEO of OPUA, a GENZ targeted health and wellness company focused on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Shavonne is passionate about spreading the importance of healthier lifestyles and generational health.

1:15-1:50 Business Meeting

Atrium - GCA Business Meetings are open to all attendees. Voting rights come with membership (paid at registration).

Tentative Agenda

- Approval of Minutes
- Officer Reports
- Old Business - Strategic Goals
- New Business - GCA 2026, 2027
- Elections (VP Elect, Secretary, Administrative Director, Private Member at Large, 1st Public Member at Large)

2:00-2:50pm Sessions D1, D2, D3

D1 - Atrium - Networking and Grad Fair

- We expect to have representatives from Middle Georgia State University, Georgia Highlands College, Valdosta State University, Brenau University, Agnes Scott College, and Kennesaw State University, among others. Come meet people and network!

D2 - Room 121 - Reflections on the First Semester of Core IMPACTS Implementation

- Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State University
- Emily Holler, Kennesaw State University

D3 - Room 122 - Building Value for Members: Ideas for Moving Beyond the Conference

- Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College

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3:00-3:50pm Sessions E1, E2, E3

E1 - Room 110 - Understanding Destabilizing Discourses

- *Uncertain World: Definitions of Antisemitism Across Time*; Emma Page, Mercer University
- *QAnon on the Public Screen: Image-Text Mediation of Civic Spectatorship*; John Hendry, Georgia State University
- *Illuminati Influence and the Fallout: Analyzing Kanye West's Anti-Semitic Remarks and the Conspiracy Connections*; Kennedy Jenkins, Mercer University
 - Respondent: David Nelson, Valdosta State University

E2 - Room 106 - Improv in the Classroom Part 2: Linking Improv to Class Projects

- Matthew Terrell, Kennesaw State University

E3 - Room 122 - When "One Size Doesn't Fit All:" Rethinking Communication Research, Practice and Theory

- Davia Rose Lassiter, Georgia State University
- Akansha Sirohi, Georgia State University
- Jasmine Hope Jackson, Georgia State University
- Salome Apkhazishvili, Georgia State University
- Funmilayo Ogunsanwo, Georgia State University
 - *This immersive experience will run as a 90 minute session in Room 122 for the E3 and F3 session blocks.*

4:00-4:50pm Sessions F1, F2, F3

F1 - Room 110- A Dynamic Teaching Approach to Introducing Complexity Theory in Communication Studies

- Butch Cross, Augusta University

F2 - Room 121 - Lessons I'd Teach My Younger (Educator) Self: What I Wish I Knew When My Journey in Academia Began

- Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State University
- Anna Deeb, Brenau University

F3 - Room 122 - When "One Size Doesn't Fit All:" Rethinking Communication Research, Practice and Theory (continued)

This immersive experience will run as a 90 minute session in Room 122 for the E3 and F3 session blocks.

5:00-5:50pm Rest and Refresh

6:00-6:50pm Film Festival Screening

Room 106 - Open Screening and Q&A with filmmakers

The Georgia Communication Association Film Festival showcases outstanding films and videos made by students at GCA member institutions in Georgia. We seek to highlight students' inspiring work that reflects their creative voices and unique talents.

- Film Fest Director: Sangsun Choi, Kennesaw State University

7:00-8:00pm Dinner & Film Festival Awards

Atrium - Ticketed Dinner

Dinner is reserved for those that purchased a dinner ticket at time of registration. Midway through the meal, our Film Festival Director will deliver awards to the filmmakers that won this year.

Film Festival Awards for 2025

Award	Title	Name	University
Best of Narrative Award	Wanderer	Isabel Bobrik	University of Georgia
Award of Excellence - Narrative	Ctrl Alt Defeat	Taylor Shults	University of Georgia
Best of Documentary	No Shame Theater: The Voice of Columbus	Braxton Lee	Columbus State University
Award of Excellence - Documentary	The Fighting Lady	Nahomi Itzel Solorzano Centeno	Piedmont University
Award of Excellence - Documentary	Per Amore Dei Gatti	Calvin Bowers	University of North Georgia
Best of Micro-Work	You Sure?	Eryn Barron	Kennesaw State University
Award of Excellence - Micro-Work	Eyes	Rebecca Levy	University of Georgia

FRIDAY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE in Digital Media and Communication

Coming Fall 2025

PARTNER



CREATE



CONNECT



CAREER

Develop skills

- Social Media Strategy & Branding ✓
- Cutting-Edge Content Creation ✓
- Digital Marketing Strategies ✓

Career Paths

- Digital Marketing Specialist ✓
- Social Media Manager ✓
- Brand Strategist ✓
- Public Relations Specialist ✓
- Multimedia Journalist ✓



Saturday 2/8

8:15am Registration Desk Open

9:00-9:50am Sessions G1, G2, G3

G1 - Room 110 - Journalism in the Past, Present, and Future

- *1964 Marietta Daily Journal Coverage of Marietta High School Integration*; Jasmine Hope Jackson, Georgia State University
- *Stories of Helene: Feature Writing in the Wake of a Storm*; Chaz Lilly, Dalton State College
- *The Ethics and Responsibilities of Social Media Platforms as News Sources*; Sydney Hencil, Brenau University
 - Respondent: Christopher Thompson, Kennesaw State University

G2 - Room 121 - Workshop Your Worst; Interactive Experience

- Kelly Williams, University of West Georgia
- Taylor Bryant, University of West Georgia
- Tiffany McBride, Columbus State University

G3 - Room 122 - Balancing Creativity with Standardization: Perspectives on the Basic Courses

- Brian Kline, University of North Georgia
- C Thomas Preston, Jr., University of North Georgia
- Kevin Cummings, Mercer University
- Roxanne Larkins, Gwinnett Technical College

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SATURDAY

10:00-10:50am Sessions H1, H2, H3

H1 - Room 110 - Understanding Cultural Moments

- *Intergenerational Vulnerability to Political Misinformation in the Digital Age*; Cassie Cain-Alston, University of West Georgia
- *The Bird Must Fly : The Resilience of the Coconut Head Generation to the 2021 Twitter Ban in Nigeria*; Funmilayo Ogunsanwo, Georgia State University
- *Examining Framing and Discourse of the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting*; Nicole Nelson, Mercer University
 - Moderator: Davia Rose Lassiter, Georgia State University

H2 - Room 121 - Implementing and Managing AI in the Public Speaking classroom: A Roundtable Discussion

- Amy E. Mendes, University of West Georgia
- Melanie S. Conrad, University of West Georgia

H3 - Room 122 - Generative AI In Practice

- *Professional Communication Students' Responses Toward using Generative AI for a Writing Assignment: A Preliminary Qualitative Study*; Barbara Tucker, Dalton State University
- *Integrating AI to Enhance Public Speaking Courses*; Niaz Khan, Georgia Gwinnett College
 - Moderator: Paul Raptis, University of North Georgia

11:00-11:50am Sessions I1, I2, I3

I1 - Room 110 - Focus on Marginalized Discourses

- *Strong Black Woman & Legacies of Loss: Mamie Till, Sybrina Fulton, and Public Displays of Black Maternal Grief*; Davia Rose Lassiter, Georgia State University
- *Analysis of Community Empowerment and Transformation: A Study of Minority Social Movements and Media Influence with a Focus on the Black Panther Party*; Alisha Mitchell, Mercer University
- *Weight Stigma for Black Women in TV: An Analysis of Kim Parker*; Lauren Lane, Georgia State University
 - Respondent: Anna Deeb, Brenau University

11:00-11:50am Sessions 11, 12, 13 (continued)

12 - Room 121 - Great Ideas for Teaching Speech (GIFTS)

- *Conflict Management: Negotiating for a Better Assignment*; Michael North, Middle Georgia State University
- *Beyond Social Media: Creating Student Interaction*; Melissa Jackson, Piedmont University
- *Why Would The Readers Care? A Hands-On Approach to Earned Media*; Mikkel Soelberg Christensen, Georgia College and State University
- *The Ups and Downs of Uncertainty Reduction Theory: An Activity for the Communication Theory Course*; Pamela Hayward, Augusta University
- *Media Production Pedagogy for Non-Major Students*; Sangsun Choi, Kennesaw State University
 - Moderator: Caitlin Wills, University of North Georgia

13 - Room 122 - Deeper Meaning in Television and Film

- *Loki The Trickster and Plato's Allegory of The Cave*; Jina Athakhanh, Mercer University
- *Grave of the Fireflies: An Elegiac Masterpiece*; Sara Fletcher Rivera, Brenau University
 - Moderator: Cameron Kunzelman, Mercer University

What Worked? What Didn't?

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Please return your name badge and lanyard as you leave, so we can use them again next year!



12:00-12:30pm Awards Reception

Atrium - Closing Remarks and Awards

Please join us for some brief closing remarks, dessert, and the announcement of the winners of our conference awards.

Presentation will be made by GCA 2025 planners:

Amy Mendes, University of West Georgia

Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College

Christian Norman, Middle Georgia State University

12:30pm Conference Adjourns

GCA Leadership 2024-2025

- President: Amy Mendes, University of West Georgia
- Vice-President: Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College
- VP-elect: Christian Norman, Middle Georgia State University
- Secretary: Cameron Kunzelman, Mercer University
- Treasurer: Rick Lindner, Perimeter College, GA State University
- Administrative Director: Joe Dennis, Piedmont University
- Marketing Director: Mikkell Christensen, GA College & State U
- Private Member at Large: Anna Deeb, Brenau University
- Public Member at Large (1): Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State U
- Public Member at Large (2): Q. McElroy, University of Georgia
- Public Member at Large (3): Brian Kline, U. of North Georgia
- Film Fest Director: Sansung Choi, Kennesaw State University
- Site Host: Amy Mendes, The University of North Georgia
- Proceedings Editor: Barbara Tucker, Dalton State College



Thank You!



A conference like this is only possible through the volunteer labor of lots of people. We want to make sure to thank:

- We are extremely grateful to University of West Georgia, the School of Communication, Film, and Media, and student volunteers.
- This conference was organized by Amy Mendes, Steve Stuglin, and Christian Norman, with prodigious support from GCA leadership and a group of volunteer reviewers, respondents, moderators, and film festival judges.
- Shavonne Reed was very generous with her time!
- We are supported partners, including Georgia Highlands College, and your memberships and conference registrations
- We owe special thanks to our Patron Members, including
Brian Kline Tom Preston Andre Nicholson
Paul Raptis Barbara Tucker
Charlotte Klesman Laurie O'Connor
Janet Hoffman Meredith Ginn
- The event relies on every author, presenter, panelist, and attendee to come together to have something to talk about.
- See you in February 2026 at Mercer University!



SPECIAL THANKS