



PRESS RELEASE

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NEW PRESIDENT AIMS TO GIVE BACK BY MOVING AJHA FORWARD

New AJHA President Pete Smith plans to help manage conference expenses, increase membership and exposure, and find ways to preserve and promote media history courses in the curriculum during his tenure.

Smith, an associate professor in Mississippi State University's Department of Communication, assumed the presidency on Oct. 10 during the 34th Annual AJHA Convention in Oklahoma City. Smith, excited to start his new role, feels a debt to the organization.

"It's been 10 years since my first AJHA conference [in San Antonio]," he said. "Since that time, this group has done more for me than any other professional group."

Smith said he plans to continue working toward the goals established by the previous administration, including assisting the Conventions Committee in managing conference costs. Specifically, he has called for the formation of an ad hoc committee (chaired by Ohio University's Ellen Gerl) to help identify university sponsorships and individual contributors as a means to possibly reduce conference costs, and he has asked the Long-range Planning Committee to develop a membership survey to gauge members' conference experience.

A central goal of these two efforts, Smith said, is "how to give members...the best conference experience we can, while making it as affordable as possible."

Smith's AJHA experience includes memberships on the Public Relations and History in the Curriculum committees, working as the first digital media editor for *American Journalism* and, most recently, serving on the Board of Directors.

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He said he is eager to give back to the organization that has done so much for him.

“I’m excited for the chance to repay that debt,” Smith said.

Diane Bragg, assistant professor in the Department of Journalism at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, was elected second vice president.

Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society. For more information on AJHA, visit ajhaonline.org.

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