Call for Program Proposals
Faces of Advocacy

When we hear the word “advocacy” in connection to our profession, every one of us—teachers, instructors, professors, researchers, writers—has a different definition of what that means. There are people who might think that this only has to do with talking to senators and representatives in government about affecting changes on a state or national level. While this is certainly a part of advocacy, it is not the only piece of advocacy that this Convention wishes to explore.

There are many faces of advocacy to think about and explore in looking at the call for proposals:

Teachers as advocates for/as:
- Themselves and other teachers
- Our profession
- Our own well-being and health
- Our students
- Literacy and learning
- Social change
- Researchers and writers
- Parents, grandparents, or guardians

What does the word “advocacy” evoke for you? What have been your experiences in these areas of advocacy? How can NCTE help you further these goals and ambitions? How can we create a movement around these areas and become part of the national conversation about our profession? What is the difference between being an advocate and advocacy? This is what we want to hear about at the 2016 Convention.

As you can see, there are many questions and problems to solve, not only when it comes to moving forward, but in understanding what the national conversation is around these topics. Who are we listening to? Who do we believe? Who has the answers we need?

In designing the format of this Convention, some “unconventional” ways of presenting sessions are being utilized. Instead of using a speaker format for all general sessions, we are going to be presenting panels of individuals who are prepared to answer questions. The open mic format is going to be employed in a thoughtful, purposeful way so that we can actually hear what your questions are and learn how NCTE can help you in your everyday battles and successes. We are also asking that you travel to the Convention in Atlanta with teams of educators; and that you come with the goal of creating an action plan to take back with you to address your concerns and issues. Special sessions will be set up after the panels for you to meet with experts in the field of your interest. We are asking that sessions you submit be intentionally directed toward advocacy and implementing change, however you see that unfolding in your community or job. We are asking that you be more collaborative in your approach to sessions this year and look around your school, community, and state, and get involved with local efforts that are having a positive effect on issues.

Last, but certainly not least, is the notion that not only are we willing to listen to you, we want you to help shape the content of this Convention more than ever before. You are all familiar with having a theme that the conference chair selects well in advance of his or her Convention. This year we would like for you to be much more involved in that process by asking questions, making comments, and giving input into what you want and need from a convention devoted to advocacy. Many of you will have already participated in or are planning to participate in CCCC’s Convention in 2016, which will also center around advocacy and how writing can be a part of that. This has been an intentional effort on my part and that of Linda Adler-Kassner, chair of that Convention. We are all working together this next year in being deliberate about our common efforts around advocacy. We hope that you, as seasoned and new presenters, will be excited to learn that this is part of the movement you have supported and welcomed in the past year.

Authors, writers, researchers, teachers, professors, parents, advocates. These are all titles and hats that we wear on a daily basis. What piece of advocacy can you bring to our event in Atlanta in 2016?

Many times as educators, we feel defeated and incapable of making change of any sort. This is your opportunity to rise to the challenge of who you are as a teacher or teacher leader; to celebrate and discuss the possibilities that lie ahead of us.

When we meet in Atlanta, home of the Braves, CNN, Coca Cola and other leaders of industry and communications, I am hopeful that our coming together will be a culminating, rewarding experience which will reflect you as teachers and educators of NCTE.

Susan Houser
2016 Program Chair
Submitting Proposals

All proposals must be submitted online at http://bit.ly/call-2016
The NCTE online proposal system will close at 11:59 pm PST, Wednesday, January 13, 2016.

Criteria for Program Selection

The NCTE Convention Planning Committee is comprised of representatives from the college, middle, secondary, and elementary sections. Two NCTE members from the section indicated on the proposal read, rate, and comment on each proposal before assigning a preliminary score. The proposal is reviewed a second time by planning committee members during a face-to-face planning meeting in the spring. These evaluations go to the Program Chair, who makes the final decision on convention programming. Though the criteria for excellence vary to some extent among these groups, some common values are listed here:

- **Clarity and thoughtfulness of proposal**—Reviewers favor proposals that are very clear about their content, explicit about what presenters will do in the session, and thoughtful in identifying a meaningful focus and providing a compelling rationale.

- **Appropriate and engaging method of presentation**—Reviewers value appropriately engaging presentation styles. They particularly look for opportunities for audience members to participate actively and interact with presenters and each other, not just listen to presenters read papers.

- **Content and issues are timely and critical to the field**—Reviewers want to know how a proposal fits broader conversations of theory, research, and/or practice in the field. They evaluate the significance of the presenter’s work, its acknowledgment of prior scholarship or practice, and its connections to important debates or concerns in the field.

- **Strong fit with NCTE mission and intended NCTE audience**—Reviewers expect proposals to connect with the mission of NCTE and with the knowledge, perspectives, interests, and concerns of NCTE members and the convention audience.