

Tim Bajkiewicz, Ph.D. – BEA Academic Director Campaign Statement

My name is Tim Bajkiewicz and I'm an associate professor of broadcast journalism in the Richard T. Robertson School of Communication at Virginia Commonwealth University. Since joining the faculty in 2008 and until 2020, I led VCU's student-produced TV newscast to several Society of Professional Journalism awards, including being a 2018 National Finalist. For 2025-2026 I was given the Distinguished Teaching Award in Humanities and Social Sciences. After earning my Ph.D., from 2001-2008 I was on faculty in the School of Mass Communications at the University of South Florida, where I taught a groundbreaking convergence journalism class in conjunction with Tampa's Media General News Center. I was honored as the University of South Florida's 2004-2005 Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher.

My professional background includes more than a decade working in radio, audio production, and live concert sound, and I'm a multi award-winning copywriter. I earned my B.A. in Anthropology in 1993 (with honors) and M.A. in Mass Communications (with distinction) in 1995 from the University of Florida. I earned my Ph.D. in Journalism and Mass Communications (Park Fellow and Outstanding Graduating Ph.D. Student) in 2002 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

I have been involved with BEA since graduate school in 1999 when I won first place in a debut paper competition. Since 2021 I have been in leadership for the Curriculum, Assessment & Administration Division: 2021-2023 Communications Director; 2023-2025 Vice Chair; 2025-2027 Chair. I have organized, led, and/or participated in many BEA panels and in 2024 received the Leibner Cooper Grant for Creative Productions on the History of Media. I also helped draft the recent Conflict of Interest statement.

I'm interested in serving as an Academic Director because I think you'd agree that BEA is a unique organization with its feet firmly in both the academic and professional worlds. I strongly believe in BEA's mission and the difference it makes for our students and faculty, and so by extension our industries. I also believe in both thinking and doing, something we often share with our students. It's more important than ever to continue having a strong organization like BEA as academic and professional resources for our students and ourselves.

In launching the new Academic Director role and engaging with BEA's Interest Divisions I would tap into our greatest resource—our membership. As CAA Chair I've prioritized involving members whenever possible and would continue this as a director. I always listen before I act, so I would meet with the leadership of each division under my care to hear their thoughts, concerns, and ideas. As a liaison between the Board and Divisions, I would assist division leadership to attain their goals like recruitment and great programs while providing a bridge to the Board. I would also meet with the previous district representatives to learn about this higher-level organizational view and how to be most effective. I know that BEA leadership is very welcoming of new ideas and approaches, and as an Academic Director I would work to make streamlined suggestions to achieve our goals of an association that helps its members successfully navigate today's complicated media and higher education worlds.

Speaking about BEA, a colleague once told me, "These are my people." I couldn't agree more. I hope I'm able to continue my service to BEA as an Academic Director. Thank you.

(Note: No AI was used in writing this statement.)