

# BLESSING EKENE, OKAFOR CV

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## EDUCATION

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### 2019- present PhD in Communication

University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

**Dissertation topic:** Intersectional Identity and Social Construction of Dissent: The Experience of Tension, Paradoxes and Contradictions by Minority Employees in Organizational Dissent Process

### 2020- present Qualitative Research, Graduate Certificate

College of Education, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

### 2021 Online Teaching Certification

Office of eLearning, University of Missouri System, USA

### 2017- 2019 M.Sc. in Communication

North Dakota State University, Fargo, USA

**Thesis topic:** The Impact of Dissent and Workplace Freedom of Speech on Employees' Well-Being

### 2012- 2014 M.A in English Language

University of Lagos, Nigeria

### 2004 – 2008 B.A in English Language and Literature

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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Fall, 2022: Instructor of record for Organizational Advocacy, Department of Communication, University of Missouri ( COM 3460)

**Fall 2019- present:** Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Missouri, Columbia Public Speaking (COMM 1200, face to face and online)

Fall 2017- May 2019: Graduate Teaching Assistant, North Dakota State University Fundamentals of Public Speaking (Communication 110, both face to face and online)

2011-2012 Teacher, Building Blocks Montessori School, Ilupeju, Lagos Nigeria

2009-2010 Teacher, Government Technical College, Katsina, Nigeria

## TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

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### University of Missouri, Columbia

Fall, 2022: COM 3460- Instructor of record for Organizational Advocacy

Spring 2022 COM 1200 – Public Speaking (19 students)

Spring 2021 COM 1200 - *Public Speaking* (19 students)  
Fall 2020 COM 1200- *Public Speaking* (19 students)  
Summer 2020 COM 1200- *Public Speaking* (11 students) -Center for Academic Success and Excellence MU  
Spring 2020 COM 1200 - *Public Speaking* (25 students)  
Fall 2019 COM 1200- *Public Speaking* (25 students)

#### North Dakota State University

**Spring 2019** COM 100- *Fundamentals of Public Speaking* (22 students, 3 sections)  
**Fall 2018** COM 100- *Instructor of records* (22 students, Online)  
**Spring 2017** COM 100- *Fundamentals of Public Speaking* (22 students, 3 sections)  
**Fall 2017** COM 100- *Fundamentals of Public Speaking* (22 students, 3 sections)

#### PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

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Zeng, Rahmani & **Okafor, B** (2022): An Investigation of the Mediating Role of Organizational Trust in the Relationship between Work Rumination and Organizational Dissent, *Communication Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2022.2089190>

Charvat, E., Horstman, H.K., Jordan, E., Leverenz, A., & **Okafor, B.**, (2021) Navigating Pregnancy during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of Social Support in Communicated Narrative Sense-making, *Journal of Family Communication*, 21:3, 167-185, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2021.1932503>

Horstman, H., Leverenz, A., Baltazar, A., Cen, X., Charvat, E., Jordan, E., Morrison, Shaye., **Okafor, B.**, & Butauski, M. (Under Review). Pregnancy during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Communicated Narrative Sense-Making and Resilience. *Health Communication*.

**Okafor, B.**, Westerman, C.Y.K. (Under review). How dissent and workplace freedom of speech impact employees' well-being. *Communication Quarterly*

**Okafor, B.**, (2019). The Impact of Dissent and Workplace Freedom of Speech on Employees' Well-Being. *Master Thesis*, North Dakota State University

**Okafor, B.**, Yakubova, M, & Westerman, C.K. (2021) Manager-Employee Communication: The Influence of Temperament and Leader-Member Exchange Quality on Employees' Use of Upward Dissent Strategies, *Western Journal of Communication*, 85:3, 400-426, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2020.1850850>

Okigbo, C. & **Okafor, B.** (2019). *Terrorism as Strategic Communication*. In E, Ngwainmbi (Ed.), *Global Media Representation and International Community Perception*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

#### OTHER NON-ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

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Okafor, B. (2017). *The power of words*. Lagos Nigeria: Bukasin Unique Touch.

Okafor, B. (2017). *Prosperity, our spiritual inheritance*. Lagos Nigeria: Bukasin

Unique Touch.

## **PEER REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATION**

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Okafor, B., & Dougherty, D (2022). **Sustaining a Resilience Infrastructure in a Precarious Economy: The Experiences of Nigerian Youths**. National Communication Association, (Awaiting acceptance)

Okafor, B., (2021). Exploring the material and discursive practices of power and culture of the African Immigrant Church (Research Escalator). National Communication Association, 2021

Emily Charvat, Haley Horstman Ellen Jordan, Alaina Leverenz, and **Blessing Okafor**. Navigating Pregnancy during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Women's Narrative Sense Making of their Received Social Support. Central State Communication Association Conference 2021. (**Nominated for Top Student Paper Award**).

Haley Horstman, Alaina Leverenz, Alberto Baltazar, Xu Cen, Emily Charvat, Ellen Jordan, Shaye Morrison, **Blessing Okafor**, Maria Butauski (2021). Pregnancy during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Communicated Narrative Sense-Making and Resilience. International Communication Association Conference 2021 (**Nominated for Top paper**)

Cheng Zeng, Rahmani Diyako **Blessing Okafor** (2020). A Structural Investigation of the Mediating Role of Organizational Trust in the Relationship between Work Rumination and Organizational Dissent. National Communication Association Conference.

**Okafor, B.**, & Westerman, C.Y.K. (2020). How Workplace freedom of speech and employee dissent impacts employee dissent. National Association of Communication Association

**Okafor, B.**, Yakubova, M., & **Westerman**, C.Y.K. Manager-Employee Communication: The Influence of Temperament and Leader-Member Exchange Quality on Employees' Use of Upward Dissent Strategies. Presented at the annual conference of the Central States Communication Association, Omaha, NE. Received Top Four Paper Award in the Organizational and Professional Communication Interest Group (2019).

**Okafor, B.**, & Yakubova, M. Recent research on dissent in organizational settings: A mixed-method content analysis. Paper accepted at the Mixed Methods International Research Association Conference, (MMIRA) 2018, Trinidad & Tobago.

**Okafor, B.**, & Lou, Z: Firm stereotype persists on social media: Source credibility of nonprofits and for-profits on social media. International Communication Association 2019

## **RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

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- Okafor, B., (in progress). Exploring the material and discursive practices of power and the interplay of culture in African Immigrant Church
- Okafor, B. (in progress) Power and Resistance in the African Immigrant Church

- Okafor, B., (in progress). The stigma of circumvention: Perception of Organizational Members on Employees Use of Circumvention Strategy
- Okafor, B., & Kiura, M. (in progress). The effect of co-rumination on student's identification and attachment to their academic institution
- Okafor, B., & Kiura, M. (in progress). Relationships among co-rumination about COVID-19, self-efficacy, and student's academic engagement.

### **INVITED TALKS/PRESENTATION ON MIZZOU CAMPUS**

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- Panel discussant at the University of Missouri New Graduate Student Orientation, Fall, 2022
- Best practices for preparing and delivering speeches organized by Sigma Phi Epsilon student organization. University of Missouri, April 2022
- A 2day-public speaking workshop on effective communication practices and delivery organized Mizzou 2, a student organization. University of Missouri, November 2021
- New Graduate Student Orientation - Student Panel Discussion on international and graduate students' perspective on maintaining academic excellence and navigating mizzou – University of Missouri. Spring, 2021
- Panel discussion on Involvement & Leadership in Grad School – how to navigate leadership and academics. Graduate School, University of Missouri – Fall, 2021

### **GRANT PROJECTS/RESEARCH AND TRAVEL FUNDS**

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- Graduate Professional Council Professional Development Travel Award, University of Missouri (\$300) Spring 2022.
- Graduate School Professional Presentation Travel Award, University of Missouri (\$200). Spring, 2022
- Graduate Professional Council Travel Award, University of Missouri (\$600). Fall, 2021
- Department of Communication Travel Award, University of Missouri (\$500) Fall, 2021/Spring 2022
- Graduate Professional Council Research Development Award, University of Missouri (\$600)- Spring. 2020
- Graduate Professional Council Travel Award, University of Missouri (\$600)- Spring, 2020
- Ford Foundation (West Africa Office) Grant through the Association of Communication Scholars and Practitioners of Nigeria (ACSPN), for the Study of Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election Campaign, **\$20,000**, September 2017 to March 2018. (Research member)
- Bush Foundation/Consensus Council Grant for Geriatric-Ethnic-Religious Minority (GERM) Project at North Dakota State University, **\$10,000.00**, June 2017 to May 2018 (Project assistant coordinator)

- North Dakota State University, Department of Communication travel grant, \$500 to support conference presentation

## **AWARD/HONOR/RECOGNITION**

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- Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Doctoral Scholars Program (DSP): Dissertation Award (\$3,750)
- Graduate Scholar of Excellence (\$3000 Honorarium)- Fall, 2022- Spring 2023
- Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award. Department of Communication. University of Missouri, USA. Spring 2022
- Loren Reid Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. Department of Communication. University of Missouri, USA. Spring 2022
- Graduate Scholar of Excellence (\$1500 Honorarium)- Fall, 2021
- Gilman Fellowship, University of Missouri (\$ 1250) – Spring 2021
- Outstanding General Assembly Member Award, Graduate Professional Council (\$200 Honorarium), Spring, 2021
- Grads Write leader, Graduate School (\$200 Honorarium) – Spring 2021
- Valerie J. Goodin Global Tiger Alumni Scholarship (\$1000) Mizzou Alumni Association, University of Missouri – Spring 2020
- University of Missouri, Columbia: Switzler **admission fellowship**, \$2750 (Fall, 2019)
- Received **Top Four Paper Award** in the Organizational and Professional Communication Interest Group (Central State Communication Association Conference, 2019).
- Golden Key International Honor Society Scholarship, 2019 (\$250)
- Golden Key International Honor Society: Recognition for academic excellence, 2018
- NDSU Athletic Academics/Student Success Programs: Recognition for support of students' success and for making a difference, 2018

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/WORKSHOPS ATTENDED**

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- CS Lewis and the craft of communication. Department of Communication, April, 2022

- Lost in Transition, Navigating how language and culture impact graduate instructor to student interaction, Teaching for Learning Center, March, 2022
- Collaborative grant writing, the art of creating and organizing effective teams. Teaching for Learning Center, March, 2022
- Supporting Access through classroom participation, Teaching for Learning Center, March, 2022
- Tenure track, Non-Tenure track, and ore: Understanding differences and opportunities, Graduate School, February, 2022
- Successful practices in Academic Conferences. Department of communication, 2021
- Individual differences in life story telling: importance of stories during COVID-19. Department of Communication, December 2021.
- Digital Accessibility and /or Universal design for learning. Department of communication, 2021
- Developing important mentor and mentee relationships. Graduate Scholar of Excellence, MU, 2021.
- Work Life Balance and Mentor Best Practices, Graduate Scholar of Excellence, MU, 2021
- Time Management. Graduate School, MU. 2021
- Introduction to Career Development and Helping Students Succeed. MU Career Development Network. Spring, 2021.

### **Webinars attended, Organized by New Scholars, Cranfield School of Management**

- Construct Clarity – Roy Suddaby (Victoria) and Joep Cornelissen (Erasmus)
- Including practitioners in co-creating desirable future – Garima Sharma (Georgia State)
- Impactful Theory: An Oxymoron
- A Bricolage Approach to conducting trustworthy qualitative research – Michael Pratt
- From Theory to Theorizing – Practicing Multiple Styles of Theorizing -Santi Furnari and Joep Cornelissen
- Management as a calling – Mats Alvesson (Lund)
- Theorizing from Qualitative Data 1-3: Claiming Theoretical contribution – Davide Ravasi (UCL)
- The Engaged Scholar – Andrew Hoffman (Michigan)
- Approaches to studying organizational phenomena processually – Ann Langely (HEC Montreal)
- Constructing Research Questions – Mats Alvesson (Lund)
- Doing Meaningful Research – Mats Alvesson (Lund)

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

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2019-till date Association of Communication Graduate Student, University of Missouri, Columbia  
 2018-till date Golden Key International Honor Society (GKIHS) 2018-till date  
 2019 till date National Communication Association (NCA)  
 2018 -till date Central States Communication Association (CSCA)  
 2018-til date Mixed Methods International Research Association (MMIRA)  
 2018-till date International Communication Association (ICA)

## **LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

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January-May 2019 Emerging Leaders, North Dakota State University

Course Model: Identity  
Discovering your true self  
Personal growth and Development  
Socialization

January- May 2018 Universal Leadership Program, North Dakota State University

Course Model: Communication and socialization  
Professionalism and ethics  
Global leadership  
Innovation and creativity  
Collaborative decision making

2015 Basic Certificate in Leadership: Daystar Leadership Academy, Lagos, Nigeria

Course Model: Leadership & leadership development  
Project management

## **LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

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2022 - till date President, Mizzou 2

2021-till date Secretary , Association of Communication Graduate Student,  
University of Missouri, USA

2021-till date Social Committee Chair, Association of communication Graduate  
Student, University of Missouri. USA

2021- till date Director of Public Relations, Graduate Professional Council,  
University of Missouri, USA

2020-2021- Assistant Director of professional development, GPC, University  
of Missouri, USA

2021-2022 Vice President Mizzou 2, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

2020-2022 GradsWrite Leader for MU Graduate School. University of Missouri. USA

2018 -2019 Co-chair Public Relation Committee, Graduate Student Council,  
North Dakota State University

2018 -2019 Vice President of Recording, Golden Key International Honor Society  
Dakota State University Chapter

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- Project coordinator for Mizzou 2 free summer 2022 driving lessons for International students and F2 Visa holders.
- Award Committee Member/ Program designer for MU Graduate School, Post-Doctoral Studies and Graduate Professional Council, Spring, 2022 Award event
- Graduate Scholar of Excellence for Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, University of Missouri, Fall, 2021 - present
- Volunteer Assistant to Dr. Alberto Gonzalez, Central State Communication Association, 2022.
- Member of Search Committee for Director of Student Health Center, University of Missouri, Spring 2022
- Student Mentor – Battle High School Girls empowerment Program, Columbia Missouri, April 2022
- Standing Committee Member for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Central State Communication Association, 2021- till date
- Reviewer, National Communication Association Conference, 2022
- Public Speaking facilitator for Sigma Phi Epsilon on Best practices for presenting and delivering speeches, April 2022.
- Abstract Reviewer, Undergraduate Research & Creative Achievements Forum, University of Missouri, 2021/2022
- Site Leader – Caring for Columbia Day of Service, Columbia Missouri, April 2022
- GradsWrite Leader for MU Graduate School,
- Advisory Board Member, Deaton Institute, University of Missouri, USA
- Public Speaking Workshop Faciliator, Mizzou 2. University of Missouri, Fall, 2021
- Student Employee Advisory Board Member, MU Career Center, University of Missouri, USA
- Graduate Student Peer Mentor, Department of Communication University of Missouri, 2020-2021.
- Undergraduate curriculum development committee, Department of Communication, University of Missouri, Columbia, 2019-2020
- Program organizer for North Dakota State University graduate student’s annual symposium, 2019
- Assistant workshop leader for the 2018, expanding your horizon for young women in grades 7-9 which aims to encourage and develop their career interests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM field)
- Volunteer participant: speaker’s fair organized by the NDSU International student and study abroad office (March 12, 2018)
- Event planner for North Dakota State University, avenues of scientific discovery, 2018-2019
- Tour guide for “Walk into my future” event organized by Fargo Public Schools Development Foundation and Tri-College University
- Assistant Leader of expanding your horizon regional conference, NDSU, April 7, 2018



- Judge for North Dakota State University Speech and debate tournament, March 2018.

## **CORPORATE WORK EXPERIENCE**

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### **Summer 2022: Graduate Research Assistant (Grant Project)**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention via the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services – “Facilitation for Missouri Opioid Overdose and Bloodborne Infection Vulnerability Assessments – Phase 2.” 05/31/22 - 12/31/22.

- Project description: Work with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services’ (DHSS) Bureau of Reportable Disease Informatics to conduct six stakeholder group input sessions on Missouri Opioid Overdose and Bloodborne Infection Vulnerability Assessments.
- Develop final report from stakeholder sessions to inform revision and finalization of assessments by DHSS.

### **Summer 2022: Graduate Research Assistant - Teaching, Learning and Curriculum (Grant Project)**

#### **University of Missouri**

CADRE project with Dr. Morton Terrel to develop podcast that focuses on reviewing external grant from National Science Foundation to connect community partners in professional development.

- Assist with creating podcast episodes
- Assist with developing community partner’s space
- Assist with additional research endeavors as needed

### **Summer 2022: Research Intern for Missouri State Department of Correction**

- Interview correction officers from different Correction facilities in the state of Missouri to find out reasons for officer’s high turnover rate.
- Analyze interview data and accurately present findings of research
- Recommend ways to improve officers job satisfaction and performance
- Explore organization’s website to find out why new applicants on the job site seems disengaged while applying for job

### **January 2020- Honorary Associate of C & F Porter Novelli Nigeria.**

#### **Responsibility**

- Help in developing and/or implementing some of the strategic communication activities of the firm and its clients.

### **October 2019 - Assistant Training and Development Consultant: Sexual Harassment Training and Consulting for United States Army**

### **Responsibilities**

- Assist in providing mental models on organizational communication
- Assist in providing training on sexual harassment from a communication perspective
- Assist in developing the communication infrastructure to create cultural change.

### **February 2019 – Research Consultant for Geriatric-Ethnic-Religious Minority, NDSU (Bush Foundation and Consensus Council Grant Project)**

- Reviewed, classified, and recorded survey data in preparation for computer Analysis
- Performed descriptive and multivariate statistical analyses of data, using computer Software
- Prepared tables, graphs, fact sheets, and written reports summarizing research results.

### **Summer 2018 First Destination Calling Staff, North Dakota State University Career Center**

#### **Responsibilities**

- Conducted a phone survey
- Gathered data about student's post- graduation activities
- Observed, received, and obtained information from all relevant sources
- Reported and compiled the data to be used for the annual employment report of NDSU

### **Spring 2018 Project Manager for Geriatric-Ethnic-Religious Minority, Department**

#### **of Communication, NDSU**

#### **Responsibilities**

- Coordinated resource procurement activities
- Developed detailed project plans
- Communicated with the facilitators of the workshop
- Prepared detailed feedback of workshop/seminar

### **2015- 2017 Journalist – Black Gold Media, Lagos, Nigeria**

#### **Responsibilities**

- Collected and analyzed facts about newsworthy events
- Wrote stories for online news platform
- Reported news stories for publication, describing the background and details of events
- Revised work to meet editorial approval or to fit time or space requirements

**2015 Business/ HR Analyst (Strategy Implementation for Organization Development) A.T. METZGER LLC, Lagos, Nigeria**

**Responsibilities**

Part of a team member of five consultants working on Organizational Development consulting for our client who is one of the leading Ports Authority in Africa.

- Assessed the company's organizational structure for adequacy and continued relevance in view of changes to the client's business model
- Defined job roles and documented job descriptions for every job role (>1000 job roles)
- Developed corporate performance scorecard modeled along the perspectives of the balanced scorecard
- Resolve any existing conflict as a result of unclear job role

**2014 Copywriter, Callmeduchess Production, Surulere Lagos, Nigeria**  
**Responsibility**

Provided content for four different radio programs

**2014 Trainee Human Resource Consultant**  
**CrystalBlend Nigeria Limited, Lagos Nigeria**  
**Responsibilities:**

- Performed searches for qualified job candidates, using sources such as computer databases, networking, Internet recruiting resources, media advertisements, or employee referrals
- Interviewed job applicants to obtain information on work history, training, education, or job skills
- Conducted reference or background checks on job applicants

**SKILLS**

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- Teaching
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Research and organizational skills
- Conflict resolution
- Good leadership and analytical skills; demonstrates innovativeness.
- Knowledge of analytical/scientific software such as SPSS, MAXQDA
- Research methods/methodology: survey, interview., observation, focus group, Ethnography, Design based research,

**REFERENCES:** Available on request