SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION HISTORY

Background

SECA traces its origins to the mid nineteen-fifties, when educational television station managers and educators discussed the role of television in programs of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and to Region II of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) where southern regional broadcasters found a commonality of interests.

By the mid-sixties the NAEB was concentrating on national development, rather than regional, and as a direct result of a Ford Foundation study, development funds were allocated to a handful of major city stations. National Educational Television (NET), largely funded by the Ford Foundation and located in New York, was the principle organization providing programming for the entire country. Policies and tastes were those of New York, Boston, Washington, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. These cities had the population, facilities and funds to boost the growth of ETV. The Eastern Educational Network (EEN) had been created, linking the major production centers of the Northeast.

ETV stations in the south had little voice in national programming and funding, and little money to develop their own programs. They did not fare much better during the first few years after the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) was established in 1967 by Congress following a Carnegie Commission study and report. The same leaders continued to dominate educational television and the same cities continued to receive the bulk of the program funding from CPB.

In 1967, a group of ETV station managers and educators met to discuss the feasibility of forming a regional association similar to EEN but broader in scope. As a result of those meetings SECA was chartered and incorporated as a non-profit corporation on November 28, 1967 in Columbia, South Carolina.

SECA was established to create a regional voice, and to gain strength in unity and a sharing of resources. More and better programs were sought through exchanging programs, combining production capacities, and by influencing national productions. The founding leaders felt that the South, too, would benefit from a regional association and network.

The founding directors were Henry J. Cauthen of the South Carolina ETV Network, Lee Franks of the Georgia ETV Network, Harvey R. Herbst of the University of Texas (KLRN), Howard D. Holst of Memphis State University (WKNO), O. Leonard Press of the Kentucky Authority for Educational Television, Lee Reaves of the Arkansas Educational Television Network, and Edward P. Wegener of Auburn University.

The founding members purposefully selected the term "communications association" rather than "educational network," aware that educational broadcasting is but one element of educational
technology, although television programming for educational broadcasting was the association's chief objective. Initial plans for the association called for a program library, since few stations were interconnected, cooperative production of a series about the region, an annual conference, workshops and national representation.

Chronological Narrative

Bids from three cities for a location for the Association's headquarters were received by the board. Columbia was selected over Atlanta and Jacksonville because of a generous bid by the South Carolina ETV Network and the state of South Carolina to provide substantial financial assistance in the early years, as well as production and network origination capability.

In July of 1968, Dr. Lark Daniel, college professor and communications consultant, was employed as the first executive director of SECA. In his first year, SECA had 15 members and an operating budget of $60,000. He remained through December of 1969 and was succeeded by Henry Cauthen on an interim basis.

By 1970, SECA had 20 member stations, three full-time and two part-time staff members, an operating budget of $75,000, an Instructional Communications Division, and a Public Television Division. W. Wayne Seal, an experienced radio and television journalist and former press secretary to S.C. Governor Robert McNair, became executive director of SECA in late 1970, and was named president and treasurer of the corporation in 1971.

Also by 1970, the membership was sharing two hours of programming per week via a "regional split" of the PBS interconnection system and tape bicycle to non-interconnected stations. A program library had been established as a further vehicle for member program sharing, and program funding was being sought from private and federal sources.

In 1970, SECA and SCETV were key participants in the first live, coast-to-coast satellite feed with coverage of a speech by CPB President, John Macy.

The Association staff swelled to 12 and the operating budget to $151,000 by mid-1971 as a result of two separate projects begun earlier that winter. South Carolina ETV and SECA persuaded William F. Buckley, Jr. to bring his weekly public affairs series, FIRING LINE, to public television, and secured funding for the first year from CPB. In addition, members were providing film reports for an hour-long weekly public affairs magazine series entitled SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE that was delivered via the regional split to the membership.

An attempt was made at forming a SECA radio division in 1971, and although there were a dozen radio stations very interested in affiliating with SECA, sufficient resources were not available to fund services at a level that would sustain a new division.

In 1972 the board undertook a comprehensive study of all aspects of the new Association and commissioned a Role and Scope of SECA study. This study eventually led to many sweeping changes in all phases of SECA governance, services, and membership.
By 1973 the region's influence on the national scene became evident with the election of SECA representatives as chairmen of the boards of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), the NAEB, and the Educational Television Service board of the NAEB. In addition a member was selected by President Nixon as the first television representative to the National Council on the Arts.

SECA's 23 regular members and three associate members were exchanging eight hours of programming per week in 1973 via the interconnection; purchasing ITV programs from national suppliers at discounted group rates; funding and producing CAMERA SOUTH, a weekly regional magazine replacing SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE; distributing Edwin Newman's SPEAKING FREELY series nationally as a network service, courtesy of NBC; recognizing quality member-produced programs through the SECA Program Awards; and, conducting an annual meeting in the spring bringing together a cross-section of station professionals and managers.

Also in 1973, SCETV and KLRU/Austin were recommended by the PBS board for national program funding, the Maryland Network's WALL STREET WEEK was airing nationally on PBS, Georgia PTV's WHY series was being distributed to more than 80 stations by National Instructional Television (NIT), Kentucky ETV's General Educational Development (GED) series was being applauded by adult educators nationwide, and for the first time a Southern station, KLRN, received a CPB local program award for its production of CARRASCOLENDAS.

In the fall of 1973, Wayne Seal left SECA and was replaced early the following year by Robert E. Dressler, station manager of an NBC affiliate in Columbia, Missouri.

By mid-1975, SECA's 30 members and staff of 14 were beginning the Association's second national series for PBS distribution. LOWELL THOMAS REMEMBERS featured edited film clips from the Fox-Movietone Newsreels with Thomas providing studio wraparounds. Eventually three series totaling 144 programs were taped and aired on PBS.

The efforts of the chief engineers at many SECA member stations to establish and enforce network technical standards for SECA led to the formation of SECA's third professional council, the Engineering Council, in 1974.

By late 1975, Lee Morris of the Mississippi ETV Network and Nocky Willett of KLRN were leading the Association in a new venture that would again bring the members to the forefront of satellite technology. SECA was selected by NASA to participate in their test of the viability of a new, powerful Communications Technology Satellite (CTS). SECA's experiment in the joint U.S. and Canadian CTS project called for the delivery of a regular schedule of television programs for real-time and taped delay use.

**In the fall of 1976, SECA began delivering the weekly four-hour CTS program schedule.** It was the first time a regular schedule of television programs was delivered to broadcast stations via satellite. Initially, fifteen SECA member stations installed satellite equipment and utilized the programs in the schedule. The project was a success for NASA and SECA and provided
valuable experience in satellite technology for SECA members as the PBS system prepared to change to a satellite delivery system in 1978.

In mid-1976, Robert C. Glazier, general manager of PBS station KETC in St. Louis, was selected by the board as president and CEO of SECA.

By the fall of 1977 a radio planning group headed by Dr. Florence Monroe of Alabama had laid the groundwork for the re-establishment of a SECA radio division. In November the SECA board approved the proposed bylaws and the SECA Radio Division was created. The division began with 11 charter members.

By late 1979, SECA had added its fourth professional council, the PI Council, and membership had expanded to 35 regular members and several associate members. Members in nine states, with funding from the Department of Agriculture, had formed a Nutrition Education Consortium (NEC) administered by SECA and were producing a series of nutrition programs for education. These SOUP-TO-NUTS programs were later distributed nationwide by the Agency for Instructional Television (AIT).

SECA began the 1980s with its fifth president and chief executive officer when Virginia G. Fox began her nine-year presidency on March 15, 1980.

The work of the NEC consortium, and a variety of other ongoing projects of the ITV council, led to the creation in 1980 of SECA's Center for Instructional Communications. The Center's purpose was to expand the scope of SECA's educational activities and strengthen SECA's leadership role in educational and instructional services. The members pooled their own resources to hire the first Center director, Reta Richardson, in 1981 with a commitment from the board to continue staffing the Center.

The timing of the creation of the Center coincided with the creation of the Interregional Program Service (IPS) at EEN to centralize the acquisition, marketing and distribution of non-PBS PTV programming system-wide. The SECA membership joined and supported the IPS effort and curtailed SECA's acquisition activities. As the 1980's began SECA and EEN assumed leadership roles in separate non-competing arenas. As EEN wound down its own educational services, five New England states looked to SECA for these services as associate members of the SECA Center.

The new Center expanded into the ITV marketing arena in 1980 with the acquisition of member-produced ITV products for national distribution. This two-year experiment culminated with the creation of the Educational Program Service (EPS) in 1982 as an ongoing national marketing service of the Center.

In 1982 the Center was selected to assume control of the two-year-old national ITV satellite schedule, which was administered by an interregional committee and delivered by PBS. In partnership with SCETV, the Center began the daily delivery of this 1,200 hour program schedule during the 1982-83 school year and assumed the role of administrator of this national
service (later known as NISS - the National ITV Satellite Schedule).

PTV activities at SECA did not cease with the advent of IPS, but rather shifted to fill a need in the programming arena. SECA's program service became the distribution vehicle for a wealth of free programming from PBS stations and independent producers who had no other regular distribution outlet or process for these programs. SECA also marketed and distributed some member-produced product on a limited basis at members' request, system wide. By the mid-1980's SECA was delivering over 800 hours of programming a year by satellite in addition to the NISS schedule and other ITV feeds.

PTFMA: In 1982 SECA further broadened its scope as an "umbrella" agency by contracting with the Public Telecommunications Financial Management Association (PTFMA) to provide administrative services and meeting support. In 1996, this organization changed its name to the Public Broadcasting Management Association (PBMA.)

Membership continued to expand and by late 1985 SECA had grown to 54 members with an additional 32 members in the Radio Division, as well as a number of associate members. The membership now included the US Virgin Islands, and would later add Puerto Rico as well. Staff expanded to 18 with the growth in membership and services and in mid-1985 the Association headquarters moved to a larger facility that had been purchased two years earlier in anticipation of the need for more space.

OSBE: In 1986, a group of state broadcasting executives that had been meeting informally for some time with some administrative assistance from SECA, established OSBE, the Organization of State Broadcasting Executives, and agreed that it would exist under the SECA administrative umbrella. This group had earlier conducted the Editorial Integrity Project, also administered by SECA, to examine First Amendment rights for state broadcasting entities and determine principles of editorial integrity, which were published by SECA for the project.

The OSBE organization also fostered the successful application by SECA for U.S. Department of Education funding for a Star Schools project. The Satellite Educational Resources Consortium (SERC), operating with a skeleton staff at SECA and additional staff near Washington, began a pilot semester in January of 1989.

In January 1989 the Association's sixth president and CEO, Skip Hinton, came to SECA from Alabama Public Television. At that time the SECA membership had reached 63, with 35 members of the Radio Division, and 6 associate members of the SECA Center. The staff numbered 24 and plans were underway to relocate the headquarters to coincide with the move of SCETV to a new facility. Construction of a new SECA headquarters began in July of 1989, and the Association began the 1990's in a new home with a combined SECA and SERC staff of 32.
The Board
The board of directors of SECA, as originally established, was to be composed of up to 39 members; one "professional" representative from each of the 13 SECA states, elected by the SECA members in that state; one "lay" member from each state, elected by the professional members of the board and, 13 "at-large" members elected by the professional members. Professional members served three-year terms, lay and at-large members served two-year terms.

The 13-state SECA region included the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Board officers elected annually were chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-treasurer (a dual office), with the chairman being designated as the Association's chief executive officer. In 1971, the senior staff position of executive director was upgraded to that of president and treasurer of the Association.

In 1974, the board office of treasurer was re-established as separate office, and the automatic succession of the vice-chair to the chair was instituted. In 1975, the president was designated the Association's chief executive officer.

Since several classifications of membership were established, i.e. radio division members, television affiliates, associate members, the term "corporate member" was used to refer to those CPB qualified, public television licensees, located within the defined SECA geographical region that were members of the Association. ("Corporate membership" was not a defined membership classification, but merely a phrase used to denote full membership.)

Two regular meetings of the full board were scheduled each year. Initially these were held at the fall NAEB convention and at the spring SECA Conference. While the board continued to hold one of its full meetings at the SECA Conference (which moved to the fall in 1983), the other regular meeting expanded from board meeting to board retreat in 1976 (away from the NAEB), to a board planning conference in 1979. The planning conference was held in the spring beginning in 1983.

Prior to 1985, several standing committees of the board existed - governance, membership,
nominating, programming, planning, conference planning, etc. The board structure was streamlined in 1985 to limit standing committees to the executive and finance committees. Other ad hoc committees are convened as needed.

Since it would be possible for a single member to be represented by the station's manager and one or more council chairs on the board, it was decided by the board in 1985 that, for the purpose of electing board officers, each member station could only cast one vote.

As the membership, and therefore the board, grew in numbers it became increasingly necessary for the executive committee to deal with the day-to-day issues of the Association that required board attention. The executive committee was initially composed of the board officers, and was expanded to five members in 1971. The immediate past chair of the board and the chair of the Radio Division were added to the executive committee in 1979. The president is an ex-officio member of the executive committee.

From the mid-1970s until 1984, the board's nominating committee presented a proposed slate of officers to the board at its spring meeting where elections were held. In 1985, a revised election process was instituted for the election of each office separately by mail ballot from a slate of eligible names proposed by the membership. An auditing firm received and tabulated the mail ballots. New officers’ terms officially began on July 1, although for a time in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the new officers began their term immediately after the planning conference.

The Councils

SECA's system of professional councils for member station personnel began with the formation of a Public Television Division and an Instructional Communications Division shortly after SECA was incorporated in 1967. These divisions were restructured as councils as a result of the Role and Scope Study of SECA's governance and structure in 1973.

Each Council included the professional representative for its discipline from each SECA member station and was represented at the SECA board level by the Council's chair. The SECA councils, with their year of formation, were:
- Public Television Council - 1973
- Council on Instructional Communications - 1973
- Engineering Council - 1974
- Public Information Council - 1979
- Postsecondary/Adult Learning Council - 1981
- Development Council - 1988
- Production Council – 1993
- Outreach Council --

The Council on Instructional Communications was renamed the Elementary/Secondary Council with the formation of the SECA Center and the Postsecondary/Adult Learning Council in 1980/81. These two educational councils were represented at the SECA board level by the chair of the SECA Center board of directors.
Each council developed its own bylaws which conform to the SECA bylaws and elect officers annually. The councils developed their activities and services in cooperation with a SECA staff liaison.

Since a council's collective response to a national and inter-regional issue in their arena was often viewed as the "SECA position" on that issue, the SECA board reviewed and ratified a council's resolution prior to publication. The board instituted this process in 1987.

The SECA Geographic Region
When the PBS land-line interconnection system was created in the late 1960's, a station's regional affiliation was determined by the regional network signal it received during a split of the interconnection system. The system was capable of delivering simultaneous feeds to each region as well as national feeds. The regionals were assigned times on the interconnection system to deliver programming to their members when PBS was not utilizing the system and these "regional split feeds" formed the initial basis for each of the geographic regions.

There were a few states that bordered more than one regional that could receive more than one regional split feed. These stations had the option of affiliating with either or both of the regional networks (Missouri and Maryland). In addition, some stations were not interconnected at all and received programming via tape bicycle. These stations also had an option for regional affiliation (West Virginia).

When PBS switched to a satellite interconnection system in 1978 the rigid land-line boundaries no longer applied to the regional networks, but were essentially retained to define the regions. By 1992 the defined regional boundaries were dropped altogether and membership in the four regional organizations was open to any station or industry-related organization.

The SECA Membership included members in the following states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alabama</th>
<th>Oklahoma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Territories:**

Puerto Rico
and the U.S. Virgin Islands