

CPTSC
2010
The 37th Annual Conference



Expanded Session Descriptions

Annual Conference of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication

In the last two years, we have all experienced significant changes in financial, political, institutional, and technical landscapes. Many of our universities and colleges have been impacted by budget reductions and limits on resources. The global financial crisis has put pressure on our institutions and, in turn, our programs. Leadership changes at the international, national, and state levels, particularly in the United States, have been shifting the political climate in ways that are beginning to filter through cultures and economies. At the same time, advances in communication technologies in the forms of Web 2.0 and 3.0 applications, cloud computing, new hand-held devices and applications for them, and others have brought new challenges and opportunities for research and teaching. The pace and severity of change in some areas have meant that programs must make a variety of adjustments.

Beyond the most recent, highly visible changes, the very nature of technical and scientific communication is rooted in change, advancement, and the emergence of new issues, practices and technologies that confront the workplace and the public. Thus for the professionals and scholars who emerge from our programs, adaptability is essential.

For the 35th Annual Meeting of the CPTSC in Minneapolis, program co-chairs Gerald Savage and Kirk St. Amant raised the theme of context in their call for papers. Though signs of serious change were on the horizon then, it might have been hard to imagine the rapid pace of change and the radical shifts that have taken place since. Consequently, it seems an appropriate moment to do a pulse check. We invite papers that explore the ways that programs manage change of all kinds; the ways our programs prepare our students for futures of change; and the ways that political, social, and economic changes are directing the vision of our programs.

Position Paper descriptions

The following includes the proposals that were submitted in response to the conference Call for Papers. They are organized by session and panel.

Concurrent Session 1: Panel A

SLOT-C

Susan Youngblood, *Auburn University*
Jo Mackiewicz, *Auburn University*
Stewart Whittemore, *Auburn University*

In 2009, we received a CPTSC grant to create the Service Learning Opportunities in Technical Communication (or SLOT-C) Database. The SLOT-C Database will give students opportunities for projects that meet community needs, improve learning experiences, help faculty improve connections with nonprofits, make identifying service-learning projects easier, and better balance how technical communication programs serve their communities. This database is a change in how we envision service learning, from participating in local projects—many within the walls of the university—to participating in projects around the world. Furthermore, this database asks nonprofits to go beyond signing up on a list: it requires them to consider the types of resources they must be ready to provide to students (e.g., time and mentoring), the possibility of working with students at a distance, and the range of communication projects they could use.

Many nonprofits, particularly small organizations, have no dedicated professional communicator with the expertise and time to sculpt effective communications. Resources are particularly tight given the current economy. However, research shows how communication is critically important for nonprofits to achieve their goals (e.g., Bray, 2008; Seshadri & Carstenson, 2007). Therefore, students learning the principles of such communication can be a valuable resource. Furthermore, research indicates that students gain valuable experience from participating in service learning projects (e.g., Blakeslee, 2001), for instance by associating their activities with a real-world context, helping them transition from classroom to workplace. Ideally, students meet community needs and also develop an appreciation for their field and for the work of the organizations they are assisting.

Far more than a list of nonprofits, the database is designed to create targeted partnerships between education and nonprofit organizations and, at the same time, enrich the curricula of the participating universities. It will help faculty assess the appropriateness of a given organization and project for the assignments in their classes by including information about both the organization and its project needs (e.g., writing instructions, creating online tutorials, or preparing educational displays), and details that help pair projects with students (e.g., skills the student needs to have, an organization staff member's availability). And by including data about telecommuting, the database will even make it possible, for example, for a student in rural New Mexico to work with a nonprofit organization in New York City.

Because the SLOT-C Database is not a simple list of nonprofits, we have faced a number of challenges in its design, particularly in balancing simplicity with complexity. Some of these challenges include

- collecting sufficient information for students to target their searches without overwhelming nonprofits and discouraging their participation
- identifying logical groupings of project types
- designing an interface to display project options effectively and to serve as an invention tool

Economic pressures coupled with student learning needs that sometimes go beyond locally available projects make this database a timely resource. We need not only to take advantage of new ways of establishing service-learning projects, but also to hone the way we encourage nonprofits to participate.

Doctoral Student Research Confidence and Research Challenges

Dr. Rebecca Rickly, *Texas Tech University*

Gregory Zobel, *Texas Tech University*

The future, integrity, and impact of Technical Communication depend upon its scholars' ability to conduct, analyze, and represent quality research that impacts the field in meaningful ways. Consequently, each new generation of PhD students needs research training and support. As a field, we need to "take the pulse" of the research training provided by our PhD granting institutions, because these are the scholars who are and will be conducting research—making knowledge—in the years to come. Once we have this data, program directors can accurately assess students' learning outcomes in a more accurate, reliable context. Training practices based on verifiable outcomes data can positively impact students and the field by filling gaps in training and praxis according to local context, always with a "bigger picture" in mind. Additionally, since most research at the graduate and post-graduate levels is funded by external grants and fellowships, doctoral students need to understand how to position their research methods, goals, and interests in larger professional and disciplinary contexts.

This project, funded by a 2010 CPTSC grant, builds on Rickly's 2005 study "An Investigation of How We Prepare Graduate Students to Conduct Research" (which followed Kim Sydow Campbell's examination of required methods courses for graduate students in Business and Technical Communication published in 2000) and Blakeslee's 2009 "The Technical Communication Research Landscape" in an attempt to address both research training and research challenges. This study, "Doctoral Student Research Confidence and Research Challenges," seeks to build on both prior research efforts and establish a longitudinal research program by annually gauging 100-200 current PhD students' perceived research confidence and challenges.

The investigators completed the first stage by launching a pilot study between November 2009 and December 2010. One hundred and forty three participants responded to this survey, and over 40 individuals agreed to engage in more in-depth interviews. The graduate student population is engaged and willing to provide useful and constructive insights about their research training and challenges, thereby demonstrating the project's viability.

Understanding what doctoral students perceive as research challenges (both in terms of training and funding) as well as how confident graduate students feel about their experiences enables program directors to reshape their curriculum and training so that graduates have greater confidence and competence and are more prepared for employment and scholarship in academia and industry. The research results have the potential to inform doctoral students, faculty, and program directors.

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TechComm Programmatic Central: Helping Track Programmatic Information in Times of Change

Lisa Meloncon, *University of Cincinnati*

In this position paper, I will provide a current report on the TechComm Programmatic Central database and an overview of programmatic information at all levels. The TechComm Programmatic Central database is a comprehensive clearinghouse of data about programs. It currently includes programmatic information and curricular data of

- 50 undergraduate certificates

- 36 graduate certificates
- 52 minors
- 142 undergraduate degree programs
- 81 master's degree programs
- 35 PhD programs

It also includes basic information about online degree programs and the number of online classes taught; basic profile of faculty; beginning information on the issue of contingent faculty in technical communication, and more. #

Background

The goal of TechComm Programmatic Central was to go a step beyond the currently available lists of self-reported schools and in doing so, to bring together in one place comprehensive programmatic.

With an increasing number of academic programs focusing on technical and professional writing, keeping up with changes in program requirements and program assessments can become a full time job. This steady growth means it becomes even more important to understand current trends and then reflect on programmatic issues. With no central repository of information about programs, program administrators and those interested in programmatic issues had only the self-enrolled listings of academic programs (STC, CPTSC, and ATTW). Two immediate limitations exist regarding the present listings: first, to get any specific information requires one to visit the school's website, and second, and more importantly, it is impossible, without extensive investments of time and energy, to do any sort of comparison or analyses about field-wide programmatic issues.

Connection to Times of Change Theme

TechComm Programmatic Central provides an unprecedented opportunity to analyze and exchange information related to programs, curriculums, and administration. Users will be able to search and query the database on any number of parameters. As an example, a meta-analysis could be performed to help the field resolve apparent contradictions of localized specializations of programs and to explore common relations between programs and curriculum.

Knowing the status of current programs—what courses are common across programs, what courses reflect localized strengths, what are common assignments or readings for different types of course, are programs offering topics courses in new developments, who is teaching in our programs, are our curriculums preparing students for the 21st century workplace—encourages and enables the field to critically reflect on programmatic trends, especially in the face of current changes in the higher education landscape.

More importantly, TechComm Programmatic Central establishes a baseline of information that will allow the field to track trends over time ensuring that programs can remain flexible and adaptable to changes within the field.

Data is still being collected and entered into the database. Since collection is ongoing, the list above is a working list that has project deadlines by August.

European Developments in User-centered Design

Michael Salvo, *Purdue University*

European Developments in User-centered Design is a site-based research project at three European sites of technical and professional writing. The project describes next-generation user-centered curriculum. These sites include University of Copenhagen, Denmark; University of Antwerp, Netherlands; and University of Dundee, Scotland. The goal of the project has been to articulate breakthroughs, trends, and best practices in user-centered research emerging in European context to inform future development in North America and build further opportunities for global partnerships. User-centered theory in the

United States emerged in dialogue with Scandinavian design practice and remains in communication with European leaders in graduate programs in Interaction Design, Design Ethnography, and Workplace Rhetoric.

The work of communicating with and closely studying these new programs has been supported by a CPTSC research grant. This proposal aims to bring back initial findings from the grant-supported travel towards presenting this study for publication.

Through the second half of the twentieth century, technical and professional writing research has redefined the relationship between producers and consumers of technology and, more generally, rearticulated relationships between stakeholders as a network of power and action. With five or more days of research at each site in Northern Europe, initial findings suggest that innovation is taking place overseas but outside traditional locations for technical and scientific communication in the United States. University of Copenhagen in Denmark is site of one of the first contemporary rhetoric programs in Europe and its workplace rhetoric program continues to innovate. Second, The University of Antwerp is a new University, the result of merging three institutions: the Universitair Centrum Antwerpen (RUCA, now Campus Middelheim), the Universitaire Faculteiten Sint-Ignatius Antwerpen (UFSIA, now Stadscampus), and the Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen (UIA, now Campus Drie Eiken). The campuses are situated in the historic city centre and in the green surroundings to the south of the city. Antwerp's English writing programs are housed in the school of Applied Economics and are run according to an entrepreneurial model. This entrepreneurship is evident in its research agenda: chasing grant-funded research that changes according to trends and funded initiatives, with little institutional commitment. In many ways, this is an instructive example for American administrators considering untethering their writing programs from a required first-year writing program. The third site is the University of Dundee in Scotland which offers the newest programs. Dundee has recently launched Masters programs in Design Ethnography and Interactive Media Design, two articulations of "next generation" user-centered research. Housed in the School of Computing, Dundee's faculty is interdisciplinary--and use the term "trans-disciplinary"--and many have backgrounds in anthropology and ethnographic research while students from six continents arrive with business, music, technology, design, writing, and other backgrounds.

This grant has extended CPTSC's investment in global community building and supported travel to Copenhagen, Denmark; Antwerp, Belgium; and Dundee, Scotland; providing opportunity to articulate innovations in user-centered design for CPTSC's audience of globally-aware administrators.

The research has promoted North American programs in technical and scientific communication by sharing information between North America and Europe, articulating shared goals while also locating differences in practice and values, informing sustained cross-Atlantic dialogue. Results include articulating European opportunities for North American scholars and program graduates while also informing European colleagues of opportunities in the US and Canada. Built around investigating new breakthroughs in user-centered and participatory design, the project promotes recent programmatic research in technical and scientific communication, particularly in establishing new practitioner-oriented MA-level graduate programs. How have European curricula developed and how closely have these developments mirrored or diverged from North American experience? How have issues of post-industrial and digital culture impacted European peers? And how have developments at the PhD level impacted MA-level programs? Are the relationships between Rhetoric and Technical Communication familiar to American observers? And do interdisciplinary programs share similar partners? How much of user-centered design emerges from its place of origin? Much of this work has been dialogic, based in discussion, but there is also a strong ethnographic and place-based case study component to the research that was only realizable with site visits following on preliminary conversations with site representatives.

Case-based research here is understood as part of a continuing dialogic relationship among sites in North America and Europe explicitly for the exchange of ideas and research on curricular design, development of research methodology in technical and professional communication, expansion of global career opportunities for program graduates, and discussion of opportunities for faculty development and international exchange.

Concurrent Session 1: Panel B

Audience Awareness and the Online Journal Context: The *Xchanges* E-Journal and the Praxis of Professionalization

Julianne Newmark, *CLASS (Communication, Liberal Arts, and Social Sciences) Department, New Mexico Tech*

The online journal *Xchanges* is committed to student professionalization and interdisciplinarity across writing- and communication-related fields. As an online-only journal, *Xchanges* addresses by its very form the ways in which discourse types are rapidly changing and the degree to which students are expected, as they prepare to enter the workplace, to be proficient in the today's multimodal communication technologies. The journal is housed in the undergraduate TC program at a science and engineering university and publishes Senior theses and major research projects from TC, Writing, Rhetoric, and WAC students from institutions across the U.S. *Xchanges'* principal goal is to contribute to the professionalization of TC students in their final years of undergraduate study by situating their research in a broadly accessible blind-reviewed publication context that transcends the limitations and confines of the university domain. *Xchanges* aims to contribute innovatively, as an online open-access resource, to the post-college disciplinary goals of the TC profession in this moment of change.

In my brief presentation, I will discuss the journal's successes and challenges in its first year at its new university home in meeting the journal's mission, which is primarily a TC-student-service mission. *Xchanges* strives to provide students with a rhetorical context that will help them to shift from writing for the professorial audience, that is their default mode to writing for a publication context that expects from them a specific awareness of print *and* e-journal publication styles and standards. To assess how well we are achieving our goal of audience awareness for undergraduates submitting to and publishing in *Xchanges*, we conducted post-publication interviews with students from the journal's home university who published in the journal's most recent issue (Issue 6.1, Winter 2010). In my presentation, I will give a brief overview of the important and edifying information these post-publication interviews revealed. This presentation will investigate the possible interventions into some of the issues to which the interviews alerted us and will seek insights and suggestions from other conference attendees for satisfying our declared deliverables.

To inspire discussion on this topic, I will briefly:

- Narrativize the experiences of the student writers whose theses/research projects were chosen, as a result of blind review, for publication in *Xchanges*. I will rely on the post-publication interviews for this information.
- Describe my outreach to TC faculty at other institutions and our discussions about integrating *Xchanges*-journal submission as a requirement in their Senior capstone, research, or thesis courses, as a way to integrate the expected audience shift into the TC courses' basic design.

Editors Are Made, Not Born: The Evolution of an Editing Program

Cynthia A. Nahrwold, Suzann W. Barr, Frankie G. Chadwick, *Department of Rhetoric and Writing, University of Arkansas at Little Rock*

Our position paper outlines the history and development of editing in our undergraduate program, the integration of editing into our undergraduate major in Professional and Technical Writing (PTW), and the development of an editing concentration at the graduate level.

History and development of editing in our undergraduate program

Our junior-level editing class (Editing for Usage, Style, and Clarity) was initially developed as a service course for the secondary education program in English. This course focused on only grammar and

mechanics: the *what* but not the *how* of editing. To complicate matters, until the mid-1990s, everyone taught the course differently; course content was not standardized. However, in the late 1990s, when we began to ask for portfolios from graduating seniors, we identified numerous (and varied) editing problems—enough for us to recognize the need for a formalized, consistently taught editing component in the undergraduate program. We rewrote the existing course to be truly an editing course rather than a course including sentence-level revision of essays that students wrote during the course of the semester: “just another writing class” according to one of our students.

Integration of editing into the undergraduate major in PTW

The reworked editing course, now a requirement of our major, is divided into two parts: clear and correct review of grammar and mechanics, and *then* style and diction. Within this instruction, students learn to adhere to the level of edit specified, make multiple editing passes for identifiable, discrete editing issues, and create document style sheets. The final project for the course entails students’ editing approximately 10 to 15 pages of either other authors’ work or students’ own work from past or current semesters, complete with a list of editing passes, a style sheet, and in-text query notes.

Subsequent assessment activities, including senior portfolios and senior exit interviews, indicate that students understand, acknowledge the need for, and appreciate the editing requirement in our PTW major.

Development of an editing concentration at the graduate level

From our own experiences and from what we have heard from employers, local and beyond, editing is a skill that too few prospective employees have. It is also a skill that cannot be mastered in one service course. Currently, we offer only two undergraduate/graduate courses: Editing for Publication (nonfiction) and Technical Style and Editing (technical). These courses “make” every semester, and are, in fact, increasing in enrollment. But a semester or two offers not enough time for students to learn what they need to know, to practice how to tackle various editing tasks, to be competent, confident editors. Thus, we have recently added a new concentration in editing to our existing graduate program concentrations: nonfiction and technical. Our offering more editing courses—ones that undergraduates can also take so long as they meet prerequisites—gives students the chance to develop the editing skills they want and that the job market demands. Editing courses currently being developed include Advanced Editing, Editing for Global Audiences, Topics in Editing, and a three-part practicum in editing.

We hope that our position paper sparks discussion of editing classes and programs at other institutions.

Concurrent Session 2: Panel A

Why We Should Teach and Use Games: An Argument for Incorporating Play and Digital Games into Technical Communication Curricula

Felicia Chong, *Michigan Technological University*

This position paper focuses on practical strategies to integrate play and digital games into the field of technical communication to address some central issues in the discipline: usability, accessibility, and design. I argue that these strategies can be incorporated into Web/graphic design or any computer-intensive classes, which are often part of the technical communication curriculum.

In the last few years, digital games and gaming theories and methods have been continually incorporated into higher education. Games such as World of Warcraft (commonly known as “WoW”) are being integrated into the composition classroom (Shultz Colby and Colby). Second Life is used to teach critical media literacy (deWinter and Vie). Medical schools such as the University of Sydney are using video gaming to teach geriatric house calls (Duque); high-tech stimulators such as Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) are being used in military training (Sieberg), and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* has recently published an article called, “5 Teaching Tips for Professors—From Video Games” (Young), just to name a

few. If play in adulthood is indeed important and natural (Huizinga); if games have the potential to teach us about literacy, learning and critical thinking (Gee and Shultz; Colby and Colby); and if learning is integrally related to games (Houser and Deloach), then how can we as technical communicators and instructors, "teach" new media or multimodal communication technologies in a manner appropriate and engaging to students in our scientific and technical communication programs?

In surveying recent issues (2004-2009) of *Technical Communication Quarterly* (TCQ), *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* (JBTC), *Technical Communication* (TC) and *Intercom*, I found only a few articles that specifically mentioned games. Lee Sherlock (JBTC) investigates the characteristics of collaborative work and overlapping activity systems in the WoW; Bonnie Nardi (TCQ) explains that she became interested in investigating the WoW communities because she was intrigued by "how people collaborate with people they don't know" (494); Baranich and Currie (*Intercom*) argue that games can not only help us learn content and develop the ability to collaborate, but also challenge our "curiosity, invention and creativity" (7); Kolko and Thayer (TC) encourage technical communicators to not only learn more digital game localization, but to also become more involved in this growing industry. Although it is encouraging to see technical communication scholars becoming aware of the potential contribution of games to our field and curriculum, the resistance to using play or digital games in the classroom remains strong (Kitalong, Daisley). There certainly has not been much conversation (in these four journals in recent years) on ways of incorporating play and digital games into technical communication curricula.

For this presentation, I will offer a few practical strategies for technical communication instructors to bring play and digital games into the technical communication classroom and thus to programs. For instance, Bogost's theory of procedural rhetoric—a theory based in video game use— can better inform our teaching of web programming or designing. For example, we recognize that words have rhetorical power. Toward the end of teaching about the nature of such power, Bogost describes procedural rhetoric as "the practice of using processes persuasively" (*Persuasive Games*, 28). In other words, he argues that persuasion can be achieved through rules of behaviors and codes. In this case, we can discuss with our students on how web coding or scripting languages (e.g., Javascript) can construct and constrict behaviors. Thus, in addition to acquiring knowledge on usability and effective communication in Web/programming classes, our students can learn about their roles as rhetors.

In addition to training technical communication students in computer programs and skills like Adobe Creative Suite and content management systems (CMS), we should also expose our students to game creation tools such as the Platinum Arts Sandbox Free 3D Game Maker, which is an open-source program that allows users to create 3D worlds and video games, and programming language such as Scratch (from MIT). By using game creation tools in the technical and scientific communication classroom, we can potentially provide our students with an opportunity to not only be conscientious about their designing and writing decisions and choices, but also allow them to experience usability and accessibility issues first hand through gaming environments.

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Responding to Social Change: Ways That Programs Can Manage Medical Writing Courses

Dr. Thomas Barker, *Texas Tech University*

The field of medical writing has grown significantly. Sources indicate that the demand for medical writers has increased 15% per year for past 5 years. The market size is estimated to have grown from \$300 million to \$700 million since 2002. Much of that technical writing work is outsourced by pharmaceutical companies to contract research organizations, freelancers, or is done by staffs at hospitals and in health agencies and non-profits.

In addition to the growth in the health economy over the last 10 years, this growth in the medical writers' market reflects the increased complexity of the drug approval processes. Pharmaceutical companies must meet regulatory requirements, expand or contract product lines and meet safety regulations, all of which requires documentation. In addition to the growth in regulatory writing, the emphasis on evidence-based practice among private physicians increases the demand for reports of clinical studies.

Another stimulant to growth in medical writing is in the area of patient educational writing. Governmental requirements for informed consent for research and treatment has led to an increase in patient educational materials.

The market for trained medical writers is growing despite layoffs from pharmaceutical industries. Many medical writers are self employed or employed by contract research organizations who have stepped in to fill the documentation gap created by smaller drug company staffs and increased demand for documentation of clinical trials, overviews of research studies, and quality assurance documentation for regulatory compliance.

Types of medical writing are quite diverse. Writers are required to convert clinical study data into manuscripts for scientific pubs, prepare regulatory documents for drug approval, create patient educational materials, write for and update medical information websites, create promotional materials for pharmaceutical companies, and produce training materials for marketing and health care.

Related career opportunities are in consumer health writing, medical education, and epidemiology and biostatistics. Education in these career areas is available through masters programs and online educational vendors.

Courses in medical writing in technical communication programs typically are limited to one or two courses and are not integrated into the larger curriculum other than as "specialty" offerings. Some courses are of the "service course" type, such as a course for nurses or pharmacy majors. These courses an enrollment population of non-technical communication majors (eg: nursing, pharmacology, allied-health, sports medicine, physical therapy, nurse practitioner).

Courses are often associated with scientific writing or environmental writing. Faculty for medical writing courses are not specialized and may or may not have a background in training, medical writing, science writing or patient education writing, much less chemistry, biochemistry, or related scientific areas.

In this presentation I will provide a brief overview of trends in medical writing that suggest the need for increased attention to medical writing courses in the technical and professional writing curriculum. I will then focus the discussion on the following questions.

- To what degree can program administrators find ways to make medical writing courses more responsive to changes in medical writing markets?
- What are the appropriate subject areas for medical writing courses. Areas might include regulatory documentation, instructional development models for patient education, marketing techniques for medical and health messages, reporting and research methods for medical and health information?
- How can program administrators work with professional organizations such as the American Medical Writers Association to coordinate certification, program review, and other quality measures in medical writing courses?
- What kinds of qualifications should program administrators look for in hiring and training instructors in medical writing courses?
- What resources are available for medical writing courses (textbooks, regulatory policy manuals, online training materials)?

My University, Your University, Let's Not Get Together: Internet-Mediated Multi-institutional Coursework.

Erik A. Hayenga, *University of Findlay*

It has become commonplace to use computer-mediated communication to author academic work—even many of these proposals are emailed, googledoced, tweeted, among ourselves. Of course much of this communication is built as an extension of face-to-face meetings and friendships—but in this age of computerized classrooms and offices it is possible to collaborate effectively without meeting in person at all. This past year a colleague (at another institution in another state) and I challenged our students to accomplish a specific communicative task while collaborating with each other using *only* computer-mediated communication. These students did not know each other, had never met, and had no plans to meet in the future.

At first, this seemed like a relatively simple task using well-worn technology. We each gave our classes a primer (mostly fallen on expert ears) on googledocs, gave our students a communicative task with multiple artifacts & due dates, assigned our students to teams, and away they went.

Well, a few went. Many of them did not.

This proposal seeks to create a space for teachers across institutions to open a place for a discussion about the theoretical value of such practice, to bring instructors together so that relationships can form to facilitate such multi-institutional instruction, and to examine & learn from the many, many pitfalls that we encountered (both technological and attitudinal). As a discipline there appears some significant stake in creating a discussion around such a notion: the increasing availability of computerized offices and classrooms makes such collaboration not only more workable in the teaching world, but also more teachable as it is a facet of the working world our students hope to have experience with. In short, this is a potentially valuable resource both for instructors and for students in technical and scientific fields, but there are significant hurdles which must be overcome first—CPTSC is the kairotic forum for such an open discussion.

Changing Work Spaces and Improving Curb Appeal: Redesigning an Undergraduate TC Lab

Julie Dyke Ford, *New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology*
Clinton R. Lanier, *New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology*

Our Technical Communication program has had a dedicated technology lab for our undergraduate students since the late 1980's when we received a grant from Hewlett-Packard to fund one. And while our department has changed buildings since then and in turn changed lab spaces, for the last several years our lab desperately needed a facelift. Not only was our equipment in dire need of updating, but the model of individual computers and monitors arranged side-by-side was no longer appealing for our student population which includes many students who own their own laptops. Students still needed a central place to work, but the space needed to be more accommodating towards small group collaboration and provide students access to software programs and hardware they did not already have, rather than individual workstations.

In this challenging economic environment we were not expecting to gain the monetary support from our university's administration to remodel our lab. But a funny thing happened: we asked. We asked and in turn we received.

Our poster presentation will showcase the recent remodeling of our Technical Communication lab, a space that was designed to resemble creative corporate environments, such as Google and IBM. We will include ways that we involved our undergraduate student majors in formally proposing renovations and updates in equipment. We will share how we convinced administration to fund this project. We will also share our strategies for using this new space as a way to increase interest in our Technical Communication program among our campus community.

Concurrent Session 2: Panel B

Adapting to Change: Reshaping Our Academic Degrees to Manage Change

Herb Smith, *Southern Polytechnic State University*

Like many other universities that have offered technical and/or professional communication degrees for several years, Southern Polytechnic State University is grappling with the challenges that new technologies and emerging specializations within the workplace are posing to our existing curricula and to our current degrees. As Director of our Undergraduate degrees in Technical and Professional Communication, I find the challenges facing our programs more demanding than ever before since these challenges encompass such a wide range of new technologies and new specializations. To meet these challenges, we are revising our curricula to stay current and to help our students prepare for careers in these emerging new fields of communication, particularly new media.

This position paper will briefly address the challenges and changes that our programs are facing and our responses to them. These challenges and changes are listed below:

- Changes to our foundation courses to better address new areas of communication study
- Revisions to our concentrations within our B.S. and B.A. degrees to reflect better focus and differentiation
- Creation of a new B.A. degree in New Media Arts

Changes to our Foundation Courses

The general education component of the University System of Georgia requires an 18-hour component of required courses in the major program. In the past, we have required the same courses for each of our degree programs. We are now in the process of changing these requirements by adding new courses that

better serve as gateway courses into the concentrations within each of the degree programs. These concentrations, in part, address specializations within our degrees. For example, we have added an Introduction to New Media course that students who are interested in the Media, Communication, and Culture Concentration or the new B.A. in New Media Arts will be advised to take.

Revisions to Our Concentrations in Our B.S. and B.A. Degrees

Each of our degree programs requires students to select one concentration. The concentrations in our B.S. degree in Technical Communication are Information Design and Digital Media and Graphics. Students pursuing the B.A. degree in English and Professional Communication choose either the Professional Writing and Communication concentration or the Media, Communication, and Culture concentration. Until recently, several of the same courses appeared in more than one concentration, thus blurring the distinctions between the content and focus that the concentrations were originally intended to create. We are currently re-designing these concentrations to eliminate the duplication of courses.

Creation of a new B.A. degree in New Media Arts

The B.A. in New Media Arts is designed to provide students with an opportunity to develop the technical and artistic skills needed to serve as practitioners in the fields of graphic design, web design, multimedia development, and video production. One of the challenges we will face as we develop this degree is finding the right balance between courses in the fine arts and those in the applied arts so that students can be prepared for careers in new media and graphic design.

Conclusion

As the Call for Proposals notes, the twenty-first century has ushered in tremendous challenges to our technical, scientific, and professional communication programs. As a result, our programs and curricula must respond to these challenges by adapting to the new communication technologies and the new ways in which information is delivered and shared.

Embracing the Digital Humanities to Keep Programs Current, Relevant, and Fully Enrolled

Matthew J Livesey, University of Wisconsin-Stout

As programs in technical and scientific communication approach what appears to be a natural sustained enrollment limit of 65—85 students, program directors may come under pressure to increase program size, particularly in tight budgetary times. In order to accomplish a significant increase in enrollment, programs may turn to marketing (renaming the program, perhaps, or finding new publicity strategies), but that is not likely to achieve the sustained enrollment increase that university administrators are looking for. A more substantive change is needed.

The Technical Communication program at University of Wisconsin-Stout has substantially revised its curriculum over the past two years and will launch a new program in the Fall 2010 semester that includes a concentration in Technical Communication (the previous major largely unchanged), a concentration in Applied Journalism (an expansion of our longstanding Journalism minor), and a completely new concentration in the Digital Humanities. It is this third concentration that has attracted the most interest, and which, I would argue, represents the most innovative path forward for our program and for Technical Communication programs in general.

Digital Humanities programs are already in operation at 20% of US universities, and these programs range from minors to certificates to interdisciplinary research centers. We define the Digital Humanities as the field of inquiry and communication that researches humanities questions and presents the results of that research in technologically mediated form. That is, students design research programs that take as their subject matter classic humanities (and even social science) disciplines and then apply computing techniques to address a research question and present results. The final product—the culmination of a year's research—may be a website, an indexed archive, a multimedia application; the form follows the needs of function.

The curriculum to support this new concentration builds on the coursework in writing and rhetoric that forms the core of our existing program; further, students will take coursework in computer science and logic, as well as courses in research methods, and a substantial number of credits in the humanities discipline of their choosing. The capstone experience will be a year-long sequence in which students work for a semester developing a research proposal, and then a second semester performing the research, analyzing results, and creating the digital artifact that will convey their findings. It is a substantial undergraduate research program, something that many campuses are emphasizing in recent years, and one that will likely attract many students who are more interested in how technology can be used to answer significant questions and convey the answers effectively than in working as practitioners in traditional technical communication roles.

Further, our industry advisory board members believe that this new concentration will produce graduates capable of not just communicating effectively, but who will be able to recognize and anticipate trends in how technology will impact communication in the future. As our focus as an institution is on preparing students for careers in technology, our ability to attract students who might otherwise pursue degrees in the humanities at other institutions is key to our success.

We view this new avenue of research and production as a natural extension of our work in technical communication; for students, the freedom to propose research in literature, anthropology, history, linguistics, or myriad other disciplines gives them a new opportunity to plot their academic career. The Digital Humanities concentration exists at the intersection of the liberal arts and technology; for a polytechnic university, this is precisely the ground our programs should aim to occupy.

Rewriting Institutional Geographies and Crafting Departmental Identities in Times of Uncertainty and Change

Bill Williamson, *Saginaw Valley State University*

Jodi Radloff, *Michigan Technological University*

The undergraduate program in Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) has been relocated from the Department of English to the newly created Department of Rhetoric and Professional Writing (RPW). This move has significant implications for program administration, the most immediate of which was responding to the challenge of communicating the identity of the new academic unit to its various campus, community, and prospective stakeholders. Our discussion explores the linkages between institutional geography, departmental and programmatic identity, and pedagogical mission, connecting all through the themes of adaptability and change.

In “The Pedagogical Missions of Professional and Technical Communication Programs,” Jay Gordon challenges administrators to craft documents that communicate our programmatic identities and pedagogical values in ways that are compatible with but not subservient to the values of the broader professional culture within which our students will ultimately seek employment. He recommends four strategies for accomplishing this goal: (a) “adopt language that reflects scholarly discourse”; (b) frame “pre-professional training” as one component only of the broader programmatic mission; (c) embrace “humanism and humanist perspectives”; and (d) “keep it simple” (131). Gordon had determined after examining the web materials for 123 PTSC programs that significant disparity is evident between how administrators present their programs to prospective students (and other audiences who encounter their programs via the Internet), and how scholars frame the values of the discipline.

Gordon emphasizes intellectual rigor and pedagogical integrity in his argument that programs not subsume their core values beneath the seemingly more immediate demands for employability. However, we suggest a more-significant and far-reaching reason to adopt his recommendations—adaptability. We argue that programs built on a foundation of blended values — practical, conceptual, and pedagogical — are more likely to respond appropriately and effectively to emerging market trends but remain stable in their core commitments. Programs with unbalanced commitments are more likely to respond uncritically (i.e., to emerging, popular technologies or to market volatility) or too slowly (i.e., academic change typically happens very slowly).

Gordon's challenge figured prominently in our work to craft the public identity RPW at SVSU. When we began to draft the catalog description for the new department, we wanted to engage in a process consistent with our program's pedagogical values, which foster student participation in discussions of program administration. RPW faculty operate on the belief that when students participate as stakeholders in their professional and program development, they are more likely to demonstrate the qualities and values we suggest we envision in our scholarly discourse. Students contributed significant effort and revisions to the catalog description and web materials for RPW (provided below). The original version of the description, which resulted from an all-faculty editing session, intimidated students during the first public discussion of it. This was not surprising; however, it confirmed that revision was necessary. Student contributions to these documents provide evidence that the program's positioning of them as full participants is appropriately done. This project represents only the first stage of this process. We move on over the next academic year to refine our curriculum, including course descriptions, to communicate a consistent, coherent whole to the world. Current descriptions of curriculum and courses represent three phases of program development, and thus lack philosophical consistency.

Our discussion seeks to build from our local challenges a set of recommendations for engaging in programmatic design and refinement that draws on and extends Gordon's recommendations for effective, ethical, and pedagogically consistent communication of program values and missions.

Catalog description for the Department of Rhetoric and Professional Writing

The Department of Rhetoric and Professional Writing (RPW) balances practice and theory in the development of technologically adept, civic-minded professionals who manage information projects that help members of diverse, increasingly interdisciplinary and global audiences learn, create meaning, and achieve goals. That is, RPW students explore the rhetorical, cultural, and professional dimensions of writing and information design in a variety of genres, contexts and publication media, including print, electronic, video, and multimedia documents.

RPW students gain the knowledge, abilities and understanding necessary to succeed as writing specialists in a wide range of career contexts, including publishing, government, nonprofit organizations, education, law, medicine, journalism, and product- and information-driven industries. Some RPW students go on to pursue graduate studies in disciplines such as Technical Communication, Rhetoric, Composition, Journalism, Cultural Studies, Law, and English.

The Rhetoric and Professional Writing Department thus meets the following objectives.

- RPW challenges and encourages students to become critical thinkers and effective communicators.
- RPW creates and maintains a theoretical framework for examining historically significant and shaping emerging technologies.
- RPW develops avenues of support, interaction and collaboration on campus and in other communities.

Students may earn a Bachelor of Arts degree or a minor in Professional and Technical Writing from the Department of Rhetoric and Professional Writing.

Passage taken from the page "What Is PTW?"

In its broadest sense, the Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) program at SVSU emphasizes four key components in its curriculum. The first is a sense of *adaptability*. The program prepares students to enter a variety of contexts, assess the situation, and move toward whatever goal they seek to achieve. That adaptability grows from our emphasis on *professional knowledge over technical skills*. Skills allow students to complete tasks, but knowledge allows professionals to adapt their skills and experiences from one problem or context to another. This knowledge-skills component parallels our programmatic emphasis on blending *theory and practice*. Again, theory offers thinking strategies that help professionals consider why a particular communication practice works or does not work in a given context. All of this culminates in an overarching concern for *professionalism and responsibility*. We want our students to develop not

only into effective professionals, but also into respectful and responsible members of the communities they join throughout their lifetimes.

Competition or Cooperation: Creating a Program as a Minor instead of a Major

Michael Martin, *Bloomsburg University*

Creating a new program within the constraints of faculty hires, FTEs, budgets and multi-level approval takes time and energy as well as the buy-in from a wide array of audiences, many of whom are vying of the same resources. The importance of professional communication in both the academy and changing workplace is undeniable and yet, for many outside of the community, few understand what such a program offers or requires. Coming from a program, which was a major within an English Department, a new university offered the option to create a new program as a minor. The creation of the Professional Writing program as one of a range of minors within an English Department has been embraced by the department, the college and the university. What has become surprisingly evident is moving in that direction made the program more appealing to the other colleges and majors because it provides support for rather than competition with those colleges or majors. During the first year, as director, I have been asked to present at classes and departmental meetings. In a time when we are looking for ways to enhance our credibility and our enrollments, this presentation examines how developing a minor provides avenues for both as well as providing a very appreciative response to the importance of professional communication throughout the university community.

Concurrent Session 2: Panel C

Applying Technical Communication Theory to Design Training for Faculty New to Online Education. Janie Jaramillo Santoy, *Texas Tech University*

Janie Jaramillo Santoy, *Texas State Technical College-Harlingen/
Texas Tech Univ.*

Over the past decade, program administrators have witnessed the exploding enrollment of students in online courses and have felt the pressure to transition their course offerings online. At the same time these same administrators have had to rethink program strategies as they struggle with the competing demands of developing and teaching online courses with tight and oftentimes shrinking budgets. These challenges provide opportunities for technical communicators to extend their expertise beyond their own programmatic boundaries. Technical communicators can be instrumental in helping institutions and programs face the pressures to increase online course offerings by using their skills to develop and implement innovative methods for training faculty new to online instructional design and delivery.

Five years ago in her article "Applying Technical Communication Theory to the Design of Online Education" Marjorie Davis (2005) argued that technical communicators are ideally situated to use their theoretical knowledge to help in the design of online education programs. Davis explains the knowledge domains needed to develop online programs, including audience and purpose analysis, design development and testing, and digital tool knowledge. Although Davis emphasizes program development, my presentation will argue that the knowledge domains she outlines can also be applied to the training of faculty for course development and delivery, essential components of the success of any online education program.

In my presentation, I will explain how technical communicators at a small two-year technical college have applied their knowledge to develop, direct and participate in a training-mentoring program called Mentor2Mentor which helps faculty transition from teaching face-to-face to teaching online. Additionally, I

will present a matrix which specifies how the knowledge domains outlined by Davis are being applied to develop and implement this training-mentoring program.

As part of the matrix, I will briefly review the questions which underlie the Mentor2Mentor training program: What audiences are served by the training process? How can the training meet the needs of each audience? What is the purpose of the mentoring program? What are the different types of mentoring? What purpose does each serve? How can the mentoring program purpose align with the purpose of the online education program? In what ways can the mentor assist with course development and testing? How can the mentoring process effectively introduce digital tools which can be used for the design and eventual delivery of the course?

Such questions have led us to consider the negotiations, which technical communicators must make when using their theoretical knowledge for an application in contexts such as those mentioned in the introduction. With this year's CPTSC attendees, I would like to discuss what type of negotiations can be made while also maintaining the effectiveness of the program.

This Used to Be the Future: Revisiting Professors' Roles in the Classroom of the 21st Century.

Brian D. Blackburne, *Sam Houston State University*

Reading through the proceedings for the 1999 CPTSC Conference, I'm reminded of what an exciting time the end of the 20th century was for technical communicators and people in general. From a personal perspective, 1999 was the first year that I began teaching (as a GTA at the University of North Texas). Coincidentally, in this same year Paul Dombrowski first wrote about UCF's proposed Texts and Technology Ph.D. program, which I would eventually complete. On a larger scale, 1999 was a time when our field's discussions focused on all that the 21st century had to offer: The exiting role that the internet was taking in our personal and professional lives; the software that technical writers would be using to create documents for the new millennium (remember Frame Maker and Rob Help?); and the roles that professors of technical communication would be exhibiting in the classroom.

On the topic of professors' roles, Ann Jennings offered clues for the "inevitable evolution" that we'd undergo, changing from professor to trainer. In short, Ann noticed that we teachers of technical communication were spending more time learning software so we could in turn teach our students *how* to create their texts. Also, we were seeing more non-traditional students who wanted quick, tangible results from their classroom experiences – whether for job-seeking or tuition-reimbursement requirements (79). Fast forward a decade, and we see that Ann was right; we were moving into a trainer-led classroom model, and many went along with the trend. And this evolution was quite natural for the those professors of technical writing who worked concurrently in academia and industry. Looking back at how my syllabi and assignments changed in the last 10 years, I can see a clear path of my evolution from professor to trainer. But at what cost did this change occur?

Like Ann did in 1999, I look to clues that signal the conflict between our academic titles and classroom roles. In a typical service course, instructors likely devote a good amount of time to demonstrating software features that range from generating a table of contents in Word to creating and editing a PDF in Acrobat. We also spend time explaining not just the theory of document design and the rhetoric of visuals in general, but the processes of locating, creating, and manipulating images for those visuals. Though we may be happy to share our knowledge of shortcuts and lessons learned, this information is readily available from countless resources. But students seem increasingly reluctant to seek these sources – even when prompted to do so; instead, the return to their trainers (us) for guidance. More alarmingly, during the last two semesters, I've actually found myself setting aside class time to discuss the rhetorical and practical merits of students' stapling/binding their documents, including their names on e-mails, and addressing their course trainer, nay *professor*, by name. And I'm not alone in these experiences. When I talk to my colleagues, I find that they're encountering similar frustrations. And where we find frustration, we must articulate underlying problems and explore solutions.

In this presentation, I offer that we have transitioned to a role of corporate trainer – a role that most students cannot appreciate because they are still grounded in a traditional academic environment. Though the genres and products that we study and produce in the technical-writing classroom are essentially those of the professional world, we cannot expect our corporate-trainer roles to completely inform students' classroom experiences. By trying to fill in as many blanks as possible for our students, we risk creating classrooms that are driven by students' technological/social deficiencies, rather than our theoretical and pedagogical plans. For the purposes of starting and growing this discussion, I pose the following questions:

- In what ways do we affect our professorial ethos when we assume the role of corporate trainer in the classroom?
- How do we mediate the differences between functioning as trainer and professor?
- Given the ephemeral nature of software and technology, should we strive to function as technological/professional SMEs for our students or should we empower (mandate) them to become their own experts?
- What are the pedagogical advantages for devolving from corporate trainer to academic professor and how do we effect the change?

I don't expect that all participants in the 2010 CPTSC Conference will characterize themselves as corporate trainers, but I suspect that some may not have realized the subtle evolution that Ann Jennings observed in 1999. Regardless, this conversation can be the starting point of more robust discussions within both academic and professional technical-writing communities.

"...[A]nd sometimes a teaching experience": The precarious brand of the International GTA

Kathryn Northcut, *Missouri University of Science & Technology*

The quotation in the title comes from National Research Council recommendations concerning the education of engineers and scientists who are not US citizens. The NRC group, the Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP), concluded that the contributions of international students to academic research in STEM fields is significant and valuable, yet they hedge when discussing placement of international students in classrooms. Although Technical and Professional Communication are not STEM fields, the contributions and treatment of our international students deserves equal attention, and many of us work daily with international students placed in writing classrooms.

This position paper follows up on recent, related CPTSC presentations about the graduate student experience, and will spark discussion in some or all of the following areas:

- How can international GTAs best be prepared for the task of teaching Technical Writing?
- What are the major problems international (and domestic) GTAs tend to face in the Technical Writing Classroom?
- What are the arguments for and against staffing service courses with master's level GTAs, and what data should be collected with respect to GTA performance in order to support maintaining or discontinuing current practice?
- What arguments are most effective not only for increasing the resources available to GTAs, but in rewarding faculty who mentor and supervise them?

Large and small TPC programs have more similarities than differences when contrasted to the situation of international graduate students in STEM fields. The perceived teaching competence of Technical Communication GTAs has had major, documented impacts on some programs. For example, at Bowling Green State University, many international GTAs were rejected by the General Studies Writing Program as first-year composition instructors, and in a related move, the master's program in Scientific and Technical Communication was disbanded (Edminster, 2009).

In large TPC programs, international students are considered along with US citizens for funding as writing teachers and tutors, especially when such students are pursuing doctorate degrees (Texas Tech, for example). The typical assignment is freshman composition, and requirements and training vary from program to program.

On the other end of the spectrum, a program that only offers master's degrees may place GTAs in advanced undergraduate technical writing courses. At one university, master's level GTAs teach the Technical Communication service course populated mostly by engineering seniors. The GTAs who teach the course, often recent graduates of undergraduate programs themselves, have little previous TPC experience or coursework, and in my program, frequently hail from abroad.

Obviously, all GTAs who graduate from TPC programs with teaching experience have some potential advantages if they seek positions as adjunct instructors of technical writing or as candidates to doctoral programs, and international students are no exception. The need for qualified instructors to teach technical writing in universities in India and China is perceived to be enormous, so an argument could be made that it is an obligation of our programs to train all international TPC graduate students to teach.

Our desire for a multicultural student population requires acceptance of difference— in terms of dialect, English proficiency, and GRE scores, sometimes —to truly diversify our programs, although nationality is certainly only one metric for diversity. The program administration challenges associated with international GTAs are worthy of discussion at the 2010 CPTSC meeting. The goal of this position paper will be to encourage other program directors to share insights on this particular administrative responsibility that so many of us face unprepared.

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Sustainability Communication and Water Research: Humanistic and Scientific Diplomacy.

Marian G. Barchilon, *Arizona State University*

There is an increasingly important need for ethics, communication, education, and training to bring peaceful associations in the United States and abroad for us, and the future of our children. Green technology involving the use of water is one area in which we can take an important role.

Opportunities for humanistic and scientific diplomacy are important in today's growing and changing world. In addition to understanding the strong value of cultural resources, it is important to understand technological process and product innovation and collaboration (teamwork) among countries, universities (faculty and students) and public and private institutions to establish possible economic relationships for these are also reflections of humanistic and scientific diplomacy.

In June, 2010 this scholar will participate with colleagues from diverse disciplines in a Faculty Fellowship Summer Institute in Israel. The Fellowship is in partnership with Tel Aviv University, Ben-Gurion University, Bar-Ilan University, Technion, University of Haifa, Jewish National Fund, MediaWatch and Scholars for Peace in the Middle East. The purpose of the Fellowship will be to initially engage in academic exchange, networking and collaboration efforts in the sustainable use of water resources between Israel and United States. This scholar will meet with Israeli experts in water research and technical communication. In the future, there will be possible associations with Turkish higher education institutions and attempts to see funding for a graduate Research Assistant.

This position paper will report on the Fellowship experience, explain follow up to the experience, and explain ways in which technical communication faculty and practitioners can engage in opportunities in

humanistic and scientific diplomacy in interrelated areas involving health and sustainability communication. These opportunities exist in locally in Arizona, throughout the United States, and abroad, and in many countries throughout the world, where water is an important issue.

Concurrent Session 3: Panel a

Alternate career trajectories for doctoral students in technical and professional communication: Preparing advanced students for flexible participation in workplaces and the academy.

Dave Yeats, *Texas State University*

For me, one of the most compelling traits of training and education in technical communication is that it often combines a humanistic liberal arts-based curriculum with more practical training that can be immediately applied to a career in industry. Graduates with Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, and certificate degrees can immediately apply their training to careers. And employers are beginning to notice the value of the technical communication degree—job advertisements that would have asked for English or journalism majors 10 years ago now seek technical communicators specifically.

However, there is one level of education where technical communication does not specifically provide a path for students to enter the private sector: the PhD level. Traditionally, doctoral programs in technical and professional communication assume that graduates will pursue research and teaching positions in other institutions. And, in one way, they are justified in doing so. There are still many jobs in the field of technical communication that go unfilled each year due to the lack of qualified applicants. This abundance of available positions even allows scholars to change institutions easily when they are looking for a move.

Some PhD graduates, however, choose not to pursue an academic position and, instead, pursue a career in industry. I, for one, left academia after only two years as an assistant professor to pursue a career in user experience consulting. I was fortunate to find a position that allowed me to use my education and training in a business context, and I realized that I had found the career that most appealed to me. Granted, I continue to teach graduate-level technical communication courses as an adjunct professor, but I consider myself to be a business consultant first.

For years, psychology departments have been placing doctoral-level graduates in industry jobs in fields like human factors and human-computer interaction. In many cases, doctoral-level research in those programs is provided by corporate or government sponsors, which gives students experience working on projects with direct relevance to industry.

One promising example of a balance between academic and business pursuits has been the online PhD program at Texas Tech University. During an onsite seminar every year, Texas Tech invites one speaker with an academic background and one with an industry focus. It's unclear, however, whether exposure to an industry speaker once a year is enough to truly help students understand all of their options. While there have not been enough graduates from that program to draw meaningful conclusions, early indications seem to suggest that graduates are interested in traditional academic positions.

I have not gathered information from institutions that are not based in departments of English; it would be interesting to hear if PhD students are more likely to enter nonacademic jobs when they come from places like the Department of Human-Centered Design and Engineering at the University of Washington.

At the conference, I hope to discuss answers to the following questions:

- Do directors of PhD programs believe that their students should explore employment in a corporate workplace?
- How can PhD programs in technical, scientific, and professional communication provide opportunities for their students to discover opportunities for employment in the industry?

- Should PhD programs include an option for an “industry” track rather than an “academic” track?
- Do faculty at PhD-granting institutions discourage their students from seeking industry jobs (either implicitly or explicitly)?
- Does the academic location in a department of English inhibit meaningful connections to industry?

Warp 12, Scotty": Administrative Overdrive and Online Technical Communication Program Development.

Tim Giles, *Georgia Southern University*

Development Usually, university administrations are content to leave program development to academic departments, and usually, a budget crisis means that programs may come under scrutiny as a way to cut costs. The most recent economic crisis, however, has manifested itself differently in our technical communication program. At our institution, program development is being driven to some extent by the university's administration. In an effort to attract students who have left the university without finishing the degree, an online version of the Bachelor of General Studies is being vetted, with technical and professional writing being one of the areas offered. In addition, the university administration is encouraging the development of an online graduate certificate in professional and technical writing, with a particular emphasis on offering the certificate program to partner universities in Germany and Indonesia. While such maneuvering generates a myriad of questions, some primary ones concern the location of each program, as to whether or not these programs will reside with the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (the location of the Technical and Professional Writing program in the Department of Writing and Linguistics), or with Continuing Education, and the resulting implications and expectations of each administrative unit. There is also some concern as to how the university administration's positioning can affect pedagogy. More locally, there is a concern as to the extent the graduate certificate program could become an exercise in teaching English as a Second Language. This presentation will explore these and other questions.

Innovation – A New Course Topic for a New Professional Communicator

David Haily, *Utah State University*

In April of 2010 I published a paper that examines 45 professional communications professions and makes the claim that almost all of them can be easily outsourced and offshored. Creativity provides no protection whatsoever. Some of the most creative careers (e.g., copywriting, technical illustration) have been commonly outsourced for decades. The jobs that were typically protected from outsourcing involved professionals who were innovators in the professional sense of the word (completely different from the lay-sense of the word commonly used by tech comm. teachers). Engineering teaches this topic beginning in the freshman year; technical communication teachers typically do not teach it at all.

My presentation proposes a new program designed to prepare students for roles in the careers protected from outsourcing. Students would leave the program with skills in rhetoric, computer technology, information technology (especially complex information systems), plus management and training. But they would also leave with a sound understanding of the innovative practices necessary for the careers.

Such a program could be online, at the MS level and should use significantly more working professionals as teachers than is typical in a tech comm. program. I plan to speak for five minutes and hope to generate a lot of discussion.

Concurrent Session 3: Panel B

From Local to Global: Intercultural and Inter-linguistic Training of Students as a Programmatic Issue.

Pavel Zemliansky, *James Madison University*

Addressing the conference's theme of global changes and pressures, this presentation argues that programs in technical and scientific communication need to make intercultural and inter-linguistic training of their students a programmatic priority. Such training will not only give future technical and scientific communication professionals a broader perspective of the world but will also ultimately increase their marketability and employability in a globalized economy.

Many programs already include courses or even concentrations in intercultural communication. However, such courses are typically electives, and intercultural and inter-linguistic communication are typically not considered among the "core" competencies required of these programs' graduates.

Because of the changing global political and economic forces, including the markets in which our graduates will be competing we as educators and administrators need re-evaluate our priorities. Intercultural and inter-linguistic training of students should become one of our core missions and activities. Such training should take the form not only of courses in intercultural communication, but should instead permeate most, if not all courses that we teach. In addition, programs should consider placing intercultural and inter-linguistic training among their strategic goals, priorities, and visions for the future.

Moreover, such training should include not only students reading and writing about intercultural communication, but actually participate in intercultural client-based and other communication projects, either face-to-face or online. The existing body of research and practice in the field (see, among others works by Maylath, Herrington, and others), supports such an approach. These projects can and should be successfully integrated with other aspects of the students' training, such as document or web design, editing, graphic design, usability, and so on.

Additional steps that programs can take to place these issues at the center of their teaching include but are not limited to the following:

- Include elements of linguistic theory and practice, especially pragmatics and socio-linguistics into their teaching
- Hire faculty with expertise in intercultural communication and globalization and how those two phenomena connect with technical and scientific communication.
- Revise mission statements and other long-term planning documents of programs to reflect the new emphasis on intercultural and inter-linguistic competencies.

What Should We Teach Students about Self Reliance?

Stuart Blythe, *Michigan State University*

Of the many changes in the workplace during the last few decades, one that might affect our students most is the rise—perhaps it's best called the resurgence—of self reliance. This resurgence is manifested in part by the current interest in entrepreneurialism. Most major universities, including my own, now host centers of entrepreneurship, and organizations such as small business and technology incubators and The Ewing Marion Kaufmann Foundation (<http://www.kauffman.org/>) support entrepreneurial activities. These efforts seem to be guided, at least in part, by a belief that economies cannot rely as much as before on large, hierarchical corporations to drive employment.

Even for people employed by others—which is still the largest percentage of workers—self reliance has become more important. Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996) described the shift from authoritarian, hierarchical organizations to “non-authoritarian hierarchies” (an admitted oxymoron). In such non-authoritarian hierarchies, “many small, efficient, and self-controlled local units act in fluid, flexible, and sometimes ephemeral combinations while being *assisted* by a ‘top’ that cannot directly control them, nor fully understand them and their actions” (p. 50). Deetz (1998) described such a non-authoritarian hierarchy where employees had “comparatively high degrees of personal autonomy” (p. 158). Although they were employees of a company, the employees were encouraged to think of themselves as “consultants,” with their sense of self-worth defined by a client’s opinions (rather than by a manager’s opinions). The two studies cited so far are confirmed by Nardi, Whittaker, and Schwarz’s (2000) report, in which they noted that contemporary workplaces are often marked by unstable patterns of employment and structure, which force workers to rely on their own networks for support. Whereas workers once relied on knowledge available from long-term employment at a relatively stable workplace, they must now rely on their own personal networks of contacts as they shift from job to job. In sum, whether workers are being encouraged to start their own businesses or to think of themselves as consultants rather than employees, they are being urged to rely on themselves, and to cultivate their own resources.

This need for self-reliance comes with costs. Nardi, Whittaker, and Schwarz (2000) note that the need to maintain their own networks leads workers to “experience stresses such as remembering who is in the network and where they are located, making many choices from among many media to communicate effectively with people, and being mindful to ‘keep in touch’” (n.p.) As a result, Nardi et al. call such networks “intentional,” reminding us that people build them intentionally and also that they feel significant tension over the need to maintain them. Similarly, Deetz (1998) notes that the decision to base an employee’s status in a company on her customer’s good opinion placed significant stress on that employee. “In placing the client as central in evaluations of work activities and in definitions of identity,” Deetz writes, “the employee is called upon to engage in activities that no employer could require or monitor and ones that few employees would be willing to give to their employer” (p. 162). Long hours, for example.

If self-reliance is indeed an important and inescapable part of one’s career, if it is especially important to knowledge workers, then what should we do to prepare technical and scientific communicators? What, for example, should we teach students about maintaining social networks? Should we teach them about entrepreneurship, or perhaps encourage them to take coursework in that field? Should we be teaching genres related to self reliance in the workplace, including business plans? These are questions I propose to explore in my position paper.

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Senior Performance Portfolios as Embodied Self-Assessment.

Ann Brady, Michigan Technological University

Technical communication programs have used print portfolios for quite some time to give students a way to reflect on their work; to monitor the development of their skills and abilities; and to evaluate the curricular design of the programs themselves. Programs use electronic portfolios as ways to collect and assess student work (Yancey) and as ways to support teaching (Dubinsky). The STC program at Michigan Tech uses portfolios as sites where students perform professionalism. In doing so, they practice self-assessment, making the complexity of their work visible and demonstrating the value of it. We propose that doing so supports technical communication programs’ efforts to prepare students to develop skills necessary for a changing economy.

We understand the changing economy to be one of expanding marketplaces and hybridized companies that draw on industrial strategies that drive innovation. We have seen how the resulting explosion of communication technologies and philosophies (Selber & Kynell) requires that technical communicators demonstrate intellectual curiosity, flexibility, and self-direction. No longer tied to one career path, technical communicators must be capable of adapting to organizational change. They must be explainers, synthesizers, storytellers, and model builders (Barrett). We have found that conventional portfolios do not necessarily encourage such traits. Before we linked performance portfolios to self-assessment and made it a programmatic objective five years ago, students often talked about their professional identities as definitive and stable. They saw themselves as documentation writers or web designers, not as cross-disciplinary network builders or adaptive collaborators.

Concerned about the limited nature of these descriptions, we decided to require senior portfolio presentations as part of the exit process. These performances are intended to entail a range of communicative, interpersonal, and technical skills that constitute a student's job market value and display the attributes of a professional self through embodied image, social comportment, and personal style.

Here, students engage a variety of audiences, most immediately industry and nonprofit representatives who constitute our advisory board, but also our department faculty, potential employers, and the larger community of our field. Requiring self-assessment as embodied performance (Goffman) benefits the students and the program as well. We find in these presentations what portfolios in other programs look for: competence in written, digital, visual, and oral communication skills. But we also find that as they assess their own abilities and attitudes, students are constructing, more and more confidently, multiple models for using these skills, thus preparing them for a changing workplace. Requiring students to explain publicly how they synthesize their communication, information, and media skills and how they might adapt those skills to construct professional identities and expand professional networks has also enhanced our understanding of what our program does well, and what it must do better.

Self-Evaluation as a Genre: Preparing Students to Keep Their Jobs in Times of Change.

Joanna Schreiber, Michigan Technological University

In times of change and economic uncertainty, we should not limit ourselves to discussing how programs prepare students to get jobs. When considering how programs prepare students to be flexible and adaptable participants in the workplace, we should also be focusing on how we prepare students to keep their jobs and advance in their positions (e.g., negotiate raises and promotions). Technical communicators are facing a competitive job market as they look for jobs and are also being forced to defend the value of their work as companies cut back. Keeping this in mind, I posit that we should be addressing the genre of evaluation as a programmatic goal because many companies require employees to self-evaluate their performance annually.

Because the complexity of the technical communicator's work is often invisible (making its value difficult to articulate), the genre of self-evaluation is particularly problematic. It is important that students gain regular practice in making the intricacy of their work visible, tying their accomplishments to organizational goals and projects. Drawing on my own industry experience, I contend that evaluations are present complex rhetorical situations that go far beyond listing the tasks accomplished throughout a year. Evaluations require employees to explicate and connect their work to company goals, projects, and cost-effectiveness. Such information is collected throughout the year, and new employees must be prepared to show the value of their work, not simply tell it. Further, evaluations require technical communicators to explicate rather than condense information and they are used to grant and deny promotion and salary increases.

Due to the overall importance of the evaluation and its unique skill-set, this genre should be addressed as a programmatic goal. Further, discussion should focus on how best to incorporate this genre into STC programs, ways to gain further industry insight, and how self-evaluations as genres both connect with, differ from, and complicate portfolio projects that already exist in many programs.

Concurrent Session 3: Panel C

What Would Google Do? Social Media and Technical/Scientific Communication Programs.

Nancy W. Coppola, *New Jersey Institute of Technology*

Andrew Klobucar, Assistant Professor, *New Jersey Institute of Technology*

Fortune 500 corporations do it. Higher education has embraced it. And, of course, the millennial generation, created it. But, are we directors of technical and scientific communication programs doing it? And, more important, are we teaching it?

Social media has had a groundswell impact on every business and organization worldwide creating a permanent shift in the way the world works. A longitudinal study of blogging and twitter usage found that almost one quarter of the primary corporations listed on the 2009 Fortune 500 have a public-facing corporate blog with a post in the past 12 months. All higher-ranked corporations have a Twitter account. And podcasting and video use is increasing among these leading corporations that provide established models for business success.

How are we adapting to media changes today to help develop the communication workforce of tomorrow? Is it enough that our graduates are proficient in tweeting, blogging, tagging, podcasting, and wiki writing?

This presentation will address these questions by taking the position that our field must develop core competencies for social media. In order to prepare students to meet professional expectations, we design our programs according to identified skills sets. These core competencies, then, provide the structure for programmatic curricula, syllabi, and learning outcomes. While our profession has no common agree-upon set of core competencies, or body of knowledge, most programs have developed localized competency sets that respond to their curricular initiatives and school mission.

To engage discussion on what core competencies for social media might be, we will distribute a mindmap showing one configuration for primary, secondary, and tertiary core competencies. From our research in and teaching of social media practice and theory, we have constructed a map that divides the competencies according to professional role – designing and marketing/branding.

What would Google do? Google values creation, openness, connections, uniqueness, collaboration, and invention. Bringing this discussion to the leaders of technical and scientific communication for open and constructive dialogue is exactly what Google would do.

Online Socially Networked Writing: Challenges to Programmatic Orientations.

Mark Zachry, *University of Washington*

Toni Ferro, *University of Washington*

For more than two decades, technological change has been a central concern for program directors concerned with offering the most appropriate and relevant instruction in our field. The changes have been notable as the field's production paradigm has featured a succession of technologies, including printing houses, word processors, desktop publishing, web distribution, content management systems, and cloud computing. As prominence among these technologies shifts for professionals, program directors must routinely consider how to adjust instruction and related learning experiences for students. In the current era, directors must now consider how the field's work is affected by the widespread shift of knowledge work to networks on the web. This talk will explore trends in networked writing by knowledge workers, pointing to issues that are relevant to programmatic directions in this time of change.

In this talk, I will offer an examination of trends in the uses of social networking technologies for work purposes among knowledge workers in North America from 2008 to 2010. The use of online services to support work is becoming increasingly common. In this study, I define the term publicly available online

services (PAOSs) and then report the results of a survey that looks at who is using these online services as well as how the services are being used. Although use trends shift from year to year, social networking services (SNSs) are a dominant kind of service individuals report using for work. As I will explore, how often such services are used for work differs depending on the age, company size, and office location of individuals.

The talk considers questions about how the uses of online, socially networked services are changing as individuals adopt and integrate a broad array of such technologies into their daily lives. The data, which covers three years, will allow session participants to consider the changing technological scene as a constant stream of new applications enter the public arena and existing, popular technologies frequently offer new features and functions. The discussion will consider how such services integrate with the knowledge work practices of individuals in interesting and sometimes novel ways. I will consider a set of closely related issues, looking at how knowledge workers are integrating such technologies into their practices. In addition to usage trends, I will consider the categories of work that people report using such services to accomplish. Drawing connections to the literature in computer-supported cooperative work, I will consider how such services support changing forms of knowledge work, from forming and maintaining collaborative environments to sharing ideas and expertise; from analyzing aggregated information to interacting with professional contacts on non-professional matters (e.g., general life concerns).

The talk will offer CPTSC attendees and the broader population of program directors a glimpse of how online, social-networking technologies are impacting work and communication. Specifically, this study expands on earlier research focused on uses of the web for work, such as Dimicco et al. (2008; 2009), which explores how such services enable people to engage in valuable work activities (e.g., sensemaking, relationship building). While their studies develop useful categories for understanding how such services may be used for work, the enterprise-proprietary nature of the technology and the lack of information about the users leave open some important questions that are addressed in this study. The talk will end with questions about how our programs are positioned to address and influence these emerging trends in socially networked writing.

Technical Communication Programs in a Socially-Networked Society: Keeping our Roles Relevant and Ethical.

Carroll Nardone, *Sam Houston State University*

Our new self-service society, fueled by the social networking environment and users who prefer to conduct both personal and professional business via computer rather than human exchanges, brings an unprecedented amount of information to our fingertips, both as users and as creators. Only now are some corporations and institutions beginning to deal with the changes that Web 2.0 (and arguably 3.0) brings. Those who teach technical communication might be a step ahead of their institutions, but the focus is in the wrong place. Computer-mediated communication, user-interface studies, information architecture, knowledge management and usability research are just some of the concepts driving significant pedagogical components in today's programs. Whether we are proactive or reactive to the changes in technology is often debated, but it's not our location in the change process that calls the question; rather, our focus should be on how technical communicators perform within these complex information systems and where our greatest impact is felt. When we allow the pedagogy to blur the distinction between information and knowledge, we are in danger of missing a great opportunity.

The main concern is a focus on the user experience from a detached perspective, assuming that if the information is there and designed for access, users will be able to fulfill their needs. However, it's not that simple. Ethically, both sides of the equation have the responsibility to the other side so that we don't wind up having a vast amount of information but little hope for knowledge derived. Metaphors are shifting in this new self-serve world, and as an industry we may think that means we have accepted the human condition. But have we? Do we accept that there is no distinction between users and developers? Our role as educators is to blur the distinction—to create ways for both sides of the technology to create, understand, and use information to gain knowledge. We must teach our students to not let the technology usurp the humanness of our interactions. In returning to the rhetorical roots of our field, we

need to realize that genre can't help us now; it's now a matter of using rhetoric to help us create a new generation of problem solvers.

This paper asks us to step back and take a look at how programs have been developing new courses and focusing on the ways in which technology is allowing us to shape our new linked-in world. Are we going far enough in making knowledge, rather than information content, the focus of the pedagogy? Teaching how to design information and how to access information is not teaching how to gain knowledge, nor does it teach how to use that knowledge. When users shape their experience, they must learn how to move beyond the surface to the level of meaningful interaction—to the realm of knowledge making. Ultimately, this paper will call for new ways of developing pedagogy so that we don't allow a focus solely on information access and design and overshadow the ability for that information to achieve something noteworthy.

Concurrent Session 4: Panel A

Multi-tasking Portfolios: Student and Program Assessments with a single instrument.

Miles Kimball, *Texas Tech University*

Michael Charlton, *Missouri Western State University*

Kaye Adkins, *Missouri Western State University*

In their 2010 article, Kelli Cargile Cook and Mark Zachry write of the challenges of using sets of portfolios to assess both individual students and a professional and technical communication program. We are proposing a panel that will invite further discussion of this dual use of portfolios. While Cargile Cook and Zachry discuss a program that has developed over seven years, however, we want to focus on what happens when programs must rapidly adjust to internal changes and external mandates.

This panel will provide a brief history of Missouri Western's graduation portfolio program, and explain how that system rapidly adapted to changes in curricular and institutional expectations. This will serve as the basis for a discussion among session attendees of effective and efficient use of portfolios for multiple assessments.

Graduating students in the professional writing concentrations at Missouri Western State University have always been required to submit a graduation portfolio to outside reviewers; this serves as their exit exam. Portfolio criteria are tied to curriculum design, both influencing and being influenced by course content. In 2009, the portfolio program was faced with two new challenges which required rapid responses. The first of these was to adapt the current print journalism criteria to students in the new convergent media program. This happened when there were students preparing to graduate with the convergent media degree much earlier than was originally expected. The second challenge was an institutional demand that each program on campus identify Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for program assessment and create a system for assessing programs and reporting the assessments as they relate to the SLOs. We were given one semester to identify our SLOs, and another to begin collecting and collating data. The professional writing faculty turned to the graduation portfolios for SLOs, as an obvious and ready-at-hand solution. However, along the way we found that we had to revise portfolio rubrics, even as we were collecting data.

Michael Charlton will explain how the portfolios are used for evaluation of individual students, including the challenges raised by the unexpected appearance of convergent media majors in the program.

Miles Kimball will offer the perspective of an outside evaluator. Miles has been reading portfolios for Missouri Western for several years, and he contributed valuable feedback during our portfolio and program revision in 2005.

Kaye Adkins will describe how the student graduation portfolio results have been used for internal program evaluation and how they became the source for our institutionally required program assessment.

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Assessment of Online Professional Writing Program

Susan L. Popham, *University of Memphis*

While the last decade has seen an increasing focus on pedagogical assessment, in all academic endeavors, most discussion about assessment has been focused on individual teachers and courses, and especially traditionally taught courses. In other words, as we teachers have learned to incorporate assessment strategies into our teaching styles, we have typically adapted those strategies to our most familiar and most comfortable teaching modes—the face-to-face, lecture style classroom. We have also thought about assessment in individual terms—my course, my classroom, my students, and my teaching objectives. However, much about the academic learning environment has changed since assessment first entered our academic conversations. We now have programs, rather than individual courses. We have a stronger sense that students need and want a coherent curriculum based around their goals, rather than choosing from a hodgepodge of courses based around teacher expertise and interest. As teachers within degree programs, we are more likely now to be held accountable to how the program curriculum of the whole program fits the needs of the students, rather than thinking about whether or not students meet the learning objectives for each individual course. Our teaching, and thus our assessment, has also seen another change: online teaching. We are much more likely now to integrate online teaching modes into our courses, and many courses are going completely online. In fact, many whole programs are completed completely online. Much discussion about assessment has neglected to consider the recent changes to academic endeavors.

This presentation will address how we can change our assessment strategies to these two relatively newer pedagogical modes: Whole program curricula and online teaching modes. What happens when we change our teaching mode to online teaching? How do we adapt our assessment strategies to assess student engagement with a whole curricular program? Most importantly, how do we assess student engagement and success within an online professional writing program?

Multiple Dimensions in Assessing Online Programs.

Donna Kain, *East Carolina University*

Kirk St. Amant, *East Carolina University*

At East Carolina University University, our Master of Arts in Technical and Professional Communication is offered through an online program. Currently, we are undertaking a program assessment to prepare for SACS review. This preparation leads us to consider the various dimensions that we will incorporate into the review process and to think about whether and how the online dimension affects other aspects of the program.

The assessment, which will prioritize student outcomes, necessarily involves looking at the program's structure and goals, course offerings and objectives, student experiences and satisfaction, and faculty preparation and development (see for example CPSTC Guidelines for Self-Study). These programmatic aspects would be part of a program review regardless of the way courses are delivered. However, as Beth L. Hewett and Christa Ehmann Powers (2007) note in their introduction to a recent special issue of *TCQ* devoted to discussion of online teaching and learning, "Understanding how to teach online does not just entail learning new technology, which, of course, we must do to varying degrees; it also involves a deepening knowledge of how students respond to and learn in online settings (p.2)." In addition, online programs require rethinking some assignments, for example oral presentations that are often assigned in TC courses (Cargile-Cook, 2003) and service learning; activities, such as participation in student chapters of professional organizations; and other opportunities, including internships and assistantships.

Consequently, assessment of online programs requires us to consider the ways that technology mediates interactions among course participants, limits and enhances the kinds of teaching and learning that goes on, and challenges traditional notions of professional development for students.

Strategies for assessing student learning, using assessment to facilitate learning (Vonderwell, Liang, & Alderman, 2007), and ensuring that faculty is adequately prepared and supported (Cargile-Cook, 2007; Meloncon, 2007) all factor into evaluating overall programmatic effectiveness. In our presentation, we will raise some of the questions and issues that we face in assessing our online program as well as some of the approaches we are formulating to address those questions.

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Concurrent Session 4: Panel B

Building new programs in a time of resource constraints. Teena A. M. Carnegie and Molly K. Johnson, *Eastern Washington University*

Dr. Teena A. M. Carnegie, *Eastern Washington University*

Dr. Molly K. Johnson, *Eastern Washington University*

In 2007, the technical communication program (which was an option within the English major) at Eastern Washington University sought to establish a separate degree. The new BA in Technical Communication would, according to the program proposal, support connections among disciplines and the campus and community by bringing together courses from the departments of English, Engineering and Design, Journalism, and Communication Studies to respond to changing state and regional economic needs.

By integrating courses from across the discipline, the program sought to not only provide students with a rich learning experience by combining education in a wide variety of communication skills with specific technology skills but also to contribute to efficient use of institutional resources (as all the courses required for the degree were available in existing programs). The only additional resources required would be one tenure-track hire which would increase the number of faculty in the program to two.

The program was approved by the state Higher Education Coordinating Board and was established as a separate degree in Fall of 2008. Now in its second year, the program has recently graduated its first cohort of students. This presentation examines the impact of transforming the program from an option to an independent major. It examines how the interdisciplinary components contribute to the program, and it examines other outcomes (role of service learning, student confidence, portfolios, and employment). It offers an overview of the lessons learned about transforming programs in times of limited budgets and with minimal resources.

Program Administrator as Entrepreneur.

Tracy Bridgeford, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*

For certificate programs in technical communication like the one I direct, an entrepreneurial spirit can serve to encourage innovation in ways that make possible the development of a community of practice fundamentally tied to a geographic area. Certificate programs are most valuable to a community when responding to local conditions. Of all the technical communication programs available, certificates need to be more flexible and more adaptable to changes in those conditions. Program administrators who adopt an entrepreneur spirit are in a better position to adapt to the postmodern workplace, looking for the opportunities local conditions provide and exploiting them.

Refusing to innovate can eventually lead to the downfall of an enterprise because without innovation, opportunities are missed and the spontaneity of creativity is lost. Entrepreneurism, Peter Drucker (1985) said, should be based on “purposeful innovation” (p. 29), an “organized search for changes” and analysis of the opportunities those changes might exploit in economic or social conditions. In the broader field of Technical Communication, entrepreneurial activity is most obvious in the creation of new programs. Examples of purposeful innovation are clearly seen in new PhD programs at North Carolina State University and North Dakota State University, respectively, created collaboratively by both English and Communication Departments, which increases its personal and professional resources. Texas Tech’s online PhD exploits the opportunities distance learning offers. Arizona State University East’s Multimedia Writing and Technical Communication program was designed to be flexible and adapted, to be able to respond quickly to changing market needs.

Certificate programs that don’t engage in purposeful innovation run the risk of becoming irrelevant or invisible within the community they serve. A certificate’s best resource is innovation, especially when it is designed in ways that attend to specific enterprises within a community. Enterprise, as I use it here, is defined by Etienne Wenger (1998) as the motivation, the reason around which a practice exists and for which community members are willing to continually learn about in order to improve the knowledge base and build social relationships. When I proposed my certificate program in 2003, I envisioned its courses as a central activity center for new, current, and former students coming together as and when needed. But I also saw the participation of community professionals not only through guest speaking engagements or internship and hiring placements but also as members contributing to the enterprise of the certificate. I saw students as a diverse community of advanced majors, graduate students, community professionals from industries in Omaha as well as the local STC–Heartland Chapter, and campus members from related disciplines such as aviation and computer science. However, although some activity exists, it’s not as robust as I think it should be.

Specifically, my certificate program has not increased in enrollments, has not diversified content, or developed as a community of practice. And even though no other technical communication program exists within at least a 90-mile radius, my program is not as successful as it could or should be in the Omaha metropolitan area, an area that is fast becoming known as a telecommunications hub as well as other high-growth industries. Adapting to my specific situation has limited, and at times, prevented opportunities that enable innovative activities. I know I’m not reaching the goals I established for my program when it was created in 2003—most notably increased enrollment and more diverse offerings, and now with an undergraduate certificate approved for fall 2010, I’m realizing how much the academic approval process as well as limited resources continues to swallow up my innovations and spirit. Despite support in my department for innovative activities, past ventures have failed to initiate needed changes such as timely course offerings, increased scholarly focus in course content, diversity of students majors, and more creative collaborations in and outside the English department. As the lone administrator, this failure is not from a lack of ideas, drive, or effort, but from a lack of resources. In addition to certificate director, I am also the internship director and since the spring 2010 semester, the graduate program committee chair (a three-year commitment); the one resource I had (me) is diminishing.

Drucker (1985) identified four strategies of entrepreneurship that can be applied to academic contexts:

- Be first to exploit opportunities. Admittedly, the slow progress of academic can be disillusioning, but because certificate programs are by their nature less complex, that is, they are often created from existing resources; the approval process is can be more expedited, at least at UNO. This

strategy involves the most risk and requires research and analysis. Drucker's idea here is to identify a new market, which for entrepreneur program administrators would mean identifying those areas to exploit for opportunities that increase enrollment, securing some unlikely resources through sharing classes, enlisting community professionals as faculty, partnering with other programs or campuses (especially with classes outside the originating department) or businesses, and marketing the program with little or no funds. These efforts could lead to increased class enrollments that make it more possible for arguing for additional faculty and resources.

- Imitate and Localize. " that is, engaging in "creative imitation" and "entrepreneur judo" (p. 220). Certificate program directors in the field can offer successful strategies that might be appropriated and exploited for own local purposes. The program showcase articles in *Programmatic Perspectives* as well as presentations and conversations at this conference offer the best chance for imitating other successes. Creative imitation also offers a relatively secure risk because certificate programs in the field do not necessarily compete for the same students, as other Tech Comm program might, given their localized nature. Entrepreneur judo refers to the aim of securing initial positions already proven successful and then exploiting what makes the enterprise distinct. Certificate programs likely can identify a localized niche from which they already attract students such as other programs, local industries, and campus staff.
- Ecological Niches. Unlike the first two strategies, which focus on leadership and positioning, this strategy aims to establish a local monopoly. With the increased competition from for-profit institutions (three in Omaha), community colleges, and in-house business instructional efforts, certificate programs should establish their competitive distinctiveness first. This competitive advantage can situate the certificate in powerful ways that define the niche from their perspective, lead the market, create partnerships, and increase resources.
- Changing Values and Characteristics. This strategy creates the utility, pricing, social and economic reality, and establishes the value to the customer. Adapted to more academic sensibilities, this strategy is about creating the effectiveness of the program (Are courses offered at times available to the students? Are courses offered regularly? Is the content timely and appropriate for both academic and industry goals?). Is the program affordable to the student base? What would make students willing to invest their time, money, and energy into the program? What are the local conditions that affect program decisions? Are they attainable for the lone administrator? What other resources are needed? Is the value of the certificate program articulated clearly in public documents? Do students know what they are getting into? Are they prepared to take on the challenges?

My point of discussion to the membership is whether a lone administrator can be entrepreneurial and engage in the practice of innovation effectively. An entrepreneurial spirit just might persuade a lone administrator to exploit opportunities in ways that can create resources.

Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity as a Basis for Programmatic Change: A Case Study.

Kevin LaGrandeur, Ph.D., *NYIT*

In its attempt to adapt to a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive market for students, especially in a region (New York City) that boasts numerous universities, NYIT embarked on a campaign in 2000 to remodel itself from the bottom up. The aim was to form itself into an institution of higher education that would stand out as unique among the many schools in the area, especially among the technical universities. This need has only become more acute since the recent economic downturn, which has put financial pressure on the college: it has only a small endowment and is primarily tuition-driven.

The institution-wide vision for change was articulated in NYIT's "Strategic Operating Plan 2000-2004," which includes the following key statement of its goals: "As the College pursues its opportunities for growth and excellence it will become...an institution with contemporary programs that meet the *needs*

and demands of a changing society...” (emphasis added). The definition of just what those needs and demands were was refined in a more recent plan that was formed with the help of an outside consulting company. That company, after conducting market research and after investigating the current curricular structure, suggested that NYIT should narrow its focus by eliminating or reducing programs that were too similar to those at the many nearby liberal arts institutions, and that, given our relatively small size and corresponding resources, it would be imprudent to try to compete with larger technical institutions by structuring itself too much like them. This more recent and comprehensive plan, the “2030 Strategic Plan,” identifies three key areas for action: capitalizing on our comparative advantage as a small school with a core of strong programs, globalization of the institution, and collaboration and interdisciplinarity. It is the last of these on which this discussion focuses, although it is important to note that it also plays an important part in the first of these three criteria: our relatively small size means that faculty relationships necessary for reaching across disciplinary boundaries are already established.

It is now ten years since the initial plan was formulated, and the Technical and Professional Communications Programs have seen the following results:

- The Technical and Professional Communications Program has been expanded and mainstreamed as part of a new core curriculum; whether this will strengthen the English Department, where the Program has been housed, is still in question. This hinges, I think, on whether the department can get more full-time faculty budget lines to teach these courses, or whether the university tries to fill the need by hiring more contingent faculty.
- Depending on funding and departmental decisions, this could be a good opportunity: the department sees this and plans to revamp the English program, but most of the faculty are literature specialists who dabble in technology. Will the faculty be able to move from a literary focus to something else? It has already come up with new courses that are more interdisciplinary in nature, such as one on technology, ethics and literature and one on disease and literature. But is this enough? How does a group invested in literature do this?
- It could be argued that the technical and professional writing courses mentioned above have become less interdisciplinary, as they have been broken into numerous, and more specialized, courses (formerly, there were courses for general business writing, Art and Architecture, and Technical Professions; the new focus is built around business, art and design, technical professions, and health professions). This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it may not fit in with the stated goals of the general plan.
- Collaborative opportunities have been notable so far, because the professional and technical writing section of the core committee were encouraged (and paid) to interview specialists in the technical and scientific faculty in order to revamp courses. Whether this collaboration will continue is uncertain, because there is no real provision for continuing it once the courses are implemented next year.
- The administration has said that, in concept, provisions could be made for collaboration via team-teaching of certain courses, but there are no details on this as of yet.

If there is time, I would also like to discuss how the roll-out of this revamped curriculum is proceeding. (NYIT’s initiation of these changes is slated for this fall, although it has already engaged in “test runs” of new courses.) We continue to research these issues, and we certainly are interested in how other universities deal with some of these issues and problems.

Rethinking the Academy: What it Means to be an Emerging Practical Program in English

Dr. Nicole St. Germaine-McDaniel, *Angelo State University*

In the past three years, university budgets have been slashed and as a field we have had to explore ways in which to make technical writing programs valuable in English departments that have traditionally focused on literature. Resources aren’t freely given to new, technical programs as they once were.

Instead, each department and program has had to prove its own merits and that it is capable of not only producing graduates with solid potential for the job market, but that it can attract new students in the first place.

Angelo State University is the home of one such English department – home to a traditional literature program that does not focus on other areas such as rhetoric, TESOL, or similar areas. When the technical writing program was begun in the fall of 2007, funds were virtually unlimited and classes filled virtually without advertising. Now, like in many other universities, times are more difficult with each department being asked to slash 5% of their operating budget for the next year. When faculty retire, we aren't assured that we will be granted the ability to keep these lines open for new faculty. Faculty have begun to ask what the academy *really* means for English: practical training or liberal arts education? Further, students, similarly pressed for resources, have begun to ask in depth questions about the value of their degrees and to examine their options.

All of this rethinking and reshaping the English Department at ASU in order to fit the current economic reality has led to a previously unseen competition for resources between the established literature program and the emerging technical and business writing program. Tensions exist between which program gets new hires, how many courses to offer and how to allocate existing faculty, and even whether technical writing with its practical focus threatens the vision of the English Department as a source for a traditional liberal arts education.

My position presentation will discuss surviving and yes – thriving in such an environment. Among the key points presented I will discuss:

- Positioning technical writing as a complement instead of a competitor to established literature programs, while retaining the focus on technology and writing
- How to obtain needed resources such as programs and technical equipment in a small university when the budget is tight
- Ways to recruit and retain students in challenging economic times without impacting existing English programs

Concurrent Session 4: Panel c

Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen: The Challenge of Change in a Small Technical Communication Program.

Michael Knieval, *University of Wyoming*

Meg Van Baalen-Wood, *University of Wyoming*

Technical and professional communication programs differ radically in scope, size, and mission—from “programs” comprised of a single service course to those offering robust graduate preparation for a career in academe or industry. While small programs may be pursuing relatively modest goals when compared to large undergraduate and graduate programs, paradoxically, the terrain they occupy can, due to their smaller size, be hyper-contested, disproportionately raising the stakes for various constituencies. Because of this intensity of investment, we argue that programmatic change can be uniquely contested and complicated in these small programs.

We base this argument, in part, on our experience attempting to implement curricular change to the technical communication service course at the University of Wyoming, a course that, in many ways, functions as the technical communication “program” within our institutional context. During an eighteen month effort to infuse technology, update the curriculum, and improve curricular consistency in the course, we found that several obstacles attend change in this narrowed programmatic context, including

- Higher stakes for a breadth of constituencies, including departments and students: since most students take the service course as their sole upper-division writing course, the intensity of expectation for the course is high, yet revision of the course seemingly requires a “least common denominator” approach to satisfy wide-ranging demands
- Limited resources for curricular reform due, in part, to the comparable insignificance of revising what is, on paper, merely a “single” course
- Substantial historical baggage to overcome due to long-standing curricular consistency and coherence.

In light of this experience, we propose that change in smaller programmatic environments may call for rhetorical strategies that distinguish themselves from those used in larger contexts. Program administrators in smaller contexts may need to consider alternative approaches, such as developing entirely new courses or structures and models of professional development for faculty that involve linking course instructors and disciplinary constituencies in creative ways.

From Boom to Bust, Where to Next? Looking for Stability in the Midst of a Crisis.

Denise Tillery, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Like many publicly funded universities, our institution has been undergoing severe, unprecedented budget cuts; since 2007, our base funding has been cut by a total of 30% and we face still further cuts. However, in the years leading up to the recession, UNLV was buoyed by the enormous growth of the surrounding city. Five writing faculty lines were added within 10 years. Those of us hired during the boom years came with the expectation that we would be leading the efforts to create a B.A. degree in professional or technical writing, while continuing to manage the rapidly expanding business writing service course, which serves up to 1500 students each year.

The collapse of the real estate market and the recession of 2007 abruptly put an end to any aspirations of new degree programs. Now we are faced with several challenges:

- How do we achieve stability in our business writing service course in the face of diminished budgets, including the available budget for part time instructors?
- How do we foster growth in our professional writing certificate program in an institutional context where students value a quick graduation above almost everything else, especially when these students are faced with drastically increasing tuition levels?
- How do we find a place for ourselves within a department that defines an English degree in traditional, purely literary terms?
- How do we ensure consistency and continuity in our program-building efforts, even if we may face losing faculty who will not be replaced in the foreseeable future?

This position paper will chart our path for achieving stability and growth in our current challenging environment. I will share some of our strategies for stabilizing our service course and fostering growth in our certificate program, and speculate on some ways we might achieve consistency and stability in our program-building efforts. Given that we must all “do more with less,” I hope that sharing some of these ideas and speculations will be fruitful for other CPTSC colleagues facing similar challenges.

Recruitment and Retention without a Budget

Kay Eccleston, *Montana Tech of The University of Montana*

Heather Shearer, *Montana Tech of The University of Montana*

Henrietta Shirk, *Montana Tech of The University of Montana*

Budget cuts are leading many CPTSC programs to rethink and reshape their strategies for recruitment and retention. In this restrictive economy, we recommend focusing on both internal and external recruitment and retention resources and initiatives that do not require funding.

In the midst of budget cuts – which often include restrictions on offering new classes – repackaging the undergraduate curriculum has the potential to add value to a degree program at no cost to departments or programs. For instance, at our institution, we have designed five separate concentrations – all created from existing required and elective courses – that allow our students to specialize their general B.S. degree, should they choose to do so. We anticipate two distinct benefits to our program as a result of our curriculum redesign: (1) we will recruit larger numbers of new students because we can more effectively market our degree program through the concentrations and (2) we will retain current students by offering them specific pathways through which to complete their degrees. One question that we would like to explore during our session, then, is this: "How can we repackage our degree programs to attract new students?"

In focusing on additional recruiting efforts at our own institution, we are pursuing three initiatives. First, we are making sure that our program is known among students enrolled in other academic departments at our institution who may want to transfer to technical communication. Visits by faculty members to freshman composition classes, as well as closely tracking both internal and external transfer students has been helpful in gaining majors for our program. Second, maintaining contacts with our alumni also provides a recruiting source for our program. Third, we are making an effort to identify and educate competent recruiters in our Admissions Office who will accurately and energetically promote our technical communication program when they visit career fairs and high school classrooms around the state and within the region. An additional question that we would like to explore during our session is: "What free internal resources are available within academic institutions to recruit students to our degree programs?"

Finally, in terms of student recruiting, we have made several outreach efforts to publicize our undergraduate degree. Faculty members make contact with the high schools throughout the state to offer our services as guest speakers in English and Journalism classes, where we can not only discuss the field of technical communication in general, but also promote our own program. We have found that most of the high school students (as well as the teachers and counselors) do not know that technical communication is a field or a career option. Another promising initiative is with the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts (MATELA), the statewide affiliate of the NCTE. Faculty have presented workshops on teaching technical communication in high schools at MATELA's annual conference, and plans are underway for providing additional teaching resources and an online summer course for teachers who are interested in this topic. A YouTube video and social media presences are being developed, as well as contact with the National Writing Project. A final question that we would like to explore during our session is: "What free external resources are available to promote our degree programs?"