

# Technically speaking ...

STC

A publication of the STC@NC State

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May 2007

## Local Mission

Connecting Students to the Future of Technical Communication



SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

## STC Mission

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication

## Contact Information

### Student community

#### Web site:

[http://www.ncsu.edu/stud\\_orgs/stc](http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_orgs/stc)

### Carolina community

#### Web site:

<http://www.stc-carolina.org>

### International STC

#### Web site:

<http://www.stc.org>

### Mailing Address:

NC State University  
Student Community-STC  
c/o Myra Moses or  
Sarah Egan Warren  
Box 8105  
Raleigh, NC 27695-8105

## School's out forever...

by John Martin

Well, for some of you it is. Alice Cooper also covered the rest of us with his next line, "School's out for summer." *For those of you in summer school, you're on your own.*

Congratulations to everyone who completed the program or completed the capstone course (*or both!*) this semester. If you're signed up for ENG 675 for the Fall, check out the article on page 9 to see the kinds of projects worked on by this semester's students.

Our community was about as active as any student community has been over the years, and we have the battle scars—and by that I mean the laugh lines and awards—to prove it. Read all about it in the "An achieving community" article on page 4.

If you've been a lurker—following our community activities with interest, but without becoming a member—we'd like you to join us *now!* Please contact our newly elected Membership Manager, Michelle Tackabery, for an application. She can be reached at [mktackabery@gmail.com](mailto:mktackabery@gmail.com).

To see the other fearless leaders who have stepped up to serve our student community in the 2007-2008 academic year, see the list on page 2.

Here's to a relaxing summer, everyone. Sprinkled throughout the newsletter, there are some suggested readings for the summer—for when you're not reading the back of your eyelids. ❖

## The President's pen

by Kim Rothwell

"F'ing great!" Never in my academic career have I been so excited about F's. Being president has been fulfilling, frenetic, fruitful, and fun! I can only hope that each of you has experienced at least one of the "F's I've enjoyed through STC this year.

Next year, as you already know, your presidency will be shared by John Martin and Andrew Armstrong. Each of them has been an integral part of making all of our events come to fruition this past year. I am confident that they and the new team of officers will function as fun and focused facilitators for your academic, professional, and social STC experience!

Farewell, friends... ❖

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## Editor's corner

by John Martin

Welcome to the fourth (and my final) edition of our STC student community newsletter. I've had a great time working on the newsletter this year. It's been very rewarding in terms of feeling accomplished about what I've produced, as well as in terms of the positive feedback I've received from a number of you. *Thank you for that.*

It is with great pride, then, that I turn over the reins of our award-winning newsletter (see "An achieving community" on page 4) to John Strange, who has been elected our newsletter editor for the 2007-2008 academic year. Thank you, John, for volunteering to serve. I look forward to working with you as a member of the board for our STC community next year.

I'd like to thank you for your vote of confidence as I assume the role of President in the Fall. My duties start way before the Fall semester does, however, beginning this weekend as I attend STC's 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I hope to return energized and ready to lead our achieving community as we continue connecting you to the future of technical communication.

And finally, I'd like to thank Myra Moses in her role as Newsletter Advisor for being so enthusiastic and supportive of all of my ideas this year, and for being such an affirming cohort and friend.

I hope you enjoy my final edition of the newsletter. The theme is *winning through achievement*. ❖

## 2007-2008 Community Leaders elected

On April 5, 2007, our community held its election of officers for the 2007-2008 academic year. The fact that we had a candidate for every office speaks to the level of interest in, and dedication, to our community. It also bodes well for another fun and productive year for us. Congratulations, and thanks, to each of our new leaders.

**President:** *John Martin*

John is an experienced leader having served as our Newsletter Editor in the 2006-2007 academic year.

**Co-President:** *Andrew Armstrong*

Andrew will be assuming the role of President for the Spring '08 semester as John will be graduating in December of '07.

**Vice President / Webmaster:** *Jennifer Riehle*

Jennifer is beginning her third semester in the program, and she is new to STC.

**Secretary:** *Brian Swiger*

Brian has the honor of being the only non-officer to attend an officer's meeting that I'm aware of. See what happens when you do—you *become* one!

**Treasurer:** *Christin Phelps*

Christin joins us by way of the PhD in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media program, in which she has just been accepted, allowing her to remain a member of our student community.

**Membership Manager:** *Michelle Tackabery*

Michelle is an experienced community leader, too, having served as our Vice President and Webmaster for the 2005-2006 academic year.

**Newsletter Editor:** *John Strange*

John is fairly new to the program, but has years of experience in newspapers and newsletters. ❖

## Dr. Carolyn Miller wins the Rigo Award

**D**r. Carolyn R. Miller, SAS Institute Distinguished Professor Rhetoric and Technical Communication, has been awarded the Rigo Award for lifetime contributions to the field of communication design.

The Rigo award is granted by the Special Interest Group in Design of Communication (SIGDOC), a section of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). The award, named after Joseph Rigo, the founder of SIGDOC, has been given annually since 1988 and every other year since 2004. Dr. Miller's co-recipient of the 2006 award is Dixie Goswami of Clemson University, SC.

The awards were presented to Dr. Miller and Professor Goswami at ACM-SIGDOC's annual convention, held at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, SC, October 18–20. Dr. Miller gave a brief acceptance presentation at the awards ceremony, titled "Some Futures for Communication Design."

The specific contributions that brought Dr. Miller and Professor Goswami's names to the attention of the ACM-SIGDOC Award Committee were their co-edited books that helped define the research agenda for technical communication in the 1980s, Dr. Miller's *New Essays in Technical and Scientific Communication* (with Paul Anderson and John Brockmann, published in 1983) and Professor Goswami's *Writing in Nonacademic Settings* (with Lee Odell in 1985). According to the Award Committee, "As two of the earliest collections of essays devoted to communication in

nonacademic, technical, and scientific settings, these books have influenced a generation of technical and professional communication specialists, teachers, and academic researchers."

The Award Committee also noted that in addition to these early contributions, Dr. Miller has continued to provide leadership in the field, developing innovative graduate programs in technical communication and digital rhetoric. According to the Committee, Dr. Miller's "award-winning and multidisciplinary research agenda continues to promote the profession and encourage novel collaborations between researchers and practitioners."

Dr. Brad Mehlenbacher, Associate Professor of Training and Development at NC State and current chair of ACM-SIGDOC, presented the awards. He said he was "delighted" when he was first informed of this year's award recipients and found it "particularly satisfying to be part of an organization that's acknowledging Dr. Miller's contributions to the field."

Dr. Miller received her Ph.D. in Communication and Rhetoric from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1980. Her research has received three publication awards, and several of her articles are among the most widely cited in her field. Eight of her publications appear in a list of 163 "points of reference," the most frequently cited articles in five technical communication journals

between 1988 and 1997, more than for any other author (*Technical Communication Quarterly* 2000). Four of her publications appear in a list of 115 "essential works" in technical communication, again more than for any other author (*Technical Communication* 2003). She is a past president of the Rhetoric Society of America and was named a Fellow of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing in 1995. Her professional service includes terms on the governing boards of six national professional organizations and nine editorial boards.



*At North Carolina State University, where she has been on the faculty since 1973, Dr. Miller teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in rhetoric and technical communication. She is founding director of NC State's Ph.D. program in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media, established in 2005, and was founding director of the M.S. in Technical Communication, established in 1988. She has been a member of the university's Academy of Outstanding Teachers since 1984 and was named Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor in 1999. ❖*

# An achieving community

by John Martin

Our student community, and the people in it, received a lot of recognition this year. Let's take a moment to reflect on our accomplishments.

## Scholarship

STC sponsors an honorary society called Sigma Tau Chi (STX) for students in baccalaureate or graduate programs. STX recognizes students enrolled in technical communication programs who have a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or above, are exemplary in participation in STC, and demonstrate a potential for significant contribution to the profession.

Only eight students from around the country were inducted into STC this year, and two of them—Kim Rothwell and John Martin—were from *our* university and community!

Sarah Egan Warren, a faculty advisor to our community, never tires of singing the praises of STC members.

In sharing the announcement in February, Sarah said, "Kim currently serves as the student president of the NC State University Student Community of STC.



**Kim Rothwell, STX Inductee**

John is our current newsletter editor and plans to run for student community president for 2007-2008.



**John Martin, STX Inductee**

Both students have been instrumental in keeping our student community active and growing."

Students who are accepted into Sigma Tau Chi receive one year's membership in STC, a pin, and a t-shirt.

The MS in Technical Communication program has had five other students inducted into STX since 2001: Heather Brautman, Maggie Van Norman, Karen Mobely, Hope (Chandler) Squires, and Anna (Weaver) Thompson.

Again, Sarah Egan Warren: "We are very proud of all our alumni and current students in STX. You make us all look good!"

## Public Relations

The International Public Relations Competition Committee of the STC awarded our community an *Award of Excellence* for our PR campaign surrounding our first ever Benefit Rock Concert, which we sponsored in October of 2006.

Milton Hawes, who coordinated the event, put together our submission for consideration in the form of a notebook, which will be displayed with the other winning Public Relations Competition entries at the upcoming 54<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Conference in Minneapolis.

You can read all about the event, as well as some words of wisdom from Milton about his experience coordinating such an event, in the January 2007 edition of this newsletter.

## Newsletter

Twenty-five communities entered this year's STC International Newsletter Competition, which recognizes three levels of awards: Merit, Excellence, and Distinction.

Eighteen entrants were recognized at one award level or another. Only two student communities' newsletters were recognized, and ours was the only one of those recognized at the *Excellence* level.

Elizabeth Bailey informed us of our award: "Congratulations! North Carolina State University earned an award of **Excellence** in the 2006-2007 STC Newsletter Competition for its outstanding newsletter, *Technically Speaking*. You should be very proud of this honor because it recognizes your dedication to publishing an exceptional STC newsletter."

## Achievement

The national STC organization

gives achievement awards, which recognize STC communities and special interest groups (SIGs) for exceptional accomplishments in meeting Society goals. The awards not only acknowledge that the obligations of a properly functioning community have been met, but that the winning communities have performed well beyond expectations.

There are three levels of recognition: Merit, Excellence, and Distinction, primarily distinguished by the number and nature of accomplishments required at each level.

In the past in different years, we have been recognized as a community of *Merit* and a community of *Excellence*. We have high hopes of scoring as a community of *Excellence* again this year. If the PR and Newsletter awards at the Excellence level are any indication, it's just a matter of time!

The awards will be announced in Minneapolis at the annual convention on Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. John Martin, as our incoming President, will be in attendance and on his cell phone the minute the announcement is made!

### Leadership

In addition to all of the awards presented by STC International, our own community gives out two awards itself each year: the *Volunteer of the Year Award*, and the *President's Award*.

At our end-of-the-year Awards Recognition event on April 5, 2007 at Mitch's Tavern, President Kim Rothwell

presented this year's *Volunteer of the Year Award* to Milton Hawes for the tremendous amount of work he did on our *award-winning* Benefit Rock Concert!



**Milton Hawes. Volunteer of the Year**

Kim presented John Martin with this year's *President's Award* noting, "I could not have done half of what I needed to do as President this year without John's help at just about every turn."

*Congratulations to our leaders and to everyone who was the "wind beneath their wings."* ❖



## STC-Carolina partnership

by John Martin

We, as students in the Research Triangle area, are lucky to have both a student chapter and a professional chapter of STC to which to belong. Students can use these organizations to facilitate their transition from the "ivory tower" to "the real world."

A strong relationship between these two organizations is beneficial to both parties. Students can get a glimpse into the local marketplace demand for technical communicators, and professionals can get exposure to, and potentially influence, what is being taught in the classrooms to help us graduate with the marketable skills in demand in our local economy.

Our community understands this benefit, and we specifically worked on a few projects this year to continue to strengthen our ties with the STC-Carolina Community. The projects included:

- Early in the semester, we met with them to begin to lay the groundwork for a mutually beneficial mentoring program.
- In November 2006, we helped the STC-Carolina Community put on their "NEW Web Unconference."
- In February 2007, we helped them with another of their unconferences, called Help Day, which focused on technical communication centered around help documentation and user assistance.

As student STC members, you can choose to be a member of the STC-Carolina Community as well as the student community at no extra charge. ❖

# Finding “A Winning Community” at the STC 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

by Kim Rothwell

*[Ed.: Last year, the STC-Carolina chapter held an essay contest for STC student chapter members. The students described how their studies and STC involvement prepared them for our profession. They awarded the winner of the contest with money to attend the STC Annual Conference. Kim Rothwell, the winner of the contest, wrote an article as both a thank you to the chapter and as a report on what she took away from the conference.*

*This is a reprint of the article Kim Rothwell wrote at the beginning of this academic year, which was printed in the Q2, 2006 edition of “Carolina Communiqué.” I’d say Kim not only found a “winning community” at the conference, but came back to “found” one here as well!]*

**W**hen I enrolled in the Master’s program in Technical Communication at N.C. State I wasn’t quite sure what the phrase “technical communication” meant. I’d tell puzzled family members that I’d be “writing about technical things” and “turning engineerese into English.”

During my first semester I took a class specifically intended to introduce me to the field. I read journal articles about what it means to be a technical communicator, joined in debates about why we were “technical communicators” instead of “technical writers” or “information developers,” and joined STC.

I had theory and the ideology, but no real-world experience.

Truth be told, when those same puzzled family members asked what technical communicators did on a day-to-day basis, the best I could muster was that most of them wrote software documentation and some designed web sites.

At the end of my first year in the program I was fortunate enough to win the Carolina Chapter’s essay contest and was allowed to attend STC’s 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Las Vegas. It was here, surrounded by industry technical communicators, where I finally learned what it means to be a technical communicator in the business world.

## **Building Connections**

I’m sure all of you know, whether you’ve attended one or not, that an STC conference is filled with opportunities to network with professionals from across the globe and to learn ways to strengthen and expand your skill set.

An STC conference is the only place where you can learn to squeeze information out of a reluctant SME, build bonds between student and professional STC communities, and run into a member of your Region who works in Vienna (that’s Austria, not Virginia) all in the same day.

For a student, an STC conference is even more. The conference is a place to talk to the people who actually work in the jobs you’ve been hearing about and find out what they do for 40 (usually actually 50-60) hours a week.

It’s also a place to learn about cutting edge practices and tools in the field that will define the type of work that future generations of technical communicators will perform.

Most importantly, attending the conference allows one to witness the breadth of the field and to feel a part of a progressive, focused, and driven international community. I came home to my STC student community filled with enthusiasm for being a member of a society that provides a wealth of information about how to improve the craft and supportive leadership to help technical communicators at every experience level succeed.

## **A Winning Community**

Leadership day showed me that our leaders on the executive board truly want to create a successful community that benefits both the profession and the members within it. After all, STC’s mission is “Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.”

For this coming year, STC has an interim strategic plan designed to build STC’s presence and influence, via local and global community support. Instead of chapters, we have communities; instead of region leaders, we have a centrally directed LCR (leadership community resource) to which all communities will turn to for guidance. Region 2 is one of the first regions to experience

the LCR and our interactions with it will help guide the shape of the LCR in years to come.

We also learned techniques to rally our community members to expand their knowledge bases and become proactive members of their own local communities. It is no wonder that this year's conference theme was "A Winning Community." I cannot imagine attending leadership day and not being motivated to lead one's own community to immerse itself in the STC and capitalize on its resources.

### Learning to Excel

Primarily, the conference offered three days of information-packed seminars in six subject areas: management, professional development, research and training, tools and technology, usability and information design, and writing and editing.

As incoming president of the NCSU STC student community, I attended many sessions regarding how to build chapter relationships between professional and student communities. There, I learned that partnership between student and professional communities benefits both types of groups by creating enduring working relationships and focusing on sharing new information about the field. I hope to use the resources and ideas I procured to build such a relationship here in the Triangle area. Because I am interested in information design, most of the sessions I attended were in the usability/information design subject area. I learned content management techniques from

Ann Rockley and prototyping for online information design from Karen Mobley and Kristen Eberlein. I also learned to hone my skills in interviewing, web design, and usability testing.

Each session provided a unique perspective on the subject and gave me tips on how to improve my skills in the future. I am confident that each of the sessions at the conference gave its participants enthusiasm and new ideas about how to excel at their profession.

### A Golden Opportunity

Four weeks after the conference ended, I realize I finally knew what a technical communicator does on a daily basis. Conversations with technical communicators from across the globe and sessions focused on users and organization helped me realize that whether one is a technical writer, editor, information architect or web designer, the goal of a technical communicator is to mold information into an accessible form so that users can create knowledge.

An STC conference is a unique type of education that supplements the formal theory and ideology one can learn in school. It is a place to interact with and learn from people with a range of professions, viewpoints, and expertise. It is a place to experience passion and vision for the field as a part of an international community. But most of all, it is a place filled with resources just waiting to be used by the next eager technical communicator. This year, one of those eager technical communicators was me. Next year, may it be all of you. ❖

## A winning advisor

By John Martin

Sarah Egan Warren likes to win, and she knows how to inspire others to win with her.



Sarah Egan Warren, NCSU  
STC Student Community  
Faculty Advisor

If Mr. Webster had an entry for Warren, Sarah Egan, I'm quite certain it would read somewhat like this:

**noun:** someone who is a natural leader with a great caring for her students, a keen sense of perspective, and an unmistakable passion about her profession.

*Used in a sentence:* "That new student in the program is a Sarah Egan Warren."

**adjective:** grounded, enthusiastic, fun, and affirming

*Used in a sentence:* "His Sarah Egan Warren approach really turned the team around."

Thank you for being *you* and for working with *us*, Sarah!

*Sarah has been NCSU's STC Student Community Advisor since 2000!*

*When she's not helping us out, she is a lecturer in the Department of English, where she has taught classes in ENG 314, 331, and 332. ❖*

# Student/Faculty Roundtable

By John Martin

On April 10<sup>th</sup> at the Global Village Coffee Shop on Hillsborough Street, several students from the STC community met with professors Susan Katz, Stan Dicks, Carolyn Miller, and Jason Swarts for a roundtable discussion entitled, “Is Technical Communication a Profession in its Own Right?”

John Martin facilitated the discussion, which was based on criteria put forth by scholars on what constitutes a profession. On some couches and chairs, over a cup of java, we asked ourselves, “Does Technical Communication possess the six major characteristics of all professions:

- Professional decisions are based on a distinct body of knowledge possessed only by those representing that profession. Can anybody else do what a technical communicator does?
- Professionals possess a level of expertise in a specific, limited area. This expertise allows them to exert authority in only their specialized area.
- Professionals’ interaction with their clients is characterized by ‘affective neutrality.’ This entails adherence to a specific code of ethics that directs behavior.
- Professional stature is predicated on the individual’s performance in relation to standards determined by his or her colleague group.
- Professional decisions are not based on self-interest or personal gain, but on the altruistic goal of helping others.
- Professionals are members of an organization that requires self-control of their professional behavior, training, and practice.”

We had a lively and interesting

intellectual discussion—the kind that, afterwards, makes you think, “Yeah, that’s what grad school learning is all about—not sitting in a lecture at the stagnant end of a one-sided conversation.” ❖

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## Telling our powerful story

*Reprinted from stc.org*

In an interesting juxtaposition to our Student/Faculty Roundtable discussion, Paula Berger’s February 2007 “From the STC President” column talks about efforts under way to divorce technical communication from the profession of writing.

Here’s an excerpt from Paula’s column:

I hope you’ve heard this phrase (Telling our powerful story) already as one of STC’s key strategic objectives for the year. But what does it mean? Be sure to read *From Writer to Communicator*, which describes STC’s efforts, led by economist Rick O’Sullivan, to change how the U.S. government defines our profession in the Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC). The SOC is used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which collects information on and categorizes our profession. The other major government user is the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), which provides employers, human resource professionals, job

counselors, and labor market analysts across the country with up-to-date occupational information needed to assist students and job seekers in making career decisions.

When we hired Susan Burton as STC’s Executive Director, we were looking for someone to help us raise the public profile and awareness of technical communication, a public spokesperson for STC and for our profession. Susan immediately started looking outward for ways that we can tell our powerful story to hiring managers, business leaders—and the world. This BLS initiative is one of Susan’s first major projects and we’re very excited because we can see STC making progress toward this critical objective. We believe that the results of this work will help you tell your powerful story to your employers, colleagues, HR departments—and the world.

*Economist Rick O’Sullivan’s “From Writer to Communicator,” referenced in this excerpt, can be found on the Web at <http://www.stc-cdx.org/newsnotes/2007/02/a2>.*

*In it, he talks about how the Standard Occupational Classification affects us, where Technical Communication is in the list (it’s not!), and making the case that it should be.*

*Rick worked with STC to produce The Case for Technical Communication, which puts forth historical facts, statistical data, and observations by STC leaders. ❖*

## Congratulations 675 survivors!

Another round of project defenses—another group of survivors.

Congratulations to the following students who have successfully completed *ENG 675: Projects in Technical Communication*, also known as “*The Capstone Course*.”

The people defending, and the projects defended, included:

### John Martin

*Master of Science in Technical Communication Program Management Portal: User Interface Design Document*

### Garrett Sparks

*Website for SourceForce.net*

### Kim Rothwell

*Recommendations for Creating and Maintaining a Project Space on the DELTA Website*

### Milton Hawes

*New School Drums: A Learning Community for Drummers*

### Jennifer Cianchetta-Riordan

*Creating a Web Presence for a Small Business*

### Jennifer Fritz

*Redesigning the NCSU English Department’s Internship Program Web Site*

### Paula Frank

*Redesign of an On-line Sweeteners Course*

### Michelle Pattie

*Creating a More Usable Document: Adhering to Genre Conventions to Meet Audience Expectations*

### Christin Phelps

*The Rhetoric of Writing for Search Engines*

Congratulations to each and every one of you! ❖

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## Witful Thinking

*Excerpted from Intercom, May 2007*

This year’s humor contest, announced in the January 2007 issue, challenged our readers to create an anagram of a word or phrase associated with technical communication. In addition, we asked that the anagram somehow comment on this word or phrase.

The top three were:

Eileen Bator’s starting phrase was: *Deadline*

Her anagram? *Ideal end*

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Darren Bellisle’s starting phrase was: *Tech writers: experts at all communication, addressing any poor English use. Stern, correct, and (okay) rather demanding.*

His anagram? *It’s really so great: we are making their complex instructions easy to understand and comprehend, and catching errors.*

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And Toni Davis’s starting phrase: *User-interface design*

And her anagram? *First, need a GUI screen*

We’ve had fun with some word games and puzzles this year in the newsletter; perhaps this can be one of our “games” during next year’s editions. ❖

## Employment news

Employment opportunity information for MS in Technical Communication students is disseminated through the *etc listserv*, which is maintained by Dr. Stan Dicks.

You’ll hear about hiring positions at the likes of IBM and SAS, as well as those at NCSU and other smaller companies in the Triangle area.

Since the last newsletter, opportunities such as these, have been advertised:

- IBM: *Information Developer*
- Keenan Institute for Engineering, Technology, and Science: *Technology and Communications Specialist*
- NCSU Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management: *Public Relations Information Sheets Re-designs*
- American Institute of Certified Public Accountants: *Documentation Specialist* ❖



## “What now?”

by John Martin

A recent survey of the members of our student STC community turned up the following insights.

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### Where are you in the program?

This is my third semester, and I'm scheduled to finish in May 2008.

I have completed all required courses and I will take ENG 675 in Spring 2008.

It's my last semester.

I'm halfway through my final course!

I'm an alumni.

I'm finished, *expletive!*

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### What was your elective cluster of interest?

Web Site Design and Development (2 Responses)

Did not chose one. (3 Responses)

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### If you were able to add a course to the MS in Tech Comm program, what would it be about?

I would like to see more web design and development courses. I took CSC 251, Web Page Development, a while ago and found it very helpful. I am taking CSC 255, String Processing Languages (Perl), to learn more web

programming. I don't think ENG517 can cover everything in enough detail.

Writing processes and procedures.

As a technical communicator, I am often put in a position of having to defend my stance. I would have benefited and enjoyed a class focusing on oral communication, ethics, and negotiation skills.

Instructional design.

Editing, grammar.

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### What was your impetus for applying to the MS in Tech Comm program?

I was working as a writer/editor for an environmental consulting firm. The job was enjoyable, but I had reached a definite plateau. I saw this program as a chance to transition into something more gratifying, even if I didn't yet know what that something would be.

I wanted to improve my knowledge and skills that I had already begun to learn on the job. I also wanted to position myself better for career advancement.

I wanted to learn more about technical communication—add to my current working knowledge—especially the theory.

My first impetus was self-improvement, as I was in the process of changing into a new

life with new skills. Another impetus was to be a role model for my children.

I wanted to build on my existing experience with documents and develop a deeper theory-based understanding of writing in the workplace.

My impetus was to delay the inevitability of adult life.

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### What do you plan to do with your MS in Tech Comm?

Last semester, I worked as a technical writing intern for a software company specializing in IT automation systems. I'd love to work as a technical communicator in the software industry once I'm done with school.

I work for the military and I do testing and documentation of mission control software. I produce User Guides for the troops and APIs and Configuration Manuals for the Software Engineers.

I want to open my own business to focus on process and procedures, as well as usability testing.

I have been promised a change in responsibilities and pay once I graduate, and hope to stay with my current job a while longer. I have been offered two better paid positions from private companies, but I think I will stick to higher education; I really love everything about my current job.

I plan to continue to teach.

I got a job at IBM.

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**Is there anything else you'd like to say about the MS in Tech Comm program, the newsletter, STC, a business/service/company you own or are associated with, awards you've won, your work, anything?**

I think this program is fantastic and I have gotten a lot out of it. Recruiters seem very impressed with the coursework I have completed.

I have appreciated Dr. Miller's assistance in preparing for the Graduate Research Symposium.

I wish we could have our STC student community meetings at an earlier hour, or on Friday. I understand why we have them after classes, because folks are already on campus, but if you just have one class, and it is at 6:00, you really don't want to hang around for a meeting that starts at 9:00.

It seems like a lot of companies are requesting FrameMaker knowledge. It would be nice to have a tutorial available for students who want to learn it on their own. Dr. Dicks helped me find a copy of the program in the computer lab, and fortunately, I won a FrameMaker book at the one and only Carolina chapter meeting that I could attend so I could have some information, but, it would be nice to have something available for other folks as well.

This has been an excellent program for me—great instructors, challenging and interesting courses, and good friends. I have nothing negative to say about any aspect of this program, except that I was too far away to be active in STC.

I am so proud of the STC officers who have worked over the years to provide additional educational, social, and networking experiences for the students in the MS program.

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Thanks to all six participants who bared their souls for us in this survey. In addition to being interesting, there is a lot of potential in using this kind of information in marketing the MS in Tech Comm program, improving the MS in Tech Comm program, and in touting our STC community.

*Imagine the possible impact and value of everyone participating in these surveys. ❖*

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## **Thank you officers**

*by Sarah Egan Warren*

**A**fter spending a year working with an amazing group of officers, it is time to say farewell and reflect back on all that we accomplished this year. I have not been allotted near enough space to list all the outstanding accomplishments from this year, so I will limit myself to just a few highlights:

- Revamped the website and newsletter
- Hosted our first ever Rock Benefit Concert with all proceeds going to the non-

profit organization, Source Force

- Organized a panel discussion of alumni to discuss their capstone projects
- Hosted two faculty-student roundtable discussions
- Co-hosted The UnConference and Help Day (two day long conferences with the Carolina Chapter)
- Participated in Service Raleigh
- Had two students inducted into Sigma Tau Chi honorary fraternity
- Received Excellence awards for our PR campaign and our newsletter.

Thanks to Kim, John, Jenn, Milton, Jennifer, Garrett, and Will for all of their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm. It has been my extreme pleasure to get to know you and work with you. You all made it so easy for me to be the Faculty Advisor this year. My main job was to send out messages telling everyone what great work you were doing! Also, thanks to Myra Moses for her undying commitment to this very newsletter—without her, it would not go on!

Congratulations to all the recent graduates and good luck to those of you who have more classes to finish. I look forward to getting to know the next batch of officers. Until then, I leave you with the words of Garrison Keillor: "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch." ❖

## Officers

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## Regional & international STC news

### STC-Carolina community events

More information @ [www.stc-carolina.org](http://www.stc-carolina.org).

**Technical Editing SIG:** *Setting the Stage for Successful Projects*—Brian Castelli will outline a new process—based on his experiences, independent research, and observations—to help you get your projects off on the right foot. Tuesday, 05/15/07, Noon–1:00PM @ EMC, 62 T. Alexander Drive in Durham.

**General Membership:** *Where Are All the Jobs?*—Doug Davis, President of ProEdit, a U.S.-based technical communication staffing and project services company will present. Thursday, 06/14/07, 7:00–9:00PM @ Matrix Resources.

### STC international events

Registration information @ [www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org).

**The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Conference:** Minneapolis, Minnesota. 05/12/07–05/16/07.

**The Council of Science Editors (CSE):** 2007 Annual Meeting at the Hilton Austin Hotel. 05/18/07–05/22/07.

**The American Society of Indexers (ASI):** 2007 Conference: “Liberating the Index,” at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Philadelphia. 05/23/07–05/26/07.

**The International Communication Association (ICA):** 57th Annual Conference, “Creating Communication: Content, Control, Critique,” at the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco. 05/24/07–05/28/07.

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## Community meetings & reports

**O**ur next community meeting will be a summer meeting with our newly elected officers, at which time we’ll plan our STC activities for the 2007-2008 academic year.

Meeting minutes can be found on the STC NCSU Community Web site at [www.ncsu.edu/stud\\_orgs/stc/minutes.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_orgs/stc/minutes.html).

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### Publication policy

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### Reprint policy

You may reprint original material from this newsletter as long as you acknowledge the author and the source.

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