

PARZOPLY
PARZOPLY
PARZOPLY
PARZOPLY
PARZOPLY
PARZOPLY

EDGE



Smart Home Labs
..... page 4

Meet Dr. Ryan Cheek
..... page 6

Parenthood and
School
..... page 7



English & Technical
Communication
Department Newsletter
Spring 2023 | Volume 32

Letter from the Chair

As I write this note, I remember that it will not reach its intended readers—you—for several months from now. Imagining the future is something that many great writers, from Thomas More to Margaret Atwood, have performed for us as a sort of magic trick to help us to contemplate not only the possibilities of our lives but how those are built upon our past and present. Given recent history, so full of unpredicted and unpredictable surprises, I'm wary of speaking as if from the future. But let me say a few things about the present and recent past in the Humanities and Social Sciences building at Missouri S&T. 2022 has been an exciting and busy year for the English & Technical Communication Department, as the pages of *Panoply* will attest.

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Ryan Cheek to our ranks, a specialist in political technical communication who has published work on political campaigns, superheroes and masculinity, and the rhetoric of the CDC's preparedness campaign. Dr. Cheek is an experienced and awarded

university teacher who will contribute to our growing Speech and Media Studies focus in the department; he is offering a course in Video Design and Editing this spring, which I'm sure will be very popular.

Dr. Trent Brown published a new book, *Roadhouse Justice*, about a self-defense killing in 1950s Mississippi. Dr. Eric Bryan, our medievalist and Old Norse/Old English scholar, was promoted to full professor in 2022, and our linguistic specialist, Dr. Sarah Hercula, received tenure and promotion. Dr. Josselyn Larson, who specializes in composition pedagogy, has been named Director of Foundational Speech and Composition in the department and has also moved over to the tenure track in recognition of and in order to promote her scholarship. And Dr. Thu Tran of the university's Intensive English Program has joined us on the top floor of HSS in order to contribute to our ESL program.

You'll see other faculty and student news in this edition of *Panoply*, including profiles of alums and

*Dr. Swenson with graduate ETC students at the Fall 2022 Miner Mingle
From left to right: Felix Nyikwagh, Ivy Akula, Dr. Swenson, and Jude Enete*





Dr. Swenson in Jerusalem in 2019

current students, upcoming events in the department and on campus, and the teaching and research we're pursuing. We're excited to share all of this news with you and hope that you'll return the favor by sharing your news with us—via email or Facebook or LinkedIn or visits to the department. Let us hear from you!

Meanwhile, best wishes for a happy 2023, even if we can't quite predict what it will bring. In the words of the great science fiction writer, Ursula K. Le Guin, "The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty: not knowing what comes next."

Dr. Kristine Swenson

INSIDE:

Smart Home Technologies	4
Meet Dr. Ryan Cheek	6
Parenthood and School	7
Dr. Brown's New Book	8
Celebration of Nations	10
New Pragmatics Course	11
Speech and Media Studies	12
Alumna Amruta Ranade	13
Distance Learning Students	14
Making Better Citizens	15
The Internship Experience	16
Intensive English Program	18

Diverse Backgrounds of our Graduate Students	20
Intensive Advising Program	21
Alumnus Scott Perdue	22
Tramp Abroad	23
Alumnus Dr. Young	24
Publications of Our Alumni	25
Dr. Swenson in Oxford	26
Alumnus Joshua Graham	28
Alumni Peter and Kayla	29
Our Fall 2022 GTAs	30



Professors Study Smart Home Technologies in Google, Apple, and Amazon Labs

“Hey Siri, turn on the TV,” commands Dr. David Wright to the Apple HomePod mini. The television opens to the home screen across from him to choose from a variety of shows and movies. Wright, a professor in our department, has assembled a space dedicated to the testing of Apple products in the Humanities and Social Sciences building (H-SS G8B).

When people walk in, they are transported from the H-SS halls to what could be seen as a typical living room. Along with the furniture, the room is equipped with an iPad, iPhone, Apple HomePod mini, and other gadgets that people may have in their homes. Wright and his collaborator, Dr. Daniel Shank, assistant professor of psychology, set up this lab to test smart home products. Having conducted usability testing in another lab (H-SS G8A) made just for Google products, the researchers are using the Apple lab to test Apple products. There will soon be an Amazon lab in a room across the hall from the other labs.

Wright and Shank conducted two studies in the Apple lab in Fall 2022. The first study had three parts: (1) identifying devices, (2) performing routine actions such as turning on a light, and (3) performing complex actions that control multiple devices simultaneously. As Wright explained, “The study measured errors in performing specific tasks, time on task, and user feedback during and after the test. We then coded the data to get a picture of the common problems with the different devices.”

The second study was a voice-bias study, which evaluated participants’ interactions with smart-home assistants and their different accents. Based on the number of accents already found in smart voices, Wright predicated that new voices with international and regional accents may become more prominent as smart-home technology progresses. “I wouldn’t be surprised in a few years to hear Siri say ‘y’all,’” he said.

When Wright and Shank first started working together in 2017, they set up smart equipment in the Missouri S&T solar houses. “For the first study, we just gave the technology to them and said, ‘Here, let’s see what you do with it,’” Wright

explained. “Then we did interviews and survey questionnaires to see what they had done. Basically, they played with it, and then when it got hard, they gave up on it. They didn’t really go out of their way to learn much. And that surprised us.”



Dr. David Wright holds one of the smart-home devices that he and Dr. Daniel Shank (not pictured), have been using in their lab.

“So we did another round where we said, ‘Okay, this time let’s give them some training,’ because we wanted to see how people were learning about these devices. They did more with it, but still people didn’t spend a lot of time trying to learn how to do more complex things.”

Wright and Shank did not know where people were getting stuck. “So that’s when we decided we needed a lab to see how people reacted to stuff to see what was tripping them up.” Unlike the studies conducted in the solar houses, where subjects were actually living, the studies in the Apple lab employ a camera to record people’s behaviors, something you cannot do in the privacy of a person’s home.



Dr. Wright with a student, Charnise Anderson, who has been working with him studying smart-home technologies

How did Wright become interested in studying smart technology? “I was having a conversation with an electrical engineering professor, who said he was interested in smart grids, which are for citywide power systems. They try to regulate peak hours, times like 5 o’clock where everybody comes home and turns their air conditioners on and there’s a huge drain on the power system and that’s where we get things like blackouts. He made a comment on this smart home stuff and how it was like that. He said, ‘Nobody is studying how human beings interact with all this smart stuff’”

That one conversation was all it took to push Wright into the world of smart devices. “A light went on, like ‘he’s got a point.’ I got into it shortly after that and just ran with it.” Wright shows no signs of stopping, already thinking about future studies in his labs. The spaces are not limited to any specific type of testing. “There are lots of different types of studies and testing that can be done,” he said. “One thing I would like to try is having people set up the equipment. There could also be game studies in here, put in an Xbox or PlayStation. Lots of usability studies. Linguistics stuff with voice assistants. Direct comparison studies. Apple v. Google v. Amazon.”

Climate Change, Poetry, and a Buffet Dinner

Dr. Karen Head, professor of English, relaxes between two campus events on September 22: Dr. Lou Gross’s talk about climate change and Dr. Marilyn Kallet’s poetry reading. As S&T Director of Arts and Innovation, Head brought the speakers to campus and made it possible for ETC graduate students not only to attend the talks but also to join a buffet dinner with the distinguished visitors.



Dare to Be Wise:

An Introduction to Dr. Ryan Cheek

Dr. Ryan Cheek joined the ETC department as an assistant professor of technical communication in Fall 2022. During his first semester, he taught ENGL/ TCH COM 2560 Technical Marketing Communication and TCH COM 5620 Research Methods in Technical Communication. This semester, he is teaching a brand-new course, TCH COM 3001 Video Design and Editing, which he is helping to develop for the department.

Originally from Salt Lake City, Cheek earned his Ph.D. in Technical Communication and Rhetoric from Utah State University. His research has been focused on political communication technologies, techne of gender, and the technical rhetoric of apocalypse. “A big part of my training was as a debate coach,” he said. “It led me to academia, research, and teaching.” His love of forensics partly explains his fascination with rhetoric. The young scholar’s interest in political communication technologies was inspired by the innovative campaigns of folks like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. This interest is evident in his publications such as “Political Technical Communication and Ideographic Communication Design in a Pre-Digital Congressional Campaign” (2020) and “Making a Case for Political Technical Communication” (2022).

A humanitarian at heart, Cheek is looking forward to continuing research that will improve the human condition. Guided by personal and institutional ethics, he hopes to collaborate with students on research projects related to politics, gender, and apocalyptic rhetoric in technical communication. Apocalyptic rhetoric is the appeal to the end of days, so prevalent in current political communication.

Cheek is thrilled to be a part of the S&T community. So far, he is incredibly happy with his home department. “The people in this department are awesome. There’s a really friendly, caring vibe, but also a rigorous intellectual vibe.” He and his family have been exploring the area. Rolla’s welcoming community and Missouri’s natural beauty have helped his family settle into their new home.

Cheek's favorite quotation is "Sapere aude." He picked it up from Kant who was quoting Horace. It can be translated loosely as "Dare to be wise."



Balancing the Demands of Parenthood with Graduate School and Working as a GTA

All college students, whether they are undergraduates or graduates, can agree that school is not without its challenges. College life comes with more personal freedom, but it also comes with more responsibility to find a balance between your personal life and schoolwork. Imagine dealing with all these challenges while being a parent and teaching courses as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA). Vivian Asigri and Priscilla Owusu-Danquah, both graduate students in the ETC department, are GTAs and parents.

The mother of two, Asigri was pregnant with her third child during the second half of the Fall 2021 semester and all through the Spring 2022 semester. She successfully rounded up the semester with the birth of a baby girl. In her own words, “With discipline, focus and determination, anything is possible.” Asigri highlighted the importance of



Priscilla Owusu-Danquah walking her children to the bus stop

having a strong support network. She acknowledged the support she gets not only from friends and family members but also from members of the ETC faculty—from constant checkups and words of encouragement to deadline extensions on assignments.

According to Asigri, “Setting priorities helps to keep me motivated, lowers my stress level, and prevents procrastination. I set my priorities by determining what task is important and urgent, important but not urgent, and urgent but not important. And I make sure to complete the different tasks I have in this order.”

Owusu-Danquah is the mother of four, and her daily routine keeps her busy from morning to night. “I am always the first person to wake up in the morning and the last person to go to bed in my house. My husband and I get the kids ready for school with their breakfast packs. Then I take them

to the bus stop and make sure they get on the bus. Then I come back home to make sure lunch and dinner are ready.”

Owusu-Danquah has developed a system for communicating with her family when she is away from home. “I leave cute sticky notes telling each child what they must do when they get back from school.” After the family is taken care of, it is time for her to get ready for school and walk to campus. “I attend classes and teach classes as well. Most times I go to the library to do my assignments.” She stays at school until her work is done.

Having a strong support system is crucial. She appreciates the support she receives from her husband and children. “Their support enables me to balance the demands of my personal and professional life.” She is also grateful to the ETC faculty for their understanding and support.



*Vivian Asigri
Spring 2022 semester*



New Book Examines a Case of Racially Distorted Justice in 1950s America

Dr. Trent Brown is the author of *Roadhouse Justice: Hattie Lee Barnes and the Killing of a White Man in 1950s Mississippi* (2022), an in-depth study of a case in which a young Black woman, defending herself from probable sexual assault, killed a young white man and was put on trial for murder and acquitted, but her difficulties continued for some years after that. We interviewed Brown about his latest monograph from Louisiana State University Press.

What did Hattie Lee Barnes do and why is it important?

Hattie Lee Barnes was a young Black Mississippi woman. In 1951, she killed a white man from a prominent family. That shooting placed her in grave peril. The Mississippi legal system took Black on white crime seriously. Barnes stood trial for murder and was acquitted. That fact itself led me to want to know more about the case. The story is complex. Before Barnes was tried, she survived an assassination attempt. She testified at the trials of the two men who tried to kill her. She also survived months of legal and extra-legal interrogation and detention. Through her own determination and the assistance of a diligent attorney and reporter, she survived. This book attempts to explain how that happened. Her story shows the unpredictable nature of Jim Crow

justice, a system in which personal connections and power mattered a great deal. The 1951 timing of the case was also highly important. A decade or so earlier, a woman like Barnes might have been disposed of—and I use the term deliberately—without much of a trace. Just a few years later, when the social revolution of the civil rights movement was becoming apparent to all Mississippians, the legal system might have decided to railroad Barnes to make an example of her. But in the early 1950s, her own efforts—and those of her advocates—allowed her eventually to escape the hands of Mississippi justice.

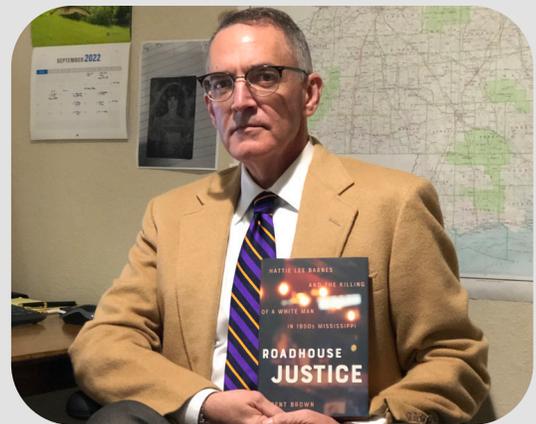
You imply that Barnes might have died in the electric chair if defense attorney Joe Pigott and reporter Charles Gordon had not taken a sincere interest in her case. How and why did they help Barnes?

Joe Pigott was a young attorney, only twenty-six years old. Mississippi had no public defender system in that era. He was appointed by the court to defend Barnes. For that work, he received \$75. Under the circumstances, some attorneys might have advised Barnes to plea to a lesser charge to try to avoid the death penalty.

Instead, Pigott saw that Barnes should not have been charged with murder

in the first place. She was simply defending herself. What is striking about Pigott is that in this era of intense prejudice, he had the courage and the clarity to see the issue not through the lens of race, but instead as a matter of right and wrong. Reporter Charles Gordon knew a good story when he saw one. He also had a keen sympathy for the underdog. He insisted that local people know what was happening to Barnes. He wrote thousands of words as the story developed, kept it on the front page of the paper, and even persuaded his newspaper's publisher to write strong editorials on behalf of Barnes. Hattie Lee Barnes was a strong woman. But without the work of Pigott and Gordon, it is easy to imagine her coming to a grim end. In the Deep South in that era, people were sent to prison or the electric chair for less than Barnes did.

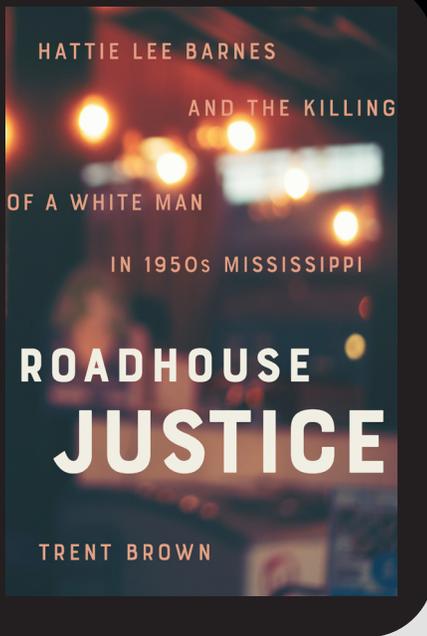
How and why did the powerful Craft family try to change the narrative about Richard Lamar



Dr. Brown with his new book

Continued on page 9





The cover of Dr. Brown's book

failed in these attempts because Barnes resisted these pressures to change her story to suit the Crafts. Also, the life insurance company saw the lawsuit as a matter of business. They had no interest in anyone's hurt feelings.

How is your account of Barnes' story "inflected through the lens of a white person" (p. 178)? Does your training as a historian help you to minimize such inflections?

The story of Barnes is inflected through the lens of white people in several senses. In the first place, she was enmeshed in the Mississippi legal system, a process and structure that was by design forbidding to her. Every person of authority that she encountered—from the sheriff to the attorneys to the juries and judges—was a white man. Even when we have her own words, as in the case of newspaper interviews or court proceedings, Barnes was speaking to white men. I do not doubt that her words in those sources were correctly recorded, but Barnes was well aware, as were all Black Mississippians, of the prudence of carefully considering one's words in those contexts. In writing this book, I was fortunate to have access to many hundreds of pages of legal documents and many thousands of words written by reporter Charles Gordon. My challenge as a historian was to understand the uses and the limitations of these sources. My experience in writing about Mississippi in the late twentieth century helped me, I hope, to read these sources with a careful eye. But I also know that

Barnes's own thoughts, character, and personality are not contained in the files of a Mississippi county courthouse.

Mississippi Justice, Jim Crow Justice, Roadhouse Justice — are they all synonyms for injustice in this case? Why did you choose the title you did?

Events of this story occurred about seventy years ago. Still, some people in the area do remember the story, if not Barnes herself. The families of Joe Pigott and Charles Gordon are rightly proud of the work that those men did on Barnes's behalf. To the degree that the story is remembered, it is recalled as an example of justice being achieved despite the Jim Crow context of the era. What I have tried to do here, however, is to suggest that the Barnes saga says as much about injustice as it does about justice. Yes, Barnes was acquitted. She eventually did leave Mississippi as a free woman. But it was a very close thing. In a just system, Barnes would not have needed the intervention of well-placed white men to secure her freedom. The Mississippi legal system was chancy and capricious. Barnes no doubt valued the advocacy of Pigott and Gordon, but she, like other Black Mississippians, obviously would have preferred a social order built upon fairer lines. The book's title, I should say, comes from LSU Press. I have never been any good with book titles. Here, I think they did a great job with both the title and the cover design.

Craft's death, and why did their effort ultimately fail?

Lamar Craft was shot to death while climbing into the window of a closed beer joint. He clearly intended to sexually assault Hattie Lee Barnes. Craft's father was mortified by the circumstances of his son's death. He began to work immediately to cast the blame on someone other than Barnes. Edd Craft and his attorney pressured Barnes, trying to make her say that Rob Lee, the bar owner and a white man, shot Lamar Craft. When he failed to persuade local authorities that Lee was the guilty party, he filed suit against a life insurance company. That lawsuit was not really about money. Instead, Edd Craft wanted a public forum—a courtroom, in this case—in which he could tell a story of his son's death that did not feature Barnes as the shooter. The Crafts worked to "clear the good name" of their son, as they would have seen their efforts. He was shot under unsavory circumstances, they admitted. But they did not want his attempted assault of Barnes, a Black woman, to be the public story. They

Celebrations of Nations and the Technical Communicator



From left to right: Felix Nyikwagh, Frederick Sunkpal, Iveren Akula, Ernest Oteng, Vivian Asigri, and Jude Enete at Celebration of Nations on September 24

Celebration of Nations is an annual event hosted by the S&T student body with participation from the city of Rolla. Since its inception in 2010, the celebration has had strong support from the students and people of Rolla, with the exception of the year 2020, when many events around the world were canceled to help curb the pandemic.

Technical communication scholar Godwin Agboka notes that we are all “cultural actors who construct our identities and negotiate systems of knowledge and meaning that come to play during intercultural contacts.” S&T’s Celebration of Nations offers many opportunities for intercultural contacts. It is a heterogeneous cultural experience that seeks to showcase diversity, unity in oneness, and oneness in our community. Such events remind us that the world we live in is a global village.

Charnise Anderson, a graduate student in technical communication, is pleased to see the S&T community promote diversity and tolerance. “Appreciation of diversity is important to the ETC department because we have a variety of people from different backgrounds,” Anderson said. “It is also crucial to technical communicators practice requires us to adapt content

for diverse audiences.” Events such as the Celebration of Nations contribute to the development of a necessary mindfulness.

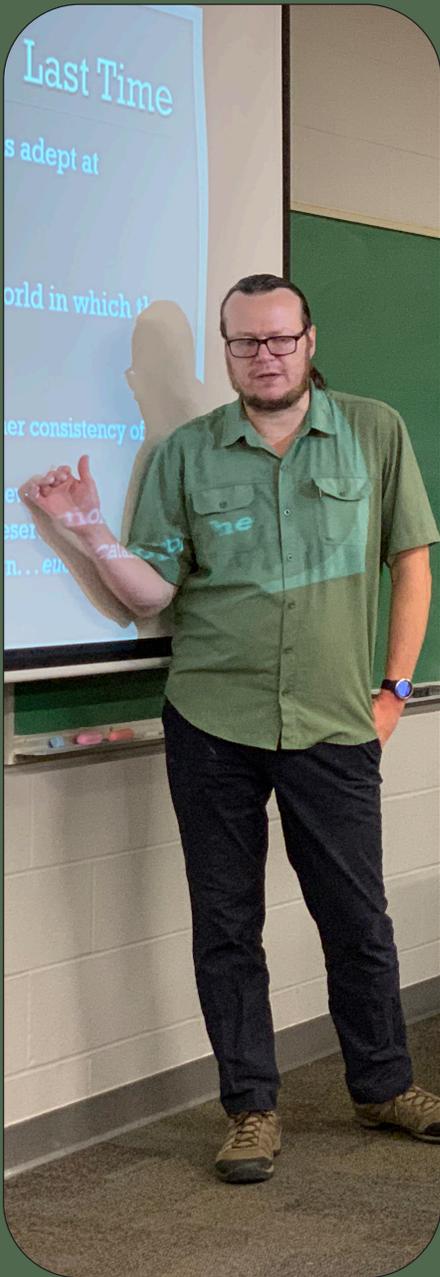
Fredrick Sunkpal is a new international student from Ghana, and for the first time, witnessing an event like this gives him a sense of belonging. He said, “As an international student, the Celebration of Nations gives me the platform to represent my country and my culture through music, food, and attire. I had the opportunity to bond with people from other cultures.” Fredrick enjoyed tasting different foods from around the world. For him, the event resonated with the sense of “one campus, one community, and one world.”

For Iveren Akula, also a graduate student in technical communication, the Celebration of Nations was an opportunity to learn new things and make new friends. “I love to connect and network with people from various cultures and backgrounds.” She believes “the future in terms of diversity is as colorful and bright as the different attires of the varying nationalities.”

Indeed, diversity is a crucial part of our lives today, and it only takes tolerance and acceptance to live in harmony to make the world a better place.

When the Meaning Is Not (Only) in the Words:

Teaching Pragmatics to Technical Communication Students



Dr. Bryan teaching class

In spring 2022, Dr. Eric Bryan taught a new course, TCH COM 5001 Pragmatics of Discourse, that combined the fields of linguistics and technical communication. A seasoned course designer, Bryan started from scratch with a topic he felt passionate about, transforming it into “palatable useful segments of information and experiences for the students.”

Pragmatics is the study of language use in context, usually involving analysis of verbal exchanges. Linguists have long recognized that spoken or written words often do not match up with the communicator’s intended meaning. An example would be a sarcastic remark. The meaning could be taken literally by someone for whom English is a second language or by someone on the autism spectrum – or by anyone else for that matter. Ideally, though, the audience for the remark would understand its intended meaning from the context of the verbal exchange.

As Bryan explained, “We all do pragmatics every single day. Every time we open our mouths, we’re using a finely tuned instrument [our brain] that understands pragmatics very very well. It’s so integrated into our use of language that it is very difficult to describe and articulate the mechanisms of pragmatics.” He added that, in his experience, the only way students, or in fact other researchers, can understand these concepts is by experiencing them. “It’s not like learning a language and teaching people a vocabulary and then they know the vocabulary and that’s it. It’s much more like teaching people the mechanisms for how they walk down the street or the physics behind jumping on a trampoline. If they can’t draw a connection between a concept and the thing that they do every day, there’s no hope they’ll understand it.”

Toward this end, he showed clips from a movie and a tv show as well as videos of people playing the dozens (a game frequently played in African and African American communities in which two

contestants participates in insulting one another until one of them gives up), and children on the autism spectrum participating in a study of language understanding. These audiovisual examples offered opportunities for students to evaluate verbal and physical communication in relation to the communicator’s intended meaning.

The class also discussed written examples of pragmatics from historical and contemporary sources and read articles from scholarly journals in linguistics and technical communication. For example, the students analyzed examples of pragmatics in Norse sagas and read Godwin Agboka’s “Liberating Intercultural Technical Communication from ‘Large Culture’ Ideologies: Constructing Culture Discursively.”

The final projects, completed by both the undergraduate and graduate students were interest driven; though both groups made the connection between pragmatics and technical communication, the graduate students produced projects that showed deeper understanding of the connection. Graduate students explored topics of cultural awareness, inclusivity, accessibility, and readability in relation to modern technical communication. Although the importance of pragmatics to technical communication has been well established in the published scholarship, Bryan found it very encouraging that the students came to the same conclusion through their own projects.

He believes the course was successful and looks forward to teaching it again. “It was an incredible challenge. I loved it honestly.

It was really fun to work with the students to make connections to the course.”



New Voices Prepare Students for a Complex Future

Speech and media studies' integration into ETC gives the department a comprehensive pedagogy to build student success in communication.

In January 2021, S&T's speech and media studies program—including minors in communication studies and leadership communication—moved from Arts, Languages and Philosophy (ALP) to English and Technical Communication (ETC). With this move, the ETC department added two faculty members: Assistant Teaching Professors Tracie Devault and Kendrea James. Two years later, the speech and media studies courses are now part of the ETC curriculum, still serving the communication needs of S&T students in a variety of personal, professional, and intercultural situations.

Moving speech and media studies from ALP to ETC was a strategic decision by the administration to bring together the communication components of the curricula in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education; to allow ALP to focus on some new initiatives (e.g., global engineering); and to strengthen ETC's portfolio of courses and faculty. To Dr. Kristine Swenson, chair of the ETC department, the move made logical sense for the future of ETC:

"Students come first. Making sure they are experiencing the same outcomes . . . is a priority."

"We are moving to a more multi-modal vision of communication that encompasses not just writing but spoken and visual communication skills. It made sense to integrate [speech and media studies] into our curriculum as we develop more communication and media courses and as we take advantage of resources such as the Collaboratory."

Faculty who teach in the program have also been pleased by the integration. "English and technical communication faculty are always working on something interesting," Professor James said, "and

because communication is such a broad discipline, it is beneficial that we are surrounded by people investigating how we communicate in our world in different areas."

Professor Devault agreed. "It makes more sense for the communication courses to be part of the ETC department. I think it will definitely open up new opportunities with collaborators who do similar things to me."



Professor Kendrea James meets with her class in an outdoor space near the H-SS building. The class is SP&MS 1185 Principles of Speech.

Both professors stressed the benefits that the move has provided for speech and media studies students. "Students come first," Professor James said. "Making sure they are all experiencing the same outcomes from these classes so that they feel prepared to continue their education in ETC (or anywhere else on campus) is a priority." To this end, speech and media studies faculty are in constant communication with other ETC department members about ways the student experience can be enhanced through collaboration, resource sharing, and course development.

The breakneck speed with which communication technologies and media evolve in the information age require pedagogy that evolves in tandem with them. The ETC department has demonstrated its commitment to that ideal by shaping itself into a more holistic entity that can provide all the resources and curriculum that its students need to seize the opportunities and face the challenges of the 2020s and beyond.



Amruta Ranade: Teaching Tech Com on YouTube

After graduation from Missouri S&T, Amruta Ranade (MS, TCH COM SP17) was swiftly offered the position of Senior Technical Writer at Cockroach Labs, an open-source database company founded by three former Google employees in New York City. Her first year in the Big Apple was lived with the wide-eyed wonder of a newcomer. As she became more settled in her new city, novelty turned to routine, and Ranade sought to fill her time with a stimulating hobby. But what hobby to choose?

What began in 2018 as a humble hobby has now grown into an influential YouTube channel on technical communication. Ranade's channel has over 7,500 subscribers and 300,000 views from around the globe. Her content is especially popular with audiences in the USA and her native country, India. These viewers, more often than not, are newcomers to the field of technical communication.

Her videos such as *What Do Technical Writers Do?* and *Technical Writing Beginners: Advice and Resources* have aided a great many people considering jumping into a technical writing career. Ranade said she aims to create

content that meets tech writers “where they are.” No matter where one is in their technical communication career, they are certain to find a useful and practical video on her channel.

Ranade's channel has over 7,500 subscribers and 300,000 views from around the globe

After about three years as a senior technical writer, Ranade changed her role at Cockroach Labs to that of a developer advocate. Like technical writers, developer advocates must understand and support the needs of their users. Unlike many technical writers, they also directly assist users (developers) of a technology by engaging them through chat rooms, Twitter threads, and yes, YouTube videos.

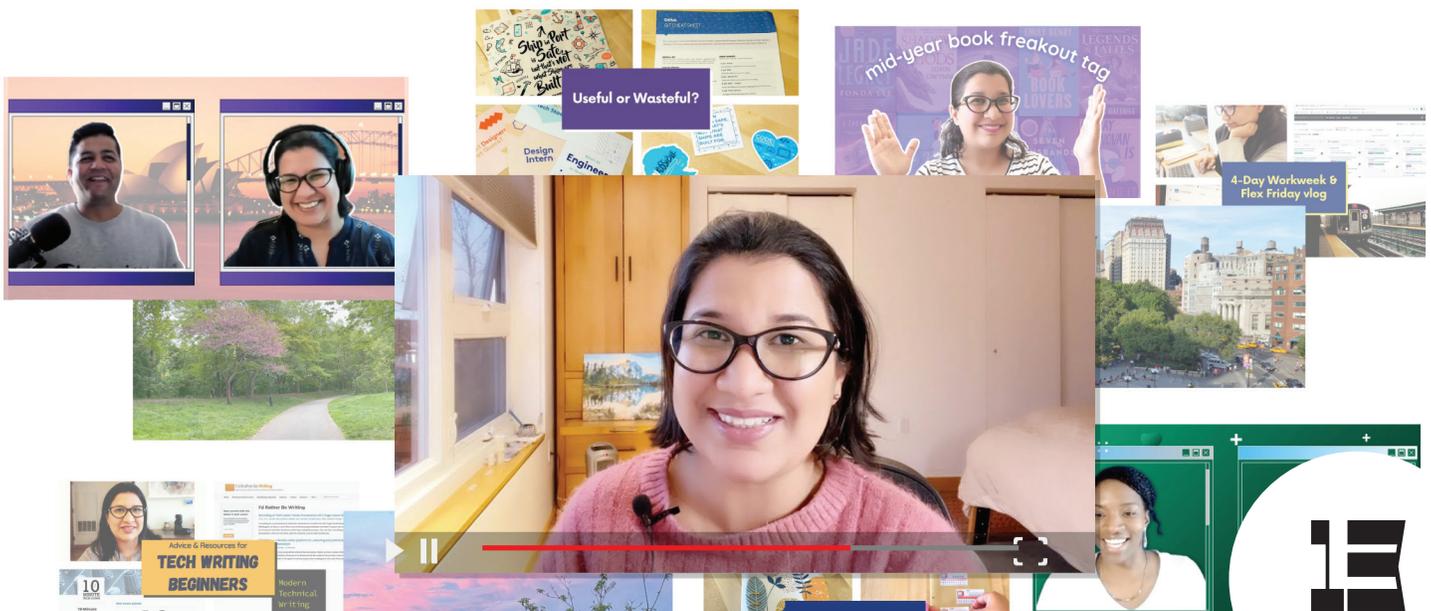
To complement her new position, Ranade said, her videos began to take a “more professional format” and her process became more “researched based” with a focus on reaching specific audiences by using specific

tools. During this time, content creation began to feel more like work than a fun hobby.

Ranade has since returned to her roots as a remote technical writer and is now Head of Docs at Airbyte, an open-source data integration company. Her YouTube channel has also returned to its roots as a gratifying hobby for her. Ranade still finds the time to create a video once or twice a month.

One has only to take a quick look at the feedback left by her viewers to see that these videos also work for where they are in their lives and their careers; “I’m trying to transition into a career in technical writing and this was extremely helpful. Thank you so much!” wrote one viewer, and “Thanks for all your work, Amruta! I have been a newspaper journalist and an editor ... for almost 15 years and have just started my new job two weeks ago as a full-time tech writer in a multinational company,” wrote another. Her YouTube content has been instrumental in furthering the educational and professional goals of many technical communicators around the world.

Visit Amruta's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/AmrutaRanade>



The still frames in this collage offer glimpses of Amruta's YouTube videos about personal, professional, and pedagogical topics.

Distance Learning: The New Old Normal

Since Fall 2011, S&T has been delivering its technical communication graduate programs online to students around the country.

When the global pandemic closed campuses across the country in spring 2020, students and teachers had to navigate remote learning and hope they would be allowed back to the classroom when school resumed in the fall. There are varying reasons students choose to pursue graduate studies online as opposed to in a traditional classroom. Chief among them is flexibility.

Part of that flexibility at S&T is being able to obtain a graduate certificate in professional communication (formerly technical communication) and then apply the credits toward a master's degree in technical communication. Both programs allow students to complete the coursework wholly online and never visit the physical campus in Rolla.

For students who are furthering their education later in life, this flexibility can make all the difference. Chris Caruthers, who completed the graduate certificate in May 2014, said he chose the distance option because he had family and job responsibilities elsewhere.

Nyana Evans, who is currently pursuing the graduate certificate, is located in Brooklyn, New York, and was unable to find a program locally. When asked why she chose Missouri S&T, she said, "S&T has a certificate program in tech com where many schools do not even have a course."

Additionally, being able to take online courses at night is convenient for non-traditional students who work full-time during the day. Chris Williams, who completed the graduate certificate in May

2021, started the program fifteen years after completing his undergraduate degree and was able to take one course each semester to fit his schooling around full-time employment.

Michele Pace, who is currently in the master's program, is also an older student and a veteran of distance education, having obtained her undergrad in 2013 after 8 years of part-time distance classes. When she wanted to go back for her graduate degree, attending classes the same way was only natural. Aside from the availability of the program online, the other reason she said she chose Missouri S&T was because of its affordability: \$600 per credit hour.

Some students chose the distance program as a direct result of the pandemic. Matt Lenz specifically chose the distance program because of the pandemic. "Tech Com seemed like a logical continuation of my studies while also making me more professionally appealing and employable." He has also decided to go for the master's degree as a distance student.

Remote learning is not just another side effect of the pandemic; it has been around for many years. Some students may take advantage of it for their entire academic career, others may choose it only for continuing education later in life, while still others may choose to mix it with traditional learning. Whatever the student's particular requirements are for obtaining a degree, distance learning is available to help meet them.

Michele Pace attends class from her home over a thousand miles from campus.



Helping to Make Students Better Citizens

Dr. Rachel Schneider, associate teaching professor of English, has a passion to create a better tomorrow. Not only is she politically active in the community, but she is also politically active on campus. She wants to help students express themselves politically.

“Students can be responsible citizens, knowledgeable citizens who learn to advocate for their political positions and beliefs. I think the communication and writing skills that we teach here are part of that work.”

In her current role as faculty advisor of College Democrats, a political organization for S&T students, Schneider offers mentorship, encouragement, and advisement, and sometimes attends executive board meetings and general meetings. She takes pride in seeing students engage on political issues and carry their enthusiasm beyond the campus.

“Students active in College Democrats at the campus level have become involved with the organization at the state level and even, in one case, the national level,” she said. “I certainly can’t take credit for their leadership skills, but I did what I could to support them.”

Through her encouragement, one S&T student in the College Democrats became active in the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, an organization that advocates on behalf of the 76,000 students of the UM System. The same student later became active in a state-level effort to bring ranked-choice voting to Missouri.

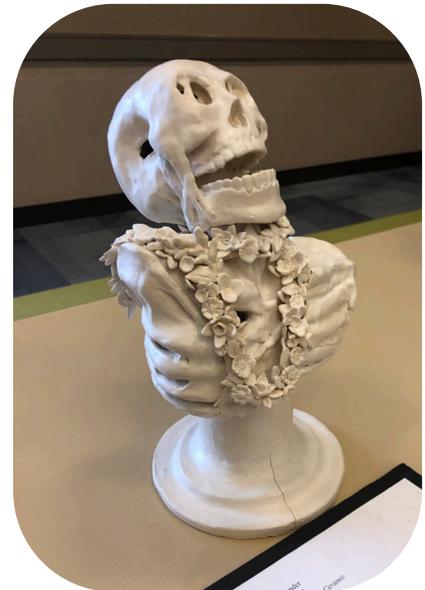
Schneider is committed to being a strong pillar of support for students as they navigate their way through school. “It can be very difficult to be a student here. The class work is very challenging. And students sometimes need support from people who are not just their teachers but mentors to try to encourage them to perform well. So I think I have been able to do some of that and certainly provide encouragement for them in terms of pursuing opportunities.”

Schneider received a BA with distinction in English language and literature from the University of Virginia in 2005, an MA in English from The University of Texas at Austin in 2008, and a PhD in English from the same school in 2014. At S&T, she teaches classes on writing and research, graphic novels, and British Literature.



Dr. Schneider in her office

As a class project in ENGL 3214 The Plays of William Shakespeare, ETC major Elaine Pohlsander sculpted this bust of dead Ophelia from Shakespeare's Hamlet. This gruesome representation is a response to paintings by Millais, Waterhouse, Cabanel, and other artists who romanticized Ophelia's death by drowning. Pohlsander's sculpture was presented at the annual Renaissance Fair in Havener Center in April 2022. For a related story, see page 29.



To Intern or Not to Intern? Four ETC Students Share Their Experiences and Perspectives

ETC students often ask whether they should do an internship. To help students answer this question, we interviewed four current students who have completed internships within the last year. The four students had various jobs at different companies, but all the jobs involved technical communication in some way.

Lara Edwards had an internship this summer with the Ozark Actors Theatre (OAT). She drafted sections of their new policies and procedures manual, completed and submitted grant applications, and performed other technical writing. With four years of previous grant writing experience, she was looking for an opportunity to expand into related types of technical writing. She said that the strategic planning needs of the theater and the policy writing allowed her to do just that.

“Doing this internship was definitely the right choice for me. Balancing work and school can be very hard, and being able to make progress on both simultaneously for several hours each week made it that much easier.” Lara gained experience with filesharing and synchronous document editing—skills that are transferable.

According to Lara, students should not let the fear of the unknown stop them from learning something new, and an internship is a great way to learn something new. It is also a great way to make industry contacts. She intends to follow up with a connection she made over the summer—a person who has experience with for-profit grants and government grants. “Cultivating the skills and experience needed for these subtypes of technical writing could open up many possibilities for me,” she said.



Lara Edwards



Kevin Wich is an ETC undergraduate who started his studies as an engineering major before switching to technical communication and linguistics. He is considering getting a master's degree in business administration after graduation because that is where his interests lie.

Last summer, Kevin completed an internship with the Bellerive Country Club. Where he worked in the facilities department, which encompasses maintenance and housekeeping. Kevin helped management with scheduling and wrote a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the porter position.

In the SOP, Kevin defined the duties of the porter's position to include such activities as leaf blowing, window cleaning, setting out chairs for special events, and extracting carpets. The SOP included, for example, detailed instructions for using cleaning products, along with photographs. “Creating the SOP,” Kevin said, “was a fun project. It was different from anything I had done before.” Kevin credited ETC courses in technical writing and document design for preparing him to create a technical document.

15

Kevin Wich

A star on the S&T track team, Annmarie Tyson is a technical communication graduate student interested in general communication and presentations, which she describes as being on the “calmer side” of technical communication.

Even though Tyson Foods wasn’t looking for someone in technical communication, Annmarie wasn’t discouraged. She used her communication skills to explain what a technical communicator does, and the recruiter said, “Oh yeah, we can put you anywhere with those skills.”

Annmarie worked as an analyst in the IT finance department but was able to fill in as a project manager for a few weeks while the primary project manager was out of the office. “It’s funny because I took Dr. Wright’s project management course after the internship, and it was like, “Wow, I wish I had had this beforehand.” The internship experience gave her insights into the coursework that she would not have had otherwise.

As a student success coach on campus, Annmarie frequently tells students to go to the career fair, talk to recruiters, and apply for jobs. She said the experience you get from the interview is beneficial even if you don’t get hired. “Try to get the internship. It doesn’t matter if they say no, at least you tried, but if they say yes, you can go get that valuable experience and knowledge.”



Annmarie Tyson

During her time at S&T, Juliette Okel has had two internships and a co-op. Her first internship was with LeNgeineer, a small minority-owned space and defense company, as a proposal writer. She found the company on LinkedIn, applied for the internship, and accepted it even though it was unpaid. Juliette said she learned a lot during her time with LeNgeineer by working with subject-matter experts who would tell her what she needed to know for the proposals she would write.



Juliette Okel

Her second internship was with Edge Impulse, a software engineering firm, as a federal sales writer and project manager. This was her first paid internship. She wrote marketing literature focused on the military’s and federal government’s use of artificial intelligence. She also managed some of the writing projects and was the point of contact. The position was remote, but she often traveled to California during her internship, which she said was a real test of her time management skills because she was also attending classes full-time.

Juliette said she was inspired to take multiple internships by a friend who graduated from the aerospace engineering program. He took six years to graduate because he had various co-ops and internships. Although it took him longer to graduate than some of his classmates, he got to know his career field better and had three or four years of industry experience when he finally graduated.

She also wishes students knew they don’t need to rush through their time at S&T. With each internship and co-op she did, she discovered what parts of technical communication she liked and didn’t like. “Internships teach you where you want to go before you have to commit.”



A New Home for S&T's Intensive English Program

The experience of studying abroad is a testament to strength and the pursuit of happiness. This is especially true for English language learners who embody tenacity and dedication to academic achievement. Not only do they face the hardships that come with higher education, but they do so while adapting to cultural shifts and new forms of communication.

Fortunately for students at Missouri S&T, there is support in the area of language proficiency. Since its creation in December 1993 with the admission of students from Turkey, the Intensive English Program (IEP) has assisted international students and community members from over 70 countries in achieving the proficiency level required for their studies and has promoted effective transition to academic programs at the university.

The program has undergone a transition of its own, moving from International Affairs (IA) to English and Technical Communication (ETC). The reorganization was prompted by “the changing nature of international outreach and current trends.” As a result, all units and roles that previously reported to Dr. Jeanie Hofer, former Vice Provost of International Affairs, now report to departments that are more closely aligned to their functions. Within the IEP program itself, classes have been reorganized, effective January 2023.

Dr. Thu Tran has been the Program Administrator for the IEP since 2012. “International students will continue to receive support regarding improving their English language proficiency. This mainly affects the program’s reporting structure. I do hope to gain more administrative support.”

Tran believes the move will strengthen “the program by giving [IEP] students more opportunities to interact with students and faculty of the English department. Collaboration between English-language learners and English majors will be smoother, and the IEP will receive more support from the faculty in the department.”

This latest development is not the first step towards integration of the program into campus academic life. In 2021, classes in the program were moved from the Southwestern Bell Cultural Center, where they had historically been taught, to main campus buildings. Classes which were scheduled directly through the IEP can now be registered for through the registrar. These changes all served to establish the IEP as an instructional unit rather than a support division. With cultural and linguistic barriers at play, bringing English-language learners closer to other members of the campus community is a tremendous benefit for their social and linguistic development.

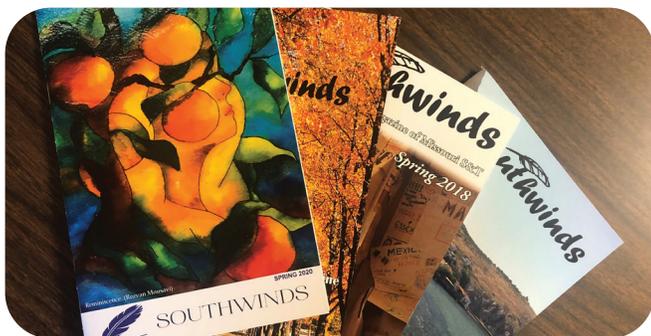
Dr. Tran teaching a class in the IEP in 2019



Southwinds

The goal of *Southwinds* is to foster an understanding of culture and respect for art inside and around the university. Mathew Goldberg, an associate teaching professor who established and oversees the ETC's creative writing minor, serves as the organization's advisor.

Southwinds was initially just a literary magazine, but it has now grown into a community for sharing photography, visual arts, crafts, sculptures, metal works, and other such things. One of *Southwinds*' main goals is to bridge the gap between the arts and sciences. Toward this end, the staff and faculty advisor are pursuing a collaboration with Dr. Karen Head, Missouri S&T's Director of Arts & Innovation. Any student from any department is eligible to join the organization and work on the magazine.



Interested students may contact the faculty advisor, Professor Goldberg (goldbergmr@mst.edu), or the organization's president, Andreas Ellinas (ape687@mst.edu).

Sigma Tau Delta



Sigma Tau Delta members serving mocktails at 2022 Miner Mingle

The S&T chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honor society, is a student organization that promotes reading and all facets of the English discipline on campus through activities like book discussions, book-movie pairings, weekly readings of short stories, live readings at which money is raised for charities, and the "brown bag" series, a chapter tradition where various professors' humanities research is highlighted and discussed.

Dr. Kathryn Dolan, an associate professor with specialty in nineteenth-century American literature, food studies, global studies, and sustainability, serves as the organization's faculty advisor. In Fall 2022, ETC major Jacob Ott was the president; Keillyn Johnson, a major in applied mathematics as well as ETC, was the vice president; and ETC majors Cindy Wilson and Keegan Hammond were treasurer and secretary, respectively. Last but not the least, Aamir Iqbal, a mining engineering major, was the organization's student council (STUCO) representative.

To join, email Dr. Dolan (dolankc@mst.edu), Jacob Ott (jromby@mst.edu), or Keillyn Johnson (krj9gq@umsystem.edu)



A group of friends enjoy dinner and conversation at the department picnic. Clockwise: Carleigh Davis, Beth Reardon (MS TCH COM, SU21), Linda Sands (BA ENGL, 1993), and Kathryn Northcut.

The Diverse Backgrounds of Our Graduate Students

Female or Male	Home Country	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
F	USA	BS English and Technical Communication	
F	USA	BS English and Technical Communication	
M	Ghana	BS Mineral Engineering	
M	Nigeria	BA Theater Arts	MA Theater Arts
M	Ghana	BA Economics	
F	Nigeria	BS Sociology	
M	USA	BFA in Computer Animation	
M	Nigeria	BS Geology	
F	USA	BS English and Technical Communication	
F	USA	BS Biological Science	MS Ecology, Evolution and Systematics
M	USA	BA English	
F	USA	BS Library Science	
F	Guyana	BA English	
F	USA	BS English and Technical Communication	
F	Ghana	BA Communication Design	
F	Ghana	BA Integrated Rural Art and Industry	
F	USA	BA Chinese and Near Eastern Studies	
F	USA	BA English	
F	Ghana	BA French Education	
M	USA	BS Technical Communication	

Our department offers a Graduate Certificate in Professional Communication (formerly Technical Communication) and a Master of Science in Technical Communication. Admission to these programs requires a bachelor's degree, but there is no restriction on discipline. As we write on our website, "Because of the interdisciplinary nature of technical communication, the bachelor's degree may be in almost any field." The result of this policy is a student body of diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

Of the 20 graduate students enrolled in Fall 2022, 10 had a Bachelor of Arts or Fine Arts and 10 had a Bachelor of Science. The list of their bachelor's degrees (see left) includes 12 different disciplines other than English and technical communication. The disciplines are as diverse as French Education and Mineral Engineering.

Eleven of the students come from the USA, 5 from Ghana, 3 from Nigeria, and 1 from Guyana. Over the years, other graduate students in our programs have come from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Norway, Iran, Libya, and Poland.

Speech and Debate Team

Well established on campus but new to our department, the speech and debate team is an organization dedicated to building students' confidence and speaking skills. It allows its members a platform to express their ideas about current events in our world today and opens avenues for networking during contests. Kendrea James, an assistant teaching professor of speech and media studies and the organization's faculty advisor, received her master's degree from Northeastern State University and has won multiple state and national debate championships.

Why should a student join the speech and debate team? Professor James explains the reasons eloquently: "Competing on the speech and debate team opens so many doors for students and allows them to experience many

benefits that they otherwise would miss out on. Meeting students from all over the country broadens our worldview networking that lasts a lifetime. What about it is that it allows students a place what they think matters, what they

want to change in the world. So many students who compete are actually advocating for something much bigger than themselves. It's a wonderful thing to watch students from all over the country come together. These students may not agree on everything, but they are compassionate, supportive, and encouraging."

Not to be deterred by the COVID-19 pandemic, the team held meetings and participated in debate competitions via zoom in 2020 and participated in a couple more in 2022. Any student interested in joining the team should contact Professor James by email at jamesken@umsystem.edu.



Professor James, the speech and debate team coach, teaching a class outside of HSS



Raising the Bar: Intensive Advising Program Sets New Academic Support Precedents

Dr. Jossalyn Larson and Professor Elizabeth Roberson have created an intensive advising program for students struggling in ETC courses. The program works by allowing ETC professors to refer struggling students to an intensive advisor, who can then help each student develop and execute a personalized academic recovery plan.

By the end of the program's first semester (FS21), more than half (58.5%) of participants had raised their grade from the D/F/W range to a C or better. "The program was successful because faculty was involved," Larson explained. "The person who was an intermediary between the student and professor was a faculty member."

Larson and Roberson observed that, even though course professors are willing to help struggling students, the students often find it easier to be open about their difficulties with an intermediary who has no influence over their grade. "Some students confided that they were too embarrassed at times to approach their professors and admit they needed help," Roberson said. They were more comfortable with a different ETC faculty member.

Intensive advisors have subject-matter knowledge and familiarity with courses, instructors, and assignments, and a portion of the program's success can be attributed to their expertise.

Larson and Roberson want to make intensive advising available to more students in ETC courses. Even though program participants in Spring 2022 saw improvement, the total number of F's in ETC courses went up between midterms and finals. This was probably because many students did not start seriously struggling until late in the semester and missed their chance to get a referral from their professors.

To address this scenario, the Fall 2022 version of the program asked professors to check their rosters for struggling students during weeks 3, 6, 9, and 12 so that

more students will receive a referral and be offered help before it is too late.

As the program continues to develop, Larson and Roberson hope to develop new intensive advising strategies specifically for weeks 9 through 12. They will also continue to refine the program as they collect data on its effectiveness throughout 2023.

In Fall 2022, Larson and Roberson started a second initiative involving GTA-embedded tutors. As part of their work as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), several graduate students in technical communication were assigned to tutor individual struggling students.

The hope is that this second method of providing department-specific personalized help will prove just as effective as intensive advising by faculty members and easier for other departments to adapt and maintain. "We are hoping we can create a model that can be adapted by departments across the campus," Larson said.



Dr. Larson in her office



Scott Perdue: Tech Com as a Pathway into UI/UX Design

Scott Perdue started his undergraduate education at Missouri S&T as an English major in 2004, but he soon switched to technical communication. The new major aligned closely with his natural ability and professional interests and would eventually lead him to a career in user interface/user experience (UI/UX) design.

Perdue graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Technical Communication in May 2009. He was one of the first five graduates of our new BS program. He then worked as a web content developer for Joyce Meyer Ministries for over 3 years, a multimedia specialist for Biomedical Systems for 2 years, and a UX developer for Ungerboeck Software for just under a year.

“The things I learned in the tech com program at Missouri S&T go straight into the field of UI/UX design.”

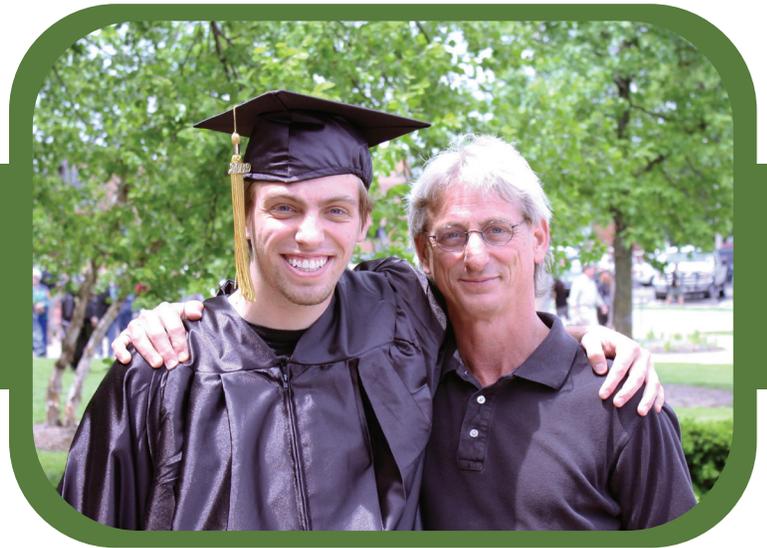
For the last 7 years, Perdue has been involved in UI/UX design at Linxup, a company based in Chesterfield, Missouri, that provides GPS solutions. In his current role as UI/UX manager, Scott manages the company’s digital assets, which include a mobile application, web application, and the internal application (for accessing test accounts, user billing, etc.). He is happy creating UI/UX designs and developing general multimedia solutions.

“The things I learned in the tech com program at Missouri S&T go straight into the field of UI/UX design,” Perdue said. “Writing is a big part of it. I learned to make sure that my writing is concise and well thought out and easy to understand. I learned that it’s not always about making the flashiest design; it’s about making a usable and user-friendly product.”

Perdue dabbles in photography and videography, as well. “I see myself as a jack of all trades, trying to be well rounded. I would rather be pretty good at a lot of things than great at one thing and not good at anything else. It’s important to balance your skill set. You don’t have to be the best designer, best writer, best editor, but just being pretty good in those things really comes in handy. You a single-person team if you need to.” Linxup was a small company when he 2016, and he had to use all his skills as

a UI/UX designer. “Because I had those skills, I was able to build up the design all by myself without having to rely on additional writers and editors. Having all those skills was really helpful.”

Perdue believes that developing a broad set of skills is crucial for success. “I encourage anybody in the field to try to be well rounded with your skill set. If your core competencies are writing and editing, but not design, spend more time working on design. Even if you’re writing



Perdue with his father at graduation in 2004

manuals or something, design always comes in handy. I also have a little web development background, and as a UI designer, that really comes in handy, too.”

How does someone prepare for a career in UI/UX design? “It’s pretty easy if you have a good eye for layout, and if you’re a good writer and editor. Those skills transfer into this field. Even if there isn’t a course directly related to UI/UX design in the tech com program, the skills you learn in your courses will translate to the product design process. Figma is the most popular design tool now available for free, so there’s nothing stopping you from downloading free tutorials online and learning to use the tool.”

Perdue has fond memories of his time at Missouri S&T. “I enjoyed my time at S&T. I am thankful to have discovered the tech com program. I am thankful for the guidance from Dr. Northcut and the other professors along the way. I’m thankful for the friends while there.”



Tramp Abroad: Professor Gives Research Talks in Limerick and London

In July 2022, Dr. David Wright gave two presentations in Europe. The first was in Limerick, Ireland, at the IEEE International Professional Communication Conference. In this presentation, he addressed the question of why people turn off or get rid of their smart home technology. One of the main reasons is the lack of privacy when using smart devices in the home. The intrusion makes people uncomfortable.

“I think people understand they give up a bit of privacy when they use cellphones,” Wright said. “Those can be tracked. Government agencies and the companies who manufacture our phones can track our location, and if they really want to, they can find out who you are talking to. You must agree to that level of intrusion being a possibility if you want to use a cell phone. With smart home technology it’s a bit different. People aren’t necessarily ready to agree to those types of intrusions coming into their homes. What we found is that when smart home users started to suspect that their living room conversations were being monitored, in what they really consider a private space, they were a bit horrified and started to unplug or modify the equipment.”

The second stop on his trip was London for an invited talk at the United Kingdom Dementia Research Institute. The institute is developing their own smart home tools to aid dementia patients and those who take care of them. The tools track a patient’s movements and whereabouts in a home with x-ray, radar, and pressurized flooring. The data can be used to establish and monitor a patient’s daily routine, and changes in the routine can help caretakers notice changes in behavior. Wright

discussed the difficulties his subjects had in using equipment in his studies to give the institute insight into difficulties the caretakers might have in using “off-the-shelf” smart home technology.

Wright said he was impressed with the technology being developed by the institute. “It’s not stuff you can just find on the shelf somewhere. They are building their own stuff from scratch. They are also putting time into the computerized data systems needed to back up and process the data they are collecting.”

According to Wright, smart home technology is a lot better than it was when he started working with it in 2017, but it still has a long way to go. From his vantage point, the next ten years look bright for improvements in the technology. The research he is doing is revealing the technology’s shortcomings but also suggesting how it can be improved.

For those planning a trip to Ireland, Wright recommended a visit to Blarney Castle in County Cork. It is surrounded by beautiful foliage and animals. Both he and his wife kissed the Blarney Stone, but there is no proof of him doing it because he didn’t want to spend 10 Euros for a second photo. The couple also visited the fishing town of Kinsale for a look at the southern coast of Ireland and some fine dining.

For those planning a trip to London, he recommended a visit to Ronnie Scott’s Jazz Club. It is “the best venue for live music that I’ve ever visited.” Wright became familiar with many of London’s finest pubs and clubs when he was teaching in London in Spring 2014 as part of the now-defunct Missouri London Program.



Dr. Wright in London



Interview with ETC Alumnus

David Young

David Young, Melissa Wampler, and Shubashini Gamagedara prepare for their presentations at the Springfield regional STC conference in April 2013. Melissa is now an IT procurement specialist for the University of Missouri System, and Shubashini is a city planner/landscape architect for the City of Oklahoma City. All three graduated from our MS program in 2013.

Dr. David Young is a successful Missouri S&T alumnus who has worked in both academia (at Georgia Tech University) and industry (at Amazon). He began his journey in Rolla as a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering (2006–2010) and left as a Master of Science in Technical Communication (2010–2013).

After his studies at S&T, Young moved to Texas Tech University, where he obtained a PhD in Technical Communication and Rhetoric (2017). From there, he went to Georgia Tech as an assistant professor (2018–2021). He was the only tech com faculty member in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication for about three years. It was up to him to develop the tech com program he envisioned for Georgia Tech. His aim was to equip students with necessary rhetorical skills before they graduated.

Curiosity, passion, and smart work led to his current role: As a Senior Program Manager, Young manages a team of three technical writers, supporting the documentation efforts for Amazon Pharmaceuticals. He is charged with removing any obstacles to the team's work and ensuring a smooth working environment for the team. Because of his study of rhetoric, Young is now "very deliberate in how he delivers messages," and this skill has helped him handle challenges in the industry. "As a

technical writing team, we have certain priorities that are important to us: efficiency and scale, but these are not priorities to some other stakeholders." When facing this recurring problem, Young seeks the right moment to speak to each stakeholder individually and puts rhetorical appeals into practice. For him, this method has always worked like magic, and he recommends it to others.

Even as an industry practitioner, Young still has the passion to teach and help students who wish to improve their technical writing skills. He may one day return to a teaching position in academia. A guiding principle for him through his education and career has been "to follow wherever your curiosity leads."

For students who might be interested in internships at Amazon, Young noted how competitive it is. He advised students to apply, but not to limit their applications or hopes to Amazon alone because there is a very large world outside Amazon also available to them. He also mentioned that "to prepare for success, treat all your works, even in school, as portfolio materials."

For technical communication students, Young gave the following advice: "Be relentless in your advocacy for audiences/end users. That is what we do."



"Be relentless in your advocacy for audiences/end users. That is what we do."

Tech Com Miners Publish Articles in Peer-Reviewed Venues

Research is an important part of graduate studies, and publication is one way of sharing research with others. Our graduate students are active researchers while they are students, and some of their research is eventually published, usually after they graduate. Several tech com miners published scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals in 2021 and 2022.

Priyanka Ganguly (MS, TCH COM SP20) has published several articles since her graduation from Missouri S&T. Two of those articles began as chapters in her master's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Ed Malone. The first article, "Rhetorical Style Analysis of the Statement of Purpose (SP) Genre: A Shared Understanding of Lexis in Successful SPs," was published in *Xchanges* in August 2021, while the second article, "Review of the Statement of Purpose (SP) Genre: A Shared Understanding of Rhetorical Appeals in Technical Communication SPs," was published in *English for Specific Purposes* in October 2022.

Ganguly is now a PhD student in rhetoric and writing at Virginia Tech. As a PhD student, she is the sole author of "Tweeting Reproductive Justice (RJ) Advocacy through #AbortionMeraHaq," published in *Proceedings of the 2021 SIGDOC Conference*. SIGDOC is a special interest group within the Association for Computing Machinery.

For a complete list of publications by our students and alumni: <https://english.mst.edu/research/studentresearch/>

With Professor Jennifer Sano-Franchini and seven of her classmates at Virginia Tech, Ganguly published "Slack, Social Justice, and Online Technical Communication Pedagogy" in *Technical Communication Quarterly* in June 2022. This article explores the use of the workplace communication software Slack for pedagogical purposes in a social justice context.

Sumina Nasrin (MS, TCH COM SP20) and Mariter White (MS, TCH COM SP21) are the co-authors of "Discontinuance and Restricted Acceptance to Reduce Worry after Unwanted Incidents with Smart Home Technology," published in *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction* in June 2022. Based on interviews with 10 users of smart home technology, the article examines the causes of and responses to user anxiety with a variety of smart home devices. Nasrin and White worked with ETC Professor David Wright and Psychology Professor Daniel Shank on this project.

Also collaborating with Wright and Shank, Charnise Anderson (MS, TCH COM FS22) and psychology alumnus Matthew Dew are the co-authors of "The Usability of an Integrated Smart Home: A Usability Study of a Laboratory-Based Google Smart Home." The article is currently under review at *Communication Design Quarterly*.

Their First Career Fair

Jude Enete and Felix Nyikwagh, graduate students in technical communication, were spotted making the rounds at the career fair on September 26, in Gale Bullman Multi-Purpose Building.



ETC Professor Participates in Summer Research Institute at Oxford

This summer, Dr. Kristine Swenson had the opportunity to conduct archival research in the University of Oxford's world-class libraries.

"It was honestly amazing. Absolutely the best academic experience I've ever had."

Every summer in July, the halls and libraries of the University of Oxford welcome a troupe of visiting faculty from around the world, sent as delegates by their home institutions for a week of research. The Summer Research Institute, hosted by Oxford's Harris Manchester College, gives its attendees the opportunity to use a vast collection of books and other resources with the expert assistance of university librarians.

This summer, Dr. Kristine Swenson, department chair of ETC, made the 4,000-mile trip as Missouri S&T's visiting academic in Oxford. "This is the first time I've had an opportunity like this, though I've traveled to England, Scotland, France, Italy, and Israel in previous years to conduct research at archives or to participate in conferences," said Swenson, who is the third representative from Missouri S&T to attend, after Dr. Michael Bruening and Dr. Kathleen Sheppard from the department of history and political science.

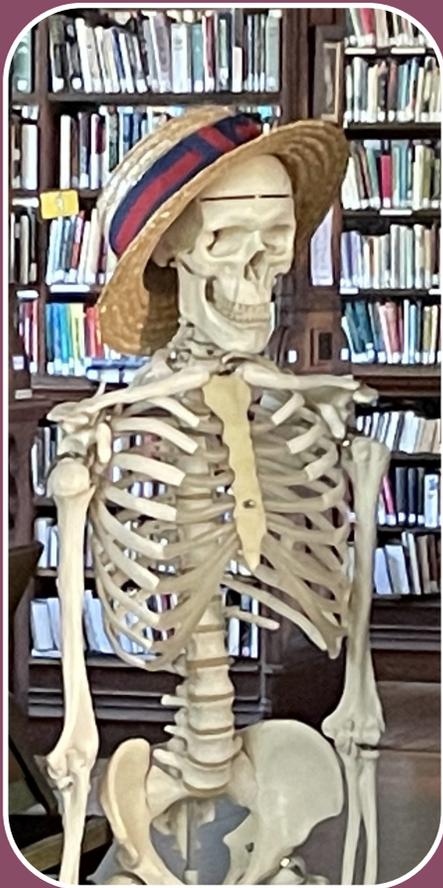
The process of visiting begins with scholars submitting research proposals as part of a campus-wide evaluation of applicants. After one proposal is selected, the chosen representative works remotely with the library staff in Oxford to develop a research plan tailored to the library's holdings. This assistance continues in Oxford as the librarians guide the academic through the often-overwhelming trove of materials and facilities that are suddenly at their disposal. "They put us up and feed us and we have some social events and some professional information events," Swenson said, "but mostly the purpose of the week is to give us space to conduct research in the amazing libraries in Oxford."

Swenson's work at the Summer Research Institute began with an article that she was already developing about Dr. Lydia Fowler, a female physician, reformer, and suffragist, who spent time in Britain in the 1860s, practicing, lecturing, and publishing. The libraries at Oxford own transcripts of Fowler's lectures that are unavailable online or in the United States; access to those transcripts allowed Swenson to expand sections of her article.

The work on Fowler began to grow into a new research question regarding alternative medicine. With access to the Tate's Library of Protestant Dissent, Swenson explored this topic and laid the groundwork for a new article examining alternative medicine as it relates to temperance, anti-vaccination, and gut health. Within a mere week at Oxford, the seeds of a new project were planted.

Of course, the limited time available to the researchers comes with a sacrifice; so much of the week is spent in study that little time is left to explore the rest of Oxford. However, Swenson was able to find some time to visit Oxford's Ashmolean Museum and go punting on a tributary of the Thames. While she could have extended her trip to London for more research after her week in Oxford, a busy summer ultimately called her back to Missouri S&T.

The Summer Research Institute may only last a week, but it leaves a powerful impression. Commenting on her experience, Swenson said, "It was honestly amazing. Absolutely the best academic experience I've had."



Festive skeleton in the Tate Library of Harris Manchester College



Miner Mingle



Miner Mingle allows undergraduate and graduate students to mingle with prospective employers on the Missouri S&T campus. ETC students attended with high hopes and great enthusiasm on this golden afternoon in September. From left to right: Ernest Oteng, Priscilla Owusu-Danquah, Lara Edwards, and Portia Ofori-Benefo.

S&T Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication

The S&T student chapter of the international Society for Technical Communication is a group of students dedicated to the improvement of technical communication as well as the continued development of its members. Through participation in planned events held all year long such as seminars, conferences, and workshops, the organization offers its members the chance to advance their professional abilities. Dr. Ed Malone, a professor with expertise in technical editing, international technical communication, and the history of technical communication, serves as the organization's advisor.

The chapter hosted an inaugural meeting in 2022 to inform interested students about its principles, goals, and opportunities. Attendees ate pizza, learned about STC, and made plans for the new academic year. In September 2022, chapter members participated in Miner Mingle, a reverse career fair in which departments and student organizations greet visiting representatives of companies.

According to Chapter President Iveren Akula, the Society for Technical Communication “offers opportunities for connecting and networking with like-minded individuals and top industry influencers.” Students may attend the regional STC conference in Springfield in April or the international summit in Atlanta in May. Other chapter

officers include Tammy Korte as vice president, Felix Nyikwagh as public relations officer, Summer Potter as secretary, and Frederick Sunkpal as treasurer—all ETC graduate students.

The STC chapter welcomes not only graduate and undergraduate students of all majors but also professional technical communicators and other non-students to become members. Anyone interested in joining may contact Dr. Malone (malonee@mst.edu) or Iveren Akula (iaacvd@mst.edu).





Learn to Be Comfortable Being Uncomfortable: Teaching English in China during the Pandemic

Joshua Graham began his academic career as an engineering student, but soon realized that it was not the field for him. While he understood the content, he did not see himself having a career in engineering. He did, however, do very well in his writing courses. Recognizing that writers often lack understanding in technical fields, and that engineers are often poor writers, Joshua sought out a field that offered an overlap between the two disciplines. He was pleased to find that technical communication married the technical elements of the engineering field with his aptitude for writing.

Since his graduation in May 2018, life has taken Joshua to interesting places. “I was tutoring a student from China and basically edited her master’s thesis. She tried to pay me, but I refused. She said I explained things in a way that she could understand and said I should come to China to teach.”



Initially, Joshua did not consider this proposal, but changed his mind with inspiration from an unusual source. “I was still looking for work, and I tuned into the local sports radio station in St Louis where I lived. They were talking about our baseball team, who weren’t doing so great at the time, and the announcer said that the team needed to ‘learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable.’ I heard it, and that part stuck with me, because I realized that there would be nothing less comfortable than going to China to teach English. That’s when I made the decision.”

Joshua connected with a recruitment agency that matched candidates with schools in China. Soon after his arrival in Ningbo in late 2018, he began teaching children, ages 4 to 9, and tutoring adults outside of work. He was pleased to find that his experience in technical communication was very useful in teaching, in that the aim was to simplify difficult concepts. He had intended to teach for just a year but found this experience so fulfilling that he decided to stay for another year, and then possibly pursue a master’s degree.

COVID-19’s full effect struck early in 2020, the middle of Joshua’s second school year. Unwilling to leave during a global pandemic, Joshua decided to extend his stay even longer. Now, he teaches kindergarten and plans to attend the University of Nottingham in Ningbo—the same institution that his very first student attended—to pursue a master’s degree in Applied Linguistics. He admonishes that “you can’t grow if you’re comfortable,” and he is very pleased with where this advice has taken him.



Joshua with some of his students at the great wall just outside Beijing

Kayla and Peter: New Jobs, Fond Memories, and a Proposal

Kayla Yates and Peter Schonberg have grown significantly since their May 2021 graduations from Missouri S&T. Yates has a Bachelor of Arts in English with minors in geology, creative writing, and linguistics, while Peter has a Bachelor of Science in Technical Communication. Although they have different degrees, they are both working as technical communicators.

Kayla began her studies at S&T as a major in geological engineering. While she found moderate success during an engineering internship, she realized that she didn't want to be an engineer. "The part I liked the most [about the internship] was writing about what I did during the day." Kayla soon transferred to the ETC department. As an ETC major, she received guidance and inspiration from multiple professors. She especially enjoyed Dr. Sarah Hercula's linguistics courses. "I was really inspired to learn as much as I could about why people think saying what they say is okay. It gave me a lot of perspective and a lot of growth."

Kayla works as a technical writer for EquipmentShare, a nationwide company based in Columbia, Missouri. She writes instruction manuals for installing equipment on commercial vehicles, such as forklifts. She also creates new channels for private internal communications.

Peter began his studies at S&T as a major in physics. Although he enjoyed reading and writing about physics, he did not enjoy the complex math that the degree required. Kayla convinced Peter to join our department, and he was happy she did. "Almost every class I took was about developing hard skills," he said.



Peter and Kayla visited Olympic National Park in March 2022.

Peter found success thanks to multiple professors in ETC. He attributes his love of science fiction to Dr. Dan Reardon's sci-fi course, adding that he uses this information in interviews to introduce companies to his personality. Dr. Carleigh Davis was influential to him in numerous ways; he worked with her on research projects before he graduated.

Peter is now working for Mastercard as a senior content analyst. He is part of a team that creates and delivers digital content such as user guides, release notes, and reference documentation for API developers.

Outside of work, Peter and Kayla wrote a code of conduct for the Amateur Fencing Association of Missouri. In August 2022, Peter proposed to Kayla at a winery in St. Louis, and Kayla said yes. They now live comfortably in O'Fallon, Missouri, with their cat Solaris.



Noah displays his Shakespeare-inspired art at the S&T Renaissance Fair in April.

Shakespeare at the Annual Renaissance Fair in Havener

For a project in ENGL 3214 The Plays of William Shakespeare, taught by Dr. Ed Malone in Spring 2022, ETC major Noah Hayes drew sketches of actors performing in films such as *Much Ado about Nothing* (1993) and *The Tempest* (2010) and sculpted figurines, or weenicons, of their characters. Projects by other students included a bust of the drowned Ophelia (see page 15 in this issue), posters and a script for a new ending to *Hamlet*, a photograph of the assassination of Julius Caesar with one person playing all the roles, and various Renaissance foods, such as venison pie (a popular dish in Shakespeare's day).



Meet Our Graduate Teaching Assistants

The English and technical communication department works hard to offer programs that empower students to understand and communicate innovative ideas. The department's graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) work just as hard both in and out of the classroom to help make these programs available to all S&T students. Meet our Fall 2022 GTAs and find out what makes them proud to be part of our department.



Iveren "Ivy" Akula

Ivy earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Sociology from Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. She is the current president of the Missouri S&T student chapter of the Society of Technical Communication (STC) as well as one of our department's two representatives to the Council of Graduate Students. Ivy is a published author and illustrator. You can find her book on Amazon: *The Chronicle of Takuruku Anyamazenga: Folktales Passed Down from Generation to Generation*. Her favorite part of being a GTA is the feeling of fulfillment that comes from helping students achieve goals that are important to them.



Vivian Asigri

Vivian graduated from the University of in Winneba,

Ghana, with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in French Education. This past December, she graduated from Missouri S&T with an MS in Technical Communication. Vivian enjoys table tennis and spending time with her family. Her favorite part of teaching was learning: "The more you teach, the more you learn." Now that she has graduated, she hopes to one day run a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving and advocating for marginalized communities.



Annmarie Tyson

Annmarie earned a BS in English and Technical Communication at Missouri S&T. Her favorite part of being a GTA is getting a new perspective on the program she completed as an undergraduate. Annmarie is an accomplished student athlete and was selected for the US Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association's All-Midwest Region Team this past summer. She competed in high jump at the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II Outdoor Track Field Championship and was awarded second place in high jump at the 2022 Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) Indoor Conference Championships. Annmarie said being a student athlete has helped her maintain her focus as an undergraduate and a grad student.



Jude Enete

Jude has a BS in Geology from the University of Nigeria. His graduate studies at Missouri S&T started in geology, and a year later he became part of the ETC department. Jude's interests include singing, soccer, and UX design and research; he has also successfully launched Nestuge, a startup event management company.



Lara Edwards

Lara graduated in December from our master's degree program in technical communication, but she also has a BS in Biological Science from Missouri S&T and an MS in Evolution, Ecology & Systematics from the University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL). In addition to working as a grant writer and grant manager, Lara is a published illustrator and muralist who hopes to one day publish a graphic novel.





Portia Ofori-Benefo

Portia earned a BA in Communication Design from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. As a marketing developer and project lead at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Portia demonstrated her leadership and communication skills as she designed marketing campaigns for Sunshine FM radio and saw those campaigns through from start to finish.



Ernest Oteng

When Ernest isn't working as a GTA, he enjoys reading, playing chess, and watching football. He has a BS in Minerals Engineering from the University of Mines and Technology in Tarkwa, Ghana. Through his blog and other writing, Ernest strives to be a source of inspiration for his audiences. His goal is to apply his skills toward developing climate solutions and building a sustainable future. His favorite part of being a GTA is getting to learn and grow as a teacher alongside the students he helps.



William Reardon

William earned both a BS (SU21) and MS (FS22) in Technical Communication—both from Missouri S&T. Before becoming a GTA, William presented his undergraduate research at the 2018 Midwest Modern Language Association conference and served on the staff of Southwinds. As a graduate student, he remained an active community member and a valued volunteer at local nonprofits. “I think working with students, providing feedback, and tangibly seeing their writing skills improve have been my favorite part of being a GTA.”



Felix Nyikwagh

Felix has a passion for the performing arts, holding a BA in Theater Arts from Benue State University in Makurdi, Nigeria, as well as an MA in Theater Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Felix has written and directed multiple plays and has experience as a television news reporter as well as a radio news writer and presenter. His favorite part of being a GTA is inspiring and being inspired by ETC students and faculty members. “They just reassure me that I’m in the right place at the right time.”



Priscilla Owusu-Danquah

Priscilla graduated from KNUST with a BA in Integrated Rural Arts and Industry. She and her husband, who is also a student at Missouri S&T, have four children ages 5, 9, 11, and 13. The family loves cooking – one of Portia’s favorite activities – and watching movies together. Priscilla is a people-person whose favorite parts of being a GTA are meeting new students and witnessing their writing improve as they learn and develop as writers throughout each semester.



Frederick "Freddy" Sunkpal

Freddy has a BS in Economics from KNUST. Through his work of promoting sustainable agricultural practices, Freddy has developed valuable project management skills and even co-founded a groundnut production and wholesale company. His favorite part of being a GTA is knowing he is making a difference by helping others exciting because it for me to take a the realization of philosophy.”



PARIOPLY

Role Changes in Department

Several members of the department assumed new roles at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester.

DANIEL REARDON, associate professor, is S&T's Interim Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education. He was formerly Associate Chair of ETC. The associate chair's role has been dissolved.

JOSSALYN LARSON, associate teaching professor, is Director of Foundational Speech and Composition in ETC. This new position subsumed the old position of Composition Director.

KATHLEEN DROWNE, professor, is Special Assistant to the Provost. She was Interim Dean of the College of Arts, Science, and Education (CASE).

KATHYRN NORTHCUT, professor, is Assistant Chair for Undergraduate Studies in ETC. She was formerly S&T's Vice Provost of Academic Support.

ED MALONE, professor, is Assistant Chair for Graduate Studies in ETC.



When we surprised Dr. Reardon at his new office, we had hoped to catch him sleeping at his desk or playing video games, but instead he was hard at work.

Staff

Writers and Photographers:

Iveren Akula

Charnise Anderson

Vivian Asigri

Olivia Cheek

Lara Edwards

Jude Enete

Nyana Evans

Joshua Garlick

Tammy Korte

Matthew Lenz

Felix Nyikwagh

Michele Pace

Annmarie Tyson

Faculty Advisor: Edward A. Malone

Designer: Olivia Cheek