

P a n o p l y

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Dolan steers faculty senate toward inclusion and collaboration



President Dolan prepares for a faculty senate meeting.

Dr. Kathryn Dolan, associate professor of English, plays an instrumental role in the academic governance of Missouri S&T. She is the current president of the faculty senate, “the legislative and policy-making body of the General Faculty.” As such, she leads a body of over 40 elected senators from every academic department on campus.

Over the past several years, Dolan has ascended through the ranks of the faculty senate, first serving as one of our department’s two senators and then assuming a series of officer’s roles, ultimately president.

Dr. Dolan is only the fourth woman president of the faculty senate and one of the few humanities professors to serve as president. “It’s good to have a humanist in the room and to have the perspective of the humanities,” she said. In her approach to leadership, she emphasizes qualities like good faith, adaptability, and open communication as essential for effective governance. She has been a proponent of inclusion and diversity.

One of Dolan’s initiatives was advocating for representation of non-tenure track (NTT) faculty on the faculty senate. They need more representation by fellow NTTs “because we’re not them,” Dolan explained. “We would advocate as strongly as possible with the best of intentions, but we might get something wrong.” Last year, the faculty senate officers appointed an NTT faculty member as the parliamentarian, ensuring their integral voice is heard in the decision-making process.

Acknowledging the significance of student voices, Dolan tries to engage with the student representatives on the faculty senate, addressing the challenges and needs of students. Her interactions with student groups are not limited to formal settings; she also meets with them informally for more in-depth conversations.

Dolan’s term as president extends through the end of this academic year. Next year, as past president, she will chair the faculty senate’s rules, procedures, and agenda (RP&A) committee, bringing to a close a five-year-long cycle of service as officer.

Dolan is not the first English professor to serve as faculty senate president at Missouri S&T. The last one was Dr. Dennis Perry in 1998-1999, more than 25 years ago. Perry is now a professor of English at Brigham Young University.

Staff Box

The 2024 issue of *Panoply* was produced by the students in TCH COM 5540 Advanced Layout and Design in Fall 2023.

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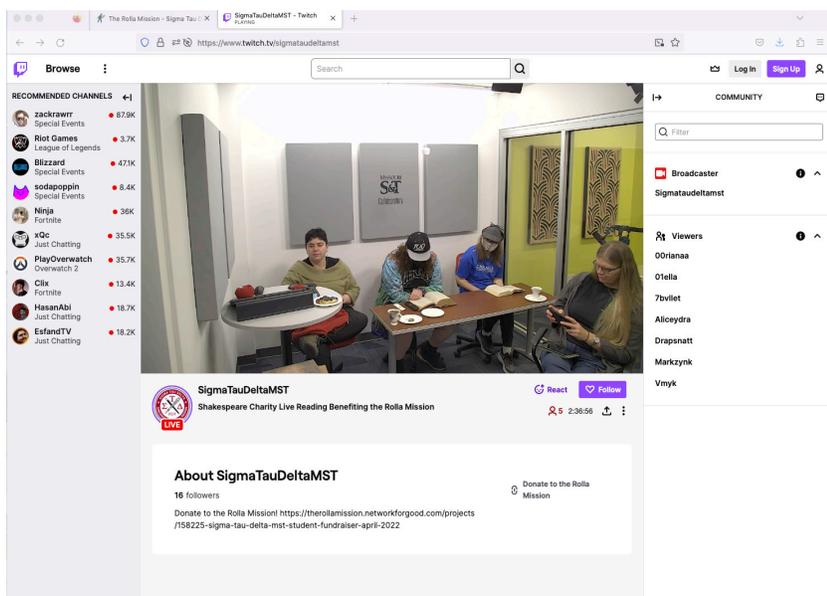
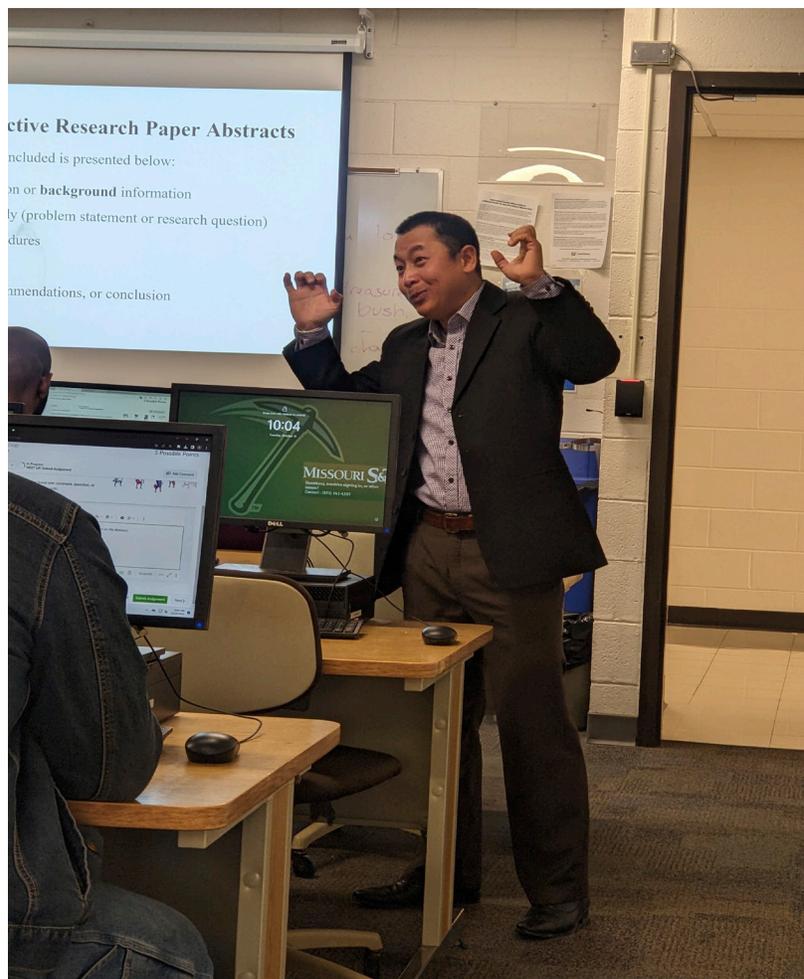
Dr. Thu Tran, assistant teaching professor, is the most recent addition to our faculty. He joined the department in 2022 and brought with him a wealth of experience and training in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). The department has added new undergraduate and graduate courses in English as a Second Language so that Tran can help students improve their English language skills.

Born in Vietnam, Tran received a BA in English Linguistics and Literature from Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities, an MA in TESOL from the University of Canberra, Australia, and a doctorate in education with an emphasis in TESOL from Alliant International University, San Diego, CA. He has been very active in the professional organization Mid-America TESOL, even serving as its president in 2019-2020.

In his teaching philosophy, Tran intertwines his passions with his pedagogy. “As a dedicated gardener, I often equate the process of teaching to gardening. Just as seeds require the right environment to sprout and bloom, students need nurturing, guidance, and access to the right resources.”

Tran speaks fondly of Rolla as his home. “The tranquility of Rolla, with its gentle rhythms and close-knit community, complements my teaching philosophy. I moved here partly due to my family ties and have found both peace and inspiration in this charming town, a sentiment I readily share with my students.”

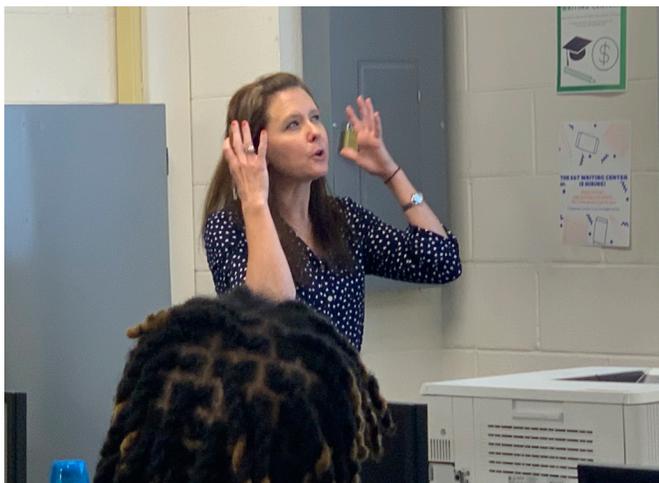
Tran served as Director of Missouri S&T’s Intensive English Program (IEP) from 2012 to 2022. The IEP program was discontinued for lack of funding.



Reading for charity: Sigma Tau Delta members raise \$600 for Rolla Mission

Members of the Missouri S&T chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honorary society, held a live reading of selected Sherlock Holmes stories on November 4. The eight-hour streaming event on Twitch was a fundraiser for the Rolla Mission. Student members and their faculty advisor, Dr. Kathryn Dolan, read the following works out loud: “A Scandal in Bohemia,” “The Adventure of the Silver Blaze,” “The Final Problem,” and *A Study in Scarlet*, all by Arthur Conan Doyle. They raised more than double their goal.

Roberson leaves ETC for a position in medical industry



Professor Roberson was a dynamic lecturer.

Elizabeth Roberson, an associate teaching professor, left our department at the end of last semester to become a medical content writer at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. A 2011 graduate of our MS program in technical communication, Roberson taught in our department for fourteen years, first as a graduate teaching assistant and later as a teaching professor, covering courses such as Layout and Design, Technical Marketing Communication, and Business Communication.

Her university education began in 1998. "I initially ventured into the health field at the University of Missouri in Columbia with dreams of becoming a pediatric oncologist." Having left Mizzou without a degree, she later resumed her education at Drury University, eventually earning an associate's degree in business administration and two bachelor's degrees, one in English and the other in writing.

The crowning achievement of her master's degree at S&T was a thesis titled "The History of Technical Communication Instruction at Missouri University of Science and Technology: The Evolution of a Curriculum." "The work was difficult but rewarding," she said, "and I think the findings are not only important but could (and, perhaps, should) lead to further research." After graduation, she became a technical editor in S&T's Office of Graduate Studies and remained in that role until she joined our faculty in 2015 as a teaching professor.

In her new role, Roberson is crafting accurate, informative content for St. Jude's Children Research Hospital. "My primary goal is to communicate complex medical informa-

tion in a clear and understandable manner. This involves translating medical jargon and technical terminology into plain language that is easily comprehensible to the general public."

She credits serendipity for leading her to the job announcement. "I came across this job posting on LinkedIn when I was doing what I did often as an educator, preparing for class." According to Roberson, there were several factors that prepared her for her current role:

- **Background in technical writing:** Her expertise and enthusiasm for technical writing provided a strong foundation for the work she now does.
- **Interest in working with children and their families:** She was drawn to the hospital's mission and its work with families.
- **Personal experience with illness:** She grew up in a family affected by various illnesses, including cancer.
- **Research skills:** Her proficiency in research further equipped her for the job of medical content writer

Roberson hopes she can make a positive difference in the lives of the families seeking treatment and care at St. Jude. "I love the written word; there's power in it. I hope to apply my knowledge, experience, and passion in such a way as to remove communication barriers, to the best of my ability, and contribute to the high quality of excellence that can be expected from St. Jude."



Biology student Enoch Twumasi interviews Roberson.

Some ETC majors add teaching certification to their degrees

Students who pursue the BS degree in English and technical communication with teaching certification must complete the same major requirements as other ETC students, but they also take courses in education and have to pass a Missouri content exam before doing their student teaching. When they graduate, they are certified to work as full-time English teachers in high schools throughout Missouri, but they are also qualified to do any job an ETC major can do.

“Students go out into the community with a full content degree, as well as training in how to teach,” said Phyllis Blackwell, Missouri S&T’s academic advisor for middle school and high school teaching certification.

Seven ETC majors are currently pursuing teaching certification in English. They have different motivations for wanting to be teachers. Senior Kate Schisler has always loved reading and working with children. “I chose English secondary education because it puts the best of both worlds together.” Both of her parents are teachers. Junior Madison Kastner was inspired by her senior year English teacher. “He solidified my desire to go into English education because I liked what he taught and how he taught.”

Teaching certification students complete a set number of hours of in-class observations per semester at area schools. This on-site experience provides them with a preview of their future roles. They start with 30 hours of observation in the first semester, increasing to 60 hours in the second semester and beyond. After passing the Missouri content exam for English, they engage in student teaching in their final semester.

The field experience is crucial because, among other things, it helps the student confirm they really want to be a high school English teacher. Even if they decide they do not, they will have a degree they can use for other jobs, such as writer or editor, content developer, social media strategist, or web designer.

Kastner, who is currently observing a class in Rolla High School, underscores the importance of field experience. “I cannot imagine going into student teaching without the field experience because you need to see the different dynamics in classrooms, which vary greatly in size.” Her exposure to different classroom dynamics has equipped her to meet opportunities and challenges.

Schisler has witnessed “how draining teaching can be.” Some teachers give too much of themselves to their jobs. They sacrifice other parts of their lives and risk burnout. Schisler knows she will have to find a satisfactory balance. “I can’t give 100% of myself all the time.”



Schisler has a part-time job as a tutor at Uniquely Wired Consultants, a Rolla-based firm specializing in reading support services. She works one-on-one with students of different ages. Schisler also works part-time at a local bookstore and loves to read. According to her GoodReads page, she read more than 100 books in 2023, mostly novels, such as *Nicholas Sparks’ Dreamland* and *Tiffany D. Jackson’s Grown*.

Kastner praises the ETC faculty for helping her learn the content of her discipline. “I really like our department. I am Dr. [Rachel] Schneider’s biggest fan. I have learned a lot from her.” The faculty play a crucial role in shaping the soon-to-be teachers’ understanding of not only the content but also different teaching styles they could adopt.

Looking ahead, Schisler plans to teach in the St. Louis area upon completing the program. Kastner would like to teach at Marquette High School in the Rockwood School District because of their excellent English program.

ETC proposes new PhD program in technical communication



Dr. Ryan Cheek

During the 2022–2023 academic year, Professors Ryan Cheek, Carleigh Davis, Eric Bryan, and Karen Head developed a proposal for a PhD program in technical communication. Vetted and approved by the full department, the proposal has been approved at the campus and UM system levels and is awaiting approval at the state level. The new program could be implemented as early as this fall semester.

The program aims to address evolving educational needs and contribute significantly to the field of technical communication. The curriculum includes four emphasis areas: global communication, professional communication, research and design, and teaching and writing. The program's modality could include both campus-based with a hybrid approach and distance-based through online delivery, offering flexibility with asynchronous and synchronous instruction.

Dr. Kristine Swenson, chair of the ETC department, emphasizes the opportunities that the program's approval would bring, fostering a five-year engagement with students compared to the standard two years for master's degrees. This extended period is anticipated to deepen integration of the technical communication programs with STEM fields on campus and enhance the department's growth.

Swenson expresses enthusiasm for strategic hiring to support the program, recognizing the crucial role new

faculty members would play in shaping its success. "We are currently in the process of hiring a new faculty member," Dr. Swenson states. "I am really excited about this." If all goes as planned, the new professor will join the department in August.

Dr. Cheek, assistant professor in our department, said that a PhD program in technical communication would enhance the reputation of S&T nationally and globally by adding a humanities-based doctorate that complements the STEM branding of the institution. "This is important for rankings from institutions like Carnegie and for fundings from agencies like the NSF, who prioritize convergence research in their solicitations."

According to Cheek, the proposed program represents a different approach to doctoral education in the humanities. "Instead of the traditional reproductive model where PhD students are recruited and trained for the (re)generation of the academic faculty workforce, we have built our program around a generative model committed to career diversity. This means placing career mentorship at the heart of the program and helping students leverage the advanced critical thinking, collaboration, research, and writing skills that doctoral education imparts on the paths they choose."

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Wright recruits tech com alumni for new MS advisory board

Our department has created alumni advisory boards several times in the past, but members of the latest advisory board were recruited specifically to provide input on the master's degree program in technical communication. All seven members of the board are graduates of our MS program, which will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year.

Dr. David Wright, professor of technical communication, was given the task of creating the new advisory board and managing it. He believes it is the opportune moment to leverage the wealth of experience from our MS alumni who are accomplished professionals. "The board is more than a link," he said. "It's a bridge between academia and industry, guiding our students towards success in the field of technical communication."

To populate the board, Wright had a list of nearly 100 MS alumni to choose from, but not all of them could be contacted or were willing to participate. He managed to persuade six accomplished individuals to donate their time and expertise:

Misty Adams (MS, 2013): Senior Technical Editor for the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine

Tara Bryan de Cañellas (2007): Technical Editor for the US Navy

Mariah Covington (2017): Project Management Professional

Priyanka Ganguly (2020): Ph.D. student in the rhetoric and writing at Virginia Tech

Garet Marling (2008): Business Architect for Cisco

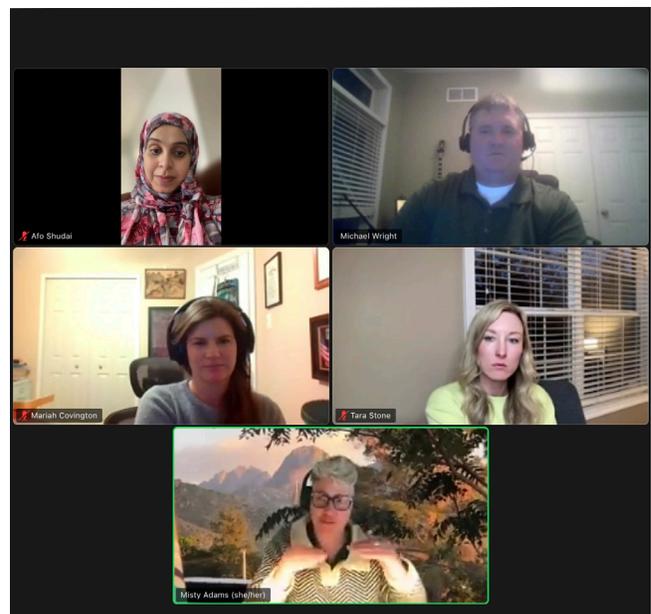
Tara Stone (2012): User Experience Designer for Integral

David Young (2013): Technical Documentation Manager for Ping Identity

Board members had their first meeting in October and a second meeting in November. They plan to meet monthly to discuss topics such as the curriculum, internships, career opportunities, and developments in the field. The input of board members will inform programmatic decisions, particularly as the department prepares to offer a PhD in technical communication. The doctoral program, if approved, will build upon the success of the MS program.



Dr. Wright in his office



Three of the seven alumni board members—Mariah Covington, Tara Stone, and Misty Adams—met on Zoom with Dr. Wright on November 13. Graduate student Afo Shudai was also in attendance.

Three BS majors offer their views on the new hybrid degree

The BS in English and Technical Communication is a hybrid undergraduate degree program, combining the technical with the nontechnical. Created by merging the English BA and the Tech Com BS in 2021, the new degree program has been around long enough to have majors who are juniors and seniors. Three of those majors offered their perspectives on the new degree.

Junior Teague McElroy switched from Aerospace to Education and then to ETC. He realized what he should be doing because he “loves reading.” After switching majors, he received jokes and comments from engineering students, but “despite social issues from engineers, the professors in the ETC department made it worthwhile.”

Like other majors, McElroy felt drawn to the new degree not only because of the technical skills the program teaches but also the literature skills. The technical skills include video editing, technical documentation, and web authoring. The literature skills include close reading, critical thinking, interpretation, and writing.

McElroy thinks that the ETC department has “awesome professors and would suggest taking any of the classes.” Outside of the department, McElroy is involved in KMNRR, the student-run local radio station, as well as the campus writing center. At KMNRR, he is using his ETC skills by working to restructure and edit the radio station’s constitution.

Sam George is a senior planning to graduate in Spring 2024 with a degree in English and technical communication. The most valuable skills he learned as an ETC major were “how to develop projects and the elements of commu-



Teague McElroy stands in the doorway of the KMNRR radio station.

nication for documents.” George thinks that ETC can be improved for future students by increasing “integration into the engineering fields by promoting more involvement in engineering projects and showing how much communication matters.”

George notes that ETC is not part of STEM. In fact, “most of the degree is humanities based and communication based.” But science can be found in courses such as TCH COM 3440 Theory of Visual Technical Communication, which George took last semester. Part of this course touches on illusions in visual communication and how such illusions are processed differently by viewers, rooted in eyesight and the brain.

After graduating with the BS, George will remain in the ETC department to pursue a master’s degree. He feels confident he will secure his ideal job based on the skills and knowledge he has acquired in the BS and MS programs. He is already using these skills while serving as vice president of Southwinds, the student-run literary arts magazine.

Samantha Warren is a senior majoring in English and technical communication, scheduled to graduate in Fall 2024. She plans to continue her education by pursuing a master’s degree at Missouri S&T. She considers ETC to be the bridge “between the technical and nontechnical because of both English classes and tech com classes” in the new BS program.

Warren has found value in the courses she has taken, including layout and design and business communication. She had “never heard of technical communication at all until an advisor in high school specifically recommended this program.” Now she pushes incoming students to consider ETC as a degree, as her experience in the department has been positive and rewarding.



Samantha Warren takes a break between classes in the lobby on the top-floor of the H-SS building.

Meet Our New GTAs

In our department, a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) is a full-time student pursuing the Master of Science in Technical Communication and a part-time employee with teaching responsibilities in English and technical communication courses. The following GTAs were new to our department in 2023.



Edrina Adjei-Manu

A resident of Ghana's Western North Region, Edrina earned a BS in real estate (2021) from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. Edrina's ambition is to build upon the communication skills—both speaking and writing—that she developed in the real estate industry back home and apply them toward technology instruction. While in the MS program, she hopes to become well versed in technical editing, technical writing, and multimedia design, enhancing her marketability and opening new employment vistas. Dr. Wright's research into smart home technology is particularly appealing to her because of her real estate background. Apart from her academic pursuits, she finds joy in cooking, especially experimenting with new recipes and trying out different national cuisines.



Daniel Obekpa Agbo

Daniel came to us with a BS in statistics and computer science (2010) from the University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Nigeria, and over a decade of work experience in the banking industry. He hopes to exploit connections between statistics and technical communication as well as computer science. His vision involves bridging the communication gap between business stakeholders and technology experts. Beyond academics, Daniel takes pleasure in the complexities of soccer, immersing himself in analyzing strategies and drawing inspiration from the sport's teamwork and determination. Recently he became a new father.



Saber Mirzaei Ahandani

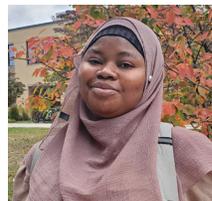
Saber is only the second student from Iran in the history of our MS program. He holds an associate's degree in mechanics-machinery (2002) from the Majlesi branch of Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, and a BA in industrial management (2011) from the Eslamshahr branch of Payam-e Noor University, Tehran. His employment history includes over a decade as a quality control inspector for one company and almost a decade as an HR consultant for another. Saber is dedicated to mastering technical

communication, equipping himself with the skills to streamline communication processes for companies. Apart from his academic pursuits, he enjoys fishing, finding both tranquility and focus in this leisure-time activity.



Ebenezer Amofo Ameyaw

Ebenezer, a versatile professional from Ghana, possesses a BA in religious studies (2011) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, and an MBA in human resource management (2017) from the University of Ghana, Legon Accra. One of his goals is to facilitate better communication and organizational understanding by combining technical communication skills with his expertise in HR management. Besides his professional pursuits, he indulges in writing, reading, and competitive table tennis. He is the author of *Every Soldier Will Go to Heaven*, available on Amazon.



Maryam Muhammad Bashir

Born and raised in Nigeria, Maryam has a diploma in information technology application (2012) from HiIT Training Institute, Kano, and a bachelor of fisheries (2018) from Federal University, Dutsin-ma. She was drawn to technical communication by a desire to translate complex ideas into simple language. Her goal is to use technical communication to enhance user experiences in the fast-paced tech world. Outside of work and studies, Maryam enjoys preparing traditional African meals, listening to Nigerian hip-hop music, and dancing with friends. She is particularly proud of her role in leading a group of Muslim sisters when she was serving with the National Youth Service Corps in Osun state.



Abigail Boafu

Hailing from the Eastern Region of Ghana, Abigail has a BS in geological engineering (2012) from the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa, and an MS in sustainability and climate policy (2019) from Curtin University of Science and Technology, Perth, Australia. She worked as a data analyst, project engineer, and project supervisor for Safety and Environmental Research Consultancy in Accra before coming to the United States. Abigail aspires to be a catalyst for transformative action, fostering dialogue, understanding, and action for a more sustainable world. Beyond her professional pursuits, she enjoys cooking creatively, singing, and exploring interesting places.

New GTAs (cont.)



Olivia Winslow Cheek

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Olivia earned a BS of English and technical communication (2022) and a graduate certificate in technical communication (2022) from Missouri S&T. She aspires to create tangible positive change in society by enhancing accessibility, improving user experiences, and promoting inclusivity. Her passion lies in visual technical communication, and she excels at document design and layout. She had one of the winning designs for the 2023 issue of *Panoply*, the department's newsletter. Olivia has been very active in S&T's student chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.



Kira Courtois

Kira, a former resident of Arizona, began her studies at Missouri S&T as an engineering student, but she switched to technical communication after enjoying one of the courses in our curriculum. She graduated with a BS in English and technical communication (2023) from Missouri S&T and entered the MS program as a graduate track pathway student. Last summer, she had a remote internship with Medical Solutions, a staffing and recruiting company headquartered in Omaha. Kira is a dedicated musician, a former writing center consultant, and a current staff member of *Southwinds*, S&T's literary magazine.



Martha Dey

Coming from Ghana's Volta Region, Martha possesses a BA in geography and rural development (2017) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. After her undergraduate studies, she collected, analyzed, and interpreted data for Cocoa Marketing Company and conducted institutional research for the Medical and Surgical Skills Institute in Korlebu. Following her entrepreneurial bent, she started her own catering business called Deychills in 2019. She has an interest in the use of social media and web genres to communicate technical information. She hopes to learn more about technical editing, content creation, cross cultural communication, and proposal writing as she progresses through the MS program. In her leisure time, Martha expresses herself through song and cooking, especially baking. One of Deychills's specialties is pastries.



Keillyn Johnson

Keillyn, a resident of St. Louis, graduated from Missouri S&T with a BS in English and technical communication and a BS in applied mathematics in December 2022 and an MS in technical communication in December 2023.

Whereas most tech com students shy away from math, Keillyn embraced it, making it a second undergraduate major. They were able to finish the MS in just one year, even while working as a GTA, because they took advantage of the department's graduate track pathway program, which allows for some credits to be shared between the BS and MS. Keillyn was very active in the S&T chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honorary society, participating in live readings on Twitch for charity and helping to organize the brown bag speakers series. They were also a cherished writing consultant in the campus writing center.



Gilda Chilotam Ojukwu

Chilotam comes from Alor in Nigeria's Anambra state. She earned a BA in English and literary studies (2020) from Covenant University in Ota. She also earned certificates of completion for the following online courses: Business English (2020) from the University of Washington, Cracking the Creativity Code (2020) from Israel Institute of Technology, Speak English Professionally from Georgia Institute of Technology (2020), and both Becoming a UX Writer (2022) and Introduction to UX Writing (2022) from Udemy. These courses betray her interest in business communication and user experience. Her ambition lies in enhancing user experience within the business sector through writing and knowledge sharing. Beyond academics, Chilotam actively creates YouTube content, sharing insights about technical communication and life experiences in Nigeria and the United States.

Chilotam actively creates YouTube content, sharing insights about technical communication and life experiences in Nigeria and the United States.



Adam Rentz

As an undergraduate at Missouri S&T, Adam participated in extracurricular activities such as the rocket design team and the campus literary magazine *Southwinds*. He also served on the department's undergraduate advisory board for a year. After graduating with a BS in English and technical communication in 2023, he immediately entered the MS program through the graduate track pathway. His motivation for pursuing a graduate degree in technical communication was to deepen his knowledge of the discipline, providing greater context for the skills he acquired in the undergraduate program. He expects to graduate in May 2025. A resident of Aurora, Illinois, Adam enjoys hiking, practicing gymnastics, and exploring different parts of the United States.

After graduating with a BS in English and technical communication in 2023, he immediately entered the MS program through the graduate track pathway. His motivation for pursuing a graduate degree in technical communication was to deepen his knowledge of the discipline, providing greater context for the skills he acquired in the undergraduate program. He expects to graduate in May 2025. A resident of Aurora, Illinois, Adam enjoys hiking, practicing gymnastics, and exploring different parts of the United States.

From Rolla to Oxford: An interview with alumnus Zach Burke

“I know AI tools are a big topic of discussion in computer science, but I think English and communications majors would do well to get familiar with those tools, as well. Majors should start thinking about how they can use AI in the content creation process.”



Alumnus Zach Burke graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Missouri S&T and went on for a master’s degree in creative writing at the University of Oxford in England. After brief stints as a podcast producer, a bookseller, and a web developer, Burke now works as a licensing operations manager for Oxford University Press.

“I actually started as a computer science major at S&T in 2009,” he said. “After about a year of that, I discovered that either my math skills or my patience—I’m not sure which—weren’t quite there, so I ended up moving to English, which is what my passion was anyway. I love writing.” He earned minors in creative writing and history in addition to the BA.

While he was in our department, he was active in student organizations, serving as president of the Missouri S&T chapter of Sigma Tau Delta and vice president of the literary magazine *Southwinds*. He also worked as a resident assistant in a dormitory and a writing tutor in the campus writing center.

In his senior year at S&T, Burke applied to a number of graduate schools. He was delighted when the University of

Oxford accepted him into its graduate-level creative writing program. He began his studies at Oxford a few months after graduating from S&T in May 2013.

The Oxford program was a two-year, part-time course of study. “We basically had intense two-week residences every few months,” he said. “We would go off and write and then come back and tear each other apart.”

His class had about 15 students in it, working on a variety of projects. “There were poets and documentary makers. There was a CNN news anchor who was writing a memoir. It was a really strange mix, a really great mix of people, a musician, novelists.”

Due to UK visa restrictions, Burke couldn’t live in the UK full time because the program was part-time. “I ended up getting a freelance artist visa in Berlin and living there while I was in the Oxford program. I was traveling between Germany and the UK.”

His course of study lasted for two years, from 2013 to 2015. His thesis won the A.M. Heath Prize for Fiction, the crowning achievement of his newly acquired Master of Studies in Creative Writing. “Oxford is an incredible university. A crazy amount of resources. By far, the biggest library I’ve ever seen. It was a great place to be.”

After graduation, Burke stayed on in Oxford for another two years. “I was awarded a graduate entrepreneur visa from the University for an arts podcast, which I ran for two years.” The podcast featured episodes focusing on new writers and musicians in the U.K.

During the same period, he also worked at Waterstones as a bookseller. That is where he met his future wife, a fellow employee. Although he had to move back to Berlin in 2018 because of visa difficulties, his absence did not derail his love life. “We got married just as the pandemic hit.” His wife eventually became a marketing assistant for Oxford University Press (OUP). After his return to Oxford, Burke joined her as an employee at OUP.

In his current role as a licensing operations manager, Burke provides support to the sales team in many ways, but he also works with OUP’s audiobook program. “I pitch audio books basically. If I think one of our titles would be good in audio, I’ll pitch it to places like Audible or Recorded Books. After we get an agreement in place, we’ll turn it into an audio book.”

Looking back at his time at Missouri S&T, Burke said the skills he acquired have been valuable. “I have had a lot of experiences that I owe to S&T.” He credits English professor Kate Drowne for the encouragement she gave him. “Dr. Drowne was huge for me. I owe her quite a bit.”

Burke offers the following advice to current students in our department: “I know AI tools are a big topic of discussion in computer science, but I think English and communications majors would do well to get familiar with those tools, as well. Majors should start thinking about how they can use AI in the content creation process. We’re already seeing it change the way we work.”

ETC students find value and convenience in GTP program

“[The GTP program] offered a valuable advantage in terms of time, allowing me to complete my degree a year ahead of the traditional route.”
— Keillyn Johnson

Many departments on campus have a Graduate Track Pathway (GTP) program, and so does our department. Started in 2020, our GTP program allows an undergraduate student to take up to 9 credit hours (3 courses) of upper level (5000 or 6000-level) technical communication courses and count them for both the bachelor’s degree in English and technical communication and the master’s degree in technical communication.

Thus, when the student graduates from the BS program and enters the MS program officially, the student already has 9 credit hours toward a graduate degree and needs to take only 21 more credit hours (7 courses). The double-counted courses are referred to as “shared courses” because the same courses are shared by the bachelor’s and master’s and meet requirements in both degrees.

“We created our GTP program in 2020 because we wanted to make it easier for our Bachelor of Science students to continue on for the Master of Science,” says Dr. Ed Malone, assistant department chair for graduate studies. “An undergraduate student might not want to stay for two more years to take 10 additional courses in technical communication, but they might have time to stay for a single calendar year and take seven (7) more courses (1 in summer, 3 in fall, and 3 in spring).”

Our GTP program is available only to undergraduate students majoring in English and technical communication because they already have a strong foundation in technical communication and do not require as much coursework in technical communication as someone who enters the master’s degree program without a bachelor’s degree in the discipline.

Rudi Starek Turner was a GTP student who graduated with a BS degree in technical communication in December 2020 and added a master’s degree to her credential exactly one year later. “For me, pursuing a master’s degree seemed like an awful journey through the traditional route,” Turner said, “but the GTP program provided the solution I needed. The abbreviated timeline and cost-efficiency made it all possible.”

Because she went on for the MS, Turner had the opportunity to work as a graduate teaching assistant for one



Keillyn Johnson

semester, further enhancing her credentials. She now works as an application engineer at Schenck Process in Kansas City. Her job responsibilities include building quotes for customers in the food industry.

Keillyn Johnson graduated with a BS in applied mathematics and a BS in English and technical communication in December 2022. Bringing nine shared credits of technical communication into the master's degree program, they took three graduate courses in Spring 2023, and four courses in Fall 2023, while working as a graduate teaching assistant for two semesters. They graduated with the MS in tech com in December 2023.

Johnson would not have gone on for a master's degree if it had required 30 more credit hours. "[The GTP program] offered a valuable advantage in terms of time," they said, "allowing me to complete my degree a year ahead of the traditional route."



Emma Likert

Although the traditional route to the MS degree requires a minimum of 30 hours, most students with graduate teaching assistantships stay for four semesters of funding and earn 36 credit hours. Johnson needed just 21 more credit hours (two semesters) after the BS to finish the MS.

Johnson plans to pursue a career in industry and believes the GTP program is well suited for industry-bound students. "I hold the view that the master's degree is more beneficial in industry than academia, where a Ph.D. is typically required," they said.

Emma Likert is currently a BS student in the GTP program. She took three hours of shared credit in Fall 2023 and is taking another six hours this semester. She is on track to graduate with the BS in May 2024 and complete the MS by May 2025.

Typically a GTP student takes two 5000-level courses and one 6000-level course for shared credit as an undergraduate, and Likert is no exception. She notes that the upper-level courses can be challenging at times, but they are enjoyable and rewarding, and she values the knowledge gained from them.

Emma shared that even if she could not double-count three courses for the bachelor's and master's degrees, she would still pursue a master's degree in technical communication after completing the BS. She is genuinely interested in the field of technical communication and understands the benefit of having a graduate degree in today's world.

Comings and goings: New roles for staff and faculty

In Spring 2023, the department welcomed a new full-time staff member, Anna Ramirez. She has the official job title of Business Support Specialist II. She is likely to be the person who helps you when you call or visit the department.

Anna replaced Linda Sands, who had worked in our department for many years and retired from full-time employment in summer 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Linda continued to work part-time in our department until the end of 2022. She is now working part-time as a program/project support coordinator in the Missouri Center for Transportation Innovation at S&T.

Two professors left our department for greener pastures at the end of Academic Year 2022–2023:

- Dr. Karen Head, professor of English, is now Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs at Augusta University, Augusta, Georgia.
- Dr. Beth Concepción, teaching professor of English, is now Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Linfield University, McMinnville, Oregon.

Professors Elizabeth Roberson and Kendrea James also left ETC at the end of 2023. There are separate stories about their departures in this issue of the newsletter.

We wish our friends success and happiness in their new roles.

Former distance student achieves success as strategic communicator

“Always do your best’ does not mean ‘always turn in perfect work.’ Writers are horrible perfectionists, and this is something I still struggle with! But some days, your best will be ‘not completely terrible,’ and it will have to be okay.”

Laura Studyvin earned a graduate certificate and master’s degree in technical communication as a distance student and is now working as a strategic communicator on campus. She is part of Missouri S&T’s marketing and communications team. Her journey to find a job she liked highlights the benefits of continuing education and distance learning.

Studyvin graduated from Rolla High School, but she did not stay in town for her undergraduate degree. She chose the University of Missouri – Columbia, the state’s flagship university, earning a BA in English. “I was always a bookworm, so the English degree was inevitable,” she said.

Returning to Rolla after graduation, she worked as support staff in a local office for several years. Meanwhile, in Fall 2018, she started taking courses in technical communication toward a four-course graduate certificate. “Finding a job that fit my interests was difficult,” she said, “so I decided to pursue technical communication to expand my skill set.” She was able to work full-time during the day and take one or two online courses per semester, usually at night.

Our graduate certificate program can be a pathway into the master’s degree program, in that a student can count the four certificate courses toward an MS, leaving only six more courses to complete. Studyvin finished the certificate in December 2019 and immediately transitioned to the master’s, again as a part-time distance student.

She made this transition just as the coronavirus was spreading around the country. At S&T, all classes went online in March 2020. Fortunately for Studyvin, her technical editing course was already online. “When the pandemic hit, I was very glad to already be a distance student!”

In early 2021, one of her professors recommended her for a student writing position in S&T’s marketing and communications department. For the next year, she worked part time as a writer in what amounted to an informal internship. She was offered a full-time position as a senior strategic communications associate in March 2022, about two months before her graduation with the Master of Science in Technical Communication.

“There was some restructuring in marketing and communications, and a full-time position became available,” she explained. “I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.”

Now her byline appears frequently on press releases issued by the university. Her news stories are often reprinted verbatim in area newspapers and used in adapted form by many other sources.

“I write a lot about what’s happening at Leach Theatre, and big annual events like Celebration of Nations and St. Pat’s. Sometimes I get to write about what the design teams are doing, or about student research projects. Sometimes, I get to help with department projects that have nothing to do with writing, like working at S&T’s booth at the state fair.”

Studyvin offers the following advice for students in our department: “Always do your best’ does not mean ‘always turn in perfect work.’ Writers are horrible perfectionists, and this is something I still struggle with! But some days, your best will be ‘not completely terrible,’ and it will have to be okay.”

S&T’s Haunted Mine opens Oct. 20

Posted by Laura Studyvin
On October 9, 2023

India Association at Missouri S&T to host Diwali celebration Nov. 5

Posted by Laura Studyvin
On October 26, 2023

Former U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt to open Chancellor’s Speaker Series at Missouri S&T

Posted by Laura Studyvin
On October 17, 2023

Subhashini Gamagedara: Landscape architect as technical communicator

When she started our MS program in technical communication in 2011, Subhashini Herath Gamagedara never dreamed she would become a landscape architect. She now works as a park planner for the City of Oklahoma City. Over the last fifteen years, she has traveled a long, winding road from her beginnings in Sri Lanka.

Gamagedara graduated from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, in 2010, having majored in geography, sociology, and English. Instead of remaining in her home country and working as a teacher or other professional, she accompanied her husband, who was already a graduate student in chemistry at Missouri S&T, back to the United States.

Finding herself in Rolla, Gamagedara decided to make productive use of her time by furthering her education. She applied for admission to S&T's master's degree program in technical communication, which was only six years old at the time. She was not only admitted to the program, but she was also awarded a graduate teaching assistantship.

Under the guidance of Dr. Kathryn Northcut, then supervisor of our department's GTA program, Gamagedara taught one section of English 65 Introduction to Technical Communication each semester. "As a graduate student, I not only took courses but I also taught them, enriching my understanding of technical communication," she says.

Also under Dr. Northcut's supervision, Gamagedara wrote a master's thesis, "Understanding the Challenges that International Graduate Teaching Assistants (IGTAs) Face in Technical Communication Programs in the US." She looks back on this major project with both satisfaction and pride.

After her graduation in 2013, Gamagedara moved with her husband to Oneonta, New York, after he accepted a teaching position at Hartwick College. The city, though beautiful with its surrounding mountains, presented a career challenge for her.

"It was a small town and lacked career opportunities for a professional spouse," Gamagedara notes, recounting her initial struggles with unemployment. Opportunity



Gamagedara shows off her well-earned student merit awards, presented to her at the ASLA Central States Conference in 2019.

eventually knocked in the form of a small IT company, where Gamagedara dabbled in marketing and web design. It was during this time that she began to contemplate an art-related career.

“I always had a passion and talent for art,” she says. She took the Strong Interest Inventory Assessment, and it helped her identify a profession. “Landscape architecture emerged as a potential career path.”

Supporting her career, her husband obtained a teaching position at the University of Central Oklahoma. “He applied there specifically because there was a graduate program in landscape architecture that I could apply to within a reasonable distance.”

“In 2015, I joined the University of Oklahoma’s Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) program,” Gamagedara recounts, her voice imbued with excitement. The three-year professional degree program was rigorous and challenging, but she excelled. For her graduate research project, “Healing Spring Creek: A Community and a Watershed Based Approach,” she won an award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

After her graduation in 2018, Gamagedara was hired by the City of Oklahoma City as a park planner, and she continues in this role today. “I conduct research to assist both short and long-term planning efforts for the City’s parks and trails system, coordinate with internal stake-

holders, consultants, and contractors through design and installation of projects, and compile various types of documentation for the department’s administrative tasks” – just to name a few of her activities.

After three years of working under a licensed landscape architect and passing four national exams, she recently acquired her own license.

Throughout her journey, Gamagedara never forgot the lessons from her technical communication education. “As someone from Sri Lanka, for whom English is a second language, going through the technical communication program at Missouri S&T was invaluable.”

As a park planner, Gamagedara applies her technical communication skills daily. “Whether it’s conducting research for a presentation or tailoring communication to an audience, the foundational principles I learned from technical communication are always at play.”

Gamagedara’s success is not just a story of career transformation but also the power of determination. “Many opportunities that enriched my career were due to taking initiative, having a good work ethic, and networking.”

To students in our department, she gives the following advice: “Do good work, make an impression, and build your professional network, and when a job opening arises, you’ll be at the forefront of their minds.”



Left to right: David Young, Melissa Wampler, and Subhashini Gamagedara, three classmates in our MS technical communication program, gave presentations at the Society for Technical Communication’s region 6 student conference at Missouri State University in April 2013.

“Cool projects aren’t just for engineers”: An interview with alumna Megan Kean

Once a high school graduate labeled as lacking direction and having her “head in the clouds,” Megan Kean (MS Tech Com, 2012) now spends a lot of time above the clouds as she jets to client meetings around the country as one of Kiewit’s business development managers in power delivery. Megan’s work reminds aspiring professional and technical communicators that “cool projects aren’t just for engineers.”

Megan’s climb at Kiewit afforded her the opportunity to travel all over the country and abroad—Toronto, Calgary, Anchorage, Seattle, Orlando, San Antonio, Portland, and many other places. Her travels now focus on her assigned regions: Pacific Northwest, Rockies and upper Midwest. “It’s been a journey,” said Kean, whose current position was not on her radar when she came to Rolla from South Dakota nearly two decades ago.

Why did you decide to move to Rolla and work at Missouri S&T?

Honestly, I had to get out of South Dakota. I had just graduated with a B.A. from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, majoring in English, art, and journalism. My cousin, who works at S&T, mentioned a job opening in the marketing and communications department, so I flew out and interviewed. I was offered the job and accepted without hesitation, resulting in my boyfriend [future husband] and me becoming official Missourians six weeks later. [Megan Kean-O’Brien worked as a communications specialist (2006-2011) and a senior communications specialist (2011-2014) in S&T’s marketing and communications.]

How did you go from being just an S&T employee to being a part-time graduate student as well?

I was bored, and it was one of those things where I wasn’t an engineer and my family, well, we like to challenge ourselves academically. And if I’m at an institution that has a great academic reputation and offers a discount for employees to attend, why not take advantage of it? I would have been a fool not to. It was a no brainer. If you don’t have something going on, do something for yourself!

Why did you choose technical communication?

I didn’t really understand what tech com was. I started by talking to some undergraduate students, and it made a little more sense to me and felt like a natural progression considering my undergrad degrees. So I thought, let’s go for it!



Megan spent a week in Texas, where she visited different project sites for transmission lines and substations. During her time there, she learned about project planning and execution from engineers, construction project managers, and crews. This experience was in preparation for a significant upcoming proposal for engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC).

Getting the degree was a lot of fun. You definitely form a lot of close bonds, at least we did back then. We were a pretty tight-knit group. We became a family, just like a real family. We ate together every Sunday. We pushed each other and wanted to see each other succeed. We realized we were all in it together, through the good, bad, and ugly.

We still talk; we are friends on Facebook, LinkedIn. They all remember Brooklyn when she was born in 2010. She was our tech com family’s first baby. [Megan graduated with her MS in tech com in May 2012, but she continued to work at S&T for two more years. A second daughter, Tori, was born in 2013.]

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When and why did you leave S&T for Burns & McDonnell in Kansas City?

I was going through a divorce and wanted a place to start over for my daughters and me. And as much as I loved working in higher ed, I wanted to put my degree to use on the corporate side. Burns & Mac has always been a highly regarded engineering firm, and the interview team made a big deal about Rolla being on my resume. When I received the offer, I figured it was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that Rolla produces more than engineering and stereotypical science-field graduates.

Burns & McDonnell is an engineering firm headquartered in Kansas City. In my role as a staff marketing coordinator, I was a jack of all trades, master of none. I worked on proposals, client events, trade shows, marketing materials, interview presentations, etc. for the global facilities group. I owe Burns & Mac a lot of credit for building upon the foundation of my MS education.

What drew you to Kiewit?

While I certainly appreciate my time at Burns & Mac, in 2017 Kiewit recruited me for a proposal coordinator role.

Kiewit is best known for being a heavy infrastructure construction firm; however, they've made a name for themselves in the energy, water, and engineering markets. Kiewit was more conveniently located than Burns and Mac [in Kansas City, MO].

Even though Kiewit's headquarters are in Omaha, they have an office in Lenexa, Kansas. It was closer to my daughters' school and our home [in Kansas], eliminating my need to pay taxes in both Missouri and Kansas.

Kiewit offered me the ability to focus solely on proposals, work on bigger proposals, while providing me greater flexibility as a single parent. It's like Burns & Mac provided me the opportunity to grow what I learned in my master's program, whereas Kiewit pretty much gave me the wings and said, "OK, now go fly."

[Megan started at Kiewit as proposal lead (2017-2021). She was promoted to senior proposal lead (2021-2022) and then business development coordinator (2022-2023), before becoming business development manager in 2023.]

continued on next page



Megan went on a glacier hike in Alaska with some clients after the Northwest Public Power Association Conference in May 2023.

Are there any projects you are especially proud of?

As the senior proposal lead, I led the team developing major proposals for the energy sector of the business, focused primarily in power delivery and offshore wind pursuits. Many of the proposals required me to do a lot of research or take a “crash course” of sorts from a subject matter expert as preparation. My proudest achievement is writing the winning South Fork Offshore Wind bid for Kiewit. South Fork is the first American-made offshore substation.

[Megan spent seven months writing Kiewit’s proposal for the contract to build the substation for this historic project involving the American company Eversource and the Danish company Ørsted.]

What do you do in your current role?

In the role of power delivery business development manager, I focus on building client relationships in the Pacific Northwest, Rockies, and Upper Midwest regions. My role is about building trust and becoming a liaison between the client and Kiewit. I take client information back to the proposal team and tell them exactly what the client wants; I’m essentially the client’s advocate. In a way, I help lead the charge by providing our team the strategy.



When Megan graduated from S&T in May 2012, her daughter was there to congratulate her.

What has been the biggest obstacle in your professional life?

Being a female in a male-dominated field; but anyone who knows me knows I can hold my own and I don’t put up with anyone’s BS. I’m fortunate to work for a company that recognizes women’s contribution to the A/E/C industry.

Has your Tech Com degree been useful to you?

Without a doubt! Even in business development, I still apply usability and learning styles. It’s my job to know the clients in order to communicate with them effectively and efficiently. I ask the TPC questions: How can I appeal to future clients? How can I communicate with them? How can I meet my client’s needs? There are so many aspects that I’m able to pull from the master’s program into what I’m currently doing today.

What advice do you have for aspiring professional and technical communicators?

The quality of work you do in school will prepare you for the real world. Employers don’t want to see anything incomplete, and especially in technical communication, it is imperative we complete work efficiently and effectively because it can impact the end result.

Be ready to explain what technical communication is. One of my biggest challenges as someone with a tech com degree has been explaining what technical communication is—and I’m not joking. This is still happening after a decade! Push yourself. You got this.

New PhD Program (continued from page 5)

Tammy Korte, who graduated from our MS program in December, said she plans to apply for the new PhD program. “I am extremely excited at the prospect of a tech com PhD program at S&T. ... I spied the job listing online for the new hire and was excited to see that areas like accessibility and social justice were mentioned,” she said.

The proposed PhD program in technical communication would mark a significant milestone for ETC, reflecting the department’s commitment to education, research, and excellence. Our department looks forward to nurturing a new generation of scholars who will leave a lasting impact on their fields and contribute to societal betterment on a global scale.



Tammy Korte

ETC faculty and students weigh in on the grade inflation controversy

Grade inflation has become a topic of national concern in higher education in the last year or so. In April 2023, for example, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published an article titled “The Grade Inflation Conversation We’re Not Having” and noted that “GPAs are going up, but colleges aren’t talking about it.” Similar stories have appeared recently in other newspapers and magazines, such as *Forbes*, *The Atlantic*, *New York Times*, and *Christian Science Monitor*.

“I would define grade inflation as the systemic lowering of the threshold set for students to achieve a certain grade: the quality of work that would once have received a ‘B’ now receives an ‘A,’ what once would have received a ‘C’ now receives a ‘B,’ etc.,” said Dr. Eric Bryan, professor of English.

Bryan suspects that grade inflation has occurred at all institutions of higher education, including S&T, although he does not have data to support this suspicion beyond what he reads in the media and hears from colleagues.

The specific causes of grade inflation may be difficult to identify, but there are likely many factors involved. According to Bryan, “One factor may be the growing need for higher retention and graduation rates for universities and colleges, which leads administrators to put pressure on departments to retain as many students as possible.” Professors might find it more convenient to manage slightly inflated grades than to confront the challenges linked to assigning lower grades to students.

Other factors might include the way assignments are constructed today compared to in the past, the major role that student evaluations now play in annual performance reviews of faculty and tenure and promotion decisions, the widespread use of rubrics in grading, and the integration of specific technologies into instruction.

To address grade inflation, Bryan proposed potential measures, but he emphasizes that some solutions could cause more problems than they solve. One measure would involve implementing a university mandate specifying the distribution of grades in each class (e.g., 10% As, 20% Bs, 30% Cs). While this measure would ensure a consistent grading pattern, he noted that such a grade distribution would not guarantee that every student receives the grade they deserve. An alternative might be the elimination of traditional grades in favor of a pass/fail system, although it, too, would come with its own set of costs and considerations.

Dr. Kate Drowne, a professor of English and former interim CASE dean, is currently a special assistant to the provost at Missouri S&T. Her perspective provides a valuable bridge between faculty experiences and institutional expectations on this critical topic.



Dr. Eric Bryan



Dr. Kate Drowne

“The term ‘grade inflation’ describes an overall assigning of higher grades to a standard of work that, at some time in the past, would probably have received lower grades,” Drowne said. She suspects that grade inflation likely exists at S&T, possibly in proportions comparable to other institutions, or perhaps even to a slightly lesser extent.

Grade inflation might occur to a lesser degree in STEM courses compared to non-STEM courses. In STEM courses, assessments often revolve around more “objective” metrics such as correct calculations, appropriate formula usage, and accurate identification of taxonomy.

“An ‘A’ should mean that the work submitted met the highest standards of a rubric developed by the instructor and shared with the students,” Drowne said. “The grade should be connected back to an assessment rubric and not just appear to the student to come out of nowhere. Grades of C and F should also reflect work calibrated to lower standards on assessment rubrics.”

Tracie Devault, assistant teaching professor of speech and media studies, believes excellent work should earn an “A” and mediocre work a “C.” “I have not seen any instances of [inflated grades at S&T] that I am aware of,” she said.

The comments of ETC students reflect the complexity of the issue (e.g., grade inflation vs. inflated grades) and the reasons for the controversy.

Abigail Boaf, an MS student in technical communication, doesn’t believe the value of an “A” is necessarily diminished when it becomes common. “It could mean that the instructor did a great job at getting the students to understand the material.”

Portia Ofori-Benefo, also an MS student in our department, believes a “C” grade should mean “average.” “A ‘C’ grade means the student met the requirements but didn’t excel. An average, acceptable performance.”

Faith Schaal, an ETC undergraduate, doesn’t believe there is a problem with grade inflation in our department. “Those who put in less work tend to get worse grades, so it feels just. If grade inflation were more of an issue, I’m sure I would have negative feelings about it, but I do believe that education should remain accessible.”

Saber Mirzaei Ahandani, another MS student, believes the “A” grade should be common. “I’m not jealous of other classmates. I hope all students get an ‘A’ on assignments.”

Alumna Megan Reade suspects that employers would be less likely to recruit graduates of a university where the common grade is an A. “They couldn’t use GPAs to find the best employees. They might have to implement their own testing to screen applicants.” She believes graduates might enter the workforce with a false sense of their own merit and have difficulty coping when mediocre work is not praised or appreciated.



Saber Mirzaei



Portia Ofori-Benefo

International students strengthen the ETC department in many ways

Our department has continuously evolved, especially through the growing presence of international students, reshaping the academic landscape. This ongoing transformation has not only diversified the student body but also significantly enriched the experiences and perspectives of faculty members.

Dr. Ed Malone, assistant chair for graduate studies in ETC, has witnessed the evolving demographics within the student population. From his arrival in 1993 to the launching of the technical communication programs in 2005, the department had very few international students as majors. From 2005 to 2020, however, the new MS program attracted international students from many different countries, such as Poland, India, Bangladesh, China, Taiwan, South

Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. In 2020, students from Ghana and Nigeria entered the program and now comprise 52 percent of all our graduate students.

Dr. Sarah Hercula, associate professor of linguistics, expresses profound appreciation for the ongoing evolution in demographics. “International students have shaped my personal and professional growth in many ways,” she said. In her research as a linguist, she explores the interaction between language and various social identity elements to address systems of oppression and inequality, and she advocates for the acceptance of linguistic diversity and cultural differences.

She emphasizes the critical role of diverse perspectives in creating a truly inclusive educational experience. “I de-



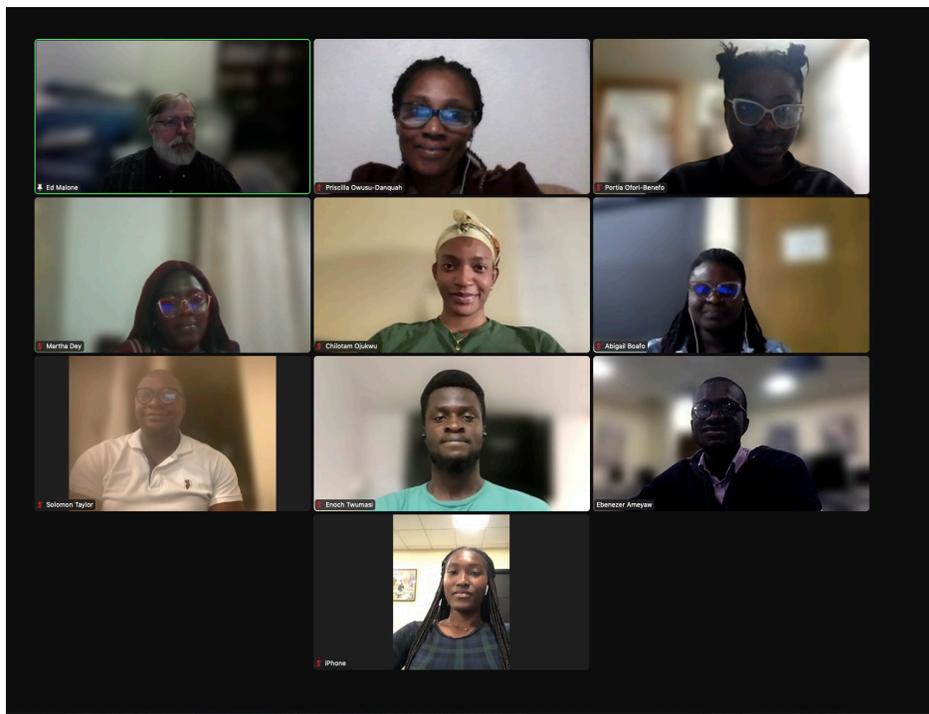
ETC graduate students

Front row, from left to right: Jude Enete, Portia Ofori-Benefo, Martha Dey, Edrina Adjei-Manu, Maryam Bashir, Ernest Oteng

Back row, from left to right: Priscilla Owusu-Danquah, Ebenezer Ameyaw, Saber Mirzaei, Frederick Sunkpal, Chilotam Ojukwu, Daniel Agbo, Felix Nyikwagh



From left to right: Ernest Oteng, Olivia Cheek, Frederick Sunkpal, Felix Nyikwagh, and Tammy Korte



Some students in Dr. Malone’s Advanced Layout and Design course pose for a screen capture after their class meeting on Zoom.

From top left: Ed Malone, Priscilla Owusu-Danquah, Portia Ofori-Benefo, Martha Dey, Chilotam Ojukwu, Abigail Bofo, Solomon Taylor, Enoch Twumasi, Ebenezer Ameyaw, and Edrina Adjei-Manu.

light in cultivating an inclusive classroom atmosphere that embraces diversity, including students of varying national origins, native language proficiency, and racial and ethnic backgrounds.”

“Teaching students in our graduate courses, especially Advanced International Technical Communication, has been an enriching experience,” Malone said. He enjoys the lively class discussions. Because of their diverse backgrounds, the students provide valuable insights into language, culture, communication, and politics.

Dr. David Wright, professor of technical communication, takes pride in the diversity of our graduate students, from their varied national origins to their different undergraduate degrees and work experience. “In the realm of our M.S. program, a mosaic of students emerges, each carrying a unique blend of personal, educational and professional backgrounds.”

He finds this mosaic to be in harmony with the discipline of technical communication. “The beauty of technical communication lies in its versatility, effortlessly weaving together individuals from various fields, finding common ground amid a diverse tapestry.”

James leaves S&T for teaching position in northwest Arkansas

“I couldn’t have asked for better people to work with. I learned so much from my colleagues and students at S&T. I am so grateful for every class, every student I met there, and I will carry all the lessons I learned with me forever.”



Professor James

Kendrea James, assistant teaching professor of speech and media studies, left Missouri S&T at the end of last semester for a teaching position at Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC). “I’m excited about my new job at NWACC,” she said, “but I was sad to leave my S&T family.” She taught at Missouri S&T for nearly six years and in the ETC department for three years.

James earned a BA in media studies in 2014 and an MA in communication in 2016, both from Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. After teaching part-time at several colleges, she came to Missouri S&T in Fall 2017 as a faculty member in the Department of Arts, Languages and Philosophy. After one year, she was promoted from lecturer to assistant teaching professor.

When the speech and media studies program moved to ETC in January 2021, James moved with it and continued to teach the public speaking course, which she referred to as her “bread and butter.” She loved seeing and hearing the students learning from one another.

One of James’s significant contributions during her time at S&T was the establishment of the speech and debate team in 2018. Starting from a modest beginning, the team grew steadily and now boasts over 10 actively participating students as it moves towards RSO status.

Some of her favorite memories are from traveling and competing with the team over the years. “It was so exciting to watch students go in and make an argument. Most of them had little experience in forensics, and it was always fun to watch them compete for the first time.”

James holds S&T students in high regard: “The students there are really special. They’re sincere and diligent, kind and intelligent, real problem solvers with compassion.”

The move to NWACC in Bentonville was motivated by her desire to be closer to family, but it also presents new opportunities for collaboration because of NWACC’s proximity to corporations like Walmart and Tyson. “I’m excited to see what the next chapter holds,” she said.

James plans to grow NWACC’s speech and debate team and hopes to coach the team to success in competitions, perhaps even against S&T students. “My former S&T students are already planning to meet me at some competitions next year. I’m really looking forward to that.”

Reflecting on her time at Missouri S&T, James said, “I couldn’t have asked for better people to work with. I learned so much from my colleagues and students at S&T. I am so grateful for every class, every student I met there, and I will carry all the lessons I learned with me forever.”



**Photo of Portia Ofori-Benefo
by Summer Potter**