



The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication Newsletter May 2008

2008 Conference to Celebrate 35th Anniversary

Mark your calendar for the 35th Annual Conference of CPTSC in Minneapolis at the University of Minnesota, Thursday October 2 through Saturday October 4, 2008.

This year's conference is the 35th anniversary of CPTSC, which began at the University of Minnesota. The Thursday night program will celebrate this anniversary. In addition, the web site and a display case at the conference will offer glimpses into the CPTSC archives, which are housed at the University of Minnesota library. Hosts Laura Gurak and Donald Ross have arranged for a tour of the University's new active learning classrooms and hope to include other campus activities such as a visit to the Usability Lab, the Center for Writing, and the [Charles Babbage Institute](#).

The business meeting on Saturday morning will be followed by excursions to the [Walker Art Center](#) and other downtown art and cultural institutions, or the historic [St. Anthony Falls](#) and mill district on the Mississippi River.

The conference will be held at the [Radisson University Hotel](#) on the East Bank Campus of the University. Aside from an Applebee's and a fancy dining room in the hotel, restaurants of various ethnic flavors are right down the street for lunch, or easily available by bus to downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul for dinner on Saturday. Participants are encouraged to stay over Saturday night to enjoy the complex variety of the Twin Cities, including art, theater, music, hiking, walking or running along the Mississippi River, shopping, professional and college athletics, the University libraries and archives, fall colors, and more.

So, save the dates for what we hope will be an engaging and memorable conference.

*Laura Gurak
Donald Ross
Local Arrangements Committee
University of Minnesota*

Programmatic Perspectives

Programmatic Perspectives Progress Report

The editors of the new online journal are happy to report that progress toward publication of the first issue of Programmatic Perspective is progressing as expected for March 2009. This progress includes finalizing the website, inviting advisory and review board members and first-volume authors to participate in this exciting new scholarly venue, conducting a focus group for 4Cs, and establishing editorial policy and procedures.

Website (programmaticallyperspectives.cptsc.unomaha.edu)

The Programmatic Perspectives website is progressing nicely. The design and navigation is nearly finished. We are in the process of finalizing content for submission procedures, copyright and editorial policies, and section descriptions. A link will be established from the

cptsc.org website to the PP website. The website will also include an online bibliography that lists all articles published in PP as well as all sources cited in PP articles.

Invitations to Write Articles

Eleven authors have accepted our invitation to write articles for the first volume of PP. Nine members have agreed to serve on the editorial advisory board. Invitations for reviewers will be sent out soon to about 30 members.

Policies and Procedures

We are establishing editorial policies for submissions, book reviews, copyright, and acceptances and fine tuning editorial procedures and will be compiling a manual this summer. [*Editor's note: see call for articles page 4*]

Advisory Board

Invitations have been sent out for advisory board members. Nine members have agreed to participate.

Reviewers

Invitations have been sent out to potential manuscript reviewers. Responses are still being compiled.

Tracy Bridgeford
Karla Kitalong
Bill Williamson, Editors

President's Corner

As I write this article for the spring CPTSC newsletter, we are midway between the 2007 conference and the upcoming 2008 conference.

Thinking back to the 2007 conference, I want to thank our program and local host committee chairs—Kathy Northcut, Molly Johnson, Jan Tovey, and Michelle Eble. The faculty and facilities at East Carolina University were welcoming and hospitable, and the conference program was thought-provoking and stimulating.

At the conference, we honored Sherry Burgus Little and James Zappen, two outstanding members of our community. Their contributions have been extensive, and their acceptance speeches reminded me of why CPTSC is a special organization for so many of us. I want to thank the 2007 DSA committee—Karen Schnakenberg (chair), Bill Karis, and Carolyn Rude—for their work and Katherine Staples and Laura Gurak for their comments about Sherry and Jim.

Looking forward to next year's conference, our program committee, led by Jerry Savage and Kirk St. Amant, and our local host committee, Laura Gurak and Donald

Ross, are already planning our next meeting, at which we will celebrate two significant anniversaries—the 100th anniversary of the University of Minnesota's rhetoric program and 35th anniversary of CPTSC. The CFP is included in this newsletter. I hope you will plan to join us there.

Finally, 2008 is an election year for CPTSC. Soon Jeff Grabill, our immediate past president, will be developing a slate of candidates nominated for offices in our organization. If you are interested in running, please contact Jeff (grabill@msu.edu). As someone who has served on the executive board for the past six years, I can assure you that it's an opportunity worth taking. The relationships you make will sustain you for years to come.

In closing, I hope you have a restful and productive summer. I can't wait to see y'all in Minneapolis this October!

*Kelli Cargile Cook
Utah State University*

Call for Proposals 2008 Annual Conference

Programs in Context: Past, Present, and Future

Thirty-five years ago, a group of educators came together in Minneapolis, MN to examine how the context in which technical and scientific communication programs existed affected the nature of those programs. That group called itself the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC), and since its founding, a central objective of CPTSC has been to examine the contexts in which programs in technical and scientific communication are developed and delivered.

Over time, a variety of forces have changed the contexts in which professional practices, research foci, and educational approaches in technical and scientific communication occur. The nature of technical and scientific communication has, in turn, evolved in response to changing technical, organizational, social, and cultural contexts.

Academic programs in technical and scientific communication have similarly changed and adapted to address such factors. For these reasons, the 35th anniversary of CPTSC's founding marks an important time for members to consider how constant contextual changes have affected, are affecting, and are likely in the future to affect our programs. The 35th annual conference, in turn, brings CPTSC back to Minneapolis, the site, or geographic context, of CPTSC's first annual meeting in order to examine this theme.

As program administrators, we need to understand not only simple causes and effects but also the complex contexts out of which changes affecting programs arise. The 2008 Annual Conference of the CPTSC wishes to address these ideas by inviting proposals for presentations that examine how contextual factors from local to global, may influence and be influenced by technical communication programs, directly or indirectly. Such contextual factors might include academic resources, geography, demographics, natural environment and climate, economic climate and budgets, social and cultural situations,

politics, and of course, developments in technology and science. We welcome a variety of perspectives and approaches—historical, pragmatic, empirical, or theoretical.

As we consider the past, present, and future contexts of our programs, we would also like to celebrate the life of Victoria Mikelonis, who invited us to Minneapolis for our 35th anniversary, and who passed away on August 14, 2007. She was present at the founding of CPTSC and was vital in many ways to the continuing development of our field.

Possible Topic Areas

Suggested topic areas for CPTSC conference proposals include but are not limited to examinations of the following (some of these topics could be addressed from historical perspectives or from perspectives that look to the future):

- How might technical communication programs reach beyond the contingencies of their localities to have a more far-reaching impact?
- How do service-area populations shape program design and delivery?
- What role should service learning play in the current and future development of programs?
- What strategies have programs developed for sustaining and extending their mission in times of budget troubles and economic downturns?
- In what ways are programs affected by and responding to emerging socio-cultural changes such as changing literacies, socio-cultural diversity awareness, linguistic diversity, changes in practices and attitudes toward health care, or social networking practices and technologies?
- How should programs address local-to-global changes in climate and other aspects of the natural environment?
- In what ways do programs respond to the political contexts in which technical communication is implicated (e.g., electoral processes, international diplomacy, immigration politics, national security, and education reform politics)?

- How might the context affecting technical and scientific community change in the future, what forces might cause such changes, and what can technical communication programs do to address such forces effectively?

- How have the changing contexts affecting graduate education led to new and different generations of educators who have different objectives for programs?

- How are online media changing the contexts in which technical communication programs provide education to a changing student base?

The CPTSC conference emphasizes discussion. The audience includes people from new, as well as established, programs and anyone with programmatic interests in technical and scientific communication. We welcome participants – administrators, faculty, and graduate students – from secondary, community college, or university levels, as well as representatives of industry.

Two kinds of presentation options are available at the CPTSC Annual Conference:

Position Paper

Position paper presentations must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Participants present five-minute position papers on programmatic issues (rather than reports of specialized research or presentations of particular teaching strategies) in order to generate discussion.

- Format does not allow for slide show presentations.

- Proceedings, published after the conference, often include expanded versions of position papers.

- Proceedings will only include those papers presented at the meeting.

Poster Presentation

Poster presentations must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Participants make five-minute poster presentations on programmatic issues.

Samples proposals/abstracts for last year's CPTSC conference can be found online at <http://www.cptsc.org/conferences/2008UofM/> should individuals wish to review them in preparation for crafting their own proposals for the 2008 CPTSC Conference.

Proposals for both Position Papers and Poster Presentations must explicitly note how the presenters will address both programmatic issues and the conference theme in the related paper or poster presentation.

Proposals are due by 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time on June 6, 2008.

Proposals should be submitted as .rtf files attached to email messages that are sent to CPTSC2008@gmail.com

For program questions, please contact the Program Chairs at CPTSC2008@gmail.com

*Kirk St. Amant
Jerry Savage*

Sustainable Growth in Technical & Scientific Communication: Principles, Personal, and Programmatic **34th Annual Conference at East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, October 2007**

With over eighty registrants and superb organization by the host committee, participants in the 2007 CPTSC Annual Conference found abundant opportunities for thoughtful exchange of ideas and even fun, just as promised in the pre-conference publicity.

The theme of the 2007 conference, Sustainable Growth, was evident in the organic metaphors that appeared throughout the conference, beginning with Dale Sullivan's (North Dakota State University) keynote address, "Growth and Community: A Few Thoughts on the Organics of Professional Communication," and continuing in the plenary session, "Tilling the Field for Healthy Growth," with speakers Brent Faber (North Carolina State University), Jeff Grabill (Michigan State University), Barbara Heifferon (Rochester Institute of Technology), Brent Henze (East Carolina University), and Tyanna

Herrington (Georgia Institute of Technology).

Following CPTSC practice, concurrent session presenters stimulated discussion with 5-minute position papers about developing and sustaining technical communication programs, engaging conferees in issues such as diversity and globalization, outcomes assessment and program review, certification and graduate programs, curriculum and internships, recruiting and funding. Reflecting a growing interest in interactive poster presentations, this year we had a record eleven posters, further expanding participant engagement.

In a return to the pre-1995 meeting format, the Administrator's Roundtable session, facilitated by past president Bruce Maylath (North Dakota State), provided an informal forum, covering topics suggested on CPTSC-I before the conference. This year's topics included program placement, TC certification, grad student recruitment, and articulation agreements.

Post-conference evaluations indicated that, whether their first or twelfth consecutive CPTSC conference, participants found the meeting informative and well-run, with special kudos to the host committee, Michelle Eble and Jan Tovey (East Carolina University), for a "seamless, smooth weekend," "breakfast sausages to die for," and efficient, even entertaining transportation on ECU student buses, which often included speculation about the signs on the buses: What rhetorical "exigency" prompted some of the warnings? How much money do they [transportation] make at \$50 per... incident?" You had to be there.

If you weren't there, you missed a grand opportunity to explore growing and sustaining programs and we missed your reflections, questions, and stories. Don't miss the 2008 meeting in Minneapolis, celebrating 35 years of CPTSC.

Molly Johnson

New Journal Solicits Articles

Programmatic Perspectives, a new journal of the Council of Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC), is soliciting articles about theoretical and practical aspects of technical communication program administration. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to,

- Program assessment
- Curriculum development and innovation
- Cross-cultural issues
- Faculty development
- Technology integration
- Relationship-building
- Diversity issues
- Program maintenance
- Programs transitions (e.g., expansion from certificate to major)
- Student and faculty recruitment
- Recruitment and retention
- Internationalization/globalization
- Historical perspectives on program administration
- New program development

The editors, Tracy Bridgeford, Karla Saari Kitalong, and William J. Williamson, welcome submissions of full articles and Emerging Scholars Forum articles (which highlight the work of new graduate students and early career faculty) of 6,000-10,000 words, and shorter articles of 4000-6,000 words for the Program Showcase Forum (which highlights a particular program). Submissions should conform to APA guidelines. The first issue is scheduled for March 2009. For more information, visit the journal's website at <http://programmaticallyperspectives.cptsc.unomaha.edu>.

Articles are accepted on an on-going basis. Queries are welcome. Please include the author's name, e-mail address, phone number, and affiliation on a separate cover sheet. Please send submissions as Microsoft Word or .RTF as an email attachment to Tracy Bridgeford at tbbridge2@cox.net.

Editors
Programmatic Perspectives

Announcing the CPTSC 2008 Graduate Student Diversity, Sponsored by Bedford/St. Martin's

Bedford/St. Martin's, a leading publisher of textbooks in the field of technical communication, has agreed to sponsor a scholarship for the purpose of supporting the goal of CPTSC to increase diversity in its membership and in the field of technical communication. Graduate students of color, race, ethnicity, disability, or nationality who are underrepresented in the technical communication field and who are enrolled in a technical communication graduate program are eligible to apply for this scholarship. This scholarship provides partial support for a graduate student to participate in the CPTSC annual conference. It provides the winner a \$350 scholarship and it waives the conference fee. An additional \$150 has been provided by an anonymous donor to supplement the Bedford/St. Martin's Scholarship. Therefore, the scholarship recipient will receive a total of \$500.

Eligibility

Applicants should satisfy all of the following criteria for the scholarship:

- be a full or part-time graduate student (NOTE: Applicants are eligible for the scholarship if they are graduate students at the time the conference proposals are submitted or during the year of the conference at which the scholarship is given.)
- be enrolled in a technical communication graduate or related fields
- become a member of CPTSC by the deadline for current year conference registration
- attend the current year annual meeting of CPTSC to receive the scholarship
- represent a racially or ethnically underrepresented group

OR

- be a person with "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity" (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)

OR

- be an international student
- Those who are engaged in research on diversity or cross-cultural issues are especially encouraged to apply.

Selection Factors

The scholarship will be given to the graduate student who best meets the eligibility criteria and who exhibits the most potential in the field of Technical and Scientific Communication in his or her studies and research, as determined by the Diversity Scholarship review panel.

Deadline

Applicants must submit an application form with all needed attachments by the due date for the annual CPTSC conference proposals. The scholarship committee will notify the recipients of the scholarship by mail no later than August 1, 2008

NOTE

- The scholarship will be awarded at the CPTSC conference. The recipient of the scholarship must make appropriate travel arrangements and pay the conference fees before he or she receives the scholarship. The scholarship is provided to assist the recipient with expenses associated with the CPTSC conference, up to the amount of the scholarship.

All application materials are to be submitted electronically to the chair of the scholarship review committee. See the Scholarship application form at the end of this publication for list of materials to be submitted.

Jerry Savage

TC Special Issue on Program Review and Assessment

Recently, the journal *Technical Communication* published a special issue on academic program review and assessment in technical communication. This special issue represents the culmination of a three year project begun by the Program Review Committee of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC). This special issue examined a variety of themes and ideas related to the program review and assessment process and did so through the following articles:

One of the most daunting tasks of the program review and assessment process is

determining what materials will serve as the focus of the overall evaluation. These materials need to be selected with care and need to reflect the objectives of the related program – as well as the overall field – effectively. It is this initial selection process that serves as the focus for Shelly Thomas and Becky Jo McShane's opening article, "Skills and Literacies for the 21st Century: Assessing an Undergraduate Professional and Technical Writing Program," which overview the process faculty at Webber State University used to develop an assessment process – and a related assessment rubric – based on student portfolios generated in a capstone course.

Materials, however, can be used in a variety of assessment processes, each of which has different benefits and limitations. Within this spectrum, one of the more pronounced differences involves if assessment practices consist of an internal review done within the department or institution, or if a department should bring in outside experts who will perform an external review of that program. Which approach is the better depends on a variety of complex factors, and two of the articles in this special issue examine both sides of this assessment continuum. First, Michael J. Salvo and Jinfang Ren's article "Participatory Assessment: Negotiating Engagement in a Technical Communication Program" presents the results of an internal assessment of Purdue University's well-established undergraduate program in professional and technical writing. In so doing, Salvo and Ren also present readers with a new program assessment model that uses concepts from research in participatory and user-centered design as the foundation for assessment practices. Next, Charles H. Sides' article "First-Person Perspective: An Analysis of Informal and Formal External Program Review Strategies" draws upon his past experiences to examine different methods of using external reviewers in the program assessment process. In so doing, Sides provides a conceptual framework for how institutions might wish to construct effective external review processes.

Even within the general categories of internal and external reviews, a range of different assessment models exist. Thus, the more individuals know about these

methods and their applications, the more effectively they can select the assessment practice best suited to their particular program. Teena A. M. Carnegie's entry "Integrating Context into Assessing U.S. Technical Communication Programs" provides readers with a framework for making such choices, for she reviews four primary models for program assessment as well as examines the various administrative levels involved in such processes. In so doing, Carnegie also proposes a contextual assessment model that can help program directors interact effectively in relation to various political interests that can affect assessment practices. Nancy Coppola and Norbert Eliot's article "A Technology Transfer Model for Program Assessment in Technical Communication" builds further upon this idea of information sharing and assessment by first examining an effective evaluative framework centered on assessing core competencies and then proposing a technology transfer model for sharing the results of such assessments with others.

The nature of the academic program also plays a key role selecting an assessment mechanism for performing an internal or an external review. And as educational approaches and academic divisions change with time, so must the methods used to assess technical communication programs. For David Dayton and Mary McShane Vaughn, the shift to online modes of education is a prime area for re-considering review and assessment practices. In their article "Developing a Quality Assurance Process to Guide the Design and Assessment of Online Courses" Dayton and Vaughn report on a project to develop quality assurance policies and procedures for the design and assessment of online courses. In so doing, the two present a framework for assessing the quality of online courses and programs and examine crucial issues in assessing online teaching and learning. Alice I. Philbin and Mark D. Hawthorne, in contrast, examine the changing nature of technical communication programs within a greater academic institution. In their article, "Applying Assessment in a Self-Standing Program: A Case Study" Philbin and Hawthorne use a case study approach to examine the assessment challenges faced by technical communication programs that

exist as their own, self-contained departments or academic units.

This multi-part approach to program review and program assessment is a first step toward furthering our understanding of the topic, and hopefully, these entries can spur further research on these and other related topics.

Kirk St. Amant

CPTSC Sponsors Montréal2008 Roundtable

The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC) invites technical communication and translation/localization educators to its Montréal2008 Roundtable meeting, the evening of 13 July 2008, at Concordia University. If interest warrants, participants will gather nearby for dinner before the Roundtable.

The meeting is scheduled to precede immediately the International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC) and is a follow-up to the roundtables held in London in 2000, Milan in 2003, and Limerick in 2005. The meeting offers educators the opportunity to discuss program partnerships, updates to curricula, and a world focus. Reports from the previous Roundtables can be found at <http://www.cptsc.org/international>.

To participate, please contact Bruce Maylath at 1-701-231-7176 or Bruce.Maylath@ndsu.edu.

*Bruce Maylath
North Dakota State University*

CPTSC Provides \$3,000 in Research Funding for 2008

In 2007, the CPTSC executive committee and membership agreed to raise the ceiling on funding for individual proposals from \$500 to \$1,500. In response to the call in 2008, a total of 13 proposals were submitted, which is more than double the number of submissions in 2007.

Three reviewers—Jan Tovey of East Carolina University, David Sapp of Fairfield University, and Michael Salvo of Purdue—reviewed each proposal. Two clear winners

emerged as a result of their rankings:

“African-American Women in a Technical Writing Program: Perceptions, Problems, and Successes,” by Susan Popham of University of Memphis, \$1,500

“Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in Distance Education,” by Karl Stolley, (PI), Fredrick Logan, and Mathew Ephraim, Illinois Institute of Technology, \$1,500

The executive committee allocated \$3,000 for the 2008 grants program in order to fund both projects. Congratulations to the winners!

In addition to the higher level of funding, the membership and executive committee agreed that the grants program director will monitor budgets and IRB compliance. For award winners, this simply means submitting a brief statement about how the funds were spent and providing documentation from their universities if they are using human participants in their CPTSC-sponsored research.

*Kathy Northcut
Director, CPTSC grants program 2007-08*

Members of the Executive Board

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Molly Johnson Johnsonmo@uhd.edu,
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Kathy Northcut northcut@umr.edu,
University of Missouri—Rolla

Bedford/St. Martin's Diversity Scholarship

2008 Application Form

All application materials are to be submitted electronically to the chair of the scholarship review committee.

Name: _____
(First Middle Last)

Institution: _____

Expected graduation date: _____

Degree expected: _____

Current address: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _(____)_____

Eligibility (Check everything that applies):

- I am a full or part-time graduate student (NOTE: Applicants are eligible for the scholarship if they are graduate students at the time the conference proposals are submitted or during the year of the conference at which the scholarship is given.).
- I am working toward a degree in Technical or Scientific Communication or related fields.
- I am or will be a member of the CPTSC by the application deadline.
- I represent a racially or ethnically underrepresented group and/or I am a person with "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity" (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

Please explain: _____

or

- I am an international student.

Please explain: _____

I certify that the information that is presented in this application form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

What to send:

- A completed application form
- A copy of your conference proposal (see Call for Proposals at [URL], which should focus on **academic program-related** issues in technical communication.
- Your CV
- A copy of your transcript

Where to send your application materials:

Gerald Savage
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