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The 2005-2006 Year was a great year for Mercer's STC chapter. The chapter faced many obstacles at the beginning of the new year with the greatest being membership. Due to low membership, we did not have sufficient staff to continue the award-winning newsletters we have produced the past two years. However, we increased our paid membership by 66% throughout the year and would like to share our chapter's highlights and achievements with you through this special edition "Year in Review" Newsletter.

Mercer's Second Annual TCO Day Receives Great Support from Student Body

By Carla Paschke, Reprinted from *The Cluster*

Mercer's chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) sponsored the second annual TCO Day on Friday, March 24, to promote one of the fastest growing majors on Mercer's campus. Housed in the engineering school, technical communication (TCO) is an innovative program designed to teach students how to effectively communicate both verbally and visually in the business world. TCO careers include, but are not limited to, graphic design, web design, technical editing, technical writing, usability, and instructional design.

The event was held in the Connell Student Center and consisted of a question and answer session to familiarize students with the broad field of TCO as well as the types of assignments typical of TCO courses. Not only were students present representing various courses, but they also brought samples of their work to showcase to prospective majors/minors. STC President Jason Daniel felt this contributed to the event's success.

"The personal element of the event distinguished it from typical recruiting sessions. Students heard from their peers about the benefits of the program rather than from a brochure; they saw samples of student work rather than a generic syllabus—it was these personal connections that added value to the event," said Daniel.

Not only was the program targeted to those in need of a major or minor, but the event also allowed underclassmen

in the field to see a preview of what types of projects to expect in upper-level TCO courses. Kyle Steele, a sophomore TCO major, found the work samples extremely beneficial.

"TCO courses are known for the real-world components the professors strive to include in each. Students test their skills by building websites for real organizations, writing proposals for real professors seeking national funding, and editing real manuscripts to be published in technical journals. It was extremely helpful to me to see work other students had completed as well as reinforced to me that this is the field I wish to pursue a career in," said Steele.

TCO Day is only one of many events Mercer's STC chapter holds each year to support students in their professional aspirations. Although the majority of STC members are TCO majors or minors, the organization is open to all students interested in emerging technologies and their impacts on the business world.

If you were unable to attend TCO Day but are interested in finding out more information about TCO as a major or minor, please contact Dr. Marjorie T. Davis, TCO Department Chair, at davis_mt@mercer.edu or x2356. To learn more about Mercer's STC chapter, please contact Dr. Susan Codone, STC Chapter Advisor, at codone_s@mercer.edu or x4185.

Chapter Wins Two International Awards at 2005 STC Conference

By Jenny Butkus, Reprinted from *The Macon Telegraph*

Mercer University's Society for Technical Communication (STC) Chapter in the School of Engineering recently received two honors at the STC international conference in Seattle, Wash. Mercer's STC chapter received the Student Chapter of Distinction Award, the highest honor given to a student chapter in this professional society. The award is only given to one student chapter in each of STC's two chapter size categories. The student group also received one of two Best of Show Awards for its newsletter, "Connections," in the STC Newsletter Competition.

Thirty-eight organizations submitted entries for the international newsletter competition, including 31 professional chapters, four student chapters and three special interest groups. The newsletter was judged based on its content, design and ability to communicate news and information between chapters and their members.

Mercer technical communication student Carla Paschke of Macon accepted the two awards on behalf of her chapter. Paschke, who graduated at the May 14 commencement, served as the newsletter editor and chapter president.

"I feel so very honored to have received these awards," she said.



Board members Amy Griswold, Carla Paschke and Jen Paschke are joined by Mercer faculty members Helen Grady and Susan Codone, along with Dr. George Hayhoe, at the awards banquet.

"I have served as newsletter editor for three years during which time I have been continuously working to improve the publication. The chapter has come so far during my three years on the board, and I am confident that the new executive board will continue the traditions we have started."

Dr. Marjorie Davis, chair of Mercer's Department of Technical Communication, senior member of STC and Mercer student STC chapter advisor for many years, said being honored with these two awards is a tremendous honor for a small student chapter like Mercer's.

"In all the years that the international newsletter competition has been held, I have never known many student newsletters to make a significant showing; after all, they compete with all the professional newsletters from around the world," she said. "Carla Paschke has done a spectacular job with our Mercer STC newsletter. Last year she won an Award of Excellence. This year, winning the Best of Show, is the highest accolade possible. She is a credit to her chosen profession of technical communication, and an outstanding ambassador for Mercer University."

Membership Update

Low membership plagued the chapter when the school year began in August. Although the chapter technically had nine members, three of these members were faculty and five were alumni, leaving only one paid student member to carry much of the chapter's weight.

Through great membership

initiatives and networking, the chapter increased its paid membership by 66% while our average number of student attendees at STC sponsored events rose to eight.

A small executive board was assembled, and many praises go out to each of these individuals for the tremendous work each put into making the chapter a

success during a year many thought Mercer would "fall off the map."

The number of TCO majors/minors at Mercer continues to rise as well, with the number of majors totalling 35. This figure is at an all time high and should have a significant impact on STC membership in the coming years.

Conference 2006

STC's 53rd Annual Conference will be held in Las Vegas, NV May 7-10, 2006.

Our chapter has had a wonderful showing in the past and we hope many of you will continue to attend this wonderful event.

The deadline for advanced registration for the event is April 21. After this date, the prices increase. The chapter will contribute to paid STC members' registration and hotel costs.

If you are interested in attending conference, please contact Dr. Susan Codone by email at codone_s@mercer.edu or come by her office in Suite 201J upstairs in the engineering school.

Conference is a wonderful opportunity to sit in on sessions on a wide range of technical communication topics. Over 200 sessions are offered.

Conference is also a great time to network with technical communication professionals.

This year's conference will be especially exciting as Dr. Grady will be honored as the recipient of the Jay R. Gould award. This is a tremendous accomplishment for Dr. Grady, and it would be wonderful to have a number of students present to support her when she is recognized.

Members Present at Currents 2006

By Carla Paschke

Mercer University was well represented at the STC Atlanta Chapter's annual regional conference, Currents, which was held Saturday, March 25, 2006 at the Atlanta campus of Mercer University.

Three Mercer chapter members, Dr. Helen Grady, Dr. Marjorie T. Davis, and Tracy Wofford, led a panel discussion entitled, "Your Virtual Passport--Exploring the World of Online Learning." The presentation explored such topics as how to conduct online learning, achieving a face to face

connection with online students, and strengths and weaknesses of online learning. The presentation drew from the experiences of Dr. Davis and Dr. Grady as professors in Mercer's Online Master's of Technical Communication Management program and of Tracey as a graduate student in the program.

Dr. Davis also presented "Technical Communicators and Online Instruction," focusing further on distance learning techniques.

Website Facelift

By Carla Paschke

The chapter's website received a facelift this year, undergoing another redesign which we hope will continue to help recruit new members for our organization.

The site contains upcoming news and events, a membership directory, resources for members, and photos. The site is a valuable resource for our chapter and one we hope to continue to improve upon and utilize more in the upcoming year. You can view the newest site at the following address: <http://develop.mercer.edu/engineering/studentlife/stc>. We hope to have this changed to www.mercer.edu/stc soon.

Canned Food Drive

By Carla Paschke

The chapter sponsored a highly successful canned food drive during the Christmas season. This is the second year the chapter has received a great response from the student body.

Food boxes were distributed in each of the schools on Mercer's campus at the beginning of December. The items were collected two weeks later and donated to the Middle Georgia Foodbank which serves the hungry in Macon and the surrounding areas.

Thank you to all those who donated items. Your generosity truly embodied the Christmas spirit.

A Closing Word from the President

By Jason Daniel

I was honored to be the president of STC this year. Following the loss of many of our older members that contributed greatly to the success of our chapter, this year was focused on chapter growth and teaching the younger members to take up the roles left behind.

I consider this year highly successful and believe we will continue to have

a great standing at conference in May 2006.

As mentioned earlier, our main goal this year was to increase our chapter size. Many of the outgoing seniors left big shoes to fill, and the chapter has not had as many new members as in the past. To increase our membership, we focused on getting most of the Technical Communication majors to

become members of STC. We also targeted TCO minors and students in parallel fields.

We hosted a variety of events including workshops, seminars, meetings, and philanthropic activities. We were also well represented at career fairs and organization fairs. My thanks go out to all who contributed this year.

Students Learn Valuable Skills at Adobe Indesign Workshop

By Carla Paschke

The ability to design effective publications is a valuable skill for graduates to possess and one our chapter strongly believes in promoting. To educate students, faculty, and staff in design software, our chapter brought in Technical Communication graduate Jen Paschke to lead a workshop on Adobe Indesign.

Packaged as part of Adobe's Creative Suite, Indesign is quickly becoming the industry standard among desktop publishing software. Its fluidity with the popular Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator further increase the program's usefulness.

Spring 2006 marked the first semester at Mercer that Indesign was taught in a classroom setting. Prior to this, Mercer educators taught Adobe Pagemaker as part of the first TCO class students take within the department. Therefore, many sophomore, juniors, and seniors missed out on the curriculum change, making Paschke's workshop extremely worthwhile.

"It has been three years since I took desktop publishing at Mercer so I had never used Indesign prior to the workshop," said senior Rachel Astorino. "The workshop really helped me to get the basics of the program down so I can do further explorations on my own. Knowing Indesign will be a definite plus as I look for an internship for the summer."

This was a sentiment shared by many in attendance. Paschke's workshop was informative and very easy for beginners to follow.

Paschke began by providing attendees with an overview of uses for Indesign, drawing from her own experiences with the program.

Jen Paschke, a BS TCO alum from Mercer and Advertising and Communication Specialist at Blue Bird Corporation, instructs Mercer's STC chapter on how to use Adobe Indesign to design publications.



"I have been using Indesign on a daily basis for the last two years and have completed projects such as corporate folders, brochures, magazine advertisements, doorhangers, newsletters, signs, and banners," said Paschke.

She then oriented attendees to the program workspace, providing everyone with "cheat sheets" that gave instructions on how to perform basic or popular commands as well as listed the tools and their uses.

The first half of the workshop was devoted to allowing attendees to practice with the commands and ask questions. Following a short break, Paschke then transitioned into part two of the workshop, walking the attendees through the creation of a newsletter.

By creating an actual document, Paschke hoped to tie in the uses of the commands discussed in the morning session of the workshop, a tactic appreciated by students.

"I really liked the workshop's setup," said Jason Daniel, TCO senior and STC President. "Building a document really helped to reinforce how to use all of the basic tools. I am one of those people who learn by doing so the format was very effective for me."

The workshop concluded with a lecture on how to submit Indesign documents as press ready .pdfs or as packaged raw files to a professional printer, a lesson commonly left out of Mercer classrooms.

"After I learned how to use Indesign, I thought I was home-free," said Paschke. "However, learning how to submit a document to a printer was a whole other challenge and one I wish someone would have addressed during one of my courses. I hope sharing my experiences with students will help them to feel more confident entering into professional environments whether it be full-time jobs or internships."

Treasury Report

The chapter is in a very secure financial place, following approval of the 2006-2007 Bear Grant. The SGA fiscal year begins March 1.

The Bear Grant is a monetary program established through the student government association and designed to aid student organizations to aid in programming and meeting expenses.

The chapter did an excellent job managing funds last year and was able to correctly allocate 100% of allotted funds from the 2005-2006 Bear Grant. This put the chapter in good standing entering into the 2006-2007 Bear Grant approval process.

The chapter was awarded the amount of \$2970 during an SGA hearing where we were represented by President Jason Daniel and Past President Carla Paschke.

These funds are to be distributed to the following areas:

- STC Conference Registration
- STC Conference Hotel
- STC Banquet Tickets
- Office Supplies
- T-shirts
- Digital Portfolio Workshop
- Programming Expenses
- Publicity/ Promotion

September Meeting: Starting the Year Off

By Kyle Steele

The Mercer chapter of STC brought together the fundamental tasks of the year at the September 20th meeting, led off by Chapter President Jason Daniel.

President Daniel, along with Immediate Past President Carla Paschke, detailed the aspects of STC that have led the Mercer Chapter to excellence in the past.

"While a small chapter, Mercer has been able to accomplish great things. Strong leaders and active participants working together have been key," said Daniel.

Paschke, who attended the May 2005 STC annual conference, recapped her experiences at last year's conference and expressed her support to attend this year's conference which will be held in Las Vegas at the end of the school year.

As this was the first STC meeting for many of those in attendance, she also opened the floor to questions, and when prompted, she discussed her own experiences with internships and study abroad as well as the experiences of fellow Technical Communication majors.

"Study abroad is a wonderful aspect of technical communication to explore. I highly recommend Bond University

in Australia as a study abroad location because of its excellent communication and media program which ties in well with TCO; however, start planning now if you would like to study abroad to ensure you will not miss out on classes taught only once every two years," advised Paschke.

Activities are always a fundamental part of an organization, and already ideas are being gathered for involvement in the community.

This year our STC chapter is going to consider expanding their network to include the professional members of STC in the area, as suggested by Dr. Marjorie Davis, Chair of Mercer's Technical Communications Department.

With a large number of the previous year's STC members having graduated, the chapter concluded that more effort needs to be taken to stimulate numbers in order to handle the responsibilities of the year.

Everyone is both welcome and encouraged to attend the STC meetings and share in the year's coming achievements.

Spreading the "TCO Word" Through Community Service

By Carla Paschke

In addition to membership drive initiatives, our chapter took a unique approach to promoting the benefits of technical communication and membership in our chapter-- community service, and we're not talking soup kitchens or street pickup.

Our chapter provided technical communication services to several local organizations in the format of websites.

One such organization was the Wesley Foundation of Macon. With point man Kyle Steele leading, the chapter provided the nonprofit with a valuable web presence.

"I was really glad to be able to work on the Wesley Foundation website. It is a wonderful organization with a great purpose of service and fellowship," said Steele.

The student government association website also received a wonderful facelift thanks to technical communication major and STC member Katie Derthick.

The chapter is firmly committed to serving the communication needs of student organizations in the future in hopes of establishing strong organization partnerships.

A Rebuilding year: Membership Initiatives

By Carla Paschke

The 2005-2006 school year was a rebuilding year for the chapter; therefore, we took great strides to increase our presence on campus and conduct membership initiatives at the beginning of the fall and spring terms.

Organization Fair

In the fall, the chapter participated in the 2005 Organization Fair. Students staffed a booth promoting STC and its benefits to not only TCO majors and minors, but also students in the business and communication departments.

By reaching out to students in other schools, chapter members hoped to spark new interest in the organization. Many programs the chapter conducts are relevant to students preparing to enter all professional fields, given the importance of effective communication in business environments.

TCO Breakfast

The TCO Breakfast is a yearly event sponsored by STC to promote TCO as a major/minor as well as to recruit new members for our chapter.

Held in the Engineering School lobby during the 10:00am "free hour," the event was situated in the ideal locale as many students passed through and stopped.

STC student members, faculty members, and nonmembers were in attendance.

This year the chapter widened the menu options of the breakfast to include a variety of fruit in addition to the usual donuts and juice., and the changes were well-received by all.

The event proved to be an excellent opportunity for students and faculty to mix and mingle outside of a classroom setting.

Campus Presence

The chapter also worked hard to increase our overall chapter presence across the university's campus.

We advertised meetings and events by hanging announcement flyers in buildings across campus such as Stetson School of Business and the Communication and Theater Arts Building.

We also advertised our events on the new engineering school website's news box, placing our events in prime location for spotting by engineers as well as prospective TCO students who may be entering Mercer in the Fall.

Furthermore, we sent out school-wide emails to the business and engineering schools to attract interest in our organization activities.

Each of these efforts positively impacted membership and attendance.

October Meeting: Emerging Technologies- RSS and Podcasting

By Kyle Steele

At the October 18th meeting of the STC, Mr. Kelly Carter, visiting professor of the College of Liberal Arts Department of Computer Science, gave his presentation on RSS coding and Podcasting.

Podding is an emerging method of internet-based communication (such as iTunes and the iPod) that acts like a cross between e-mail and the web in the sense that you can subscribe to a topic, immediately receive the contents of that topic, then anything new added to it.

RSS – Really Simple Syndication (although there is some dissention about the actual meaning of the abbreviation) – is the mark-up language used to do this and according to Carter is “the most widely used XML application to date.”

Those who code can appreciate the simplicity of this language – it’s malleable enough to do the job and visually simple enough that the code itself can easily be read by both humans and computers.

What kind of potential does this technology have?

Already this technology can be used to put audio and video on the web in minutes, as shown when Carter recorded Dr. Constantinides and put her voice on the server to turn around and download it through a free program.

This technology could eventually make it possible to have RSS feeds even on cell phones, developing a communication device that most people have already into a fully-functioning wireless network that

offers full multimedia on demand with the ability to limit the amount of bandwidth used up and to practically nullify spam.

Mr. Carter’s presentation can be found at his faculty website, http://faculty.mercer.edu/carter_k/other.html, along with links to free downloads of programs that enable podding and RSS-interface, almost all of the programs that were necessary to give his example of putting audio on the web.

The ‘home’ of RSS information can be found at <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss>.

As always, both members and non members are encouraged to attend the STC meetings and share in the year’s coming achievements.

New Faculty Member Search

By Carla Paschke

Mercer's Technical Communication Department will be seeing a new face again next year.

Despite loving her students, TCO faculty member Dr. Lena Constantinides has decided to explore other career opportunities which are more research based, following her first year at Mercer.

The TCO Department is currently completing the final interviews for the open faculty position.

In addition to interviews with the Engineering School staff, candidates are also meeting with TCO students and alumni without a faculty member present to ensure free discussions.

The TCO Department will miss Dr. Constantinides greatly, but are excited at the prospect of a new "TCO Family Member" as well.

Alumni Fun: Reconnecting at Conference

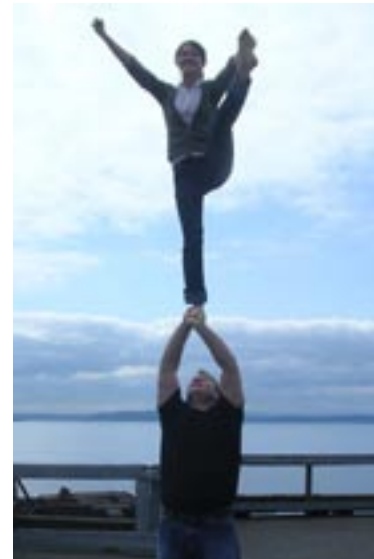
By Carla Paschke

In addition to the benefits of career building sessions and networking opportunities, one of the perks of attending STC's annual conference is reconnecting with fellow TCO alumni.

This is true for Carla Paschke, a 2005 TCO graduate, and Chris McRae, a 2002 TCO graduate.

The two met in 2001, Paschke's freshman year and McRae's senior year, while on the same cheerleading squad, and it was McRae who recruited Paschke to the chapter. The two continue to keep in touch.

In between sessions at conference, the former Mercer stunt partners enjoy light-hearted stunting in front of scenic locations. They have been photographed stunting on the streets in downtown Baltimore and in front of the water in Seattle, Washington. Will Las Vegas be next?



TCO Alumni Chris McRae and Carla Paschke stunt on Seattle's waterfront. *How many Technical Communicators can do that?*

November Meeting: Interning in Usability and Design

By Jen Paschke

Amy Griswold, a TCO alumna who graduated in 2005, presented a recap on her internship at Spunlogic at the STC General Meeting on November 14, 2006.

Spunlogic is an online behavior firm located in Atlanta who specialize in User Interface design (Online Branding, Flash Animation, Application Interface Design, & Banners & Interactive Ads), Online Marketing (Search Engine Optimizations, Pay Per Click Campaigns, Email Marketing Web Development, and Database Development (d-Commerce Applications, Content Management, and System Integration).

As an intern Amy served as an

Account Manager, meaning she was the go-between for the client and the designers/developers. Some of her clients included The Georgia Aquarium and Holiday Inn.

At the conclusion of her internship, Amy was fortunate to be offered a full-time position with Spunlogic, which she excitedly accepted.

Looking back on her internship, Amy reflects just what an awe-inspiring experience her summer with Spunlogic truly was, "I don't think that I have ever realized how much I do know and how much I don't know at the exact same time. Interning opened my eyes to what it would take to succeed in this world."

Not only was Amy's talk an inspiring tale for up-and-coming STC members who also will be looking for internships but it provided an open-forum for students to ask questions about internship logistics such as where to apply, what will count towards graduation, what expectations your bosses will most likely have.

For anyone who missed Amy's informative presentation, be sure to stop by the TCO suite to see a copy of her internship report as well as the reports of other TCO graduates.

If you have any questions about the TCO internship program, please see Dr. Marjorie T. Davis, Suite 201J, davis_mt@mercer.edu.

January Meeting: Graduate Offers Helpful Study Abroad Advice

By Jen Paschke

On Tuesday January 24, Jen Paschke, a 2005 Technical Communication graduate, returned home to Mercer to speak at that night's general STC meeting on "TCO and Study Abroad: A Perfect Fit (If You Do It Right)." As many of our current STC members are interested in taking advantage of Mercer's study abroad opportunities, this subject proved to be both enlightening and educational. Paschke covered the following topics in her hour-long presentation:

- A Program Overview Summarizing her Personal Study Abroad Experience
- Three Keys to a Successful Study Abroad
 1. Plan wisely
 2. Understand your University
 3. Make the Most of the Culture
- Final Tips Applying Specifically to Australia

Program Overview

Paschke, a TCO major and business and communications minor, studied abroad fall semester of her junior year, when she traveled to the Gold Coast of Australia. Bond University, where Paschke studied, is located about one hour south of Brisbane on Australia's east coast. Paschke arrived at Bond in early September and finished exams the first week of December. Four other Mercer students including two TCO majors accompanied Paschke to Australia. Building on these numbers, Mercer's study abroad office now reports that Bond is quickly becoming the most popular destination for Mercer Exchange Programs.

Three Keys to a Successful Study Abroad

To ensure that students make the most out of their experiences while still



Paschke took advantage of site-seeing time to visit places such as a wildlife park where she was able to feed Australian creatures such as kangaroos and koala bears.

remaining in good standing at their home university, Paschke recommends that study abroad prospects take several steps:

1. Planning

- Timing is Key

The timing for a student's study abroad experience is key. While Paschke went abroad during her first semester of her Junior year, she would highly recommend that others try to take advantage of programs during their sophomore year or during the summer. By junior year, most students are highly involved in their "major" classes, many of which may be offered on an every other year basis. Therefore, if a student misses the class offered fall of junior year, he/she would have to wait until their "fifth year" for it to be offered again, ruining the previously on track

"four year plan." Problems may also develop if the prerequisite courses students need to take their major classes were offered while students were away.

- Start Early

Paschke recommends that students considering study abroad start early to have their proposed course schedule approved. Students are solely responsible for obtaining approval from campus department chairs to have courses transfer back as equivalent Mercer-offered classes. Students should not make the mistake of assuming department chairs will approve any course a student asks them to. Students should have "back up" courses already approved in case they do not get into the classes for which they originally planned.

- TCO Spreadsheet: You must look ahead

As Paschke alluded to when discussing the ideal timing for a study abroad experience, keeping an eye focused on the steps necessary for graduation should always be on one's mind. Diligently preparing one's TCO spreadsheet can be an invaluable tool to plan for how to fit a study abroad semester into a four year degree.

- Work with your advisor

While students are ultimately responsible for their own study abroad preparation, advisors have worked with students in similar situations and can offer valuable pieces of advise. Additionally, if discrepancies in fulfilling graduation requirements are going to arise, advisors may be able to help make alternate plans such as independent studies – if they are aware of the problem in advance.

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January Meeting: Graduate Offers Helpful Study Abroad Advice (cont.)

By Jen Paschke

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• Work with the Study Abroad Office

The study abroad office has sent many a graduates to places around the world. They are the ones who can make sure, I's are dotted and t's are crossed. Paschke recommends that students "drop-in" as much as possible so office personnel can put a face to a name and may work harder to ensure your files are in order.

2. Understand your University

The university to which students visit will be different than Mercer. One of the worst assumptions students make is that a university in a "universal" experience. Some areas to note that may be strikingly different follow:

• Registration

Unlike Mercer, students at Bond still register in person; therefore, students begin lining up to register hours before registration even begins.

• Drop/Add

The Drop/Add period is much longer at Bond; students can drop or add a class two to three weeks into it the semester.

• Bell Curve

Unlike Mercer, Bond operates on a strict bell-curve which may be difficult to adjust to depending on the class dynamics.

• Grading Scales

At Bond, rather than giving letter grades, professors give marks of "High Distinction" "Distinction" "Credit" "Pass" or "Fail" with a high distinction receiving a numerical mark of 85-100. While at first glance these numbers may seem generous, students must recognize that professors often have higher

expectations of students and rarely give a "high distinction."

• Class Structures

Every Australian college class is divided into tutorials and lectures. Tutorials usually have approximately 15-25 students and provide for hands-on experiences and open discussions. Lectures combine all the tutorial classes for a specific subject for one or two lectures a week.

• Do my grades transfer back?!!

Many exchange students have only pass/fail requirements for their home universities, meaning they need only pass the class to get full credit. Their grades will not be factored in for their GPA; in essence a C is equal to an A. As Paschke said "Mercer does take grades so all work or your lack there of will follow you back home, and it can either be a help or a burden.

3. Make the Most

• Learn the History

Paschke recommends taking a class in the history of the country in which a student is traveling. "When I completed my history class, I knew more about Australian history than most Australians; when I went to museums, I found myself lecturing others on what the museums left out. Ultimately, knowing a place's history helps form a personal connection between a country and a student."

• Find a Balance

Make time to travel but find a balance with school work and money- While students may want to skip class to travel, they cannot forget that they have responsibilities to their classes; that most classes do have attendance policies. Additionally, traveling abroad is expensive which makes

budgeting a "must have."

• Have Fun

As Paschke said, "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for students; never again will they have such an adventure. Looking back years from now, these are the stories they will tell children and grandchildren. Enjoy it while you can because you will truly carry these experiences with you forever."

• Try New Things

With new countries come new opportunities. Some of the experiences Paschke cites as having tried for the first time are kayaking, surfing, mountain climbing, snorkeling, baseball cap wearing, and betting at horse races.

4. Final Words of Advice:

Paschke offered the following list of advise to anyone interested in studying in Australia:

- Buses aren't necessarily cheaper than plane tickets.
- Exchange rates do change- it's a gamble.
- American Express gives users the best exchange rate possible for the month a purchase was made.
- Call home from calling cards- not mobile phones- the price can jump from \$0.01 to dollars depending on your plans.
- Don't throw everything away when you go home- there is such a thing as shipping to the States.
- What if you fall in love with it? Talk to Dr. Davis.

TCO/STC Technical Writing Competition Award Winner Honored

By Carla Paschke

Mercer University student Galan John Willig of Macon received the Best Paper and Senior Design award at Mercer's annual Honors Convocation. The convocation, held in April 2005, recognized outstanding students from each school or college at Mercer.

The Best Paper Award was co-sponsored by the Technical Communication Department and Mercer's student chapter of STC. Faculty members and STC board members serve as judges for the yearly competition, popular among senior engineering students.

Willig, a graduate student majoring in computer engineering in Mercer's School of Engineering, is a member of the Order of Omega and Alpha Tau Omega, and is involved with Up 'til Dawn. Willig graduated from Windsor Academy High School and is the son of Jay and Judy Willig.



Dr. Helen Grady presents Galan John Willig with the Best Paper and Senior Design Award for his Senior Design technical report.

2005 Outstanding Technical Communication Graduate Named

By Jen Paschke

Mercer University student Carla Marie Paschke of Macon received the 2005 Outstanding Student in Technical Communication award at Mercer's annual Honors Convocation. The convocation recognized outstanding students from each school or college at Mercer.

Paschke, a senior majoring in technical communication in Mercer's School of Engineering, is a member of Phi Eta Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Tau Chi, and Gamma Sigma Alpha honor societies; the Mercer cheerleading squad (captain); the Newman club; and Alpha Delta Pi sorority. Paschke is also President and Newsletter Editor of the Society for Technical Communication and the 2005 Mercerian. Paschke graduated from Mount de Sales Academy and is the daughter of Jeffery and Laura Paschke.



Dr. Helen Grady presents Carla Paschke with the Outstanding Graduate in Technical Communication Award at the April Awards Ceremony.

From Interview to Offer: An STC-Sponsored Career Seminar

By Jen Paschke

On March 17, 2006, Barbara Warren, Director of Career Services, spoke at the STC-sponsored career seminar. The seminar was open to all Mercer students.

Said seminar attendee Carla Paschke, "The information presented by Ms. Warren came at a perfect time for the members of our STC Chapter. The majority of them are either looking for an internship to fulfill a gradua-

tion requirement or looking for a job after graduation. The tips provided in this seminar will help everyone."

Senior Rachel Astorino echoed Paschke's comments, "Looking ahead to life after graduation is scary. I definitely feel more prepared for the working world having attended this seminar. In fact, in some ways I am looking forward to putting the tips Ms. Warren provided into great use."

A Highlight of the tips presented by Ms. Warren in the hours long seminar follow:

Preparation is the Key

Be Ready to answer recruiters' questions by doing company research

- Product lines, services offered
- Locations
- Current events
- Mission and goals
- Corporate culture

Set the right tone for your interview

Stress your best qualities through:

- Appearance
- Demeanor
- Eye Contact
- Word Choice
- Tone of voice
- Body language

Know your rights

- Illegal questions prove into your private life or personal background
- Forbidden by federal law
- Can't discriminate based on these

things:

- Sex or sexual preference
- Religion
- Age
- Marital Status
- Whether you have or plan to have children

Recruiters seek 12 types of information

- Your passion for their business
- Motivation, purpose
- Skills, experience
- Diligence, professionalism
- Creativity, leadership
- Compatibility with Job
- Personality, cultural compatibility
- Management style, interpersonal skills
- Problem-solving ability
- Career aspirations
- Accomplishments
- Personal interests, hobbies

For a complete guide to the information presented by Ms. Warren, visit the STC website to download a .pdf copy and prepare yourself for your next interview.

If you would like to schedule an individual meeting with Barbara Warren, contact her in the office of career services at warren_bd@mercer.edu or by phone at 478.301.2863.

Visit Mercer's career services website at www.mercer.edu/career to find out more information about career counselors and the other wonderful services offered by this valuable component of our university.

Thank You to the 2005-2006 Board

Great leadership made this year extremely successful. The small executive board faced many challenges but came together to exceed community expectations.

Many thanks go out to the board for their hard work and their selfless ability to wear many hats within the organization.

Board Members:

Jason Daniel, President

Rachel Astorino, Vice President

Kyle Steele, Awards Coordinator

Russell Evans, Secretary

Katie Derthick, Website Chair

Dr. Susan Codone, Advisor

Additional thanks go out to Dr. Marjorie T. Davis and Dr. Helen Grady for their continued support and to TCO alumni for their guidance and willingness to contribute as speakers at STC events.

Need an Internship? Companies to Check Out

By Carla Paschke

March is an important time for students who are searching for internships and summer jobs. The following list is compilation of local businesses who have hired Mercerians in the past.

For a complete list of internship hires, please visit the chapter website. Career services offers further internship placement services.

- Geico Direct
- SAIS Engineering
- Mercer University Research Center
- Mercer University Advancement
- Blue Bird Corporation
- Ball Engineering
- NCR
- Goodwill Industries
- Cox Communications
- Peachtree Software
- Mercer Instructional Technology Center
- Mercer Educational Media
- University of Georgia Extension Services
- Asian Ventures
- Tomberlin Industries
- Wachovia
- Holiday Inn International
- Southern Bell
- Clickstream
- ChoicePoint
- CPC
- Wesleyan College
- YKK
- ARINC
- Rayonier
- Mercer Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Idea Integration
- Coca-Cola
- Harris Publishing
- Siemens Medical Solutions
- Scientific Atlanta
- Lockheed Georgia
- TSYS/Synovus

TCO Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Helen Grady

By Jen Paschke

Mercer's STC would like to extend a special congratulations to Dr. Helen Grady, a 2006 recipient of the Jay R. Gould Award recognizing excellence in teaching technical communication that becomes true academic mentorship.

Dr. Grady was awarded this high honor for her personal and professional concern that only the best teachers extend to their students beyond the demands of the classroom and beyond even graduation as former students continue to grow throughout their professional careers.

"Dr. Grady is extremely deserving of this award. During my years at Mercer, Dr. Grady served as my honors project advisor, a four year commitment, and one which she excelled at. She helped me grow personally as well as professionally, and I am only one of the many students whom she has reached in this manner," said 2005 TCO alumni Carla Paschke.

The official awards presentation will take place at STC's annual conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Connections

This newsletter is produced by the Mercer University Student Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication and is published monthly between the months of October and April.

Society for Technical Communication

Mission Statement: *Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.* STC is an individual membership organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication. Contact the STC at 901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904, Arlington, VA 22203. 703-552-4114 (voice) www.stc.org 703-552-2075 (fax) stc@stc.org

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