

The Writer's Insider



DEPARTMENT
OF WRITING ARTS

Spring 2017

Vol 1. Issue 5

“For students who are interested or considering [the technical and professional writing] track, I think it’s a super valuable option for anyone interested in technical or workplace writing, but also for students who are dual majors or have interest or expertise in different fields, even fields like the sciences or business. These courses increase their marketability in the job market. It gives them a kind of niche.” - Jen Tole

Technical Communication: An Overview

Engineers with technical expertise and the ability to communicate became important in American society during the Civil War. This value for technical projects and the skills needed to carry them out opened up new educational opportunities for those interested in pursuing careers in technical fields. As a result of this increased importance, the US Government passed the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, which called for 30,000 acres of land in several states to be set aside for the creation of colleges focused on the agricultural and mechanical arts.

Prior to 1870, all students of higher education, including engineering students, primarily studied rhetoric and what we understand today as the humanities. With industrialization becoming central to the American economy, institutions of higher education shifted to produce engineers, and as a result, much of the focus on the Humanities diminished and the only writing courses many engineering students received was in First Year Composition. Regardless of the level of engineering material

mastered, graduates found it difficult to communicate this information through writing.

Changes came to engineering colleges at the beginning of the 20th century: English departments instituted upper-level writing courses geared towards writing in the engineering profession. Textbooks for teaching these technical writing styles began to circulate.

“With the introduction of English departments in engineering colleges came tension”

With the introduction of English departments in engineering colleges came tension: English and engineering departments had differing views about what the focus of writing courses should be. The English departments tended to value teaching literature whereas the engineering faculty felt this was not teaching the engineering students the technical writing skills they needed.

Industry professionals were dissatisfied still with the writing ability of engineering graduates. Changes were made, and the increase in English departments across the country multiplied the need for more English faculty. These faculty members were predominantly interested in literary

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WRITING ARTS CLUB

This semester, big changes have come around within the Writing Arts Club. The club, open to students of all majors who are interested in Writing, is petitioning to become SGA sanctioned. The petitioning process will continue until March of 2018, after which the club will potentially be sanctioned.

“Becoming SGA is a huge step forward for RUWAC,” said WAC President Morgan Douglas and Vice President Amanda Spadel. “SGA has always been a solid foundation for students and clubs, it provides an additional measure of support and integrity.”

The club also works on a new writing project each semester. Currently, the club is working together to create a Novella. Students work together to create the content, write the novella, then eventually publish the work in a zine format. Members work out of Google Docs in order to collaborate effectively. Then, at weekly meetings, members discuss the Google Doc elements and vote on what elements will remain in the story. Additionally, the club participates and hosts events for the campus at large.

“As an SGA organization we are required to complete four services projects during the duration of the complete school year, we try to commit to volunteer work that will directly benefit our campus,” said Spadel and Douglas. “We also host our P5 Party- Portfolio, Pizza, Pajama, Pity, Party- at the end of each semester. This is another chance for students to work together on their final work; this can include everything from writing portfolios, to AFT assignments, to preparing for final exams.”

Each year the Writing Arts Department recognizes students for their work and dedication. This year, a Toni Libro Outstanding Master of Arts in Writing Medallion Winner is Michael Fotos.

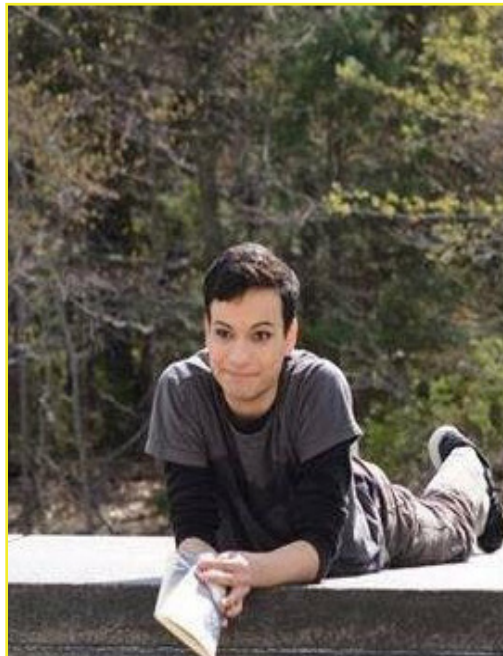
Spotlight on Michael Fotos

The Toni Libro Medallion serves to acknowledge these devoted students and their hard work. The medallion is awarded to a graduate student who consistently demonstrates professionalism, diligence, and great talent and promise. Winners of the medallion are exceptional students with a passion for learning and a dedication to the school that makes them stand out amongst their peers. This year, we are proud to recognize Mike Fotos as one of these students.

In their time here at Rowan, Mike has become an invaluable asset to the department. When I asked why they thought they received this award, Mike attributed it to simply “showing up for things, being thrown into things... having a hand in so many little and big things.” If you look at the recent evolution of the department, you can find Mike’s fingerprints.

While Mike has played a role in much of the growth and development here in Writing Arts, they did not start out here. Mike came to Rowan as a biochemistry major, unenthusiastic about school. When they realized that biochemistry might not be their calling, they switched gears and studied theatre and dance and truly thrived in that environment. But something was not right. After careful consideration of their future in theatre, Mike switched to Writing Arts and realized they had been a writer all along.

In the course How Writers Read, Mike discovered their life’s mission. Mike decided they were going to be an advocate of the disruption of normalcy, that they would value things that are not what we see everyday. This would ignite their



drive and purpose to write and teach.

Around the same time, Mike found a new place to thrive in—the Writing Center. The Writing Center became a safe space for them, their “happy place.” Mike is currently the longest employee at the Writing Center, holding the title of Graduate Intern/Tutor Coordinator. (They prefers Tutor Coordi-

nator as it sounds better.) Mike expanded the Writing Center and its impact on the University. They founded a fellowship program where the tutors now can go to classes and help students with

their work. Mike has been instrumental in spreading the word across campus about the Writing Center and expanding the program.

Another program that Mike helped to develop was the Writing Arts

Club. Mike was looking for a place to connect with their peers, and stumbled on the Writing Arts Club. When Mike got here, the Writing Arts Club was nowhere near what it is today. Mike didn’t hesitate to help revamp it. They helped restructure the meetings, created a website, and allowed for it to take form. Now, the the club is petitioning to be SGA sanctioned and is an outlet for many students, like it was for Mike.

Approaching their senior year, Mike found they weren’t ready to leave Rowan yet. They applied for the 4+1 program and is now in their M.A year. Mike works on Glassworks and still works in the Writing Center. Apart from their grad classes, Glassworks, and tutoring, you can also find Mike in the front of the classroom. Mike was the first student to make an attempt at both the 4+1 program and

the TEP program. They has been teaching ICC1 for two semesters—and They’d like to continue to teach. Mike may have started out not so happy here at Rowan, but now They love it and does want to leave.

They love being valuable to the department. They’d like to stay here and have a significant role—perhaps as an adjunct and in the Writing Center. Mike’s hopes for the future include continuing to write for advocacy and continuing to perform.

My final question for Mike was if they had any advice for the rest of us. And they certainly did.

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Each year the Writing Arts Department recognizes students for their work and dedication. This year, a Toni Libro Outstanding Master of Arts in Writing Medallion Winner is Sarah Knapp.

Spotlight on Sarah Knapp

When I sat down with Medallion award winner Sarah Knapp, I had only a brief understanding of the award, which was sponsored by Dr. Antoinette Libro, a former Dean of the College of Communication. Evidently, Sarah knew of it from being at last year's Student Showcase, but she hadn't known she was nominated for it until she received the email just a few weeks ago. The email included a time for her to come to the ceremony and a statement that the medallion is "Awarded to a senior who has demonstrated outstanding course performance, strong leadership skills, and excellent career potential as a writer and as a teacher of writing."

Upon reading the qualifications for the award, her response was something like, "oh my god, really?" When she shared her accomplishments during her time here at the University,

it became clear she was more than qualified.

She is graduating with her B.A. in Writing Arts at the end of this

spring semester 2017, with the aim to begin graduate school with Rowan in the fall. She's also pursuing a concentration in Women and Gender Studies, educating herself on different perspectives on gender and social issues. She waited until her sophomore year to declare herself a Writing Arts major, after taking a Creative Writing class.

"I fit the whole four year college experience into my last two years," she says with a positive tone, "but I



don't think I'd change it because it made me who I am, and brought me to where I am."

"What I've done here at Rowan, and the career path that I've started on is one that I'm happy in and one that I've completely enjoyed, so I'm ready to see where it goes."

Sarah particularly enjoyed Writing, Research, and Technology, finding the style and approach to writing taught in the course a good fit for her development as a writer. She conducted her own research, set up a website and wrote articles for it: she continues to

explore new technologies of writing, and would like to make a career of it.

Sarah also worked over the summer in the Dean's office of the College of Communications and Creative Arts, writing articles and putting together a newsletter.

Recently, she's been working closely with Glassworks magazine, publishing opinion pieces, reviews, and performing readings at Glassworks events. She hopes to continue working with the magazine and exploring opportunities that have opened up for her while working with the publication. Working with the magazine has opened her eyes on her love for the rhetoric of publishing.

Along with Glassworks, Sarah worked hard in the department's internship to build the website for the Writing Arts department and is happy about how the work she did impacts the department and the college.

"It's kind of cool to look at when you go to the website and you're like 'I did this!' People are looking at this and coming to our school."

Sarah aspires to begin her own literary magazine in which she's the Editor-in-Chief calling the shots. She also would like to become a professor within the field of Women and Gender Studies, which she is fiercely passionate about. She mainly hopes to continue writing opinion pieces and articles for online based publications, reaching a larger audience. She's enjoyed her ride with the University and is eager to see where it will take her next.

"Maybe I'll have my own magazine, maybe I write for someone

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else's, but either way I know that what I've done here at Rowan, and the career path that I've started on is one that I'm happy in and one that I've completely enjoyed, so I'm ready to see where it goes."

Easing the Tension: Breaking Down Technical and Professional Writing

Those of us who dare to embrace the title of “writer” probably entered the field under the premise that all writing is inherently creative-- an ornate and melodic juxtaposition of language that creates a narrative, evokes emotion, and reveals truth and insight about the world and our lives. When students become Writing Arts majors to develop themselves as creative writers, they will likely discover that there are other valuable options they might otherwise neglect, for example, technical and professional writing as well as new media writing and publishing.

Despite its newness and reliance on multiple genres and digital multimodality, writing with new media bears some relationship to creative writing, where writers construct engaging narratives filled with emotion and insight, expressed within digital contexts. But where does the most underrated and misunderstood field of writing fit into the equation? Especially since it is one of the central parts of the Writing Arts major? What exactly is “technical and professional writing?”

I’m willing to bet that most new Writing Arts students don’t know much about it. I didn’t. All I knew was creative writing, and even my knowledge of that was limited. In retrospect, my ignorance of technical and professional writing was part of why I chose to study creative writing without a second thought. Is the same true for other Writing Arts students? Is our ignorance and fear of the unknown holding us back from exploring the world of technical and professional writing?

Broadly speaking, the purpose of technical and professional writing is to convey information in order to accomplish a task with others and get work done. Given this definition, it is important to understand that technical writing and professional writing are not one and the same. If you listen closely, you just might hear someone

say “technicalandprofessionalwriting” in just one breath or simply call it technical writing. While technical and professional writing may be one concentration (formerly known as a “specialization”) in our department, they are in fact two separate fields with different conventions and purposes.

The easiest way to differentiate between these two kinds of writing is to define both of them separately. Technical writing is understood as writing for those who work in “technical” (mechanical or scientific) areas. This genre requires writers to objectively deliver facts and data in ways that are useful to readers, such as instruction manuals or grant applications, but also clothing labels or coupons, that is, writing that we use to get things done, and writing that most of us fail to recognize but could not get on without. While normally considered to be informative and not persuasive, technical writing, when we consider the way a writer presents facts to frame a reader’s understanding and attitude, may be seen as persuasive and perhaps even “creative.”

Because professional writing is not as localized and specific as technical writing, anyone can become a professional writer: someone who writes within any professional setting. Such writing includes emails or press releases, memos or policy statements, letters or contracts. Becoming aware of the impact of written communication within business and institutional settings promises to elevate professional writers as essential players in the functioning of any organization. This aim is partly responsible for the creation of the Writing Arts concentration in technical and professional writing (fall 2013), and the new

developments that will be in place for the 2017-18 academic year.

Courses specifically designed for this concentration are being developed and will shape a concrete field of study for interested students. The Technical and Professional Writing concentration shares several courses with the other two concentrations in the major. For instance, Tutoring Writing satisfies Creative Writing and Technical and Professional Writing, Writing for the Workplace and Professions in Writing Arts satisfy New Media and Publishing as well as Technical and Professional Writing, and The Publishing Industry satisfies all three concentrations. The Publishing Industry and Professions in Writing Arts are basic tools that

“Professional writing is the overarching definition that encompasses all writing that would happen in a profession: correspondence, emails, memos, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, even signage.”
- Grace Fillenwarth

are helpful for all writers. Writing for the Workplace is a special case. It is focused on professional writing, but still satisfies the New Media and Publishing and Technical

and Professional writing concentrations— perhaps because professional writing is a necessary skill for every field (think editors, agents, et cetera). Another course offered in the concentration is Rhetorical Theory (offered by Communications Studies), a class where students learn to develop rhetorical sensibility. The Technical and Professional Writing concentration also borrows courses from other departments, including Journalism (Magazine Article Writing, The Publishing Industry); Communication Studies (Rhetorical Theory); and RTF (Intro to New Media). Other courses available are Introduction to Technical Writing, Magazine Article Writing

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(offered by the Journalism department), Tutoring Writing, and Introduction to New Media (offered by RTF). This is only the beginning for the technical and professional writing concentration here at Rowan.

In the fall 2017, we will see Medical Writing and Rhetoric as a special topics course where students will have the opportunity to explore medicine as a culture and a discipline, what is called medical rhetoric. We will also see Science Writing and Rhetoric in the spring 2018, in which students will gain familiarity with reading and writing within scientific genres to better prepare them for a career in an important field. This is a solid foundation for the concentration, however it is only a start. New courses will continue to make their way into the curriculum to form a more concrete track for the students that choose this growing field of study.

Now, I bet you're wondering why you should choose this concentration. If I'm frank, technical writing seems to offer the most accessible and most lucrative career options, which as a writing student, I know is a pressing concern. It's an expanding field, not just here at Rowan, but out in the world. While both technical and professional writing have existed since medicine, science, business (really, anything that needs to be written about) have existed, there is constantly more and more attention being drawn towards these genres. Plus, just think about all of the opportunities there would be to write and to get published! I think that's a pretty convincing case in itself.

Personally, I am intrigued by the technical and professional writing fields and I'm excited to watch it grow and develop here at Rowan. I'm happy to be a part of it, and I think you all should be too— even if you just take one class. A writer should be well-rounded and established, able to speak on and write in multiple genres. So I urge you, take this opportunity to expand your understanding of writing.

A More Inclusive Future for Technical Writers

When the field of technical communication began to form, its focus was on training writers to communicate within the sciences, and more specifically engineering. The Civil War and the World Wars that followed emphasized the importance of technical know-how, especially with respect to weaponry and infrastructure.

This group of students was predominantly male, as was the area of study and studies in general. According to the National Women's History Museum, women did not begin attending college in the same numbers as men until the 1980s. This gender gap in education subsequently resulted in a gender gap in technical and professional writing studies.

Additionally, what was first associated with technical and professional writing was only writing that pertained to male dominated-fields within the sciences, and especially in engineering and related fields. Many women remained in the home, or became factory workers during the Industrial Revolution and afterwards. Both of these occupations involved large volumes of dense technical writing, but it was not legitimized, let alone taught at a college level. The forms of technical communication women engaged in--cook book reading and sewing machine maintenance, for example--were considered women's activities and therefore not a practical area of study. For example, cookbooks are essentially how-to guides involving chemical experimentation and trial and error. Women using sewing machines had a technical understanding of how to operate the machine which involved understanding its mechanics.

However, women were not freely permitted to be involved in the sciences and were therefore excluded from technical writing or partici-

pating in the education system in general. This greatly influenced what was considered technical and what was considered professional. Writing one may associate with home maintenance and factory work was not studied at a college level, though writing associated with engineering and medical work was. The effect of this disparity limited, historically, the accepted contributions made by female technical and professional writers.

As the education system became more diverse over the past half-century (since the 1960s) and women gained greater access to more educational materials, practical training, as well as opportunities for career advancement and achievement, this field of writing has grown, and continues to grow, more inclusive. As a case in point, one of the leading figures in the field of technical and professional writing today is [Lisa Meloncon](#), Associate Professor of Technical Communication at the University of Cincinnati. Dr. Meloncon is a past president of the Council of Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication, a current member of the steering committee of Women in Technical Communication, and co-founder of the only stand-alone conference for rhetoricians of health and medicine.

The organization Women in Technical Communication not only does research on women in the field, but also holds conferences and provides mentorship opportunities to help women advance in their careers. These supports for women have helped these forms of communication grow in more inclusive ways while also expanding the definition of what constitutes technical communication to include genres that were once rejected as feminine.

Glassworks Launches Spring 2017 Issue of Magazine



On March 29 in the Edelman Planetarium, students, staff, and community members attended the reading and launch of Glassworks Literary Magazine's Spring 2017 edition. Students and editors read their favorite pieces from this issue, and Writing Arts Professor Marya Hornbacher read excerpts of her own creative work.

The evening took no more than an hour, but in that time, while reclining in the chairs and basking in the dimmed lighting,

with images projected on the domed ceiling, members of the audience experienced a combination of poetry, short story, memoir, and short prose pieces. Professor

Hornbacher shared insights into her writing process and background to her work, and each reader elaborated on the reasons they chose each piece and its history with Glassworks Magazine. The evening provided insights into the work that goes into producing and editing creative content for a literary

magazine while providing entertainment and engagement with the writing.

Each piece was handpicked by the Glassworks team, and were the perfect pieces to showcase what the magazines about and the thought that goes not just into the pieces, but into the way the magazine is structured and how much time the staff spends to put together the best product. When Professor Hornbacher took the stage,

you could tell she was used to reading aloud, and there wasn't a hint of anxiety in her. She read from her own stories gracefully, and captivated the audience as the images above her flowed from one to the next.

The tone of her voice was leisurely, and perfect to narrate her tales from her past and being on the road. Her works were at times humorous, dramatic and vividly entertaining, and shed some insight into her life and what helped shape her as an

The reading was met with laughter and applause from everyone in the audience, and one member even questioned her if she would be reading for an audiobook any time soon.

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Rowan University Writing Arts Club



Every Friday
Boz #107
5- 6:30PM

All Majors,
Minors, &
concentrations
are Welcome!

The Writing Arts Club prides itself on having a diverse group of members, each bringing a unique set of skills and view on writing into the meetings. Meetings take place Friday evenings at 5:00 pm until 6:30pm, in Bozorth Hall room 107.



author. The reading was met with laughter and applause from everyone in the audience, and one member even questioned her if she would be reading for an audiobook any time soon. With the refreshments, the dim lighting of the planetarium, and the easygoing speakers, this night was relaxing and enjoyed by all.

Mediafest 2017: Behind the Writing

Creators of visual or audio content in the Department of Radio, Television and Film (RTF) gathered for the fourth annual Media Fest to honor the best content of the 2016 semesters.

The event, which took place on Friday, March 24 in King Auditorium in Bozorth Hall, was put together by Jonathan Mason, a professor in the RTF department. Students submitted a link to a video or a script in the beginning of the spring semester to be assessed.

“Students need to really make sure the version of the script their submitting is the best it can possibly be, which means not just turning it whatever they finished at the end of the semester, but using all the notes they received from their professors or classmates and polishing that script to make sure there aren’t any open questions,” Mason said. “Proofreading seems like a petty thing, but when the jury receives a script and there are spelling mistakes, they either stop reading it or you have to work extra hard to regain their trust. Every little storytelling mistake you make is amplified by the fact the script is unpolished.”

Alyssa DeLio, who won Best New Media (linear), submitted an informative piece about LGBTQ representation in media and the booming web series world among the community, much of it made by lesbian women. To make the piece, DeLio did a lot of research and found a lot more content than she expected. She created a script that was too long and needed to make some cuts.

“The revision process is never an easy one, but I always make my decisions by reading my piece over a few times and asking myself, ‘Why does this part need to be here?’ and, ‘Can I say this better?’” DeLio said. “You’ll know when something doesn’t sit well or sound right. Go with your gut.”

DeLio got the idea for this project by slowly watching the number of LGBTQ web series grow during the last five years. To find inspiration for creative work, DeLio suggests paying attention to your thoughts when doing everyday tasks.

“Don’t chase the ideas, let them come to you!” DeLio said. “I’m definitely one of those people who put a lot of pressure on themselves to come up with a great idea on the spot. However, I found that the great ideas don’t come when you want them. They come when you’re walking to class, driving home, taking a shower, and basically all moments that you find yourselves without a pen. I’ve gotten used to carrying around a small notebook and I jot ideas down when they come to me. But, your cellphone works, too! Text yourself. Don’t let them fly away.”

Like DeLio’s piece, many of the works nominated featured new topics or ideas. However, when submitting works for Media Fest, this should not be the focus, according to Mason.

“Don’t worry about your script being original enough. The jury is looking for storytelling that feels authentic,” Mason said. “There’s a difference between being authentic and being original. Being authentic is more important. When a piece of writing comes from an authentic place, you feel that on the page. Those are the stories people want to read.”

Authentic storytelling was especially true for Argiea Spencer, who won Best Documentary for a film about her recently deceased grandfather, a man who made a great impact in a school within a low-income area.

“For a long time I thought about making this film but after he started becoming sicker and sicker in the final months of his life I came to the

realization that I had wasted a lot of time and never got to know him as well as I should have,” Spencer said. “This film provided some much needed closure for me and through it I was able to learn a lot about him and his life.”

Although Spencer did a lot of pre-writing for the documentary, she continued to edit as she learned more about her grandfather and his influence.

“If I’m being honest, the writing process was pretty rough for me,” Spencer said. “It was a weird experience because, even though this was my family, there were so many details I wasn’t completely sure about. So I was constantly rewriting and uncovering new details that I never even knew existed. And even though I did do an extensive amount of pre-writing for this piece a majority of the story telling was done through the edit. So the revision process was extremely interesting for myself and the crew because essentially we were all learning about my family and shaping the story together.”

Media Fest is a reminder to students that the professional world is different than school and they should conduct themselves like the artists they are.

“The purpose of the RTF Media Fest is ... to celebrate the work that is done here at Rowan so that we move past the feeling that we’re just writing something for an assignment for a class,” Mason said. “It’s a reminder that when you create something, when you’re an artist or a writer, you’re creating something because you’re passionate about expressing an idea. That idea shouldn’t just die at the end of the semester. This festival is to celebrate that work that you put a lot of blood and sweat into.”

Dr. Sanford Tweedie: College of Communication and Creative Arts Dean



“I miss students. I love teaching. The classroom, to me, is energizing. Interacting with people who have so many interesting ideas. I’ve always said if I’m not learning from my students, then I’m not enjoying teaching.”

Dr. Sanford Tweedie, the new permanent dean of the College of Communication and Creative Arts, didn’t always picture a career in higher education.

Tweedie did not put a lot of thought into school as an undergraduate. He chose English as his major because he needed to finish in three years due to his ill father, and he already had a few credits in that subject.

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in English, Tweedie traveled to California for graduate school, but dropped out before the first semester was over.

Tweedie returned home to Michigan and decided to teach high school English. At the time, Michigan required certification to teach in two subject areas, so Tweedie went back to school to study English language to accompany his English literature background.

The professor in Tweedie’s psycholinguistics class suggested Tweedie apply to be his research assistant. While filling out the application, Tweedie noticed there were two boxes he could check: research assistant and teaching assistant. Tweedie’s professor suggested he check both and to take

the teaching assistantship if he got it because it paid more.

Tweedie was offered the teaching assistant job and began teaching at 22 years old. After receiving his master’s degree, Tweedie attended a Ph.D. program for English at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where he also worked as a teaching assistant.

Tweedie began working at Rowan two years after Henry Rowan made the donation of \$100 million in the Department of Communications in 1994, expecting it to just be a stepping stone in his career. At the time, there were only five writing courses, which included first-year writing and business writing.

Despite Tweedie’s initial impressions of the university, he soon found it was growing rapidly and provided immense opportunity. Tweedie helped create the multiple majors and minors during his 23 years at Rowan. In 2013, Tweedie became the chair of the Department of Writing Arts.

“It was really interesting for me to come into a Department of Communications because I had come out of three English literature departments,

and there was a totally different world where people where the emphasis was on production,” Tweedie said. “Yes, [in English] you do lots of reading. Yes, you do lots of film viewing and lots of critical analysis of lots of things, but [communication and creative arts] was more about the production whereas English literature it’s more about consumption and analyzing and interpreting. It felt so much more energizing to me to be in this department versus the English department.”

The College of Communication and Creative Arts has grown significantly during Tweedie’s time here. Tweedie originally did plan to become the permanent dean and acted as the interim dean to “fill a seat.” However, now he is excited to play a role in the continued growth of the university.

“It was not as intimidating or scary as I thought it would be,” Tweedie said. “Having been chair of writing arts, with its over 100 faculty and having to teach, the work here is probably more than that, but I don’t have to go into class embarrassed because I don’t have papers done. There’s a different sort of pressure but I don’t mind doing 10,000 things at once. It’s easy for me to stand around and brag about the amazing things that our faculty does.”

Starting next semester, the writing arts and communication studies departments will be housed in the building at Victoria Street, bringing four of the six departments in the College of Communication and Creative Arts to that side of campus.

“When we first started moving buildings down here, I did not think this was the best idea. But President Houshmand has a big picture and understanding of what he wants to do, and I didn’t see it at the time,” Tweedie said. “The whole center of gravity on campus is shifting from *See TWEEDIE, page 9*

Dr. Jenn Courtney: Writing Arts Chair

“As chair, Dr. Courtney will continue to help things run as smoothly as possible for faculty and students.”

In May of 2016, Dr. Jennifer Courtney was elected interim chair of the Department of Writing Arts. A few weeks ago, she became the permanent chair of the writing arts department. As the chair of the department, Dr. Courtney will continue to have a hand in everything, working with and supporting faculty and students.

Dr. Courtney graduated with her Ph.D. in English and a specialization in rhetoric and composition from Purdue University. In 2004, she came to Rowan when Writing Arts was still called the Department of Rhetoric and Composition. Two years later, it became Writing Arts. In Dr. Courtney's time here, the department has been through many changes. As it became Writing Arts, it developed its major, minor, and liberal studies sequence. The curriculum became more coherent with the creation of the three concentrations (formerly known as specializations). Its relationships with outside departments, like business, engineering, and the honors program continues to develop, as do the extracurricular activities offered for students. The most notable change in the department over the years is the growth. It has at least doubled in size, but thanks to the amazing faculty, still retains its commitment to students. A lot of this excellence in the department has traces of Dr. Courtney.

Dr. Courtney has taught Evaluating Writing, the Sophomore Engineering Clinic, and Intro to WA, and the MA Teaching Practicum. She has been instrumental in developing the First Year Writing program as well as the Teaching Experience Program. Dr. Courtney has been an active voice in the University community. She has been a University Senator and a member of the Academic Integrity Committee.

Along with all of this, she has published on curriculum development as well as cultural studies.

As chair, Dr. Courtney will continue to help things run as smoothly as possible for faculty and students. She will work in curriculum development, hiring of new faculty, mentoring faculty, working with faculty (both new and current) on recontracting, advising students, coordinating programs and events for faculty, planning orientations for prospective students, and scheduling classes. She will also work closely with newly elected Dean, Dr. Tweedie, to map out the future of the Writing Arts department and how to get there. Currently, Dr. Courtney is gearing up for Writing Arts' big move across campus, which will take place this summer. Dr. Courtney will also continue to teach one course per semester, most likely Intro to WA and the Teaching Practicum.

Dr. Courtney has many plans for the future of the department. The first is already in motion-- that is the development of the Technical and Professional Writing concentration, as well as a Certificate of Undergraduate Studies in Technical and Professional Writing for students outside of Writing Arts. She will also be working to develop additional courses in conjunction with other departments across campus, like Business Composition. Dr. Courtney is also hoping to expand the amount of online courses offered, get more students involved in internships, and enhance and further develop the Graduate program.

There is no doubt that Dr. Courtney will continue to do great work in the department; we in the Writing Arts Department are excited to be a part of this time in Writing Arts history.

TWEEDIE, from page 8

the north halls to here. This is now becoming the place to be on campus.”

The College of Communication and Creative Arts is also creating a new major for sports communication, and anticipate having it available to students by fall 2018. The major will likely be housed in the journalism department, but include classes from every department in the college. Tweedie anticipates the major to generate a lot of interest and become a “destination major.”

Although Tweedie enjoys his new role as dean, he does miss teaching and interacting frequently with students.

“I miss students. I love teaching,” Tweedie said. “The classroom, to me, is energizing. Interacting with people who have so many interesting ideas. I've always said if I'm not learning from my students, then I'm not enjoying teaching.”

Despite no longer teaching, Tweedie still stays up-to-date with what the student population is doing. On April 1, the College of Communication and Creative Arts celebrated 50 years of excellence with a student showcase, award ceremony and banquet. During the fifth annual showcase, students from the college presented various projects and research. The showcase and award ceremony allow him, as well as others from Rowan University, see what students in the college are doing.

Ultimately, Tweedie wants to continue to serve students and their needs. He hopes to create a student advisory board in the near future to hear the student perspective and what he and the faculty of the College of Communication and Creative Arts can improve upon.

“That's why we're here, for the students,” Tweedie said. “It's all structured to provide students satisfying educations then become good citizens and thriving people in their careers. If we're not doing that, then why are we here?”

Growing the Technical and Professional Writing Concentration

Technical writing, as we typically understand it, provides users of technology with written instruction manuals, guides, and software and technical demonstrations. Professional writing, on the other hand, is a genre of writing concerned with communication within a company or institution: drafting emails, newsletters, bulletins, anything that keeps employees, employers, and stakeholders communicating in a way that gets the work done. Technical writing also includes writing résumés and cover letters as well as reports and procedural documents (these short articles in this newsletter are instances of professional writing). The genres of technical and professional writing require directness, concision, clarity, and are meant to guide readers to get work done.

In order to better provide students the skills necessary to excel in careers that involve technical and professional communication, the Writing Arts department is expanding the concentration to include two new courses, which will be taught first as special topics courses. This fall 2017, Dr. Amy Reed will teach Medical Writing and Rhetoric, and this spring 2018, Dr. Fillenwarth will teach Scientific Writing and Rhetoric.

In Medical Writing and Rhetoric, students will examine the field of medicine from a social standpoint, and assess the impact medical advances have had on our world as a whole. Students will work on patient-oriented assignments such as training materials, drug and disease related literature, informational pamphlets, and tools that will help a medical patient better understand and become educated about their situation. This class, combined with Magazine Article Writing, could potentially help students create concise articles in the style of the various health magazines that exist today.

The topics of medical writing range from lengthy scientific documentation of research for actual doctors to read through and help with their practices, to more broader non-physician oriented guidelines for people to read and follow to take the best care of themselves. Students will become familiar with medical concepts and ideas that they can use in their writing, and also the different techniques to follow to become well equipped in a career that relies on working with medical literature.

While related to medical writing, Scientific Writing and Rhetoric takes on a broader approach. Medicine is, by definition, a science, and much of the literature is research-based as well as professionally conducted. Students will develop research practices and best approaches to developing scientific documents, including reports, articles, white papers, research development reports, and proposals. In the process, students will learn the rhetorical features of these forms of scientific writing. Students who become involved with this course will be taught the best ways to convey findings to a reader, and the differences in the writing process that come with differences in subject matter.

These two classes are a large addition and a start of the reconstruction of the Technical and Professional Writing concentration. As the concentration grows with varied and complex course selection opportunities, students will continue to develop the tools to become better writers, both within the medical and scientific schools of thought, and in varied methods of professional communication. These courses offer students a base in Technical and Professional communication allowing for further development of these skills in future courses.

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studies, and the divide between English and engineering deepened.

Though technical writing began to develop as a discipline, those teaching it grew discontent. Oftentimes, these professors were more interested in teaching literature, were underpaid, and did not have respect or recognition within their departments because they were relegated to teach writing rather than the more coveted literature courses. Though morale was generally low amongst the faculty of “engineering English” courses, the demand for the courses increased as did the number of offerings.

As a result of World War II and the G.I. Bill, new students poured into universities. Also a result of the war was countless mechanical inventions, all requiring manuals and instructions for operation, thus increasing the demand for technical writers.

By the 1950s, technical writing formed into how we know it today. The contention between Engineering and English continued, but by the end of the 1950s, technical writing courses developed further and became required for students.

The end of the 1960s saw a decline in enrollment for engineering programs, and therefore decreased enrollment in technical writing courses provided for engineering students. This meant that professors who were more resistant to technical writing were no longer required to spend time teaching it. Those who remained teaching the courses deepened their understanding of technical writing and were in contact with one another, strengthening the courses as a whole.

Increased enrollment began in the 1970s, and technical writing professors began to receive recognition for their knowledge of the subject matter. The legitimization of these courses brings us to where we all now, with technical and professional writing existing as a legitimate and necessary area of study that has expanded well beyond engineering to include all STEM fields.

Writing Arts: A Brief Timeline

1966

Several faculty members separate from The English Department and to teach courses in journalism and public relations Writing.

School of Communication forms with five departments, one of which is College Writing.

1996

1999

The Department launches both the undergraduate B.A. in Writing Arts as well as M.A. in Writing.

Creative Writing joins the Composition and Rhetoric department and the department is renamed "Writing Arts".

2004

2017

The College of Communication and Creative Arts celebrates 50 years since the founding of the department with a banquet, celebrating 50 years of excellence.

To view the digital version of *The Writer's Insider*, as well as archived editions of previous publications, please visit:

<http://www.rowanwritingarts.org/the-writers-insider>

The Writer's Insider is published every semester by the Rowan University Department of Writing Arts Interns.

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