

The Technical Communication Certificate in Perspective

Now in its tenth year, the Technical Communication Certificate has established itself as a program that meets industry and government agencies' demands for engineers who are skilled communicators and for communication specialists. Because employers value well-developed communication skills, the TCC courses will enhance any student's success in co-op/intern positions and post-graduation careers. The more than hundred TCC graduates overwhelmingly confirm not only that the certificate gave them an edge over other candidates during the recruitment process, but also that the communication knowledge, skills, and attitudes they acquired while in the program helped them succeed in their jobs and helped prepare them for the communication and management tasks in today's multifunctional team environments.

Aside from the relevant courses offered in the TCC, students value especially the close contact with faculty through advising, independent study projects, and collaboration. Students in the program often take on leadership roles in other college or campus wide student organizations and projects, further developing their communication, team, and management skills.

In evaluating their experiences with the TCC program, students have many positive comments. Of the 1997 graduation class, Jennifer Hattan, CEE, now at HNTB Environmental Engineering, states, "almost every interviewer I spoke with was impressed with the program (and many said they wish they had something like this when they were in school." Will Campbell, CHE, now with Proctor and Gamble comments, "The TCC program gave me the opportunity to diversify my UW-CoE educational experience." Pax Maguire, ME, who also won a scholarship from the Society of Technical Communication, states that "I believe more of [the program] belongs in the standard engineering curriculum." Eric Larson, now at Intel, states, "Excellent!...you learn a "user-oriented" approach that is not taught in normal engineering courses." Sarah Storm, ME, now at Hewlett Packardt, liked especially "working with students in other majors." And Ratika Arora, now at Intel, recalls, "I always loved coming to TCC classes because the instructors took an interest in each individual student. This was one place - General Engineering Building - where I knew the instructor knew who I was."