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President's Midterm Report

🕒 January 29, 2014 📁 President's Column

The President's Midterm Report was published in the [January issue of Intercom](#), but we're republishing it here as well as a guest post by STC President Nicky Bleiel.

I am honored to continue the tradition of the President's midterm report and I am pleased that there is so much good news to share with all of you.

STC celebrated an important milestone in 2013—our 60th anniversary—but we did anything but rest on our laurels. We spent the entire year positioning the Society for Technical Communication for the next 60 years and beyond.

Chris Lyons, our new executive director, came on board in May, just as the 2013 Summit kicked off in Atlanta. If you were an attendee you may have met him, because he tried to meet as many attendees and exhibitors as possible. He and the entire STC staff have been working hard all year to grow our programs, membership, initiatives, and publications.

Membership

Membership was up in 2013 (for the first time in several years) and we offered a discounted "early bird" membership rate for 2014 that was under \$200. That offer was very popular and we are looking forward to continued growth in STC's membership numbers.

Education and the Summit

STC's educational offerings continue to be expanded, with new live Web seminars, online courses, and virtual conferences being added all the time. The preliminary program for our annual conference and premier event—the Technical Communication Summit—has been posted, with additional sessions and events being planned by Conference Chair Chris Hester and Program Manager Paul Mueller. For more information about the Summit, which will be held 18–21 May 2014 in Phoenix, AZ, see <http://summit.stc.org/>.

Initiatives

STC has expressed its support for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) initiatives. We recently sent a letter to the White House Office of Science and Technology to promote the fact that technical communication is intrinsic to STEM-related education and economic growth. We plan to continue working in this area. Additionally, STC is supporting the Center for Plain Language in their efforts to have the Plain Language Act, HR 3786, enacted. This law, similar to the Plain Language in Government Act that STC supported in 2010, would require federal regulations to be written with greater clarity.

A number of partnership agreements with technical communication–related organizations have been signed or are in negotiation. These partnerships focus on expanding cross-association access to education and events. We hope to provide the opportunity for our members to take advantage of offerings in potential areas of specialization and also to open the door for members in other associations to take STC classes and consider STC membership. Agreements have been made with tekcom, American Medical Writers Association, Association of Proposal Development Professionals, Association of Independent Information Professionals, The American Society of Indexers, and Sigma Tau Delta—The National English Honor Society.

The Student Outreach Task Force (led by Sally Henschel and Michael Opsteegh) is exploring how STC can better attract and serve student members. This task force began its important work immediately after the Summit and will report to the Board in early 2014.

The STC Board and staff gathered information about our membership and the profession in a number of ways, including a member survey launched in July, our new Advisory Council (which had its first meeting at the Summit in May), consultation with thought leaders and the leaders of other organizations, research, and thorough examination of all of our existing programs.

Direction and Mission

Turning toward the future, I am proud to unveil STC's new mission statement. This statement and the focus areas position STC to effectively serve both the discipline of technical communication and our members. This statement was developed by the STC Board of Directors and the staff—our next step will be to develop a detailed action plan and then execute it.

STC Mission Statement

The Society for Technical Communication advances technical communication as the discipline of transforming complex information into usable content for products, processes, and services.

STC serves its members by identifying and promoting best practices in the field and by demonstrating the economic value delivered by technical communicators. By providing lifelong learning opportunities, we help our members develop their skills and competencies so that they may advance in a variety of career paths.

To achieve this mission, we focus our efforts in these areas:

- Offer continuing education that enhances the competencies and skills of our members and enables lifelong learning
- Foster the means and opportunity for technical communication professionals to succeed in today's workforce and to grow into related career fields
- Define and publicize the economic contribution of technical communication practices to businesses and governments
- Promote the concept that technical communication training develops foundational skills and fosters in practitioners habits of analysis, discernment, and problem-solving that underpins their ability to successfully perform in many fields
- Manage the operations of the Society in a sound and sustainable manner, investing strategically to enhance our ability to deliver member value

I think you will agree that the STC stage is set for success in 2014 and beyond.

Thanks for your kind attention—and for being a member of STC. I hope to see you in Phoenix at the Summit!