



Department of English and Technical Communication

236 HSS | 500 W. 14th St. | Rolla MO 65409-4681
573-341-4681 | english@mst.edu | english.mst.edu

Drs. Hercula, Kania-Gosche, Tran, and Wright:

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Chair of the Department of English and Technical Communication at Missouri University of Science and Technology. With over thirty years of experience in higher education and extensive leadership roles in academic administration, I bring a depth of knowledge in faculty mentoring, curriculum innovation, and student success. My experience as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and as Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Achievement and Enrichment has provided me with a broad understanding of institutional leadership, budgeting, and strategic planning that will allow me to guide our department toward a future of sustainable growth and academic excellence.

A strong department is built on the foundation of a supported and thriving faculty. Throughout my career, I have worked diligently to ensure that faculty members receive the mentorship, resources, and opportunities necessary to excel in their teaching and research. As associate chair of the department from 2019 to 2022, I played a key role in faculty support, supervising course scheduling, advocating for work-life balance, and mentoring faculty in research and professional development. My leadership in faculty hiring, including a successful track record of diversity recruitment, has further demonstrated my commitment to fostering an inclusive and dynamic academic environment that promotes faculty success.

Additionally, faculty success is not only about day-to-day support but also about long-term career development. Our department has a strong record of promoting faculty, and I am committed to continuing that tradition. The yearly review process should be transparent, aspirational, and achievable, ensuring that each faculty member sees a clear path to advancement. Rather than treating yearly reviews as isolated evaluations, they should be cumulative and developmental, helping faculty build upon previous achievements to reach tenure and promotion milestones. Faculty thrive when they feel supported in their research, teaching, and service. My goal is to develop a culture where professional growth is not just encouraged but expected—a culture that benefits individuals and strengthens the department as a whole.

Strengthening and Modernizing Our Curriculum

One of the most pressing challenges for our department is ensuring that our curriculum remains relevant and competitive in a rapidly evolving job market. I believe that communication and media studies represent the most viable path forward for increasing enrollment and providing students with a degree that translates directly to career opportunities. While literature and creative writing remain essential components of our academic offerings, we must acknowledge the realities of faculty expertise and student demand. We have the faculty strength in digital communication, media studies, and technical communication to excel in these fields, and I am committed to positioning our department at the forefront of this evolving landscape.

This shift is not just about enrollment numbers—it is about ensuring that our students graduate with the skills necessary to succeed in an era of digital transformation. I have extensive experience in curriculum

development, having redesigned writing courses multiple times to align with best practices and student needs. My scholarship in transmedia storytelling, technical communication, and digital media further underscores my commitment to ensuring that our curriculum remains at the forefront of the discipline.

Supporting Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics

While aligning our department with modern communication trends is essential, our tradition in literature, creative writing, and linguistics remains just as vital. These disciplines develop analytical, creative, and linguistic expertise—skills that are invaluable in technical communication, media studies, and digital storytelling. Our literature courses cultivate critical thinking and interpretive depth, which are key to understanding the cultural and rhetorical impact of communication in all forms. Creative writing fosters narrative craft and adaptability, preparing students for both artistic expression and industry applications. Similarly, linguistics and language studies provide the theoretical basis for understanding how meaning is structured—an essential component of rhetoric, AI-driven discourse, and human-computer interaction.

As chair, I will work to strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations, ensuring that literature, creative writing, and linguistics are not only preserved but actively connected to the department's evolving priorities. Whether through integrated course opportunities, digital and multimodal applications, or expanded industry engagement, these fields will remain central to our department's identity while broadening their reach and impact.

Revitalizing the M.S. in Technical Communication and Media

Another urgent challenge facing our department is ensuring the sustainability and relevance of our M.S. in Technical Communication. Graduate enrollment trends have signaled that significant changes are necessary for the program to remain viable. I support our faculty's efforts to transition the M.S. to an online, asynchronous 8-week format, which will better align with student needs and industry expectations. This restructuring also presents an opportunity to refine course offerings, ensuring that students receive a rigorous and market-driven education.

Additionally, shifting the program's focus to Technical Communication and Media with an updated CIP code will allow us to modernize its branding and increase appeal to prospective students and employers. The inclusion of a mandatory internship component further strengthens the degree's applied learning outcomes, enhancing graduate employability. I recognize that these changes require faculty support, and as chair I would work collaboratively with faculty to ensure a smooth transition while maintaining academic integrity and faculty oversight of the curriculum.

Ensuring Consistency in Multi-Section Courses

As a department, we must recognize that students deserve a consistent and high-quality experience across all multi-section courses. While faculty autonomy is important, it must be balanced with the responsibility to provide students with equitable learning experiences. My stance is clear: students have a right to a common experience in a multi-section course, regardless of the instructor. This does not mean sacrificing academic freedom but rather ensuring that all sections align with best practices in composition and communication pedagogy.



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I have long advocated for the standardization of foundational courses, and my leadership in course redesign and faculty mentoring has helped create a more cohesive learning experience for students. I am prepared to work collaboratively with faculty to develop standardized course structures that maintain flexibility while ensuring consistency and rigor.

Preparing Students for Emerging Communication Technologies

As communication fields continue to evolve, students must be prepared to engage critically with emerging technologies that are shaping professional and academic writing. Our department has an opportunity to guide students in understanding how tools such as artificial intelligence and digital media affect communication practices. Rather than viewing these technologies as replacements for traditional skills, we can position them as extensions of rhetorical knowledge—enhancing students' ability to analyze, synthesize, and create meaningful content.

My approach to integrating innovative technologies in the classroom has always prioritized ethical and informed engagement. Faculty should have the agency to determine how best to introduce technology into their pedagogy while ensuring students develop the analytical skills to navigate these tools effectively. As chair, I would foster open dialogue among faculty about how emerging technologies intersect with communication studies, supporting research and professional development opportunities that allow instructors to engage with these issues on their own terms.

Expanding External Funding and Strategic Growth

A thriving department requires strong financial support, and external funding must be a key priority. I have successfully led and co-designed proposals that resulted in \$2 million in grants, including major awards from the Kummer Institute, Boeing, and the National Science Foundation. These funds have supported academic programs, student success initiatives, and faculty research. As chair, I will prioritize grant writing and industry partnerships to secure additional resources for faculty development, research opportunities, and student scholarships.

Beyond funding, recruitment and departmental visibility must be a strategic focus. Growing our department requires targeted marketing efforts, digital engagement, and stronger outreach to prospective students. By leveraging alumni networks, industry partnerships, and interdisciplinary collaborations, we can create new programmatic opportunities that attract a broader range of students while enhancing the visibility of our strengths. This includes modernizing our branding, strengthening online presence, and developing recruiting pipelines with regional high schools and community colleges.

A key aspect of this growth involves engaging with industry partners to ensure that our curriculum aligns with the evolving needs of employers. Strengthening alumni networks will also be a priority, as they serve as valuable ambassadors for our programs and can help establish mentorship and internship opportunities for students. Additionally, I will work to secure external funding sources that support these strategic initiatives, ensuring that we have the resources needed to innovate and expand while maintaining a solid foundation in our core disciplines.

Vision for the Department's Future

Missouri S&T is an institution that thrives on innovation, and our department should reflect that same spirit of forward-thinking progress. If appointed as chair, I will work collaboratively with faculty to develop a clear strategic plan that ensures the long-term viability and success of our department. My focus will be on faculty support, curricular modernization, student success, and external funding.

At the heart of my vision is the belief that a strong department is one where faculty, staff, and students feel empowered to achieve their best work. This means fostering a culture of mentorship, shared governance, and continuous professional development, ensuring that faculty have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. I will encourage open dialogue, data-informed decision-making, and creative problem-solving, so that we can collectively shape the department's future.

Our department is uniquely positioned to lead in the intersections of technical communication, media studies, literature, linguistics, and creative writing. By building new interdisciplinary collaborations, strengthening external partnerships, and recruiting students into vibrant, market-relevant programs, we can position ourselves as a national leader in communication studies within a STEM-focused university. I am eager to work alongside my colleagues in shaping this future, ensuring that our department leads in innovation while staying true to our core strengths.

Sincerely,

Daniel C. Reardon

Professor of English

Missouri University of Science and Technology