

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

PROPOSAL 18-00

CERTIFICATE IN WRITING

Michigan Technological University will award the Certificate in Writing to students who have at least 21 semester hours in courses listed on this proposal and have earned a 2.50 GPA in the certificate program courses. The certificate will be noted on the student's transcript.

Proposal Background

The field of technical communication has grown to encompass several areas of expertise among practitioners. Although our undergraduate degrees in this field provide a good, general introduction to several of these areas, it does not, at present, allow students to develop an area of expertise. The Certificate in Writing was developed to meet the needs of students in technical communication who wish to cultivate their talents and skills in writing and who wish to present themselves on the job market as specialists in writing and editing. In addition, the certificate can provide students from other programs an opportunity to supplement their studies with extra emphasis in writing.

The Scientific and Technical Communication Program in the Humanities Department is restructuring its degree requirements for the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science degrees as we move from quarters to semesters. The Bachelor of Arts degree will give students the option of developing one or more area(s) of expertise in technical communication (media and writing). To recognize their concentrated study in writing, we propose to issue a certificate in writing.

Several colleges offer certificates in technical communication, and the degree requirements tend to require from 15-21 semester hours for completion (Michael Keene, *Education in Scientific and Technical Communication: Academic Programs that Work*, Society for Technical Communication, 1997, page 128). The proposed certificate in writing is more specialized than such degrees, but it requires approximately the same number of hours.

Objective

The objective of the certificate program is to give students a clear outline of which courses are required to develop their writing skills and to assure prospective employers that students have mastered the skills necessary to work as technical writers and editors.

Significance

Michigan Tech already has nationally recognized Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science programs in technical communication, and we expect to be among the first scientific and technical communication programs to offer certificates for special emphasis within technical communication.

By far the largest single need in the field of technical communication is for excellent writers and editors. Students who already have abilities in writing can further cultivate that skill by taking the courses required for this certificate.

The Certificate in Writing will provide an added incentive for high school students who are considering college studies in English or journalism to come to Michigan Tech. We believe this certificate will aid in our recruitment efforts.

Besides these advantages, the certificate will:

- Help students plan their studies in technical communication
- Reward students for their extra effort in the area
- Help faculty advise students
- Enhance students' career opportunities
- Increase students' employability

Costs and Revenues

The certificate uses courses and equipment already in place in the Humanities Department. We expect no added costs.

Non-degree students who take the program would generate additional revenue for the Department of Humanities.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to take 21 semester hours in writing for the certificate. Nine of these hours may be used to meet the *Writing* requirement in the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees in Scientific and Technical Communication. See "Curriculum" below for more details.

Administration

The certificate will be administered by the Scientific and Technical Communication Committee in the Humanities Department and by the Director and the Advisor of Scientific and Technical Communication. If the committee believes changes are necessary, it will recommend changes to the Humanities Undergraduate Steering Committee, the Humanities Department, the University Senate, and Provost, as necessary.

Enrollment

We expect several of our majors to sign up for this certificate. Similarly, students in other majors, especially engineering, are very much aware of the value of being a good writer, so we expect the certificate to draw some students from engineering. However, we do not plan to increase our course offerings at this time unless we have faculty to cover such courses.

Fit with other Programs

The Certificate in Writing will supplement studies for majors in scientific and technical communication. It is a natural extension, indeed a recognition, of an area that has long been our major focus in our program, but which now needs special recognition because of the diversification taking place in technical and scientific communication.

Curriculum

Students must take 21 semester credits in writing for the certificate. Nine of these credits may be used to meet requirements in the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees in Scientific and Technical Communication. Students must maintain a minimum 2.50 average on a 4.0 scale in these courses, and students must earn at least a C in the class in order for it to count toward the certificate.

HU2110 Creative Writing

HU3120 Technical and Scientific Communication

HU3150 Reading and Writing

HU3605 Grammar and Usage in Society

HU3606 Editing

HU3629 Practical Writing

HU3621 Introduction to Journalism

HU4110 Advanced Creative Writing

HU4130 Special Topics in Rhetoric/Composition

HU4628 Reading & Usability in Technical Communication

HU4634 Advanced Practicum in Scientific and Technical Communication

HU4670 Technical Communication Projects and Internships

HU4690 Special Topics in Technical Communication
HU4703 Issues in Communication Ethics

Adopted by Senate: May 10, 2000

Approved by President: May 30, 2000