

PANOPLY

English and Technical Communication | Missouri S&T | Winter 2020



A CRIME TO
REMEMBER

page 4

BRIDGING ENGLISH
AND CIVIC DUTY

page 7



SCHOLARSHIPS MAKE COMMUNICATORS WHO BECOME TOMORROW'S LEADERS

In English and technical communication, we prepare students to step from the classroom into the world as communicators with the power to write, speak, think and lead. For many students, the first step on this learning journey is scholarship support.

Please take time to connect with the student who calls you during our annual phonathon. It's a great way to learn what's happening in our department and across campus. And when your caller asks for your support, please consider taking the step that will help our students take theirs.

give.mst.edu

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings friends,

Fall is my favorite time of year in Missouri and this year it was especially welcome, following a LONG summer where we saw 90-degree weather stretch into October.

Recently, an alumna of English and technical communication brought us the gift of a chrysanthemum, one of my very favorite flowers. This favoritism is in large part because I am a terrible gardener and must plant only very hardy perennials to have any kind of green or bloom around my house. I love the grit of this perennial and how it grows slowly and reliably all spring and summer, blooming in the cool of mid-fall and usually hanging on into December.

Chrysanthemum is from the Greek for “gold flower” (though the one in the department is a lovely russet color) and is, for that reason, associated with royalty. It is also a traditional flower to give on Mother’s Day (get it? “mum”?). And in the Victorian language of flowers, it symbolizes loyalty and friendship, which is especially appropriate in this case.



Our gifted mum is currently sitting in the sunniest window in the department, looking out on the library, and as I write this, is just starting to show its colors. This strikes me as an excellent metaphor for what happens with our students each fall. They arrive green and promising and, sometime in mid-October, also begin to open up and bloom. Some, it's true, require more care than others but, for the most part, these are hardy beings, students who love reading and writing and thrive in the STEM-heavy soil of S&T.

Best wishes to those of you who have had similar experiences here as students and have since transplanted to new gardens. I hope you enjoy this year's issue of *Panoply*, which contains much of the current goings-on in the department. As always, we love hearing from you, so drop us a line to let us know how you are.

All good wishes,

Kristine Swenson, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair,
English and Technical Communication



IN THIS ISSUE

2 English research is on FYRE

FYRE program gives first-year students opportunities for research experience.

3 Studying for the future

William Reardon, a junior in technical communication, is the *Rollamo* editor.

4 A crime to remember

Trent Brown publishes book on unsolved murder in his Mississippi hometown.

6 Rejecting smart devices

Is your smart home device listening when it shouldn't be?

7 Bridging English and civic engagement

Assistant teaching professor Rachel Schneider serves on the Rolla City Council.

8 Learning by doing

Rudi Starek is learning on the job as a student writer in marketing and communications at S&T.



FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Jossalyn Larson (top left) published "The Sovereignty of Truth: Memory and Morality in 'Crocodile,'" a chapter in *Through the Black Mirror: Deconstructing the Side Effects of the Digital Age*. Larson also received an S&T Faculty Achievement Award this year for her work in teaching and service.

Kathryn Northcut (top right) will present at the 2020 Rhetoric Society of America Conference in Portland, Ore., on the reception and perception of *Protoavis texensis*, a controversial fossil from Texas.

Anne Cotterill's book, *Cold and the Demonic North in Early Modern England*, under contract with Amsterdam University Press, combines the history of science, climate, and early modern poetics and politics in England, 1550-1750.

David Wright, Dan Reardon and **Ed Malone** were guest editors of the August 2019 issue of *Technical Communication*, the quarterly journal of the Society for Technical Communication. The theme of the issue was transmedia, participatory culture and digital creation.

Ed Malone co-authored a textbook recently published by Oxford University Press titled *Technical Editing: An Introduction to Editing in the Workplace* (2020). The textbook offers a comprehensive, accessible and current approach to studying technical and professional editing.

Sarah Hercula's (bottom left) book *Fostering Linguistic Equality: The SISE Approach to the Introductory Linguistics Course* (2020) analyzes a pedagogical model designed for use in introductory linguistics courses that addresses students' misinformed ideologies about language variation and linguistic prejudice. Hercula also won an S&T Faculty Teaching Award this year.

Dan Reardon published a co-edited volume called *Mid-Career Faculty — Trends, Barriers and Possibilities* (2019).

Eric Bryan (bottom right) has two book projects due out in 2020 — *Literary Speech Acts of the Medieval North: Essays Inspired by the works of Thomas A. Shippey*, edited by Bryan and Alexander Vaughan Ames; and *Icelandic Folklore and the Christianization of the North: Religious Belief and the Transformation of Cultural Memory*.

ENGLISH RESEARCH IS ON FYRE

The First Year Research Experience (FYRE) program offered through the College of Arts, Sciences, and Business gives new students a chance to work one-on-one with a faculty mentor on a specific research project.

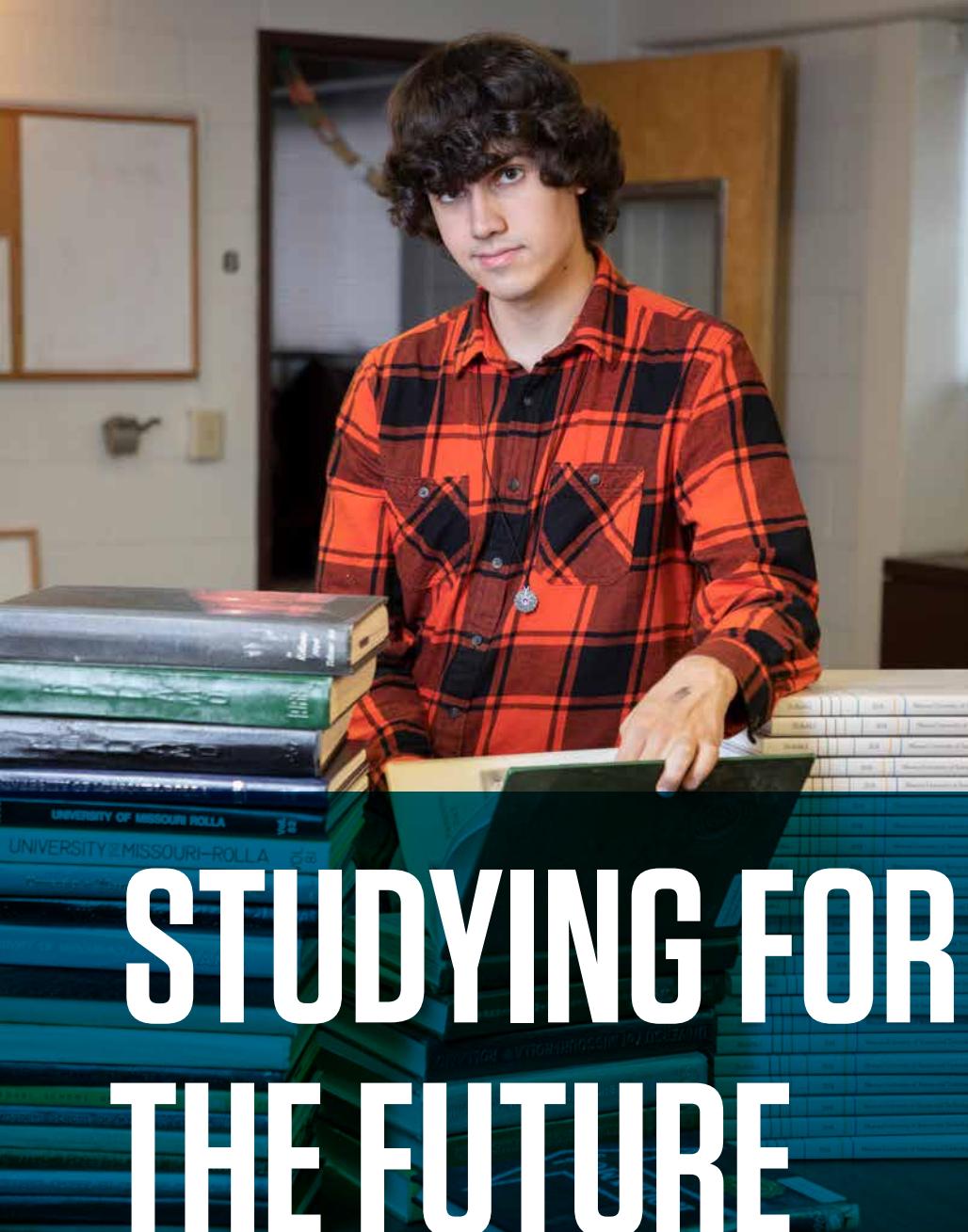
FYRE students pose questions, check data and create knowledge. The program is designed to improve critical thinking, communication, and presentation and leadership skills.

This past year, English and technical communication faculty were involved in three projects.

Kathryn Dolan worked with **Lillian Adams**, a sophomore in chemistry, on a project that examined the global history of breakfast cereal.

Sarah Hercula worked with **Anna Peacock**, a sophomore in biological sciences, to build a linguistic perceptions survey.

Daniel Reardon worked with **Maya Washington**, a sophomore in biological sciences, on a project that examines the bias of play in game reviews.



STUDYING FOR THE FUTURE

William Reardon hopes to one day pursue a career in academia, but first the S&T junior has to complete his technical communication degree. He says the friendliness of the English and technical communication faculty inspired him to join the program.

"I know being a professor isn't easy," Reardon says. "I'd also like to be a scholar of gothic fiction. I realized one day that studying gothic fiction is really what I wanted to do. It's my favorite."

To gain hands-on professional experience while still in college, Reardon joined the *Rollamo* staff. As one of the yearbook's managers, Reardon is responsible for 13 other students — and their deadlines.

"It's good experience learning and practicing how to manage people."

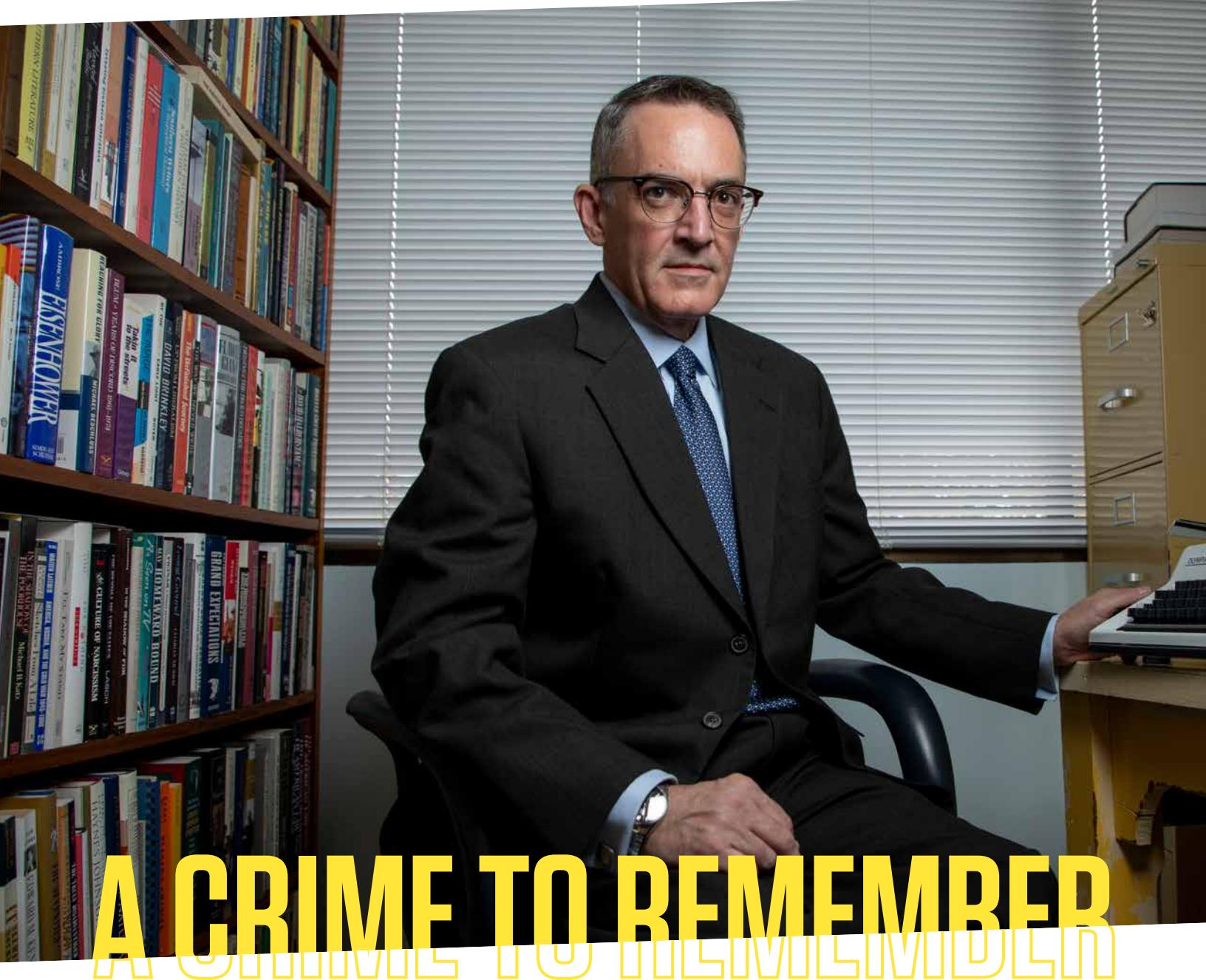
"It's good experience learning and practicing how to manage people," he says. "My favorite part of being on the yearbook team is sending the yearbooks to the newly graduated seniors. Of course, I also really enjoy the interpersonal experiences that come from dealing with a variety of departments on campus."

Reardon is involved in a number of other student organizations. He is vice president of the Alpha Gamma Mu chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society, and as an editor of *Southwinds*, S&T's annual literary and arts magazine, he assists with the publication and serves as treasurer.

To further broaden his experiences, Reardon traveled to Tuba City, Ariz., to build wheelchair ramps for houses on native Hopi and Navajo lands as part of Miner Challenge this past spring. Miner Challenge gives students an alternative to the traditional spring break trip — a week focused on volunteering to improve communities throughout the United States and abroad.

"I learned the degree to which cultural differences manifest themselves," says Reardon. He learned small but important differences like Hopi don't observe daylight saving time and Navajo wedding ceremonies last nearly 10 years.

"I went on the Miner Challenge trip because it sounded interesting and I love to travel," says Reardon. "I wanted to get more involved in service opportunities and this was a great fit."



A CRIME TO REMEMBER

With painstaking accuracy, Trent Brown tells a compelling story of true crime that reveals the consequences of socioeconomic injustice in the South in his new book, *Murder in McComb: The Tina Andrews Case*. The book is published by LSU Press and will be released in February.

Brown, a professor of English at Missouri S&T, drafted the 120,000-word book on a 1965 Olympia typewriter, one of 40 vintage manual machines he's collected to undergird his writing process.

"Using a typewriter for first drafts clarifies my thinking," he says. "It forces me to look at the structure of the piece — what I'm trying to argue, what comes next, and if there is enough there for a story — and it keeps me away from the distractions of emails, Facebook and the like."

Brown is a historian of the American South who joined the S&T faculty in 2003. His research focuses on the cultural history of the 20th century United States, with particular interests in race and gender. He is the author or editor of five books and other essays and articles that examine these topics in his home state of Mississippi and in the extended purview of the Deep South.

"In teaching literature, I always manage to teach a good bit of history as well," says Brown, who teaches courses on American Literature and American Film. "The two subjects inform each other so directly."

Brown was born in McComb, Miss., a town of 10,000 he characterizes as "a remarkably violent place in the 1960s," and where 12-year-old Tina Andrews was murdered in 1969. After two extensive murder trials that ended in a mistrial in 1971 and

resulted in an acquittal in 1972, her case remains unsolved today.

Brown's *Murder in McComb* is the first comprehensive examination of the case. After three years of research and writing, his investigation sheds new light on the impact of the prejudices of whites against whites during and after the tense, uncertain Civil Rights era.

Brown sought to discover what forces could explain how Andrews' murder came to be unsolved. He presents documented evidence and proceedings of the case, as well as recent interviews with people involved. He says the book doesn't try to solve a cold case, but to explain why the arrests after the murder didn't result in a conviction.

Brown notes that Andrews and her friend, Billie Jo Lambert, the state's key witness, were considered "girls of ill repute" and "trashy" children by many people in McComb.



"If they had come from so-called 'better' families, I can imagine a different outcome for the case," he says. "With witnesses reluctant to testify, a skilled and aggressive defense attorney, and some local residents who didn't wish to see the two arrested law enforcement officers convicted, the story became one about social class and taking sides."

"I've spent a lot of time reflecting on the values of the place where I grew up," says Brown. "With Tina Andrews' story, I've tried to explore part of the Deep South's history in the years beyond the civil rights movement, and at the same time, give her short life and the lack of justice that ensued, the recognition it deserves," says Brown.

Murder in McComb: The Tina Andrews Case will be available on amazon.com in February. □



ALUMNI NOTES

Misty Adams, Engl'11, MS TComm'13, is a documentation specialist at NASA's White Sands Complex in Las Cruces, N.M.

Molly Albertson, Engl'05, is client services director at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia.

Drew Amidei, Engl'15, is completing a Ph.D. in English at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Zachary Burke, Engl'13, earned a graduate degree in publishing from Oxford University.

Hannah Coffman, MS TComm'19, is teaching technical writing as a technical editor in the office of graduate studies at S&T.

Tara Bryan Gosnell, Engl'04, PsyC'05, MS TComm'07, is a technical writer and editor with the U.S. Navy in Washington, D.C.

Razmus Kerwin, Engl'12, MS TComm'14, is a visual information specialist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Rolla.

Amy Patterson, Engl'07, earned a master of arts degree in English from Northwestern University and is completing a Ph.D. in rhetorics, communication and information design at Clemson University.

Matt Peaslee, TComm'12, is a senior project manager at MasterCard.

Carla Reinagel, Engl'07, and her husband, **Jon**, Phys'07, are missionaries in Mozambique and founded Equip Mozambique, a foundation that supports leadership development, introduces technology and develops strategies to alleviate poverty. (Above)

Caetlin Witbrod, Engl'14, is a creative writer and freelance editor through her company, Words by Witbrod, based in St. Louis.

Alex Womack, Engl'15, completed a master of arts degree in library and information science from Dominican University.

David Young, ChE'10, MS TComm'13, earned a Ph.D. in technical communication from Texas Tech University and is now an assistant professor at Georgia Tech.

GRADUATION DOESN'T MEAN GOODBYE

We'd love to hear about new appointments, degrees earned, job promotions and other family or professional news.

Tell us what you're doing with a degree in English or technical communication so we can feature your accomplishments among our alumni achievement stories.

english.mst.edu □



REJECTING SMART DEVICES

When a call for study participants went out in the Rolla area, nearly 50 people told Missouri S&T researchers that they purchased and then stopped using a smart device in their home.

"We have found that there is a certain amount of privacy that people are not willing to give up," says **David Wright**, associate professor of English and technical communication at Missouri S&T.

Wright, who researches technology diffusion and communications networks, teamed up with S&T psychology professor **Daniel B. Shank** to look at why people are ditching their smart devices.

A smart device is an electronic gadget generally connected to other devices through wireless connections that a user can operate

interactively such as the Google Home, Amazon Alexa, and automated locks and doors, lights, and thermostats.

Wright says they hear stories of people unplugging them because of bad experiences.

"For example, an Amazon Alexa in the kids' room that starts laughing in the middle of the night and scares the kids, or the Roomba that attacks the cat," says Wright. "The main theme with the stories is that people feel their privacy is being violated without their consent or control."

Respondents reported a belief that smart home devices are listening when they shouldn't be. They say their discussions at home seem to turn into advertisements the next day, which leads people to believe that device manufacturers are not transparent about their products.

Wright says trust is a major issue for people using smart home devices. Shank has collected stories of home devices sharing private medical data to others in their home or gathering data when the device was not active.

The researchers are using seed grant money from Missouri S&T's new Center for Science, Technology and Society to continue research on why people might reject smart home devices.

"When you've gone that far to get the system up and running, it takes a fairly bad experience for someone to drop out and stop using it," says Wright. "We believe there are a lot more and varied stories about this."

The researchers are now following up with in-depth interviews to gain a fuller understanding of smart device rejection.

BRIDGING ENGLISH AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

With her short, chic neon-yellow hairstyle, **Rachel Schneider**, assistant teaching professor of English, is a bright spot on the Missouri S&T campus. Schneider says her hair has been almost every color of the rainbow, including bright red, orange, coral, pink, blue, indigo and violet.

"My hair colors express my interest in experimentation — that I don't want to fall into a rut," she says.

Schneider teaches British Literature and Writing and Research, a course that requires students to learn analytical writing techniques that involve assessing evidence and arguing effectively. She says she's teaching them lifelong skills they can use in any profession, especially if they become voters or civic leaders who participate in the U.S. democracy where they may need to decide policies.



Speaking of civic leaders, Schneider was recently elected to Rolla's City Council, representing Ward I, a neighborhood east of campus where many students reside.

"I have the opportunity to represent their voices in local government that impacts their lives," she says. "I'm modeling for them why it's important to have a strong foundation in analytical thinking and writing."

This past fall, Schneider was working to put forward a tax in Rolla for better police, fire and animal control services and is excited to participate in developing the city's new community plan for the Ber Juan and Schuman Parks neighborhood.

"I take a real pleasure in working with the people in Rolla's city government and hope my role as a civic leader will inspire students to get involved," she says.

Schneider joined S&T in 2015. She holds Ph.D. and master of arts degrees in English from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor of arts degree in English language and literature from the University of Virginia. She has received three faculty service and professional development awards from S&T and numerous fellowships and scholarships from Oxford University, Harvard University, the University of California and the University of Texas at Austin.



LEARNING BY DOING

Rudi Starek can be in multiple places at once. At least, that's how it seems. Besides being a full-time technical communication student with a minor in chemistry, she works at the S&T Store on campus and is a student writer in the marketing and communications office.

She stayed busy this past summer as well, interning at BioSpan Technologies Inc., an oil recovery, pavement preservation and industrial cleanup company in Washington, Mo.

"I don't think I had the typical intern experience, because I was in the laboratory most of the time," says Starek. "We were mixing carbon and soybean oil and working with FTIR (Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy) — my hands were dyed black all summer long."

Starek's interest in S&T started early, when she attended numerous camps throughout her middle and high school summers, including It's a Girl Thing and Explosives Camp. But she credits her teacher, **Lindsey (Dunstedter) Stratton**, TComm'09, a lecturer in English and technical communication, and her Introduction to Technical Writing course for cementing her choice of major.

"I actually enjoyed writing my organic chemistry lab reports because they were so similar to technical communication," says Starek. "You have to stick to the facts, no personal pronouns and be very clear while being concise."

Starek says she had an idea of what she wanted to do in college before she got to S&T, but quickly realized that her initial plans led her to a different path.

"In high school, I really liked my science and writing classes but thought I wouldn't be able to pursue both," says Starek. "After I took the intro class, I realized that I could still write and work with science."

CENTER FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY HOSTS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In November 2019, Missouri S&T's Center for Science, Technology and Society (CSTS) hosted "Technologies of the Everyday," the 41st annual meeting of the Humanities and Technology Association (HTA) Network.

The two-day event on the S&T campus in Rolla included keynote speaker Carl Mitcham and 24 presenters from U.S. universities, including eight from S&T. Mitcham, an international distinguished professor of philosophy and technology at Renmin University in Beijing and professor emeritus of humanities, arts and social sciences at the Colorado School of Mines, spoke on the ways design choice affects the human condition in his talk titled, "Engineering is Everywhere."

"Our presenters explored how the pervasiveness of technology impacts our everyday lives," says **Kris Swenson**, interim director of the CSTS and professor and chair of English and technical communication. "We learned about the social, ethical and existential ramifications today's technologies are generating, and in ways we can apply to our curriculums."

The HTA Network brings together scholars and researchers from the humanities, STEM fields, industry and the military to reflect on how technological developments affect our self-understanding, from education to social interaction to moral responsibilities.



WELCOME THE COLLABORATORY

Where humanities and technology meet

The Collaboratory is S&T's state-of-the art communication hub where humanities students and faculty can collaborate, experiment, research and engage.

In this new 1,150-square-foot digital lab, which will be located in the Humanities and Social Sciences building, researchers will gain hands-on experience with the latest technologies used to create and share knowledge.

The space will contain three areas:

Display room — a flexible public venue for educational exhibits

Collaboration room — an open area equipped to plan digital pop-up museums, podcasts, oral histories and more

Digital production room — studios for podcasting and video production to seamlessly produce professional-quality presentations and green-screen recordings.

Invest in experiential learning

S&T's unique experiential learning environment gives our students a competitive edge in the workplace and graduate school. In the Collaboratory, students will have new opportunities to integrate vital technological skills with their humanities studies.

Help advance our mission

Your gift to the Collaboratory can help us build a better future for tomorrow's leaders and scholars. For more information and naming opportunities, please contact **Kristen Gallagher**, executive director of development, for the College of Arts, Sciences, and Business, at 573-341-6050 or gallagherk@mst.edu.



English and Technical
Communication
236 Humanities-Social Sciences
500 W. 14th Street
Rolla, MO 65409

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 170
ROLLA MO 65401

150 YEARS

LET'S CELEBRATE
MISSOURI S&T'S STORY

From our founding in 1870 as a pioneering technical school to our 21st-century standing as a national technological university, the Missouri S&T story spans a century and a half of remarkable change.

GET SET TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS OF MINER PRIDE!

A year of special events kicks off with MinerFest 150 in October 2020 and concludes with the Alumni of Influence celebration in November 2021. In between, mark your calendar in green for our biggest best-ever festival — or “Bestival” — over St. Pat’s Weekend in March 2021.

Watch for the publication launch in October 2020 of a commemorative book by Curators’ Distinguished Teaching Professor emeritus Larry Gragg. His history of the university spans 150 years of Miner milestones, memories and mischief.

Visit 150.mst.edu for more information.