

Professional Writing: Our New Name



e have changed our name. We began as the Interdisciplinary Technical Writing program in 1991, and then changed the program's name to Technical, Scientific and Professional Communication in 1994, to reflect the range of work encouraged and supported by the program. The decision to change the name to Professional Writing came through a process of strategic planning, supported by WPI president Dennis Berkey and provost Carol Simpson and conducted by the program's co-directors Chrysanthe Demetry and John Trimbur. While we have streamlined the name of the program, the requirements remain the same. Professional Writing at WPI is unique among technical, scientific, and professional communication programs because of its interdisciplinary emphasis, where majors combine a technical or scientific concentration with coursework in writing, digital media, visual design, and rhetoric.

The strategic planning process enabled us to clarify the areas of concentration we offer in Professional Writing. Drawing on the experiences of our graduates, research on job trends, and the interests of current and prospective students, we determined that these four areas best represent the future of the program:

- Science writing, health communication, medical writing
- Writing for nonprofits, writing in the public interest, community literacy
- Digital media, visual communication, information design
- Bilingual professional communication, translation, transnational communication

We're committed to the original aim of the program: to prepare students for work as communication professionals who understand that writing can make a difference by bridging the

gap between the public and scientists, engineers, physicians, managers, policymakers, and other experts. And we're delighted to know that now nearly 100 graduates of the program are working and thriving in a wide range of professional settings.