



## THE B.A. IN PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (PTC): A WINNING COMBINATION FOR YOUR CAREER

The only undergraduate program of its kind in Florida, the B.A. in Professional & Technical Communication (PTC) at USF Sarasota-Manatee offers courses in writing and editing along with electives in business and information technology. Most of the courses are presented completely online to make them convenient for both traditional college students and those who are returning to school as working adults leading busy lives. Since the program began in Fall 2013, the number of students seeking this B.A. has grown by more than 100 percent. As of Spring 2018, we have almost 70 PTC majors.

The degree focuses on technical documents as well as corporate communication needs in advertising, crisis management, human resources, marketing communications, and public relations. Courses in writing, editing and publishing, and digital communications for a wide variety of formats, including scholarly, technical, medical, non-profit and journalistic, are part of the curriculum.

A vital aspect of the new program is partnering with area businesses and non-profit institutions to offer internships to graduates. This real-life experience, a degree requirement, gives our graduates a strong competitive edge. Also available is a minor in this field and an Undergraduate Certificate which can enhance the career prospects for students in all academic majors.

### ADVANTAGES OF THIS DEGREE

- Do you want to make yourself immediately employable?
- Do you need to communicate to your colleagues, your staff, customers, or executive management—in writing and speaking—with more confidence and impact?
- Do you want to lead more efficient operations, increase sales, motivate staff, and increase profits?

Whatever career you are planning to pursue, knowing how to write for that world is essential.

- If you need funding for your research or a loan for your business, you'll need to write effectively and persuasively.
- If you want to make a sale, change jobs or ask for a raise, you'll need to know how to put your strongest pitch in writing.

Consider a B.A. in Professional & Technical Communication at USFSM. This pragmatic course of study can broaden and deepen your career possibilities.

### PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS ARE IN DEMAND

Makers of advanced consumer and industrial goods need technical writers to explain how to understand and use their products safely and effectively. So if you enjoy technology, our program shows you how to write clearly for the creators and users of technology. And companies need technical writers whose work will ensure that a Challenger

disaster never occurs again. *(A poorly written memo contributed to that tragic but avoidable event whose effects are still felt decades later.)*

### PROFESSIONAL WRITERS GET THE JOB DONE

And if you enjoy business, our program shows you how to write effectively for that world as well. Today's business professionals must gain support and cooperation within their organizations and externally with their customers. In our program you will learn through writing and speaking how to motivate employees, convince the investing public of your company's value, sell products and services, and keep the public and the regulators well informed. *(Perhaps if BP's ex-CEO, Tony Haywood, had graduated from our program, he might have done a better job communicating with the public about the 2010 Gulf oil spill crisis!)*

### BROAD CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

If you enjoy writing, research, editing, and using today's technology to communicate, you can apply your aptitude for it in many ways.

Whatever career you choose, recent research shows that two thirds of salaried workers in U.S. corporations have jobs that require writing, and these workers spend upwards of 30 to 40 percent of their workday writing. And almost three quarters of workers complain about the poorly written emails, memos, and reports they receive from others!

The National Commission on Writing concluded that a third of employees in the nation's top corporations write poorly. Further, one third of all writing done in the business world fails to get the job done the first time. Our program aims to change those sorry statistics.

### HONE YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE

So what exactly can you do with a B.A. in Professional & Technical Communication? Admittedly, competition for jobs in every field is fierce, but a B.A. in this field from USFSM will give you an edge. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs in corporate communications are expected to grow faster than average, and jobs in technical writing are increasing even faster. Here's a short list of careers where strong communication skills pay off in both initial job openings and long-term prospects:

Advertising	Health Care	Public Relations
Broadcasting	Information	Script writing
Business Management	Technology	Sports Writing
Corporate	Journalism	Technical Writing
Communications	Marketing	Research &
Freelancing	Medical Writing	Development
Finance	Non-profit Writing	Training &
Grant Writing	Publishing/Editing	Development

In addition to the core courses, you will elect additional courses from a broad list that includes offerings from Information Technology and the College of Business. Our degree program is outlined below.

## **FRESHMAN-SOPHOMORE PREREQUISITES**

ENC 1101, College Composition I This course prepares students for academic work by emphasizing expository writing, the basics of library research, and the conventions of academic discourse.

ENC 1102, College Composition II As students engage in creative and critical thinking, this course emphasizes argument, research, style, and strategies for revision.

ENC 2210, Technical Writing This course focuses on the effective presentation of technical and semi-technical information.

SPC 2608, Public Speaking The nature and basic principles of human communication; emphasis on improving speaking and listening skills common to all forms of oral communication through a variety of experience in public discourse.

## **JUNIOR-SENIOR PTC CORE REQUIREMENTS (12 credits, 4 courses)**

ENC 3242, Technical Communication for Majors (usually taken in first upper-division semester) This course encompasses the range of possible careers for technical communicators with special emphasis on the issues professional writers face in various workplace contexts and on the technology skills needed to be effective.

COM 3110, Communication for Business and the Professions Identification of situations specific to business and the professions, analysis of variables related to communication objectives, and preparation of oral presentations specific to the workplace.

ENC 4946, PTW Internship (usually taken in penultimate semester; this is a degree requirement) This course is a custom-designed internship in which a student works with a company or organization on real-world communications assignments under the guidance of a supervisor and a USFSM faculty member.

ENC 4268, PTW Senior Seminar (usually taken in last semester) This seminar is designed to serve as a capstone course for majors by consolidating the learning from previous semesters and by performing advanced assignments under the guidance of the instructor (and where possible, outside mentors) in such areas as the following:

- Digital communication and technical writing such as manuals, procedures, and user documentation
- Writing, editing, and publishing for desktop, print media, and scholarly outlets such as medical science, psychology, education, and business
- Grant writing for non-profit organizations
- Freelance writing in fields such as education, finance, health, law, nutrition, sports, movie or restaurant critiquing, travel writing, and other non-fiction topics
- Business writing within an organization or enterprise to influence public opinion and inform consumers through advertising, marketing, and public relations
- Ghostwriting, editing, and training as a consultant to corporations, organizations, government, and the professions

## **PTC ELECTIVES (12 credits, any 4 courses)**

ENC 3241, Scientific Writing & Presentation This course trains students to organize, format, and write effectively about topics in biology and other sciences and to present findings orally.

ENC 3250, Professional Writing This course introduces the techniques and types of professional writing, including correspondence and reports. It is designed to strengthen both oral and written communication skills.

ENC 3310, Expository Writing This course teaches the techniques for writing effective prose (excluding fiction), in which student essays are extensively critiqued, edited, and discussed by peers and the instructor.

ENC 3416, New Media for Technical Communication This course involves the study and production of digital media with special emphasis on emergent and evolving applications.

ENC 4212, Professional & Technical Editing This course helps students meet business and technical editing challenges in the workplace. Assignments concern research, interviewing, writing, editing, and the technology needed for successful results.

ENC 4218, Visual Rhetoric for Technical Communication This course emphasizes the study and production of visual rhetoric with special emphasis on print and digital document design and technical graphics.

ENC 4260, Advanced Technical Writing This course is designed to develop writing skills of a high order: technical exposition, technical narration, description, and argumentation; graphics, proposals, progress reports; physical research reports; and feasibility reports.

ENC 4264, Managerial Communications This course is designed to strengthen written, oral, and non-verbal skills in the context of managerial communication tasks. It presents communication skills as integral to management strategy and as vital to workplace success.

ENC 4906, PTW Independent Study This course focuses on professional topics customized for individual students. It is usually offered only when a student needs credit to complete a PTC major, minor, or certificate but who is unable to meet requirements through a regularly offered course.

ENC 4931, PTW Special Topics This is a custom-designed course focusing on professional skill sets such as technical journalism, IT documentation, corporate communications, government documents, marketing messages, non-profit communications, and similar specialties. It is usually used to pilot new courses being considered.

## **ELECTIVES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (0-12 credits, 0-4 courses)**

CGS 2100, Computers in Business Study of the use and impact of computers in all areas of business organizations. Course includes hands-on experience and the use of software packages for business analysis.

CEN 3722, Human-Computer Interface (HCI) The study of people, computer technology, and the ways these influence each other. The basic foundations of HCI in terms of psychology, computer systems, and their integration into design practice are discussed in the course.

COP 2030, Programming Concepts This course covers basic programming concepts using the Python language for implementation and developing problem-solving skills.

COP 2700, Database Systems In this course, database systems are described with particular emphasis on Relational Database Management Systems (RDBMS). SQLite is the target RDBMS and is programmatically driven with the Python language and Open Office base.

CIS 3360, Principles of Information Security Board review of Information Security and related elements. Includes terminology, history of the discipline, and overview of Information Security management.

CIS 4510, IT Project Management This course covers the general aspects of project management and emphasizes the important, special considerations that apply to information technology projects. Supporting software is used extensively.

CIS 4412, IT Resource Management An overview of the resource management function, with emphasis on information systems management. Topics include planning, organizing, and controlling user services, managing information system development process, and the fundamentals of EDP auditing.

## **ELECTIVES IN GENERAL BUSINESS (0-12 credits, 0-4 courses)**

ACG 2021, Principles of Financial Accounting Study of basic accounting principles including the recording and reporting of financial activity. The preparation and interpretation of financial statements.

ACG 2071, Principles of Managerial Accounting A study of the accountant's role in assisting management in the planning and controlling of business activities. PR: ACG 2021.

ECO 2013, Economic Principles (Macroeconomics) Introduces students to basic economic terminology, definitions, and measurements of macroeconomic data, simple macroeconomic models, fiscal and monetary policy, and international macroeconomic linkages.

ECO 2023, Economic Principles (Microeconomics) Introduction to the theory of price determination. How an economy decides what to produce, how to produce, and how to distribute goods and services.

BUL 3320, Law and Business This course covers the nature of legal and societal institutions and environments, and major aspects of public, private, UCC, and related business law.

MAN 3025, Principles of Management Examines intrapersonal, interpersonal, group/team, organizational, and environmental (both stakeholder and societal) factors influencing the management task.

MAR 3023, Basic Marketing Survey of the marketing of goods and services within the economy. Attention is paid to the impact of marketing on other functional areas of business as well as society.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE "TECHNICAL" IN "TECHNICAL WRITING"**

Being able to write well in various genres and content areas is critical to success as a professional or technical communicator. Equally important is an understanding of how to use XML-based writing technologies, how to use social media for marketing, and how to integrate multimedia with traditional written documentation.

Communicators today need the training our B.A. program offers in both content creation and the media used to distribute that content. This means learning not only how to shape messages but also how to convey them using the most current editing and publishing software. The USFSM program will give you a solid foundation in communication technology and help you decide where to specialize.

## **ALSO AVAILABLE: A MINOR OR UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE**

Regardless of your major, you can choose Professional & Technical Communication as a minor or can pursue a Certificate in this field to enhance your employment opportunities. For details, see the USFSM website or your academic advisor.

## **OUR FACULTY**

**DR. WILMA DAVIDSON, Ed.D.** Bringing extensive experience as college teacher, writing coach, consultant, and professional writer, Dr. Davidson gives students the pragmatic guidance they need to choose successful careers as professional communicators. In addition to her faculty role, she heads up her own consulting practice and continues to serve corporate clients throughout the United States. She specializes in helping students develop not only their writing and editing abilities but also their live presentation skills. She presents courses in both all-online and blended online/on-campus formats.

**PROF. THOROLD ROBERTS, A.B.D.** As a veteran professional communicator and college teacher, Prof. Roberts offers students sound insights into what they need to serve clients and employers. His pragmatic emphasis on how to meet real-world communication challenges using the right mix of technology, research, editing, and writing skills gives students an advantage in the marketplace. All of his courses are presented online using email, web-posted lectures, and the Canvas learning management system. He also directs the student internships which all majors are required to complete.

**PROF. JOHN STEWART, M.A.** Prof. Stewart combines 18 years of corporate technical communications experience with an academic background in classical rhetoric. His courses in new media and visual rhetoric are based on a solid background in history and theory with practical applications such as building websites and XML publishing. His professional writing course provides real-world practice in writing and formatting effective emails, letters, reports, and resumes. His technical writing course provides students the opportunity to collaborate on producing proposals, manuals, and test reports.

**ADJUNCT AND VISITING FACULTY.** Our adjunct and visiting faculty vary from one semester to another, but all have the academic backgrounds, professional credentials, and proven teaching experience needed to support our students in their career preparation. Some bring specialized skills in software, internet communications, and related technology which students can put to immediate use in their post-graduation jobs or advanced-degree study.

*For official details about the PTC degree program as they apply to an individual student, please consult the USFSM undergraduate catalog and the individual's academic advisor.*

*For the USFSM Undergraduate Catalog, see <http://www.usfsm.edu/catalog/>*

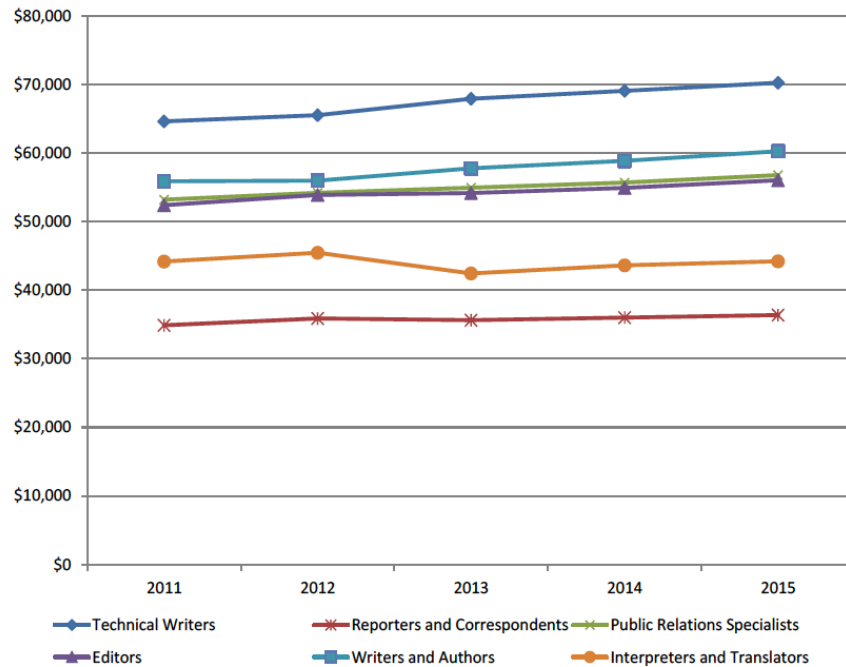
*For the B.A. in Professional & Technical Communication (PTC) see <http://www.usfsm.edu/academics/programs-and-majors/undergraduate/professional-and-technical-communication/index.aspx>*

*For information on internships (updated Feb 2018), see [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4946\\_Writing-Internship-Info.pdf](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4946_Writing-Internship-Info.pdf)*

# ADVANTAGES OF THE PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (PTC) B.A. DEGREE AT USFSM

## 1. Top selling points about the B.A. in Professional & Technical Communication program that are of interest to potential students.

- Our B.A. is the only undergraduate degree of its kind in all of Florida tax-supported higher education.
- Median annual income as of 2015 for Technical Writers is around \$70,000, as noted in graph below. Job growth rate is about 15%, better than the 11% for all occupations.



Source: © 2016, 2015–2016 Salary Database, Society for Technical Communication

## 2. Characteristics of someone who would succeed with a B.A. in Professional & Technical Communication degree.

- Excellent writing ability (solid understanding of grammar, style, vocabulary, and how to serve readers and users).
- Attention to detail (able to follow and prepare complex instructions).
- An interest in and aptitude for learning emerging communication technologies.
- Sensitivity to the human and cultural factors that spell communication success for clients and employers.

## 3. Examples of careers that a graduate could pursue with a degree in Professional & Technical Communication.

Besides corporate, technical, and professional career opportunities, such as software documentation and report writing, our program offers excellent preparation for editing positions, marketing communications, and freelance web content work in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Fields where our graduates are in demand include those listed below:

Advertising	Health Care	Public Relations
Broadcasting	Information Technology	Script writing
Business Management	Journalism	Sports Writing
Corporate Communications	Marketing	Technical Writing
Freelancing	Medical Writing	Research & Development
Finance	Non-profit Writing	Training & Development
Grant Writing	Publishing/Editing	

**4. Representative local companies or nonprofit organizations that would be interested in hiring a USFSM Professional & Technical Communication graduate.**

- **SRQ Media** (several of our students have served this company as interns)
- **L-3 Aviation Recorders** (one of our top graduates is now serving there as a senior technical writer)
- **USFSM** (another top graduate, Krista Schrock, is now serving as editor and graphic artist for our campus)

**5. Representative companies or organizations that have served as writing internship sponsors for USFSM students (see more complete list on last page of this document).**

Adult Community Education Center Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Manatee & Sarasota counties) Davidson & Associates Communications Consultants Destination Cuisine First Baptist Church of Venice FL Habitat for Humanity, Bradenton FL Jewish Family & Children's Service	Keep Manatee Beautiful KHS-USA (manufacturer of packaging equipment) Mote Marine Laboratory Professionals Assisting Military Families & Friends SRQ Media (several publications) Suncoast Communities Blood Bank World Vision/Child Ambassador Program Yoga from the Heart
---	---

## Profiles of Selected Students in Professional & Technical Communication



**Chloe Conboy**

PTC Major

Responses submitted Feb. 7, 2017

See also Jan. 24, 2017 USFSM blog entry by Chloe Conboy:

<http://usfsm.edu/bullhorn/broadcaster/>

**1) What advantages do you see in choosing the PTC major at USFSM? Please comment on courses available, support from faculty and campus Career Services, ability to complete most courses completely online, and other relevant points.**

Signing up for the Professional and Technical Communications major I didn't know I would be gaining a family. I love the PTC major because of the personal relationships you build with the professors. They truly want you to succeed and are there for you whenever you need them. I have never had professors that are so passionate about teaching students about something they love. The professors provide you with vital information and share their knowledgeable work experiences. I am truly grateful to have professors who are motivating and help me achieve academic success.

**2) How do you believe the USFSM PTC degree will contribute to your career success? What are your career objectives at present?**

The USF PTC major has given me a platform to achieve early academic success. The PTC major has provided me with efficient verbal and written communication skills. I have already accomplished a Broadcasting Internship that provided me with professional work experience. Thanks to USF I was prepared for this and exceeded expectations at my internship.

**3) What message about USFSM and this degree program would you pass along to others who are considering a career in Professional and Technical Communication?**

Don't underestimate this major. So many things can be accomplished with this major and I highly suggest to get on board. There are endless opportunities when it comes to Professional and Technical Communications . I have loved every minute of learning about Professional and Technical Communications and utilizing my communication skills. If you want to enhance your skills and learn in small class sizes and have personal relationships with professors, this is the major for you.

---



**Alex Masella**

PTC Major

Responses submitted Feb. 9, 2017

**1) What advantages do you see in choosing the PTC major at USFSM? Please comment on courses available, support from faculty and campus Career Services, ability to complete most courses completely online, and other**

**relevant points.**

When I first investigated the PTC major at USFSM, I was a little intimidated by some of the courses. I mean, who wants to take "Advanced Technical Writing?" But the way the courses are structured makes things completely manageable, and the learning is very practical. What I loved about the PTC major, is the flexibility it gave me to pursue my passions and the freedom I had to be creative and use my strengths to achieve my best work. It's empowering, and gave me incredible motivation to work on large projects. The faculty is personally invested in the students, and offer critique in a precise and gentle manner. You can really feel them rooting for you, and they somehow make the writing an enjoyable experience.

**2) How do you believe the USFSM PTC degree will contribute to your career success? What are your career objectives at present?**

The PTC degree is already contributing to my career success. The position I have at my company (which revolves around the field of numismatics) requires precise wording, grammar, and research, but it is also extremely technical in nature. The skills I was able to refine and the techniques I learned are being applied daily. The PTC degree has changed my perspective on drafting documents forever.

I think a dream position would be the media/communications director at an organization, and the foundation of that (written communication) is exactly what the PTC major helps you understand. It's about organization, precision, conciseness, clarity, the revision process, and so much more.

**3) What message about USFSM and this degree program would you pass along to others who are considering a career in Professional and Technical Communication?**

If one is considering the PTC major at USFSM, don't be overwhelmed by the courses on the sheet. The class choices can be engineered to favor your interests, and the classes themselves will provide you with skills essential to nearly all lines of work.

---



**Matthew Mitchell**

PTC Major

Responses submitted Feb. 8, 2017

**1) What advantages do you see in choosing the PTC major at USFSM? Please comment on courses available, support from faculty and campus Career Services, ability to complete most courses completely online, and other relevant points.**

There are many advantages to choosing the PTC major at USFSM. First, the faculty is exceptional, as

nearly all of my professors held a doctorate degree, and even the ones that did not were very experienced and capable in their ability to teach the many classes of PTC degree program. When I started, there were not as many classes available as are currently. This just attests to the ever-expanding PTC major at USFSM.

Finally, I am not your typical college student, as I am 32, married with 4 children, and am extremely busy with other endeavors like coaching wrestling and officiating football and wrestling year-round. Yet USFSM made it manageable for me to complete my degree as the majority of my classes were available online, and the Academic Advising, Financial Aid, and Career Services departments were there every step of the way to assist me. I am truly grateful for everyone who made it a possibility for me to attain my Bachelor's degree at this point in my life!

**2) How do you believe the USFSM PTC degree will contribute to your career success? What are your career objectives at present?**

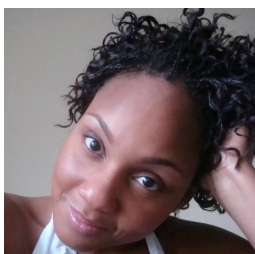
I go into any endeavor believing that I will achieve success, but as far as my career goes, I know I will be successful, because I was so well prepared for the "real world," by my professors and faculty here at USFSM. Confidence is an important thing to have when beginning a new career, and because of all of the work I put in with my professors over the past several years, I have more self-belief than I have ever had, and I know it will propel me into doing great things in my future.

Overall, my main goal is to work a career that brings me joy and excitement every day. At present, my goal is to work in the front-office/management department of a professional or collegiate sports team. If that does not pan out, I would also love to work as a broadcast journalist for a sports media outlet.

**3) What message about USFSM and this degree program would you pass along to others who are considering a career in Professional and Technical Communication?**

If you are looking to pursue a career in Professional and Technical Communications, I recommend you look no further than USFSM. A little over 3 years ago, I was 29, and working in a machine shop that manufactured furniture. The factory did not have air conditioning, and regularly reached temperatures of over 120 degrees. While I really liked my employer, and the bills were getting paid, I felt overworked and unfulfilled, as I just yearned for more. Every day, I would go to work and think about my alternatives, all day long.

Finally, after finding out that USF had a campus in Sarasota, and they offered a communications degree program, I decided to take a leap of faith, quit my job, and enrolled full-time at USFSM. Here I sit, three years later, realizing it was the best possible decision I could have made for myself. While it was not the easiest thing to do financially, especially while raising a family, I got it done, and will graduate in May 2017 with a Bachelor's degree in PTC. Just over 3 years ago, I had felt like I missed out on the opportunity to pursue my dreams, yet with one decision, I shifted my paradigm, and now have countless dreams in front of me to keep chasing. I urge anyone who is questioning whether or not to enroll in the PTC program at USFSM, to take a leap of faith, and just do it! If you put in the effort, you will be extraordinarily awarded in just a few short years. Best of luck!



**Sherita Mobley**  
PTC Certificate (Spring 2018)  
Responses submitted Feb. 8, 2017

**1) What advantages do you see in choosing the PTC Certificate at USFSM? Please comment on courses available, support from faculty and campus Career Services, ability to complete most courses completely online, and other relevant points.**

Online Professional and Technical Communications courses have opened up my schedule allowing me to pursue volunteer, internship and work opportunities to supplement my education. Also, online classes give me more time for family -- and hobbies, like rowing. The lectures include an inside look at the technical communications field and tips on how to navigate it successfully.

Outside of lecture, I receive quality one-on-one guidance from very knowledgeable and personable instructors. Not only is the program sharpening my technical writing and communication skills, but course projects have also helped me to construct a tangible product – a portfolio – that I can show potential employers. Because I can work closely with my professors, who encourage me to tailor assignments to my career objectives, my study feels more like an apprenticeship than a ‘distance learning’ experience.

**2) How do you believe the USFSM PTC studies will contribute to your career success? What are your career objectives at present?**

Having courses like Advanced Technical Writing and New Media for Technical Communications on my resume has opened a lot of discussion during interviews and, therefore, doors to opportunities. Professor Thorold Roberts has said that sometimes companies aren't quite sure what a technical writer is or what they do, but know they need one. I've found this to be perfectly true.

When I mention my studies in Professional and Technical Communications, work is somewhat shoved at me and I have had to exercise selectivity in order to stay on the path toward medical writing. My career objective is to complete the Epidemiology master's and one day use my position as a medical scientist, skill as a technical writer, and passion for public health to help bridge the communication gap between science and the public in effort to control the spread of disease as well as increase support and funding for government programs that protect public health. After graduation, I depart for Gaborone, Botswana in Africa to serve the Peace Corps and my host community as a Health & HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Specialist for the local government to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Professional and Technical Communications not only made me a more attractive candidate for this opportunity, but also prepared me for specific projects I will be expected to deliver during service.

**3) What message about USFSM and this degree program would you pass along to others who are considering a career in Professional and Technical Communication?**

I have such esteem for the USFSM Professional and Technical Communications program that it's hard to tame into a single thought. The program has definitely helped strengthen my ability to communicate important information in a concise and effectual way. Though technical communications is a field unto itself, it's crucial that other professionals -- scientists, engineers, clinicians, executives, etc. – also have the expertise to communicate facts, figures, and findings effectively to stakeholders. In other words, it transcends any one area of academic interest in order to foster professional communication between various groups and to disseminate key information in a targeted way.

I believe the need for strategic communicators is so great, that graduates can take this skill in any (and many) desired directions. USFSM professors, with extensive experience in Professional and Technical Communications, help students to focus their career objectives and develop the necessary skills to pursue their individual career path. Just as the Professional and Technical Communications program has made me a competitive candidate within science and medical communications, it can offer a competitive edge to others with interest or experience in other fields.





**Kaitlin Ritz**

PTC Major

Responses submitted Feb. 8, 2017

**What advantages do you see in choosing the PTC major at USFSM? Please comment on courses available, support from faculty and campus Career Services, ability to complete most courses completely online, and other relevant points.**

The PTC program has been great at USFSM, especially because there is not another program like it in Florida. Anytime I mention to people what I'm majoring in, their eyes get really wide and they're overall impressed immediately. The best part about this program is that I waited almost 5 years after I graduated high school to start working on my BA degree.

I have two jobs but I'm still able to complete my courses for this major because they are almost all completely online. That is such an appeal for many people, especially those that need to work and can't afford to take time off to go to school. I've never had an issue trying to register for a course since they are almost always readily available each semester for me to enroll. Career Services has also been very helpful because they e-mail lists of internships and jobs tailored directly towards my major every few months. I feel as if I've been handed everything I need to succeed, it just comes down to me taking advantage of it.

**How do you believe the USFSM PTC degree will contribute to your career success? What are your career objectives at present?**

My current career objective changes the closer I get to my graduation due to all the knowledge I keep receiving in my courses. I currently have an internship at Fuse Media where I'm writing 200-300 word articles for Gravitas Magazine and it's something I really enjoy doing. I've always loved reading magazines and definitely could see myself writing for one in the future.

The PTC program has prepared me in learning how to write from a professional viewpoint, but also creatively. I know how to write in a technical standpoint as well as being able to edit to a higher standard. I've been taught on how important communication is in the workplace and how it directly impacts you succeeding at what you do. Without a doubt I know that the PTC program has prepared me to not only be successful, but believe in myself that I have it in me to be successful.

**What message about USFSM and this degree program would you pass along to others who are considering a career in Professional and Technical Communication?**

If you've always had a love for reading, writing, editing or probably all three...this is the degree for you. When I first enrolled at USFSM I thought I wanted to major in English because I loved all three of those things. Upon enrolling and going to a week of classes, I realized that wasn't what I wanted to major in at all. One of my professors mentioned the PTC program and I took a semester off to research about what exactly the program offered and what it was.

I am so glad I mentioned English not being the right fit for me because that professor helped me discover exactly what I needed, the PTC program. I was feeling lost not being able to find a degree program that identified me until this program. My first week of classes I knew immediately that I made the right decision switching my major. I never even think as my schoolwork as schoolwork because it's all stuff I love doing.

# WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS AND SPONSORS EXPECT FROM A PTC INTERNSHIP?

By Prof. Tod Roberts, USFSM Director of PTC Internships

To clarify the purpose of the PTC internship, I offer the following thoughts to students and sponsors. These comments are meant as broad guidelines, not as formal policy statements, rules, or regulations. The success of an internship depends on both parties being freely willing and able to focus on the **benefits** to be gained rather than the duties to be performed. How this success is measured in individual circumstances varies in relationship to the parties' personalities and professional experience.

STUDENT	SPONSOR
Perform meaningful learning-oriented tasks that have feasible deadlines and measurable outcomes	Provide mentoring guidance in defining those tasks, deadlines and outcomes
Choose activities related to the student's career needs and interests now and in the future	Define which objectives match the student's interests <b>and</b> the opportunities within the sponsor's business or organization
Create a written workplan with specific objectives and deadlines that the student believes can actually be achieved during the internship	Guide the student in keeping this workplan realistic in the context of the sponsor's experience and knowledge, but accept the likelihood that some objectives may not be met
Meet all agreements with sponsor concerning work times, places, communication methods, and procedures	Define clearly in writing when, how, and what you want the student to do as an intern, but keep this realistic in terms of the student's academic and personal responsibilities

Based on what I have observed as USFSM faculty director of PTC internships since this program began in the Summer 2008 term, there is no substitute for regularly asking and answering questions about the student's progress and the sponsor's satisfaction. Both interns and sponsors have repeatedly emphasized **clear communication** as the single most important factor in the success of an internship. This is particularly understandable because most interns differ from employees in one critical characteristic that also defines their major objective -- **workplace experience**. Even non-traditional students who are typically more mature and have already been earning a living for several years probably lack knowledge and skills in the particular tasks they expect and want to perform in an internship. Thus, sponsors should provide guidance **as mentors rather than as employers**.

Sponsors may need gentle reminders about how an intern differs from an employee. An intern's primary job is to gain experience and skills, whereas an employee's duty is to perform as expected in exchange for agreed-upon wages, benefits, and working conditions. A student in a for-academic-credit internship, even if compensated in a financial stipend, is in a sense "employing" the sponsor by paying tuition to the institution that awards said credit. A sponsor is providing a valuable service to that student and institution, but in exchange is receiving the energy, ideas, and enthusiasm that the intern can offer. A sponsor is also gaining a very low-risk, low-cost means of screening a potential future employee.

I welcome thoughts from students, teaching colleagues, interns, and internship sponsors. Please send them to [tr@sar.usf.edu](mailto:tr@sar.usf.edu).

## INTERNSHIPS SERVED BY USFSM PTC STUDENTS (2008-2018)

Total number of PTC interns from Summer 2008 through Spring 2018: **72**. Intern activities range widely, from writing and editing of technical documents to daily journalism, social media marketing, public relations, corporate communications, donor relations, websites, blogs, and newsletters. Detailed summaries of internship experiences are available upon request. Please contact Prof. Tod Roberts ([tr@sar.usf.edu](mailto:tr@sar.usf.edu)).

STUDENT NAME	SPONSORING COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION	SEMESTER
Colleen Berish	Jewish Family and Children's Service	Summer 2008
Melana Morris	Biz 941 (Sarasota Magazine)	Fall 2008
Kimberly C. Durocher-Poole	The American Reporter	Spring 2009

Robert Johnson	Creative Loafing, entertainment weekly	Summer 2009
Kyle Frederickson	Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota	Fall 2009
Christopher Pauling	Creative Loafing, entertainment weekly	Spring 2010
Margaret Weissenborn	Adult Community & Education Center (ACEC)	Spring 2010
Karin Clemons	Jewish Family and Children's Service	Fall 2010
Stephanie Sifrit	Suncoast Communities Blood Bank	Fall 2010
Julia Horowitz	SRQ Media Group	Summer 2011
Mia Popaja	SRQ Media Group	Summer 2011
Michelle Richardson	SRQ Media Group	Spring 2012
April Wright	World Vision, Child Ambassador Division	Spring 2012
Marie Rolston	Habitat for Humanity, Manatee County	Spring 2012
Johni Fairley	Community Center for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, Manatee and Sarasota Counties	Summer 2012
Daniel Drach	Destination Cuisine, Sarasota FL	Fall 2012
Rose M. Lee	Stephanie Kaiser & Assoc Grant Consulting, Redondo Beach, CA	Spring 2013
Gladys Zayas	Yoga from the Heart, Sarasota FL	Spring 2013
Chelsea Moore	SRQ Media, Sarasota FL	Fall 2013
Samuel Peterson	Yoga from the Heart, Sarasota FL	Fall 2013
Douglas R. Miller	Davidson & Associates Communication Consultants, Sarasota FL	Spring 2014
Jane M. O'Connor	Davidson & Associates Communication Consultants, Sarasota FL	Spring 2014
Andrew Sink	Carry The What? (high-tech startup), Richmond VA	Summer 2014
Leigh Gibbs	Keep Manatee Beautiful, Bradenton FL	Summer 2014
Christopher Bustin	Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota FL	Fall 2014
Casey Fountain	Edible Sarasota Magazine, Sarasota FL	Spring 2015
Jacob Garfield	Davidson & Associates Communication Consultants, Sarasota FL	Fall 2014
Brittany Mitchell	Dealers United (automobile dealers marketing firm), Sarasota FL	Summer 2014
Carlos Serra	Labinal Power Systems / SAFRAN, Sarasota FL	Summer 2015
Bobbilynn Hollifield	Sarasota Magazine, Sarasota FL	Fall 2015
Ryan Hurst	Bradenton Convention & Visitors Bureau	Fall 2015
Shannon Cooney	Sun Coast Media Group, Charlotte Harbor FL	Spring 2016
Courtney Hawk	Davidson & Associates Communication Consultants, Longboat Key FL	Spring 2016
Cali Nowak-Credit	J. Burns Pizza, Lakeland FL	Spring 2016
Marguerite (Celeste) Reeder	The Fox Business Group LLC, Bradenton FL	Spring 2016
William Abel	Sarasota Bay Club	Fall 2016
Chloe Conboy	ABC7 Media (TV broadcasting)	Fall 2016
Christopher Krenn	Tampa Bay Lightning	Fall 2016
Thomas Schwarz	SRQ Media	Fall 2016
Emily Smith	SRQ Media	Fall 2016
Rachel Staigerwald	Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau, Port Charlotte FL	Fall 2016
Lewis Certain	Poplar Network	Spring 2017
Raven Chapman	S-One Corporation	Spring 2017
Kimberly Couts	Borgen Project	Spring 2017
Gisele Dunn	Borgen Project	Spring 2017
Rachel Esteves	NK Productions	Spring 2017
Alex Masella	The Players Theatre	Spring 2017
Matthew Mitchell	Manatee Wrestling	Spring 2017
Kea-Marie Olaso	TDA Global Sports	Spring 2017
Luz Oliveras	Borgen Project	Spring 2017
Kaitlin Ritz	FUSE Media	Spring 2017
Felicita Correa	Patchwork Press	Fall 2017
Lauren DiTaranto	1952Records.com	Fall 2017
Emma Hewitt	St. Thomas Dive School (St. Thomas, U. S. Virgin Islands)	Fall 2017
Laura Hidri	Prof. Kim Badanich (USFSM research)	Fall 2017
Seth Horner	Rhinestone World	Fall 2017
Dylan Howell	SRQ Media	Fall 2017
Stephanie Isaac	Sarasota Magazine	Fall 2017
Brooke Kull	D-Magazine (Dallas)	Fall 2017
Ella Melzer	Sarasota Magazine	Fall 2017
Tiffany Meza	Timi Hager, USFSM E-Learning	Fall 2017
Sinclair Morris	Net Weave Marketing	Fall 2017
Robert Whelan	Pest Control by Mike, Inc.	Fall 2017
Victoria Yoder	Fuse Media & Marketing	Fall 2017
Ashley Cooper	Sarasota Magazine	Spring 2018
Madison Hall	PGT Custom Windows	Spring 2018
Kristine Koeze	Fedora Security	Spring 2018
Senée Mobley	Jacksonville Magazine	Spring 2018
Jordan Noyes	Sarasota Magazine	Spring 2018
ReNeika Perry	Sarasota YMCA	Spring 2018
Rosalie Sanders	Cultivate the Writer	Spring 2018
Logan Schanie	Cirrus Aviation	Spring 2018