

Candidate Profile: Garret Romaine, STC Nominating Committee

Looking to the Future

By Garret Romaine, STC Associate Fellow

This short article reviews my background, explains some of the challenges as I see them, and explains my goals for our future.

I hope your career as a technical communicator is rewarding, whatever your expertise. My own career was great until I got laid off, and now I'm scrambling to put my skills to use. Despite my moments of gloom and doom, I know things will level out eventually – they always do. Having thrived during the boom in the technical writing field of the late 1990s, technical writers expanded our expert skills and abilities. Our toolset is incredibly robust, and those of us in the technology world have core capabilities that rival software engineers. We have come a long way as a profession, and part of that is thanks to the efforts of STC members.

Significant Issues Ahead

At the same time, our professional organization faces serious issues. There is a continuing challenge to deliver value to individuals. We need creative solutions if we are to expand the organization. We need our talented members to step up and make a difference. The economy is slowing, and our members will need the most current skills and abilities in order to compete.

We face this opportunity from the vantage of a Society with many moving parts. We are more than just cutting-edge XML experts in high demand; we are also the academics who keep classes relevant and send forth graduates of interest to hiring managers. We are writers in the public sector, facing tight deadlines with dwindling resources. We are the

editors who mark up text and make others look good in any media. We are the illustrators and designers who marry visuals to words and shimmer across platforms. We are the managers who send employees to annual conferences as wise investments. And—finally—we are the members who show up at local meetings or log on to virtual communities and participate. Our needs are different, but our goals are the same: we want the time we spend as volunteers to directly benefit our careers.

We all rely on STC for expanded networking opportunities, cutting-edge classes, lectures, and workshops, and enhanced professional advocacy. Through STC, we have the opportunity to share ideas, learn new tools, and make ourselves more productive and efficient. New and prospective members ask me all the time, and sometimes in just these words: “What’s in it for me?” It takes longer and longer to answer that question, because there are so many different STC communities to join.

Relevant Experience

My experience as an educator, active STC volunteer, and experienced technical communicator is relevant to this election. I have taught technical writing and editing at the university level for many 12 years. My goal has been to deliver information that bolsters the careers of neophyte undergraduates as well as seasoned communicators in graduate studies. I have taken advantage of STC volunteer opportunities as chapter president, mentor, employment manager, competition manager, and workshop organizer. I have presented at conferences, written



for *Tieline*, *Intercom*, and *Technical Communication*, and served as a judge for local and international competitions. In 2005, my colleagues both honored and humbled me as an Associate Fellow, and this year, I was elevated to a full Fellow. I am ready to step up to the job of member of the Nominating Committee, because recruiting is something I love to do.

While teaching and volunteering, I have worked steadily as a senior writer, lone writer, editor, author, contractor, consultant, and manager. My STC experience has been a key talking point for me, and I am grateful to keep it going.

Helping Your Career

I hope you can say that STC has made a positive difference in your career. Knowing STC members, I would expect to hear from you if that has not been the case. High expectations are good; none of us should be complacent. We all have high expectations for our Society, and rightfully so.

I thus ask for your vote—and I also ask that each of you help move our profession forward. We are all in this pursuit together.