This document describes the Software Technical Writing Program at Middlesex Community College (Massachusetts). The program is a "hands-on" course designed to develop job-related skills in three major areas: technical writing, software, and professional skills. The program was originally designed in cooperation with the Massachusetts High Technology Council and funded by the State Department of Occupational Education to retrain adults to become systems software technical writers. This nationally recognized program, which has maintained a near 100% placement rate, has since become self-supporting. Industry and higher education forged a unique partnership in the development of this model program, which has provided training for people interested in gaining the skills necessary to research, write, edit and design the manuals and documentation that accompany technical products. Documentation managers from Data General, Digital Equipment Corporation, and Wang Laboratories designed the original curriculum to respond to the needs of industry. An Advisory Board of documentation managers works closely with the college faculty and staff to maintain a focus on the skills most valued in the industry today. Graduates of the program have the opportunity to be hired as technical writers, marketing specialists, or content developers. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree or equivalent and 3 years of work experience. (JA)
The program is a "hands-on" course designed to develop job-related skills in 3 major areas:

**TECHNICAL WRITING**
- Writing and Editing
- Planning of documentation
- Production and design of major writing projects
- Peer review
- Online help

**SOFTWARE**
- Assembly language
- Operating systems
- Data bases
- Networking
- Programming for the web

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**
- Research
- Interviewing
- Negotiating
- Time/stress management
- Corporate organization
- Teamwork

The nationally recognized industry designed training program for people interested in gaining the skills necessary to research, write, edit and design the manuals and documentation that accompany technical products.

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

The success of a company's products is closely tied to the quality and accessibility of the information that supports those products and services. Much of this information is in the form of documentation, including paper and online, which is produced by technical writers. Middlesex Community College, with the support of industry experts, is offering you the opportunity to join the important profession of software technical writing.

Graduates of the program may have the opportunity to be hired as:

- Technical Writers
- Technical Editors
- Marketing Specialists
- Content Developer
- Information Developer

**APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Applicants must have:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- Three years of work experience
- Demonstrated aptitude for computer technology
- Well-developed writing skills
- Word processing and spreadsheet skills
- Basic web searching and navigation skills

Upon review of initial application, eligible candidates will be notified of dates for the aptitude battery. Selected candidates who demonstrate aptitude for the software technical writing field, based on aptitude battery results and application review, will be scheduled for an interview with the Program Manager.

For application information, please view our website at http://careertraining.middlesex.cc.mo.us/stwp or contact us at 781-280-3663 or career_training@middlesex.cc.mo.us
8 MONTH INTENSIVE PROGRAM

- This intensive 8 month program in Software Technical Writing is designed for students with little or no computer experience. It has gained a national reputation for being one of the most successful training programs of its kind.
- Classes meet three evenings a week and ten Saturdays from September - May.

CORPORATE CONNECTION

The Software Technical Writing Program at Middlesex Community College has consistently achieved an excellent placement rate. Graduates of the program have been hired by over one-hundred companies in New England and throughout the country as technical writers, editors and trainers.

A partial list of employers includes:

COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES MAY:

- Call for information
- Request a presentation by the Program Manager
- Review student portfolios which include resumes, writing samples, original manuals and documented programs
- Interview current graduates

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Program Manager, Software Technical Writing Program
Middlesex Community College
591 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 01730-1197
(781) 280-3663 or (978) 656-3200, ext. 3663
career_training@middlesex.cc.ma.us
careertraining.middlesex.cc.ma.us/stwp

THE ADVISORY BOARD

Professionals in the high tech industry, who participate actively in the program, provide expert advice to ensure that the curriculum design responds to industry needs.

John Abbott
Software Documentation Consultant

Stan Doherty
Sun Microsystems

Michael Linnehon
Nortel Networks

Ariane Stith
Kewill Corporation

Chris Ebacher
Astrai Point Communications

Judy Tarutz
Independent Consultant

Susan Fields Tamker
Compaq Computer Corporation

Bud Samiljan
Avid Technology

Valerie Dwyer
EMC Corporation

Joanne Izbicki
Quintus Corporation

Kurt Staven
Appian Communications, Inc.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN ALL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES
HISTORY OF THE SOFTWARE TECHNICAL WRITING PROGRAM
1981 – 1999

The Software Technical Writing Program at Middlesex Community College was originally designed in cooperation with the Massachusetts High Technology Council and funded by the State Department of Occupational Education to retrain adults to become systems software technical writers. This nationally recognized program, which has maintained a near 100% placement rate, has since become self-supporting. The Program began in 1981 as a unique response to a State fiscal reform program which resulted in substantial numbers of teachers losing their jobs due to the impact of Proposition 2½. Industry and higher education forged a unique partnership in the development of this model program which has provided new careers for individuals and become a proven source of quality trained writers for industry. In May, 1983, Middlesex Community College’s Technical Writing Program was nominated by the U.S. Department of Education for the “Secretary’s Award for the Most Outstanding Vocational Program” of the year. The Software Technical Writing Program celebrated the graduation of its twentieth class in May of 1999.

Documentation managers from Data General, Digital Equipment Corporation and Wang Laboratories designed the original curriculum to respond to the needs of industry. The industry continues to support the program in a number of ways:

- Providing an Advisory Board of documentation managers who work closely with the college faculty and staff to insure focus on the skills most valued in the industry today. Companies that have participated on the Board include: Banyan Systems, Inc., Boston Technology, FTP Software Systems, Data General Corporation, Digital Equipment Corporation, ISIS Incorporated, EMC Corporation, Bay Networks, Shiva Corporation and Sun Microsystems, IBIS Communications, Avid Technology, Compaq Computer Systems, Fidelity Investments, Nortel Networks and Argon Networks.

- Several companies, including Digital Equipment Corporation, Data General Corporation, Wang, NEC, Prime, Analog Devices, Applicon, Codes, ComputerVision, Cullinet, Kaye Instruments, Raytheon, Lexidata, Masscomp/Concurrent, Nixdorf, Zayre and Apollo Systems Division/Hewlett Packard have donated thousands of dollars to reduce tuition costs and thousands more in equipment and teaching materials.

- Over 100 companies have hired our graduates including those represented on the Advisory Board.

- Several high technology companies provide speakers for the program and organize site visits to their facilities providing students with the opportunity to explore the corporate environment.

- Companies provide release time for faculty members.
The Software Technical Writing Program has gained a national and international reputation for quality and success. Howard Foley, President of the Massachusetts High Technology Council has stated, "Middlesex Community College’s Technical Writing program has gained a national reputation for being one of the most successful training programs of its kind." Documentation managers from as far away as California have come in search of the graduates as prospective employees. A study group of computer professionals from Japan in search of a model Technical Writing Program attended a full day of seminars at Middlesex Community College. Articles highlighting the program have appeared in national magazines and newspapers including Byte, Computerworld and the Boston Globe. The program's success has encouraged companies to confidently approach the College with new ideas for retraining programs. Middlesex Community College will continue to seek out opportunities to form partnerships with industry in serving the needs of the community.
SOFTWARE TECHNICAL WRITING PROGRAM
CURRICULUM

Writing Module (200 hours)

Organizing and Communicating Information
Types of Documentation
Types of Editing
Information Groups
Documentation Plan
Research for Writing
Types of Audiences
Project Management
Parts of a Manual
Revision Process
Indexing Guidelines
Publishing Information

Software Module (200 hours)

Computer Architecture
Hardware Overview
Operating Systems – Unix
Data Representation
SPARC Assembly Language
Introduction to C Programming Language
C++ and JAVA
Networks and Network Protocols
The Internet and WWW
Database Management Systems

Professional Skills Module (20 Hours)

Time Management and Writer’s Block
Managing Change and Stress
Communication Styles and Skills
What to Look for in Company
Résumé Writing and Interviewing Skills
Corporate Survival
Self-Employment and Consulting
Managing Your Career
Dealing with Conflict
Giving and Receiving Criticism

Hours Outside the Classroom

Approximately 20 hours per week

Hardware

IBM-compatible PCs, SPARC emulator

Applications and Operating Systems

FrameMaker, vi Editor, emacs Editor, UNIX (ULTRIX), Windows Microsoft Office, RoboHELP
OVER 100 COMPANIES HAVE HIRED GRADUATES OF THE SOFTWARE TECHNICAL WRITING PROGRAM

Abinitio
Adage Incorporated
Amdahl Computer Corp/Sunnyvale, CA
Apollo Systems/Hewlett Packard
Appicon
Applied Expert Systems
Aspen Technology
Atek Incorporated
Avid Technology
Baird
Banyan Systems Incorporated
Bolt, Beranek & Newman
Boston Technology
Bruce Hall Company
Bull HN Information Systems Incorporated
Cadence Design Systems
Cambridge Associates
Centerline Computer
Cerner Incorporated
Charles River Data Systems
Codex
Commercial Union Insurance Company
Compaq Computer
Computer Corporation of America
Computographic
Computevision
Concord Computer Company
Concurrent Computer Company
Cortex Computer
Cullinet Software Incorporated
Cyborg Corporation
Data General Corporation
Data Tree
DB Telco
Decision Software
Digital Equipment Corporation
Dun & Bradstreet
EMC
Easel Computer
Elcam
Emulogics
Fidelity Investments
Foxboro Company
FTP Software Incorporated
GTE Sylvania Laboratories
Gulf Oil
Hewlett Packard
Horizon Technology Incorporated
IBM Corporation
Information Design Group Incorporated
Inforex
Interactive Computer Systems/NH
Interactive Systems Incorporated
Interactive Data Systems
Intelco
Intellution Incorporated
Kaye Instruments
Kronos Computer
Laboratory Technology
Language Processors Incorporated
Lexidata
Manager Software
Meditech
Mercury Computer Company
Microcom
Multisystems Incorporated
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Nixdorf Computer Corporation
Northeast Data Systems
Nynex
Octek
Open Vision Technologies
Oracle
Panametrics
Panasophic Systems Incorporated
Phoenix Software
Powersoft Corporation
Praxix Computer
Prime Computer
Progress Software
Racial Datacom
Raytheon Service Company
Resource Dynamics
Ross Computer
S & S Electronics
Saddlebrook Corporation
Scientific Atlanta Incorporated
Sequoia Systems
Siemens Allis Incorporated
Software.com
Stratus Computer
Sun Microsystems
Sybase
Teradyne
Travelers Insurance/Hartford, CT
Trellix
TRW
UIS
Unicom
Unisys Corporation
Valid Systems
VIA Systems Incorporated
Voice Information Associates
Wang Laboratories Incorporated
Xylogics
Xyvision Corporation
Zayre Corporation

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(781) 280-3663
career_training@middlesex.cc.ma.us
I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION (Class of Documents):

All Publications:
SOftware Technical Writing Program

Series (Identify Series):

Division/Department Publications (Specify): 

Publication Date: 
Spring 2001

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Printed Name/Position/Title: Kimberly A. Burns, Assistant Dean

Organization/Address: Middlesex Community College, Springs Road, Bedford MA 01730

Telephone: 978-280-3660  FAX: 978-275-7126

E-Mail Address: burnsk@middlesex.cc.ma.us  Date: 5-15-01
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