

Definitions

We're using Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) as an umbrella term to designate programs, faculty, and curricula that emphasize non-literary, workplace communications, and which are often called technical communication, business communication, professional communication, or some variation.

Many institutions offer degree programs, including certificates and minors and we seek to understand the working conditions of non-tenure track faculty in these programs.

We mean “contingent faculty” in the same way as the AAUP, meaning all faculty that are not tenured or tenure track. We are, however, excluding graduate teaching assistants.

“Full-time Non-Tenure Track” (FT-NTT) are faculty that are full-time, usually on a 1, 3, or 5-year contract that can be renewed.

“Part-time” faculty (often referred to as adjuncts) may or may not have contracts, usually work on a per-term or per-course basis, and are not considered full-time by the institution for whatever reason.

Title of Study: Technical and Professional Communication (TPC): A Survey of Material Work Conditions

Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Please read this paper carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Who is doing this research study?

The person in charge of this research study is Lisa Meloncon, Assistant Professor, of the University of Cincinnati (UC) Department of English and Comparative Literature.

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this research study is to gather specific information on the material work conditions at your institution. Your participation will help us understand the working conditions of those who administer and teach in Technical and Professional Communication programs, particularly about issues of contingent faculty and professional development opportunities.

Who will be in this research study?

You may be in this study if you are a TPC program administrator or if you are contingent faculty teaching TPC courses. Up to 800 TPC administrators and TPC faculty may participate in the study.

What will you be asked to do in this research study, and how long will it take?

You will be asked to complete a survey. It will take about 20-30 minutes, and you can complete it at the location on your choice.

Are there any risks to being in this research study?

You will not be exposed to any risk or discomfort from participating in this study. None of the survey questions ask for sensitive personal information and you may choose not to answer any questions.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?

You will probably not get any benefit from taking part in this study. But, being in this study may help the field of TPC understand material work conditions.

Will you have to pay anything to be in this research study?

You will not have to pay anything to be in this research study.

What will you get because of being in this research study?

You will not be paid to take part in this study.

Do you have choices about taking part in this research study?

If you do not want to take part in this research study you may choose not to participate or you may

quit participating AT ANY TIME.

How will your research information be kept confidential?

Your responses to the survey are anonymous.

Agents of the University of Cincinnati may inspect study records for audit or quality assurance purposes.

What are your legal rights in this research study?

Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights you may have. This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

What if you have questions about this research study?

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, you should contact the PI, Lisa Meloncon by phone at 513-556-3034 or 803-370-0008, or by email at meloncon@tek-ritr.com.

The UC Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews all research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the Chairperson of the UC IRB at (513) 558-5259. Or, you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.

Do you HAVE to take part in this research study?

No one has to be in this research study. Refusing to take part will NOT cause any penalty or loss of benefits that you would otherwise have. You may start and then change your mind and stop at any time. To stop being in the study, you simply need to close out the survey and then close your browser.

Agreement:

BY COMPLETING THIS SURVEY, YOU INDICATE YOUR CONSENT FOR YOUR ANSWERS TO BE USED IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

Please keep this information sheet for your reference.

Information about the types of courses you teach

1. What is your current position?

- ☐ Full-Time Non-Tenure Track (FT-NTT)
- ☐ Part-Time (on some sort of contract that has an option to be renewed)
- ☐ Adjunct (paid per course, per term)

Other (please specify)

2. How long have you held this position?

- ☐ 1 - 3 years
- ☐ 4 - 6 years
- ☐ 7 - 9 years
- ☐ 10+ years

3. How many courses do you typically teach in a term?

- ☐ 1 course per term
- ☐ 2 courses per term
- ☐ 3 courses per term
- ☐ 4 courses per term
- ☐ more than 4 courses a term

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

4. What types of service courses do you teach? Check all that apply.

A “service course” is a course delivered for other departments and is typically comprised of non-majors. Examples might include the introductory technical writing course commonly required for science and engineering majors.

- ☐ Business Writing/Communication
- ☐ Technical Writing/Communication
- ☐ Professional Writing/Communication
- ☐ I do not teach service courses.

Other (please specify)

5. In a typical academic YEAR, please tell us how many courses you teach of the following.

Service course (e.g., Writing for Business, Technical Communication)

Introductory courses to TPC majors

Other courses in TPC curriculum

Freshman composition

Advanced writing courses to TPC majors

Advanced writing courses to non-TPC majors

Literature survey courses

Other courses in the department

6. Do you have autonomy to design your own courses?

☐ Yes.

☐ No.

☐ Partially.

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

Online Writing Instruction

7. Do you teach online sections of the service course? Please select the answer that best matches your usual experience.

- ☐ Yes, I teach fully online sections.
- ☐ Yes, I teach hybrid courses-- meets online and face-to-face.
- ☐ Yes, I teach both fully online and hybrid.
- ☐ No, I teach face-to-face only. Click to the next page.

8. Do you have access to a Instructional Designer (someone who will help you put and/or update your online course?)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

9. Who has ownership of your online course?

- ☐ the institution
- ☐ the institution but I also have some rights for re-use
- ☐ I retain full rights
- ☐ I am not sure

Other (please specify)

10. If you use institutional support such as an instructional designer or get help to make your courses accessible, does that change the ownership rights of your course?

- ☐ Yes, if I use institutional support of any kind, then the institution owns my course.
- ☐ Maybe.
- ☐ No. I retain the rights to my course.
- ☐ I don't know.

If you need to clarify, please do so here.

11. Do have access to institutional support staff to assist you with helping students with disabilities? For example, you may need to closed-caption a video that is your course. Is there someone on campus to help you with that or are you responsible for doing it on your own?

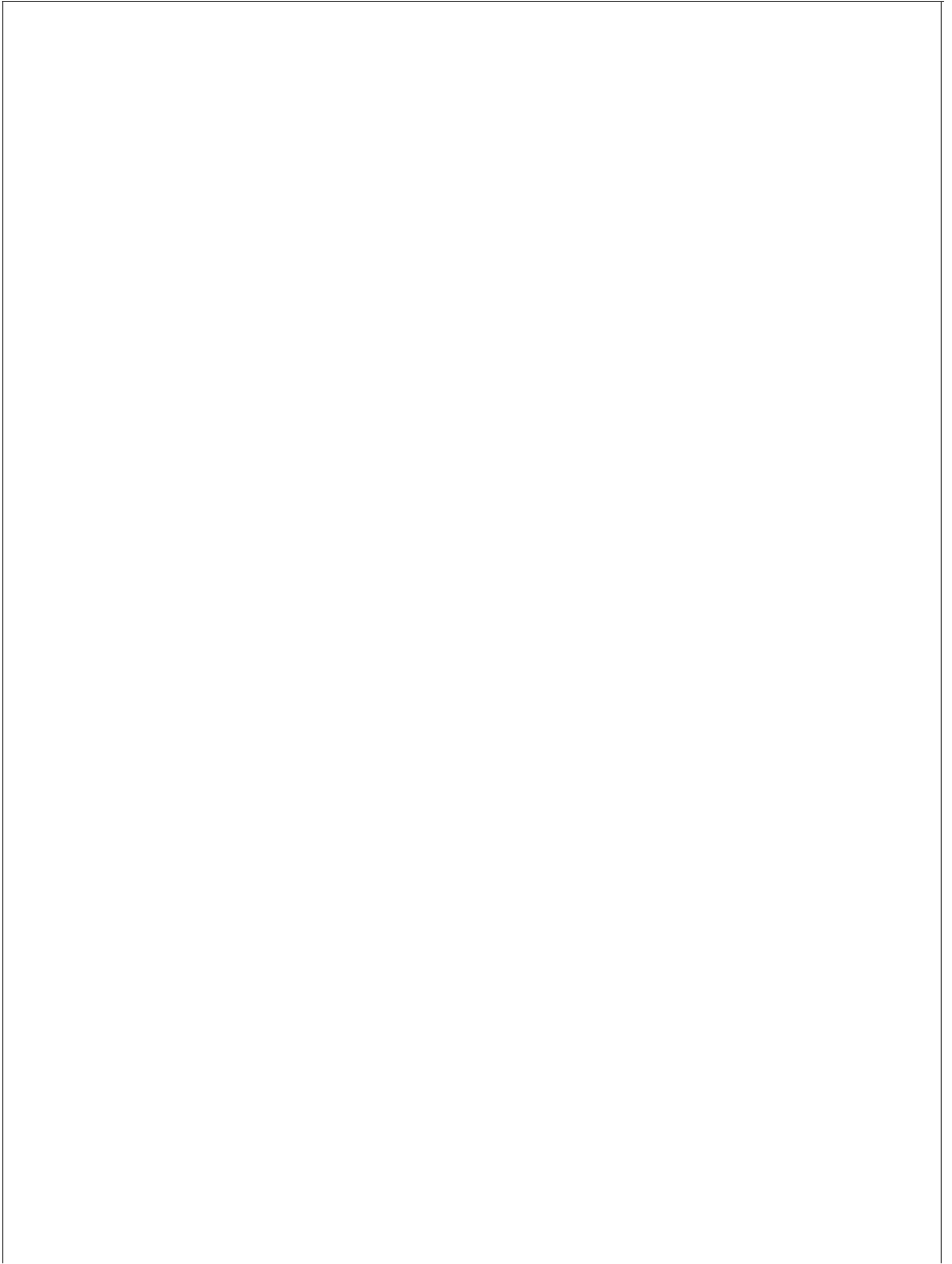
- ☐ Yes, I have access to institutional support in cases of student's documented disability.
- ☐ No, I do not have to institutional support unless the student has a documented disability.
- ☐ No, I not have any access to institutional support.
- ☐ Maybe.
- ☐ I don't know.

If you need to clarify, please do so here.

12. What do you use to deliver your online or hybrid course?

- ☐ Not applicable because I do not teach online.
- ☐ I use the university's CMS.
- ☐ I use an open-source CMS such as Drupal, Moodle, or Joomla.
- ☐ I use an open-source wiki such as MediaWiki.
- ☐ I use an open-source blog interface such as WordPress.
- ☐ I use Google sites.
- ☐ I use a combination of the tools listed here.

Other (please specify)



Material Work Conditions of Contingent Faculty

13. Do you have access to office support staff for forms, copies, office supplies, and general assistance?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know.

14. What best describes how you park(for when you teach face-to-face)?

- ☐ I have a faculty parking permit as part of my contract.
- ☐ I pay for a faculty parking permit.
- ☐ I pay (at meters or a lot) for days when I am on campus.

If you need to qualify, do so here.

15. Do you have designated office space with a computer in that space?

- ☐ Yes, I have my own office with a computer.
- ☐ Yes, I share an office, and we each/all have our own computers.
- ☐ Yes, I share an office, and we share computers.
- ☐ No.
- ☐ Not sure.

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

16. What is your salary range?

- ☐ less than \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,000-\$35,000
- ☐ \$35,001-\$40,000
- ☐ \$40,001-\$45,000
- ☐ \$45,001-\$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000+
- ☐ Not applicable because I am paid per course.

17. What is the average term of your contractual appointment?

- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ over 4
- ☐ not applicable because I work term to term.

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

18. Estimate the weight of importance given to the following when it comes time for reappointment or contract renewal? Use a number that represents a percent of total effort. All your answers should add up to 100%.

Teaching performance

Teaching evaluations

Peer reviewed publications in TPC journals

Other Publications

Conference presentations

Committee work in the department

Service to university

Service to the profession nationally

Student Advising

Other

19. What are you paid per course?

☐ Not applicable because I am paid on an annual contract.

☐ \$1500 or less

☐ \$1501-\$2000

☐ \$2001-\$3000

☐ \$3001-\$4000

☐ \$4001-\$5000

☐ \$5000+

20. Are benefits included in your compensation package?

☐ No.

☐ Yes, but I have to pay more for them.

☐ Yes.

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

Professional Development for Contingent Faculty

In this section, we are trying to identify what professional development opportunities are available to you.

21. Have you ever taken a formal course on teaching? Please select the answer that best fits your background.

- ☐ Yes. I took a course on teaching composition or college writing.
- ☐ Yes. I took a course on teaching TPC.
- ☐ Yes. I took two courses--one on teaching composition and one on teaching TPC.
- ☐ Yes. I took another kind of teaching course.
- ☐ No. I have not had a formal course on teaching.

22. Have you ever taken a formal course for teaching online? Select the answer that best fits your situation.

- ☐ Yes. It was offered at my institution as professional development.
- ☐ Yes. My institution paid for me to take a class or complete a training course.
- ☐ Yes. I paid for my own class or training course.
- ☐ No. I have not taken a formal course on how to teach online.
- ☐ No because I do not teach online.

23. Do you receive peer observations of your teaching? Please select the answer that best fits your personal situation.

- ☐ Yes. I am observed every year as a way to improve teaching effectiveness.
- ☐ Yes. I am observed in the year or term I am being reappointed or my contract renewed.
- ☐ No. I do not receive peer observations of my teaching.
- ☐ Sometimes. There is not set time but I have been observed.

Other (please specify)

24. Do you feel pressure (either explicit or implicit) to modify your teaching practices to ensure positive end of course evaluations?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.
- ☐ Partially.

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

25. What professional development opportunities are available to you? Check all that apply.

- ☐ brown bag lunch series (where tips and techniques are offered concerning teaching such as constructing a better syllabus, sharing of assignments, etc.)
- ☐ online resource portal (where information about assignments, exercises, policies, readings, etc. can be shared between faculty)
- ☐ access to Quality Matters training (specific to online teaching)
- ☐ training for professional practice (e.g. training on the latest version of software)
- ☐ grading calibration sessions
- ☐ pedagogy workshops (where the focus is on a specific technique like active learning or using technology)
- ☐ training to teach online courses
- ☐ encourage faculty to use resources on campus (such as teaching center)

Other (please specify)

26. Do you have regular access to money for professional development ? Please select the answer that best applies to your situation.

- ☐ Yes. My department has allocated funds for contingent faculty.
- ☐ Maybe. My department has funds available that I may apply for.
- ☐ Maybe. My university has funds available that I may apply for.
- ☐ Maybe. Sometimes my department is able to locate funds when I make a really strong case.
- ☐ No. I do not regularly have access to funds.

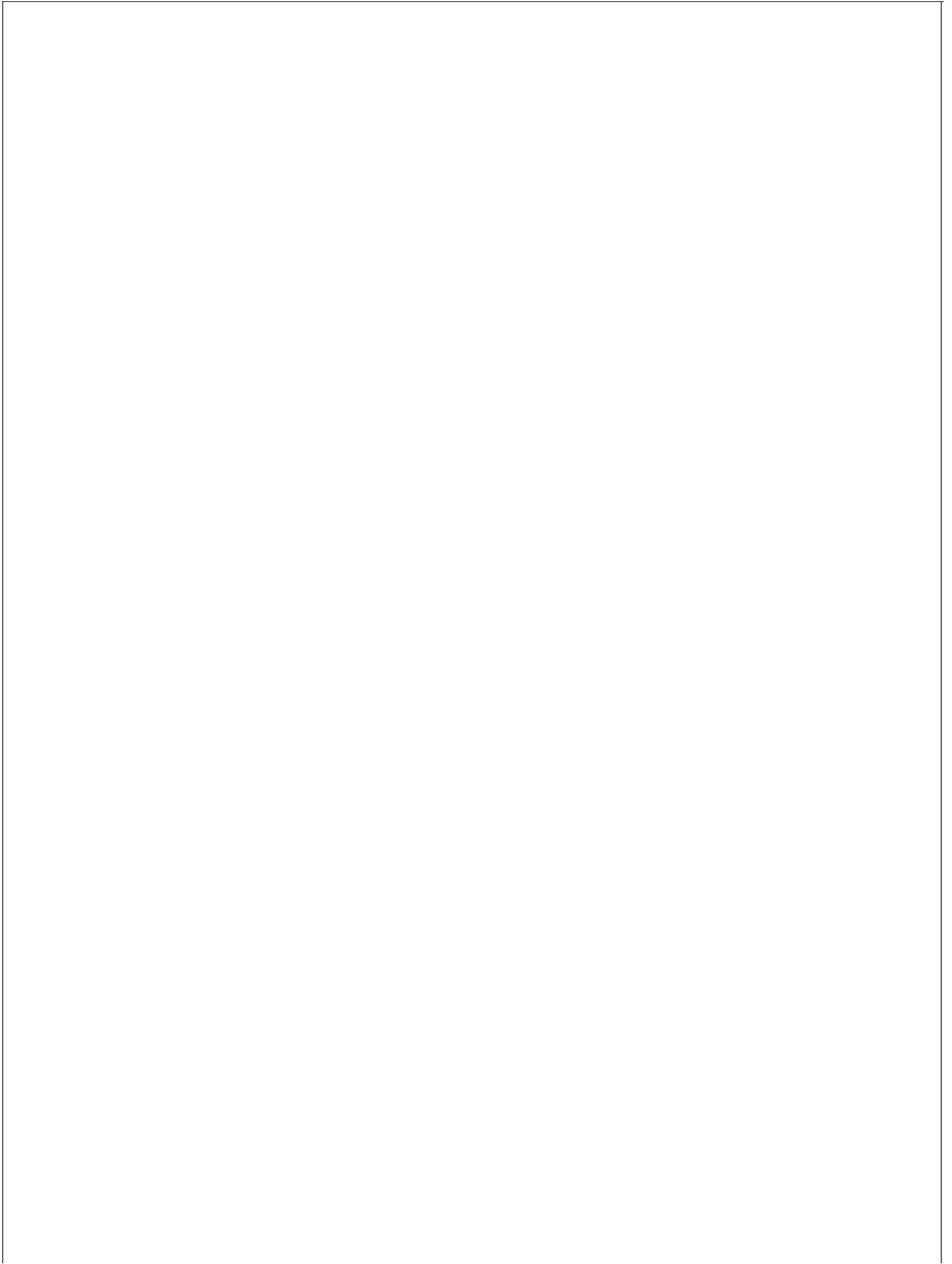
If you need to qualify, please do so here.

27. If you do have access to financial forms for faculty faculty development, what are they? Check all that apply.

- ☐ opportunities for leaves
- ☐ grants to fund research or teaching innovations
- ☐ travel funds for research or to attend pedagogical focused training
- ☐ funding for conferences, if I am on the program as a speaker
- ☐ funding for conferences simply to attend
- ☐ funding for software
- ☐ funding for external workshops
- ☐ research funds for which you can apply

Other (please specify)

28. In a dream scenario where resources (including human capital, technology, and money) were not issues, what types and kinds of professional development would you like to have available?



Job satisfaction of contingent faculty

29. Thinking of your current position, please rate your satisfaction with the following:

	Satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Partially Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departmental status	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reappointment possibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Involvement within the department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense that you belong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collegial respect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Are you happy working as a contingent faculty member?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ No

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

31. Would you prefer to be working on the tenure-track?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

If you need to qualify, please do so here.

Demographics and Background

32. Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I would rather not say.

33. Please indicate your race/ethnicity.

- ☐ Caucasian/white
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Hawaiian/Pacific
- ☐ Multiracial

Other (please specify)

34. In which type of institution, i.e., Carnegie classification, do you teach? (See <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/> for more information.)

- ☐ Research very high (similar to the previous classification of R1)
- ☐ Research high
- ☐ Doctoral
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Baccalaureate
- ☐ Two-Year institution

Other (please specify)

35. What is the name of the department in which Professional and Technical Communication is taught?
Select the one that best applies to your school.

- ☐ Communication + some other term (e.g., Communication and Mass Media)
- ☐ English
- ☐ English + some other term (e.g. English and Comparative Lit.)
- ☐ Writing Department
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Attached to a college administered program
- ☐ Engineering

Other (please specify)

36. Please select the highest degree YOU have obtained.

- ☐ MA: English
- ☐ MA/MS: English with a specialization in TPC
- ☐ MA: Rhetoric & Composition
- ☐ MA/MS: TPC
- ☐ PhD: English
- ☐ PhD: TPC
- ☐ PhD: Rhetoric and Composition
- ☐ PhD: Rhetoric and Composition with a specialization in TPC

Other (please specify)

37. How do you self identify as a teacher/scholar?

- ☐ TPC teacher/scholar.
- ☐ Composition teacher/scholar.
- ☐ Rhetoric teacher/scholar.
- ☐ Rhetoric/composition teacher/scholar.
- ☐ Literary teacher/scholar.

Other (please specify)

38. Do you teach at the same institution where you obtained your highest degree?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

39. Are you represented by a faculty union?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No. My campus has a union, but my job category is not represented.
- ☐ No. My campus does NOT have a union.

40. Do you have experience as a practicing technical communicator? We take "practicing technical communicator" to mean someone with substantial work experience (cumulative total of over 2 years) producing documents and other deliverables that would be recognized by others as TPC.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

41. Briefly describe your work as a practicing technical communicator.

Last question

If you would be willing to do a brief, confidential follow-up interview (through the technological medium of your choice), please contact the principal investigator, Lisa Meloncon by email at meloncon@tek-ritr.com or by phone at 803.370.0008.