

Dear members of the Executive Committee,

I am delighted to hear that Michaël Steehouder, for his many contributions to education and research on technical communication, will be honored with the Distinguished Service Award of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. I find that he fully deserves the Award and I am glad that his value is recognized and acknowledged by the Executive Committee.

Without Michael Steehouder, there would not be anything like 'Technical Communication' in the Netherlands. Michael is the only full professor of Technical Communication in the Netherlands. Of course there are others who specialize in Technical Communication, but they have different job titles or missions and must distribute their attention. Michael has always attempted to connect and integrate technical communication with other forms of communication: business communication, professional communication, marketing communication, electronic forms of communication, rhetoric. In that sense he has shown many students over the years that technical communication is rooted in the same fertile soil as other, more trendy forms of communication. That good thinking about (for example) helpdesk interaction or computer documentation in the end is thinking about service delivery, about argumentation and persuasion, about attitudes and actions. He has opened students' eyes for the relevance of technical communication.

Over the years, Michael has written and edited several very successful Dutch textbooks, with various co-authors and co-editors. His textbook 'Leren Communiceren' is a standard in Dutch higher education and has seen five editions in the past 20-plus years. The number of copies sold in a small country as the Netherlands is enormous. As colleagues, we have calculated that (assuming an even distribution) there must be a copy present in each and every street in The Netherlands. Other textbooks and more scholarly books were on manuals, on forms, on text analysis, an encyclopedic reference handbook on professional communication, and recently the 'Basisboek Technische Communicatie', which can be translated as Technical Communication Foundations. He covered, as an educator and as a scholar, the whole width of our field. Michael is a very prolific writer and also a very prolific maker of typos. His mind is too quick for his fingers!

For many years, Michael has been the chair of the Dutch STIC, a professional organization of technical and industry communicators. He is very active in the international world of Technical Communication, with Intecom, with EU projects aiming at assessing and raising professional standards, with the IEEE Professional Communication Society, and with our sister department at the University of Washington in Seattle. His work has helped the Faculty of Behavioral Studies, of which we are part, to broaden its view and develop an international perspective.

But above all, Michael is a very considerate person, who serves as an advocate for others in his group, in the University of Twente, and in the international context. He fully deserves to be put in the spotlights. I congratulate him with the Distinguished Service

Award, and the Committee with its decision to honor prof. dr. Michael Steehouder of the University of Twente.

Thea van der Geest