Vice President Q&A

To see the candidates for Vice President:

- Nicky Bleiel
- Robert Dianetti

To see the posted questions and answers for each position:

- Vice President
- Director
- Secretary
- Nominating Committee

Q. 1: What will you do to bring member dues in line, end the nickel and diming for every resourse (sic), and steer STC toward serving its members and the profession instead of building an empire? - Dennis Camilleri

Nicky Bleiel Responds:

STC is about advancing the profession of technical communication and serving its members. Recent Society accomplishments to this end include creating the “MySTC” social network community, building a new website, working with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to redefine the definition of the profession, partnering with other international technical communication

organizations to work on ways to promote the profession worldwide, and launching a certification program so that technical communicators will have uniform proficiency standards. In addition, STC provides core member services such as two award winning publications, the STC Technical Communication Summit, educational opportunities, communities (geographic and virtual), competitions, a job bank, a Buyer's Guide, a blog, standards work, and recognitions. It is difficult to set a dues level that makes everyone happy, and the economy is putting a strain on everyone, but one way to keep dues lower is to make some offerings (like webinars) á la carte. That way you can pick and choose what you want and stay within your budget. The current dues are in line with other similar organizations, and haven't been raised in two years. All that being said, STC dues are an investment in the profession and your career. Of course, we can't (and we won't) rest, we need to keep identifying and delivering resources that will build a better STC.

(Other candidate responses will be posted as received)

Q. 2: How would you measure and address a growing sense of dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement amongst non-American members of our "international" society? - Mellissa Ruryk

Nicky Bleiel responds:

STC has members in 50 different countries, plus we have 13 chapters outside the U.S. While it is true that some Society offerings are U.S. centric, that is because the Society is based in the U.S. and providing benefits like salary surveys is much more straightforward to produce when you can work with your own government and laws. That being said, the Society does strive to serve the international tech comm community and its members, for example: several STC Live Web Seminars and Certificate Courses are being held at times that work in different time zones, STC will have a booth at the tcworld International Pavilion this year (tcworld is held by tekom in Germany), STC is working with other international tech comm societies to see how we can work

together to promote the profession and gather useful data (such as salaries), and STC provides support for international chapters. Publications, competitions, and standards work scale globally too.

I think one of the keys to strengthening a global STC tech comm community is communication – we need to communicate STC initiatives better. We also need to keep identifying ways to strengthen ties even more. All ideas are welcome, please send them along.

Robert Dianetti Responds:

I would guess that surveys would be the best response, but I'm not sure that is the answer you are looking for.

A more proactive approach would be to collect the dissatisfied members into a group (virtual or otherwise) and see if a response to the dissatisfaction could be worked out. Then we've have something to measure as things inproved.

Q. 3: The Board President appoints the chair of the Nominating Committee. In 2Q 2013, this task will fall to you. Up until 2 years ago, this position rotated each year. Are you in favor of continuing this tradition, or do you favor appointing a new chair annually? If so, why?- Suzanne Guess

Nicky Bleiel responds:

The length of service for the chair of the Nominating Committee has varied over time. Some serve one year, some have served more. This is actually the case with chairs/members of all committees. I think that each chairmanship needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis every year. The needs of the Society, the willingness of the member to serve as well as other criteria all need to be assessed before making a decision. That is the system we have now and I would continue it.

(Other candidate responses will be posted as received)

Q. 4: How ready are you to move out of the comfort zone, and change the paradigm, or the business model of STC (assuming that it moves us forward, of course) ? Put another way, are you averse to radical change? - Ray Gallon

 Nicky Bleiel responds:

I am not averse to change if it is needed to move forward. In fact, I've found that change is required to do anything worthwhile.

(Other candidate responses will be posted as received)

Q. 5: What is your strategic vision for the STC in the next 3 to 5 years? - Bernard Aschwanden

Nicky Bleiel responds:

STC has tackled some big initiatives in the past few years that address the strategic vision (I mentioned them in the answer to an earlier question) and that must continue.

The current STC Strategic Goals can be found at http://www.stc.org/strategic-goals . All five need to be addressed, and I've thought of a few specific things I'd like the Society to tackle that will advance several of them; such as holding virtual "summits" with industry leaders, producing YouTube videos about tech comm and tech careers, and creating STC apps and content for mobile devices. These high-profile ideas will also help increase membership, which is an important strategic goal.

This seems like a good time to mention that I'm working on a survey project right now that will help STC formulate a strategy to promote our profession and its professionals — as well as STC — to these software development managers. Further studies will target other industries. This project will also address strategic goals.

(Other candidate responses will be posted as received)

Q. 6: How do you plan to ensure the STC Board of Directors is focused on longer term strategy and not trying to run day-to-day operations (which generally should be left to the staff at the STC office). - Bernard Aschwanden

Nicky Bleiel responds:

The staff does run the day-to-day operations, and have been for the past five or so years. The STC Board is a strategic body that sets goals and direction, monitors and reviews progress, and makes adjustments as necessary.

Robert Dianetti Responds:

Tough question. The answer is that the board needs to do a measure of both. With that being said, activity with no strategy is usually reactive and doesn't move the organization forward. Strategy without action is just a pipe dream.

The goal of any leader is to know the difference between the two, and direct the organization with the proper balance between the two in mind.

(Other candidate responses will be posted as received)

Q. 7: How do you feel about the pace of change in STC. Are we adapting to the new situation, and are we doing it fast enough, or should we be looking to change the way we evolve? - Ray Gallon

Nicky Bleiel responds:

Change, when needed, can never happen fast enough. I think STC should always strive to be both nimble and prudent.

Robert Dianetti Responds:

Personally, I don’t think the Society is moving fast enough. I am not sure of the reasons why but change is always stressful for individuals and organizations alike.

We need to move quick or continue our current trend. If we aren’t growing, we will not be in business.

Q. 8: Tell us how you feel about certification for Technical Communicators and STC's role in certifying both members and non-members. - John Sgammato

Robert Dianetti Responds:

I believe certification is a good thing. It will increased the visibility and importance of the Society, and it will give members an opportunity to show their competency in a professional, meaningful way. This cannot but help their careers.

Nicky Bleiel Responds:

Certification is a good thing for a number of reasons. For the individual, there is the opportunity to learn the state of their skills, and to differentiate themselves in the marketplace. For the Society, the certification program furthers our mission of advancing the profession of technical communication.

Jared Spool (@jmspool) Tweeted this interesting case for certification on March 1st: "Certification isn't about proving you are any good. Certification is to prove who you say you are. It's for the hiring manager."

Q. 9: Where would you like to focus your VP energies first, and why? - Li-At Ruttenberg

Robert Dianetti Responds:

First off – assess what immediate problems need to solved. Shortly after, work with the board on developing and executing a strategy to move the organization forward.

Change needs to happen fast, IMHO. We have to hit the ground running.

Nicky Bleiel Responds:

As I have mentioned in my blog post (http://notebook.stc.org/meet-the-candidates-nicky-bleiel-candidate-for-vice-president/), I have projects I am working on now, and I have a number of ideas I'd like to pursue. However, the Board works together to set strategic direction and the new Board will meet at the Summit to discuss future direction. I will wholeheartedly focus my energies on executing that strategy. We have a lot of work to do and I am ready and eager to tackle it.