OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

a project of OHSU's Historical Collections & Archives

an interview with:

Susan Conrad

interview conducted on: January 11, 2019

by: Steve Huskey

Interviewee: Susan Conrad
Interviewer: Steve Huskey
Date: January 11, 2019
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen

Steve Huskey: My name is Steve Huskey and I'm interviewing Susan Conrad for the OHSU Oral History Program. This is January 11, 2019. We are in the BICC building at OHSU. When did you first start working at OHSU? What were the initial responsibilities?

Susan Conrad: My first job at OHSU was at CDRC in 1976. I worked as a clinic secretary helping set up clinics that included the patients and doctors and social workers. The programs I worked on were pretty bad ones. Muscular duchenne, myelomeningoceles, which is a birth defect of the spinal cord. I had children with bad burns and neurology issues. Paraplegics, quadriplegics. I only stayed there about nine months because I had a small son at the time and I kept imagining what it would be like if he had any of these problems, and it just got to be too difficult. I admire the people who work there. But I just could not be one.

Then in 1975, I got a job at School of Dentistry registrar's office. And that was a typical registrar's office job. I did admissions and I did registrations and dealt with many, many, many student issues as they came up, so that was my job there.

Then in 1981—oh, just a little bit of a backstory. I had been taking some night classes at Portland State in programming, because my husband at the time was studying programming and he was sharing it with me. And I just loved the logic of programming and learning all that. So, I wanted to take some classes because I thought maybe I could get into OHSU's IT, one of their teams, and work as a programmer.

So, then in 1981, I applied for a job in what they called Special Projects. And Monty Mullen was the boss. And it was kind of a, kind of an IT department. They worked with computers a little bit at the time. They were basically systems analysts, what in the olden days we would have called efficiency experts. And they went into the different departments and helped them streamline their work. And if possible, they would find ways to computerize some of the responsibilities. So, that's what I would do.

And they didn't give me a typewriter. What they did is sent me to what was called the Wang room, which was a room in Baird Hall. You go through the entrance, it's right to the left. And it had what they called Wang word processing machines. These were not computers; they just did word processing, Wang word processing. And I would be given an eight-inch floppy disk that they kept in the Wang room for me. I wasn't allowed to take it out of the room. And I would insert it into the word processing machine, type up my reports, print them out, and then go back to the office. So, that was my first experience with working with, it wasn't really a computer, but it was my first experience working with word processing.

I never did apply for another job in IT or at OHSU. I just kept moving up, and they just kept pushing me up. So, that was my early experience.

Huskey: You were the first computer trainer at OHSU. How did you come to hold that position?

Conrad: Well, it wasn't something I wanted in the beginning. I had started doing entry level programming work. There was a team of programmers that had been added to our department and they saw that I'd been taking COBOL classes, so they knew my desire to be a programmer. So, they started including me. In fact, I wrote a lot of code that became part of several different projects that we did at the time, IT did at the time. So, I was really happy doing that.

However, PCs started hitting campuses, our campus. People were buying them and they had no idea how to use them. So, they kept calling the computer center, which was the computer operators. And they knew server software, and the server operating system. But on the PCs, they were using DOS, which was one of the first operating systems. And the computer operators had no clue what DOS was or how it worked, so they started complaining.

So, all the IT departments at the time, and at the time there was a hospital and clinic side, and then there was everybody else: administration, research, education. And we had two separate networks, so we couldn't communicate with one another. But they all did decide to get together, because both the hospital and the other side of OHSU, they were still getting all these DOS questions, and nobody knew how to answer them.

So, what they did is they got us all together and they asked us if any of us had a degree in education. So, I raised my hand and I said, "I have a BA in secondary education. Majored in English."

And they said, "Oh, good. You get to be OHSU's computer trainer."

I said, "Well, I want to be a programmer."

They said, "Well, don't worry about it. Just what you need to do is, we'll just send you around to all the departments." OHSU probably had a population of about six or seven thousand at the time. "Just go around to all the departments and show them how to use DOS. And then just come back and be a programmer. It will just take a few months. We just need to show people one time how to use the computer."

Well, all of us were very naïve at that time. We had no idea what we were getting into. So, that's how that went. So, anyway, that started my computer training.

Huskey: It wasn't just a one-time thing.

Conrad: So, I never did go back to being a programmer.

Huskey: What were some of the challenges you faced teaching computers and word processing? Where did you teach? What kinds of support did you provide?

Conrad: Well, we had no classroom. So, I had to go to department to department. And the first class I taught, as I mentioned earlier, was DOS in each person's department. I would teach them certain DOS commands so that they could at least get around. And basically to get into whatever word processor they had purchased to use, they would just type in the executable for that particular software program, and they would get into it.

And then I also, there were about three main word processing programs floating around on campus. One was Spellbinder. Another one was MultiMate; the School of Nursing loved MultiMate. And WordStar. They were very, very basic programs and didn't have a lot of

features. And it was pretty easy to show them how to do things, because there weren't that many features to show them. So, I got through that okay.

Then I also provided support. And I did this alongside Mary Mitchell. She had two technicians working under her. One was Kevin McVein. The other was Steve Huskey here. So, the four of us would go through and we'd answer these support questions. We'd fix dot matrix printers and do some basic computer support with them.

And I just want to give you an example of one support question that I got, that is sort of typical of some of the support we had to do in the early days. I got a call from a department that said they had just purchased a computer and it had arrived that morning. And they had set it up, but it wasn't working. Could I come over and fix it for them? So, I said, "Sure." So, I got my little toolkit and I went over to the department, and I walked in. They said, "Here's the computer." And I looked at this desk, and I saw a monitor and it was on, but nothing was showing. And I saw a keyboard. So, then I'm looking under the desk. And I'm looking behind the desk. And I said, "Well, where's the CPU?" And they said, "Well, we didn't know what that was, so we didn't order it. Is it important?" So, that was one thing that we had to, we had to deal with questions like this all the time.

But I'll never forget, as I'm walking away from the department, after I helped them do a purchase order with the correct CPU, as I'm walking back to my office, I thought to myself, "Oh, no, we need to teach Purchasing how to order computers." So, that became a real immediate issue that we had to address right away, which we did. So, that was good.

Huskey: How did OHSU employees react to learning how to use computers?

Conrad: Not well. Usually it was the department head's decision to buy a computer. And I believe he felt that everyone in the office would just sort of pick it up and learn how to use it. He or she. So, we had a lot of scared people. In fact, there was quite a migration of early retirements from some of the older people who were scared to death and didn't want to have any part in learning how to use computers. So, we lost a lot of employees just because of computers back in the early days.

I went to my boss and I said, "This is getting way too much for me. I need a classroom. I need to have a place where I can teach these people so that they can actually practice on the keyboard with me there, so that they can learn how to do it." And I said, "People who are doing something, they learn by doing. And at least we'll move into someone's short-term memory. And if they keep practicing what they've learned and keep using it, it will eventually get to their long-term memory." And that was my goal. Because I kept answering the same questions for the same people over and over again. They'd say, "I know you taught us this, but—" And so, I knew I needed one.

So, Monty, my boss, got me permission to use the Instructional Media Department, which was a place where students could come in and use computers. And I could use it in the mornings when most of the students were in class. And then the students would take over in the afternoons.

And I began teaching. I began teaching computer basics. Difference between memory and storage, that was a really difficult thing for people to understand. I finally, after we opened

the computer store, which is later, I would take software packages off the shelf and take them into the classroom and pass them out. And then I'd put a certain amount of megabytes of storage, and then some kilobytes of memory. And I would say to the class, "Now look at the software package you have and tell me if this software will work on this computer." And that was the way they learned.

And then one person said, "Oh, so it's really important that you read the package contents before you buy it." Because we were having a big problem with people buying software and not having enough memory or storage to use it. And so, we had to make sure that they knew what to look for before they bought software.

And I also taught, of course, DOS and copy command, I would say, was one of the most difficult because it was the longest and it was difficult for people to understand. But we got through it.

We also taught the format command. And in those days, format would take a data diskette, a blank one, and format it. In other words, put little addresses on it, electronic addresses, so it would always know where the files were that you were storing on it. But you could also use format to completely wipe a diskette and have it be used for something else. So, I was teaching that along with Eric Olson, who was an engineer at the time. And he wanted to get a feel for how people were learning, or what their problems were. So, he would come in, he would be there as a partner in my class a lot of times.

And we had a break, and this employee comes up with a rather sheepish look on her face. And she says, "So, tell me again about the format command. Does it really wipe all data that's been put on there previously?" And we both nodded and said yes. She said, "So, here's what's going on in my department. We had this new software. And so, we're supposed to be entering data from the previous day onto the system. And so, what we're doing is following the instructions we were given. And it says, 'step one, format a diskette.'" Then she said, "So, you're telling me that every morning we are deleting the data that was put on there the day before."

And I said, "Yes, you are. You want to skip that first step unless you actually need to start with a new data diskette."

And she was quite relieved to learn that. Because she told me later, "You know, none of us wanted to use the software, because we always knew we'd get in trouble the next day." So, we were really glad that we were able to help her.

We also taught Condor database. It was an early database at the time. And department heads, fortunately, chose people that were skilled at possibly learning how to create and maintain a database. So, that made our jobs easier, make my job easier. We could come in there and they really enjoyed learning how to create a database in Condor and use it. Gather all their data.

I also went around and taught some departments, or created databases for some departments. I can remember HR printing, my old stomping grounds, both registrar's offices and the Diseased Organ Museum was another that I'll never forget, that I had to sit in that room for a week or so while I put in all their data for them, because they didn't have a network back then.

I also began teaching WordPerfect. I checked out all the other software or word processing software that was available on campus. WordPerfect was a newcomer, but it was very, very, a very, very superior product than even Microsoft Word. People don't know this, but Microsoft was a little behind the eight ball when it came to productivity software, like word

processing and spreadsheets and things like that. And when I tested it, I remember there was a menu. And I just chose mail merge, just to see what mail merge was like. And I got a message across the screen that said, "feature not developed yet." And I said to myself, I don't think people at OHSU are going to like that message at all. So, I dropped Microsoft at the time and we went with WordPerfect.

Teaching WordPerfect, people came from typewriters, for the most part, learning WordPerfect. And so, they had a hard time not pressing "enter" at the end of a page. But they became absolutely thrilled when they learned that they didn't have to do that anymore. And they got even more thrilled when they learned that they didn't have to watch before they came to the end of a piece of paper. That WordPerfect automatically started a new page for them. They just absolutely couldn't believe it.

One thing they were most excited about, though, were proportional fonts. On a typewriter generally you had letter gothic and courier as your monospace fonts. A monospace font is one that takes up the same space, width space, of any other letter. So, a capital W and a capital I are taking up the same width space. Proportional fonts are different. They're built proportionally. So, a capital W takes up a wider space than a capital I. And they loved proportional fonts. We were also selling HP LaserJet printers like crazy, and it had all of these different fonts available to them.

And I got a call one day. And says, "My printer is just getting really slow. It's not printing." And so, I went over to their department to do the support. I said, "Show me what you're trying to print." And she gave me some papers that had about sixteen to twenty different fonts on each page. And I said, "This is what's slowing you down. You don't want to do this. You want to start with one font and just have that one font per page." So, they did kind of calm down about that.

But one of my big failures was that I couldn't convince people that they only needed to put one space after a period with proportional fonts. I even created a WordPerfect macro that when it saw a period and two spaces, it would change it to one space. But with proportional fonts, you only needed one space. I never got people to believe that. I showed them books. I showed them magazines. I showed them newspapers. And they just never believed me. They said, "Nope, we need the two spaces." I said, "It doesn't look as professional that you might think it is, if you have the two spaces." But even about two weeks before my retirement, I had an employee tell me, say, "You know, I still use two spaces after a period. I still think that's the right thing to do." So, that was one of my complete failures.

Oh, and then, I also had to teach an HP LaserJet printer class. And this was because when the HP LaserJet first came out, it forced you to add all the escape sequences that you needed. If you wanted to, for example, if you wanted to turn bold on, you had to type this escape sequence. And then when you turned bold off, you had to type this second escape sequence. So, it didn't work very well. But fortunately, WordPerfect realized the problem. And immediately, within just a few months, they had a solution where they embedded all the escape sequences within their program. So, we just had to press the bold key to turn bold on and off after that.

Huskey: Discuss the OHSU computer store and the challenges you faced setting it up, as well as maintaining it over the years.

Conrad: We opened the computer store in October of 1984. Monty came to me and he said, "I now want you, now that you're doing training, I want you to also take over running the computer store."

And again, I complained. I said, "I have not retail sales experience at all. I worked at a Dairy Queen one summer during high school, but that's it. I know nothing."

And they said, "Well, you'll figure it out." This became what I was always told. I'll figure it out. And I guess I did.

So, we opened this store in October 1984, which was the same month that the first Apple Macintosh was released. So, the day before we were to open, I got a visit from two of our Apple representatives. And they brought a Macintosh with them that was going to be stored in the computer store. And they said this was one of the first computers, Macintoshes, that arrived in Portland. So, that was kind of cool. And they proceeded to show me how to use it. Now, the first Macintosh had no hard disk. And it had one floppy drive and it had two programs, MacWrite and MacDraw. They showed me how to put one of those programs in, for example, MacWrite. And I'd put it in. And then I would open the program. Then I would eject that program and I'd put in a blank, formatted data disk. And then as I typed or drew or whatever, I could then save it to the data disk. And that's how it worked.

That was fine. My problem was, the Macintosh came with a mouse and I'd never used a mouse before. And I don't know if anybody remembers how they learned to use a mouse, but it was difficult for people to learn. And I found myself just moving the mouse further and further away from me as I tried to find, tried to click on what I needed to click on the screen. It just took a while to learn.

So, I was really nervous for the next day. And not only that, but I'd just found out that the seventh floor of the Campus Services building was supposedly haunted. This was where our computer store was placed. And haunted by a nurse who had died up there, or maybe been murdered up there, I'm not sure, while it was a TB hospital. Campus Services was a TB hospital. But I have to say that I never saw any ghostly spirits at all in the time I was up there, and neither did any of my workers.

Anyway, we opened the store. We were going to keep it open from nine to eleven and four to five. And then the other times, I would be teaching. And first day, I just said a little prayer that nobody would come into the store on the first day because I still didn't quite know how to use the mouse. And I wanted to use the two hours that I was up there by myself to learn how to use the mouse.

Soon after that prayer, seven medical students walked in. And they said, "Hey, we hear you have a Macintosh. Can you show us how to use it?"

I said, "You know, I think it might be better if I sit you down and I tell you how to use it and you learn how to use it and learn how to use the mouse. That's the best way." And so, that worked, thank goodness. And we went on from there.

Later I was able to hire Steve Huskey here to help me in the store in the mornings. And often when I was teaching classes, he'd be there by himself, teaching, while I would be training.

One of the first things that they asked me to do that I didn't know when I started running the store, my boss told me that the Oregon Board of Higher Education had told me that all Apple

and IBM and Zenith computer shipments would all come to me, to OHSU by me. And then I was supposed to receive the shipments, and then reship them to the appropriate university or college, which I thought was a nutty, completely ridiculous plan. But anyway, I started to do it.

But pretty soon, after a month, I went to my boss and I said, "I have to quit." I said, "I can't continue to do this. This is taking up all my time. I barely have time to train. Steve is stuck in the store all the time. Mary Mitchell's upset, she can never use Steve for support." And I said, "I can't do this. It's ridiculous." And he finally agreed, and talked to the other universities. And they said, "Yeah, we're fine with receiving our own shipments." So, that stopped, which was a good thing.

Later, when Steve's work got more, when Mary Mitchell got higher and higher, and he had to work more hours for her, I was able to hire Tom Howe, who is a photographic, he's a genius when it comes to remembering things. Photographic memory. And I hired him. And on the first day, I gave him a DOS manual. And I said, "Take this home tonight. Take a look. Because we get a lot of people in here wanting to know how to do certain DOS commands." So, he said, "Okay." So, he takes it home. Next day, brings it back, and he gives me the book, and he says, "Yeah, I've read all the DOS commands in the book." And the book, it was about this thick. And he says, "I think I understand how to use all the commands now." Great. I don't even know that. So, he's always been a great person for running the store.

Huskey: We're sitting in the Biomedical Information Communications Center during this interview. You witnessed the building of the BICC. Discuss the original concept of the center.

Conrad: Okay, 1989 we won a grant that the librarians, OHSU librarians, worked very hard on getting. They wrote it and they received a grant with a lot of money to create a building that would be our information center. During this time, university information centers were cropping up in universities and colleges around the country. And they were usually either placed adjacent to the library, or within the library building somewhere. And so, the library wanted to start all this where access to information would be in one place for employees and students and guests, actually, too.

So, we got together with, the library asked my department, which was called Edutech Center at the time, Medical Photography, Telecom, HISD and NTS, the two IT departments, technical departments that we had. And I'm forgetting. EdCom, of course EdCom was the other one that was a part of all this. And we were supposed to come together and work together to be an access to information.

Well, things didn't go exactly as planned. Dr. Bob Beck was hired as our first director. And he had the same idea that the librarians had started with, which is the Fred Meyer's model, where you can go somewhere and get everything you need from one place. So, he wanted this to be an information where people could come in and get all their information needs in one building. Well, things didn't go quite as planned. And I'll talk about that in a minute.

We had our first computer fair. The building wasn't built yet, but Dr. Beck wanted to start advertising it and kind of showing a coming of attractions type of thing. So, we invited several directors of information centers in other parts of the country who had built them adjacent to a library or within the same building. And they were there to tell us how they worked and

what problems they had setting up, but what was working and how happy their customers were, and that sort of thing. That was a huge hit.

We also had our first computer store fair there and we had vendors from the different computers that we supported the store, Apple, IBM, Zenith, HP, were some of those. So, people enjoyed talking to the vendors as well, to see what was coming up next.

And at the same time, we also, Dr. Beck wanted to start the network contacts program. So, we began that. Each department was supposed to select one person who would, their responsibilities would be first line of support for any computer issues. And attending the NC meetings and the classes we were holding for them. And also initially they had to change backup tapes on the building server. Each building had its own server. So, depending on what network you were on, if you were on AT&T, you had a server in the administration educational research buildings. And if you were HISD, you had them in the hospital clinics. But network contacts had to actually change the backup tapes every day, at the end of every day, before things got changed. So.

Huskey: What were some of the challenges during the transition to the BICC?

Conrad: Many. The first thing that happened was Dr. Beck hired several people to help with our transition to the BICC Information Center. We had to have a way to come together, all departments had to come together to deal with the various issues that people would bring to us. This team began to create a lot of issues. The first thing that they decided was to change OHSU into an Apple computer only campus. Now I knew this wasn't going to fly well with anybody at OHSU. But I also knew that Dr. Beck was more student-friendly than he was employee-friendly. And so, when he asked my opinion as the manager of the computer store, I used the students. And I said, "All these students come from other universities and colleges, and they've had to buy computers for their previous colleges or universities. They aren't going to like having to spend even more money after they've just taken out this huge financial loan to get through school here, they aren't going to like having to buy another computer, if they don't have an Apple." And so, he said, "Oh, you're right. That would be bad. Well, let's not do that." And I said, "Great, good." So, a lot of people never knew that even was a possibility at the time.

His team began spending a lot of money on, a lot of the remaining BICC funds, I believe, this may not be true, but I've heard it, so I'm going to say it as it's true, that this building was supposed to be seven stories, not five. But because so much spending was going on by this team, they had to stop at five. I believe all of ITG was supposed to fit in the top two buildings, but that was not to be.

They spent money on equipment that would never work, didn't work, would never work. On things that our engineers were saying, "This isn't even practical." And they went on questionable business trips where we never saw any results. We never knew where they were going or what they were supposed to be learning about. But we never learned what they were doing, so we never really understood the business trips. Basically, spending money left and right, as fast as they could. So, tensions in the BICC began to build.

Another thing that happened, sadly, was misogyny. This team, and I'm not sure how close Dr. Beck was to it, because he did talk to me and other women, and I didn't detect any

misogyny in him. But the other men definitely were. They all bought Top Gun hats and, not to say that Top Gun was a misogynistic movie, but they would put their own Maverick and Goose type nicknames across the top of them. And this, they became more aggressive and arrogant, especially as everyone started asking questions, like, "Why are you spending money on this? Why are you buying that?"

And it was especially hard for us women. They either ignored us, ignored what we said, they just wouldn't answer us, or they found ways of putting us down all the time. And back in those days, women didn't talk about sexual harassment or gender bias or anything in the workplace because it generally didn't work well for the woman. I know that's all changed now, thank goodness. But back then, we stayed quiet. But it was very difficult for us to come to work every day. And we never knew what was going to happen. So, it was a real tense and stressful situation.

They got rid of my boss, Monty Mullen, and they hired one of the Top Gun guys to run what was now Network Technical Services. And I fell in that department and worked with the engineers on different projects. Trainers and engineers would help each other. We'd test the equipment, new projects or new products that they were developing and make sure that they were customer-friendly. And then we would end up writing the instructions for our customers to use. So, we had a pretty good team going.

Unknown to me, my new Top Gun manager had decided that after Christmas he was going to get rid of everybody in my department. And then close Training, and run the computer store himself. The library director at the time, Jim Morgan, found out about this. And he called me on Christmas Eve and told me what was going on. And then he said, "The library's creating space for you. And I want you to get your staff together. And the library staff will also help. But we've got to move you out of Gaines Hall and into the library." Which is the old library now.

So, we did. I got a hold of my staff. We all showed up on that following, the day after Christmas. It was also a holiday. And we moved everything, all of our office furniture and equipment. Tom Howe even unscrewed all of our whiteboards. We took all of them. We took all the training room computers. We had our training room in the basement of Gaines Hall. And we had a computer store also in the basement. We took everything over to the library.

We were squeezed into kind of a small space. In fact, we could only have one customer at a time enter our computer store over there. But it wasn't going to be too many more months before we got to move into the building. And I was really happy to be under Jim Morgan at that time. He protected me and my department and saved us. And from then on, for years to come, we reported to the library and were part of the library

Then, the next issue that arrived was OHSU had a layoff season, which happens periodically around here when things aren't looking good. Dr. Beck's team's plan was to lay off all female managers and close Training and close the computer store and send everybody to Portland State's computer store. All the employees and students could go there and get their computers. They also fired Jim Morgan and replaced him with a non-librarian, which is just not done. You just don't do that.

The librarians immediately revolted and got all the rest of us to revolt as well. We were all equally upset about all of this. I didn't know that I'd been laid off. That had not come out yet.

But the firing of Jim Morgan and replacing him with a non-librarian was huge, so we were all revolting all of this.

Lesley Hallick, who had the whole layoff plan, and she knew who was going and who wasn't, basically unfired me before I even knew I was fired. So, that was good. But she called a meeting. She was the director of, vice president of academic affairs. She was over Jim Morgan. She was over the IT people as well. Not HISD, but on the educational side of IT. And she called us all over for a meeting. And I'll never forget. It was in R310 in the research building. Huge conference table, but we still all couldn't sit around it, there were so many of us. She asked each and every one of us if we had confidence in Dr. Beck and his team. And each and every one of us answered, "No, we do not have any confidence."

I was especially gratified that the men in our group also brought up the misogyny issue. And they said they didn't like what they were seeing, they didn't like the way their female coworkers were being treated, and it made an unpleasant place for all of us to work.

So, she took all that in. She did an investigation, which lasted around three months. And soon after, they were all gone. And she basically moved, they were not responsible for anything anymore within the BICC. Even during that three-month investigation, she moved them all elsewhere. So, anyway, we were done with that problem.

Dr. Hallick did ask me about sending students and employees to Portland State computer store. And I said, "Well, no, that's not going to work. But they didn't ask me about it." And I gave her faxed copies that I'd received from all of our vendors: Apple, IBM, Microsoft, Gateway, Adobe, all things we sold in the store. And they all said it's a violation of our contract to let anybody outside of each university to purchase computers. So, in other words, we could not go to Portland State and buy computers. A university computer store had to reside in the building. Not just figuratively, but it had to be physically located in the building. On campus, I mean. On campus. So, that changed, and the computer store remained open a while longer.

Huskey: How many women worked in IT when you—

Conrad: Oh, no, excuse me, can I just go on?

Huskey: Go ahead.

Conrad: I'm sorry. I just thought that there was some other stuff here. In 1991, we actually moved into the BICC. And in my department, for example, file drawers and bookcases were not ordered, so we lived out of boxes for the first few weeks. But that was okay. When we moved in that morning, we could put our boxes of stuff in the office, but we could not sit in the office. We could not turn on the computers. We had to wait for field techs to come around and test, and set up each connection or us. So, we all kind of sat outside and just kind of waited. It was a little weird for us, because we're used to starting each day with starting up our computer and getting to work. But we sat there and did, and I could see things were going well. On my floor, we were on the fourth floor of the BICC, there were training offices that faced the street and Baird Hall and McKenzie Hall, were all trainers' offices. Study rooms were at one end. And in the middle was, where all these what we call pods, they were screen-divided places for students to come in

and use the computers, and work with a group, or work by themselves if they wanted to. And they all knew that we were all trainers. So, that they knew that they could come to any one of our offices and ask for help if they needed it. So, it worked well. The computer store was also on the fourth floor.

And when I got into the building and put stuff in my office, I turned around and I looked at the computer store. And I said, "What happened to the glass wall in the door that's supposed to be there?" And so, the architect was still in the building. He was taking pictures and everything, and trying to help people that had questions about the building. And I found him and I asked him, I said, "Where is my glass wall and door on the computer store?"

And he said, "Well, you know, I wanted to talk to you about that. I don't want to put in that glass wall, because I think it interrupts the flow of the floor." And then he said, "Besides, this is OHSU. No one at OHSU would ever steal a computer."

I said, "Well, that's a nice thought. But let's just put up the glass wall, just in case." So, he ended up agreeing with me that we needed to be able to lock it.

I was also given the responsibility for the four BICC training rooms that were on this floor, on this first floor of the gallery, of the gallery. And one somewhere around in here, too. But I wasn't given any funding for purchasing computers. They did purchase the first ones for us. But after that, I had to buy my own equipment and computers. And so, I had no choice, because I had no funding for it, so I had to start charging people to take our classes. And we also had to start charging departments for scheduling and using our training rooms.

And with that, I was able to replace all the computers in one room at a time. So, every four years, a room got new computers. And it got a little awkward, because then everybody wanted to schedule the room that had the newest computers. But it was the only way I could get that to work.

I had another problem with the training rooms. We had a Mac training room. and one of the executives on campus decided that he wanted to use that room for catering services. So, he told me that whenever the gallery had an event, I was to, I couldn't schedule training on those days in that Mac training room. And that my staff had to remove all the computers and all the equipment from that room, put it in the hallway. Ed Com wasn't really pleased about that, because that was their hallway, in the back hallway. And then when the event was over, we had to replace everything, put everything back.

This took a lot of time. And sometimes when we'd reconnect computers, they wouldn't connect to the network. So, then we'd have to call a field tech to come over and fix those computers. So, the field tech wasn't too thrilled to be doing this kind of thing about every other day. So, I went to the executive and I said, "You know, this isn't really working out too well. My staff are working long hours, working at least a couple of hours doing this stuff. And sometimes even longer, if things don't go right."

So, he says, "Well, just charge me."

I said, "Okay. How much? What would you think is a fair price?"

He was the financial executive. So, he said, "Well, have each staff person do the math and figure out the percentage of time that they're doing this moving. Say it's two hours. How much salary that is to them per hour. What's their hour of salary rate? And then just add up all

those numbers." And I had to include myself, because I was helping with all this. "And then charge me that amount."

So, next time we had a gallery event, afterwards I sent him a bill for $754, because that's how long it took me, took our staff to do that. And then he called me and says, "You know, we're going to start doing catering under the stairs from now on." So, at least that was fixed.

And somewhere in all this, ITG was born. I don't know that I paid a lot of attention to it, other than being glad that we finally were going to be under one network, and that HISD and Network Technical Services were going to work together. Because it was a little bit difficult working with the two of them.

Then we had our first computer fair in our new building. And instead of just being in the gallery, like later we did, we had it throughout the whole building. So, people could go to different stations, library, Ed Com, Training, the store, and the help desk, and people were really curious, really, to see who the help desk was. At the time, it was just two people. But they were really curious to meet them, because they'd heard them on the phone all this time. So, that was kind of a cute thing that they liked to do.

And on occasion, Tom Howe would bring in his computer museum, which actually has been featured on TV a couple of times in local Portland talk shows. And he would bring in some older computers and older software. And I believe at one time he had a commercial that Kevin Costner did about the smaller diskette that Apple had, rather than the 5 ¼. And he says, "Businessmen can just put this diskette in their inside pocket." And Kevin Costner did that first commercial. And so, he would have that be replaying and replaying. And then pretty soon we'd have a lot of medical students and dental students and nursing students playing Pong all day down in the gallery. So, it was a fun time. Back to you.

Huskey: How many women worked in IT when you began? Has the number of women increased over the years?

Conrad: This was a hard question. When I was studying to be a programmer, I think there was only one male programmer at the time, Dick Anderson. Everybody else, all the other programmers were women. And they were the ones that actually taught me a lot about programming. So, there were a lot of women there. Field techs, I don't believe there were too many of them. In fact, maybe none at the time. And then Steve was reminding me that we hired, that Leah Witte became a field, the manager of the field techs. And she actually created a class, Crack the Case, for teaching women, which I thought was really interesting for her to do. But now the field techs have a few more women in them. But I don't think it's, it's not a majority, and I don't think it's even even Steven, either.

The help desk, well it started off with two people, Doug Hurd and Sue Toupal. So, even Steven. And then as it increased, I would say that it still remained pretty much an even balance in the help desk of men and women over the years. I don't recall a time where it was mostly men or mostly women.

Most managers at the time on the Information Services side, which was my department, Library, Ed Com, all non-ITG people, we were Information Services. A lot of female managers on our side. Not so many on the ITG side at the time, that I knew. And let's see. We had one

female engineer, Jeanie Gilley. And she was highly, highly respected. She died at an early age of liver cancer, unfortunately. But while she was there, every male engineer deferred to her and respected her knowledge. But I don't remember if there's any more, I know there's a few more software engineers, female software engineers. But I remember going through this building and talking to the engineers, and I still don't remember seeing a lot of women. And that's been as of five years ago. So.

Huskey: Discuss the establishment of the BICC help desk. What were some of the immediate issues you encountered? Elaborate on some services offered by the help desk.

Conrad: Yeah. So, we had just finished the Dr. Beck scandal and we're coming back together through all that. And now we were given this huge task of setting up a help desk with more than the two people that we had there. So, in 1992, under the leadership of Dr. Hallick, she had taken over running being the director of the BICC, in addition to her regular job. The BICC departments were tasked to set up a phone-in help desk immediately. And I have to read this, because I couldn't memorize all this. So, immediate questions were who would work at the desk? What kind of services should be given? Who would be served? What systems would be supported and at what level? What kind of educational support would be available to those working at the desk? Where would the desk be physically located? Who was in charge of this mission? It was decided very quickly, Dr. Hallick said that both the ITG director and the library director would be in charge of this particular mission, as they kept calling it.

And the final question was what should we call the new help desk? Well, we formed a committee of representatives from each of the big groups. And I was representing the store and Training. And we decided to tackle the last thing first. We decided we needed to come up with a new name. Or they wanted us to come up with a new name for this that would be somewhat original. So, after work one night, all of us gathered down at Tequila Willy's, which used to be a restaurant on Macadam. And over pitchers of margaritas, we came up with the name Bridge. And we really liked that name.

Now, a little bit of a backstory here. A lot of people in ITG and the BICC were Star Trek fans. I'm not sure why that was. I don't know if it was true of all of OHSU or if it was just us weirdos that were big Star Trek fans. But we all knew all of the episodes and everything. So, we decided that the Star Trek mission was going somewhere where no one has gone before. And we were certainly doing that. We were definitely going somewhere where we'd never been before. So, that was good. And also the Star Trek Enterprise, the bridge was where all the action generally took place on all the shows. So, that made sense to us. And also, the bridge stood for the BICC departments sharing information, or beginning to share information. And finally, Portland is a bridge town. So, making Bridge the perfect name to represent everything we were trying to bring together. And of course, also there was a bridge off the fourth floor of the BICC, so that was good, too. It included all that.

So, the name Bridge was accepted and used. Then the next step was staffing the Bridge. And the directors came up with three proposed models. The first one was to have a dedicated Bridge staff that spent all their time on help desk phone duty, all day long. And then they would

try to answer primary support calls. And if they couldn't, they would forward it somehow. They would write it down and then come and ask us, one of us, to help them with the question.

Number two was a few designated staff on the help desk, but rotating all of the rest of us in and out of the Bridge at one time. And their third was a group of BICC staff that always rotated in and out, and we had no designated staff at all on the Bridge.

The third choice was obviously the worst choice. But that was the one the directors chose. So, the director of Telecom at the time, Doug McDonald, he said what would be better is to have a dedicated staff, and then my staff could install a new phone line on everybody's phone that will be labeled help desk. So, when that phone rings, you know that they're calling your department because they can't even answer a primary question of support for somebody. And further, if they stay on the phone and listen to the answer, if they could, then they would be able to answer it themselves next time.

So, I thought Doug had a great plan. We all were nodding our heads. And the director said no, we're going to go with proposal three.

So, a flier was distributed to all of OHSU stating that the Bridge was open in the BICC, and that we were all coming together, and that this was a place where everybody could come. And they advertised all of these services. Now I couldn't remember everything, because I didn't keep a copy of that flier. But I did remember some things. Under computing, we would deal with sales and training and access to computers, giving people access; and then information on all software available on work stations, email, library services, videoconferencing, photograph and telecommunications. And we were told that we all had to learn how to primary support all of these different groups.

And this created a lot of tension already, because now people were saying, "I have to learn everything, as well as do my regular job?" And people started getting a little scared at this. I was tasked to create, to work with each department head in that group to create mini training sessions to show what, primarily, somebody should need to know about each group. But we had a problem getting people to find time to come to these things. And later, ITG refused to send any of their staff to our mini training sessions, which was not a good thing.

In the middle of all this, I also ended up hiring Valerie Fishler to run the computer store. She was highly capable. She came from the IMD. She'd been teaching people how to use Macs even before I was doing that. And she proved to be a great sales manager as well. And she took a lot of the pressure off me. Because before that, I was still running the store and everything else. So, she was really helpful at taking that off my hands for me, so I could concentrate on all these mini training sessions and getting people to come to them. So, that was that.

Unfortunately, also the ITG director ordered the distribution of polices and procedures to just the ITG Bridge staff only. The rest of us who rotated in weren't allowed to see what they were. So, this became a problem, because we didn't know what they were. So, if we were on the bridge, trying to answer questions, a lot of times we'd have to put them on hold and wait for an ITG person to be able to answer the question, which was not good customer service.

The big difference between ITG and Information Services, in my opinion, was that ITG liked to conceal things. I know that's not a very nice thing to say. That was just their nature. They were afraid for security reasons, and granted, there's all kinds of policies and procedures that the rest of us don't need to know about. But I actually got into trouble from the ITG director

a little bit, I got myself out of it, because he heard that when I was staffing the Bridge, someone had called and said that they needed me to send a tech over immediately. They were from the hospital. Because they needed their toner cartridge changed on their laser jet. And I put them on hold and I got the phone number for the techs or dispatch, whatever. And they said, "Oh, we can't send a tech for maybe an hour and a half or so."

So, I got back on the phone with the woman. She said, "We need this printed now!"

And I said, "Well, would you mind if I taught you how to change it yourself?"

She says, "No. That would be great." So, I went through the steps with her and changed it. And she was just ecstatically happy. She said, "Now I don't have to wait for a tech anymore!" And so, I thought I'd done a really good thing.

Well, ITG person was listening, and they felt they needed to report it to the director. And the director says, "Well, we don't do it that way. We don't let staff learn how to do these kinds of things."

So, that was kind of a big difference. And I said, "Well, that's not what I do." I said, "Information services people, we generally want to share all our information. When I'm teaching a class, I want people to know everything I know. Because I feel that's going to make them more comfortable in their workplace. I don't want them to have to wait for a tech to come and show them how to do something." And the same thing for the computer store. People come to the store to get information about what computer to purchase. I want to give them all the information we have about that, because that's going to help them. And every person having a computer in their home means they're going to get better computer skills on their own, which is going to help OHSU. So, to me it was a win-win.

But that is something that has always kind of gone on. And I do know that it just seems to be in their nature to keep some things secret. They did finally give in in teaching people how to change toner cartridges, though. So, I did finally win that battle.

We had another grand opening. And again, we talked about, this was to celebrate the Bridge, and people got to see the help desk, which was located on the third floor behind the library area. It was located back there where they could remain hidden. But people could walk by and see them and wave at them. Again, they'd only talked to these people on the phone, so they were always glad to see a person and find out who they were and what they looked like. And we had little things going on, little demos going on in each of the big departments all throughout the building. The most popular one, I was told later, was one that I set up to explain how working on the bridge was by showing a video of Lucy and Ethel in the candy factory. So, that got a lot of laughs, from the help desk, especially. They said yeah, this is how it is. So, that was really fun.

So, onto the next one.

Huskey: Could you share some memories of colleagues you've worked with at OHSU?

Conrad: Sure. From the library, I'd have to say Leslie Wykoff, who was the reference manager, and Dolores Judkins, who was a reference librarian, were probably my closest friends and coworkers within the library. They taught me so much about library processes and procedures. More than I ever knew. And how they did reference checks for the physicians that were there and the dentists, and everybody else. And how they would help them research articles that they

15

needed for their work. It was very, very impressive. I learned a lot. I learned a lot about being a librarian here at OHSU.

One story involving Dolores and I. Dolores was teaching a class on Gopher. Now, Gopher was, I believe, the first internet browser. And it was created by the University of Minnesota, Gopher was their mascot, from what I understand. So, they named it Gopher, because they thought you're traveling through the internet like a gopher travels through dirt, whatever. So, I went to the Gopher class and I found it fascinating. I was traveling through the internet, going to all these different websites. And she was showing us some interesting ones that might be of interest to people working at OHSU. And it was fascinating.

And then she got to the part where she was teaching us about bookmarks. And I thought to myself, bookmarks. I don't need to know about bookmarks. I remember where all these pages are. I can find them easily. And I told Dolores this after class. I told her it was a great class. But I said, "I don't get bookmarks." I said, "I'm not going to need those."

And Dolores just smiled at me. She said, "We'll see."

So, the next day I want to practice my Gopher skills. And so, I started traveling through the internet. And I was trying to find the places I liked, the websites I liked from yesterday, and I couldn't remember where they were. And I thought oh, okay. Bookmarks are good. So, I learned that lesson from Dolores very quickly.

Jim Morgan, of course, our library director. Once we came under his wing, things worked very well for us. He learned a lot about running the computer store and running a training program. We explained everything. We showed him finances and how we kept the accounts and sales accounts. And he wasn't all that familiar with the sales part of things. But he learned, and was always there for me whenever I had a problem or an idea I wanted to try, he was very supportive throughout and became a great friend. And of course he protected me in the early days. So, I'll always be thankful to him for that.

Abdul Anani, he was our CFO, our corporate financial director. And he helped us immensely. He was just truly amazing. I had hired a person to take care of our books, because they were complicated. And he was able to help build with setting all this up and making sure they all went well. And we also would get into fights every once in a while with the financial departments. They just didn't like the idea, really, of running all these businesses within a university campus. And Abdul defended us and protected us throughout. So, that was good.

Within ITG, I worked closely with Eric Olson, as I mentioned before. He was an engineer who was trying to learn what customers' questions were in the very beginning, when they were getting computers. And then Jeanie Gille, I've mentioned her. She was a wonderful software engineer. We all became friends with her. She was amazing. It was amazing what she could do. We'd tell here, "Well, this may be confusing to our customers to go through all these steps."

She said, "No problem. I'm going to fix it." Next day, she'd have a solution. It was just amazing.

On the help desk, I have to go back to my first two help desk people, Doug Hurd and Sue Toupal. They were supporting the hospital and clinic side. But when they started getting WordPerfect questions, they started calling me and trying to get the answers. And I finally said, "Just send them all to me." But they still wanted to learn and help. So, they were, the three of us, were basically supporting the campus all by ourselves in those early days. So, I really got to

know the two of them very well. And they remained with the help desk for a long, long time. Let me see. What am I forgetting?

Oh, my own staff. Valerie Fishler ran the computer store. She was stellar. She kept everything very organized in the store. And her right hand person was Jon Duquette, who works in ITG now, I believe, after the store closed, he went there. And I really appreciated some of the little things that they did. Like they allowed the surgeons to come in toward the end of the day into the computer store and play computer games. And this was kind of their de-stressing time. So, they enjoyed just coming and playing the games, not being forced to buy them. Just doing that for about a half an hour or so, and then they would go back and then go home. But I thought, when they did things like that, it was really nice. A nice thing that they did.

Mike Miller, he was my rock in training. I made him supervisor. Because again, I kept getting embroiled in more and more things outside of training. And he, I could always depend on him to help me out on any issue or anything. And all the projects that we got involved in later, he was just rock solid at keeping calm, which I'm not always, but he always kept me calm and moving forward.

And of course now, Steve Huskey here, one of my first hires. He worked in the computer store for me, as I mentioned earlier. He was always in a good mood and optimistic about what was going to happen next. And he also taught me how to moonwalk, so I'll always be grateful for that.

Tom Howe, who took over the computer store, with his photographic memory, remembering every single thing he sold every single customer, and doing all the extra stuff he did for the computer store. So, yeah, those two, both Tom and Steve, were invaluable to me.

Huskey: During your tenure at OHSU, the university transitioned from DOS to Windows. Discuss the transition, the differences between the two operating systems, and any challenges you encountered.

Conrad: Okay. Well DOS was pretty basic. There was always a blank screen with the capital letter C, a colon, a back slash and a blinking cursor. And you were supposed to type something. You were supposed to know what to type. And it would open up something, or run a command. You could type something like DIR and get a directory of the files in that particular directory. You could change directories. You could, like I said, format disks, and you could open up programs. If you typed WP, that would open up WordPerfect, for example. So, that was DOS. Very simple. No mouse required.

Windows, as we know, is completely different. The screen is, Windows fills up the whole desktop screen. This can be hard for what we call auditory learners, who get a little baffled sometimes by too much content on a screen and don't always notice things. But visual learners are 60 percent of the world's population. So, Windows, Microsoft, well, they actually copied Macintosh's desktop. But they created the similar Windows desktop, that had all this information on it. And so, that would take some people a bit of getting used to.

We planned some meetings. The whole plan was, that we worked out with ITG, was that we would coordinate teaching a department how to use Microsoft Windows. And then of course WordPerfect for Windows, and everything else for Windows. And then while this was

happening, ITG techs would be converting all their computers to Windows. And then when they came back, they would feel comfortable because they'd spent some time learning Windows. I even got permission from Dr. Hallick to be able to let the people in the class play solitaire, because that was the best way in that day and time for people to learn how to use the mouse. It turns out that a lot of people had never played solitaire ever, so my trainers ended up having to teach people how to play solitaire as well. But it was a good plan.

The problem was that some department heads, I guess they felt a little frightened about telling their staff that this big change was happening. Because it was pretty huge. So, they would send them to our classes. And we would say, "Welcome here, congratulations, you're moving to Windows today. And we're here to show you how to use it while field techs my ITG are converting all your computers while you're here."

And people would go crazy! They would just get angry and start yelling at us, the trainers. And they'd be very upset with this. We would eventually, not a good training experience. But we'd eventually get them calmed down and said, "This is going to happen. And we're going to make it easier for you if you just, you just have to go through these exercises that we're going to show you how to do this."

And it also involved a new OHSU work station in Windows which including access to Clinical Services, Administration Services, Educational Services. I don't think we had a research services, because that was all kind of kept pretty private. But we had all these, and then access to all the applications that were available for them. So, it was a pretty full screen, pretty complete. But we went through everything so that they understood how to get into the different places. And I said, "When things change, we'll let you know. But this is the way the OHSU work station is going to look now." And they really didn't like the previous OHSU work station, which didn't really work all that well. Windows was much better for it, much better place for it. And they kind of started liking that. And of course they enjoyed playing solitaire. And they got pretty good at the mouse. But when they would go back to the departments, they would kind of start yelling at the poor field techs, who were still there, ready to have them sit down and make sure they could get into their system. Use their computers.

So, I let Dr. Hallick know that we were having these small difficulties. So, she sent a letter around to everyone saying, "It is the responsibility of each department head to tell their departments what is going to happen. This is not the responsibility of field technicians and trainers." So, then it changed, and I think things got a lot better for us through the years. That seemed to be the best way we worked with people from then on. And department heads became really good at doing that, even as we started teaching other things, which was good. So, next question.

Huskey: Same question, regarding the transition from WordPerfect Office to Microsoft Office.

Conrad: Okay. So, Dr. Hallick invited me into the office. And this kind of happened before the other thing happened. Actually, no. We were on Windows, but we had WordPerfect Office. And she wanted to know if we'd have any difficulties moving to Microsoft Office. And I said, "Well, yes, a few." I said, "I still have Microsoft Word and Office on my computer, because I keep testing the updates to see what they're like." Because I could see kind of the writing on the wall.

People were becoming more Microsoft-heavy with their programs. So, I said, "WordPerfect is still the superior program." I said, "The tables feature in Microsoft Office is still really bad. Whereas in WordPerfect, you set up a table, you start typing, and everything is right there for you. In Microsoft Office, you have to go through a whole bunch of margin changes and different things within the cell before you can get it to work. And I said, "And also, Microsoft Word doesn't have reveal codes, and our network contacts and our users depend on reveal codes to be able to see what the codes are beneath all the text they're typing. Because that's where most of the problems are. And they can see what the problem is and get rid of it and move on."

And Microsoft did not have a thing. In fact, I think at one time they even wrote a white paper on why they didn't have reveal codes. Because they got a lot of pressure, I'm sure on it. But I told her, I said, "You know, I kind of felt this was coming." She was getting a lot of complaints from new employees, researchers, physicians, other people of prominence, that wanted to use Word, because that's what they were used to. So, I sent up a presentation and called it WordPerfect Office versus Microsoft Office, and invited people to meetings. And I discussed the pros and cons. I tried to stay a neutral as I could. The problem was, none of the WordPerfect users, not even the network contacts, came to any of these meetings. They just felt that WordPerfect would obviously just triumph and be the winner. Well, since so many Microsoft people showed up, or Microsoft users showed up, they were the ones that were able to make the decision. And I told Lesley Hallick. I said, "Microsoft wins." So, I had to tell the WordPerfect users. And they were all really upset.

And then became kind of a frantic time trying to convert everybody. And the help desk needed help immediately. Because people had it, so now they knew that it was the official OHSU program, they kept calling the help desk. "Well, now you have to help us with all these programs in Microsoft Office." So, they were stuck. And they were asking me when we're going to be teaching it. We're still creating manuals for it. We weren't getting funding to buy any manuals, so we had to create them ourselves. And that takes time to write all this.

So, I got together with Mike Miller and I told him my idea is that we add to our edutech website a WordPerfect Office to Microsoft Office conversion site. And in those days, all websites we created at OHSU was public. We had no intranet yet at the time, so everything was available to the whole world. So, we had to be careful what we put on there. But I assigned each one of my trainers a certain application within Microsoft Office. And they had to tell about, they had to check and see that converting from one application to the other application and write down any problems they saw and what they could do to solve them. And then other types of things that they'd have to learn how to do differently. And so, we tried to keep it as concise as possible. At least it gave them a head start on it.

And the help desk loved it. And they started sending all their customers to that website. And it got used a lot.

A few weeks later, I got a call from a company in South Carolina. And she said, "Can my employee have your permission to use your Microsoft Office conversion website? Because we're going through a WordPerfect to Microsoft conversion as well. And we couldn't find any help for this on the web." Which we couldn't, either. So, I gave my permission for them to use it. Then I emailed Dr. Hallick to make sure that would be okay. And she approved it and said, "Sure, you know, we're happy to help anybody."

And over the next few weeks, I got calls from a lot of people. A lot of corporations, businesses, wanting permission from me to be able to use it. And I'm sure there were other people that never bothered to ask permission. But I was really proud of my department for creating that website. Because it helped a lot of people all around the country. So, that was a really proud moment for us. And that's it.

Huskey: 2005 was a significant year for your department with the closure of the computer store and the move to the Information Technology Group. Discuss both events.

Conrad: Yeah. Well, closing the store became, we knew we were going to have to do it. Because Apple stores were starting to pop up in malls and other areas around the country. They were offering the same discounts to our students and employees. Buying from Apple, you just had to show your OHSU ID, and you could get a discount at an Apple store. And we were also selling Dell computers at the time, and Dell started selling online. And again, they gave our students and employees discounts, the same discounts they were giving us. So, it became, you know, it wasn't necessary for us to have a store anymore. So, we did end up closing it. It was a sad time. But my three store employees that were non-students, we did have some student workers in there. But our non-students all got jobs elsewhere. Mostly within ITG or the BICC, so that really worked out.

Yes. John Kenagy was the CIO at the time. And when he came onboard, he met with me and he said, "I don't understand why you're not working for me." And I kind of told him the story about how we ended up under the library. And he kind of started his own little crusade to get my department, the training, to move over to him. And we resisted for a while, but eventually the move happened. Eventually Jim Morgan realized that it was really more appropriate for us to work under ITG, work more closely with the engineers and the field technicians, and go to meetings. He actually, John Kenagy, even before we moved over, he asked Jim if he had permission for me to go to meetings and be a part of committee groups within ITG. And Jim said yes. So, it really wasn't that big of a deal when we finally made the move. We had to move from the fourth floor within the library area to the other side of the fourth floor. But that was basically the only difference. We still taught the classes. John Kenagy let us do everything we used to be doing, and teaching everything we were teaching, and it wasn't a big deal. We just got closer to the engineers in a lot of cases. In fact, when they had developed new things, or new products that needed to be added to the server, again, they kept asking us to test. But they felt more comfortable about asking us. I think there was always this thing, there was always kind of a chasm between Information Services and ITG. And again, they would feel they couldn't tell me everything. The whole concealing things. But now it was different. Now they felt very comfortable with us and they just wanted our help in testing new products to make sure that was customer-friendly, and running instructions for it and providing the training.

And what we also set up at the time was that we'd ask an engineer to attend the first couple of classes on anything new, on a new product. And this was a win-win situation. This turned out to be a great idea because if the trainer got a question that he or she wasn't sure about how to answer it, because he or she would still be new at teaching this new thing, the engineer would be asked to supply an answer. So, the trainer learned how to answer the question the next

time it would get asked. The engineer learned how to answer questions in a non-engineering way, so that kind of normal people could understand the answer. So, it was really, really great. We called these engineers subject matter experts, or SMEs. And we used SMEs a lot from both the tech department and the engineers to help us in training. So, we all got a little closer together, which was a good thing.

Huskey: What do you foresee as major challenges for IT at OHSU?

Conrad: Did you skip one?

Huskey: Let's see. I did. A few years later, you saw additional changes. When the training program closed, you moved downtown to the ITG offices. What challenges did you face regarding both?

Conrad: Yeah. This happened in 2008. And everyone can remember we started a pretty bad recession then. And funding was really low. Bridget Barnes, who was ITG's CIO, she made a really hard decision to close our training program and to lay off all my trainers. And she saved Mike Miller and me. So, the rest of the trainers were laid off. This was a particularly bad time for me. I knew why Bridget did it. I could tell by the look on her face that she hated doing it. She'd always supported training, liked training. It was really hard for me. The two programs that I'd started, computer store and training, were both gone now. It was like, you know, was it worth it? It made me really question my career history at the time. But it got better.

Mike and I moved down there. She had us move down there almost immediately. She told the library they had to then manage the training rooms, which they had no idea how to do. So, Mike and I had to show them how to do it. And they had to take over that. And we moved very quickly after all that. Maybe a week later, we moved. And had movers come and help us. We had everything packed up and we moved down to ITG, downtown. It was a different place to work. So, used to going up the hill every day for so many years. But it got better. I knew a lot of people there, because I'd been working with them all the time.

And Bridget started giving us projects. So, one of the first projects she gave us was we were now going to be in charge of the ITG contacts. And this was interesting, because I'd always been kind of a part of their life. I was there when it first was created, and helping how it would work and all of that. So, this wasn't really new territory. And I attended all the NC meetings. Mike did not. He always had a lot of other things to do, a lot of training to do. But I felt I needed to go to see if any questions were asked that had to do with training, or questions that I could maybe supply the answer to.

But once we were given that, Mike just jumped right in like he did every single project he was ever, ever given. And the two of us created an online IT contacts meeting, which was great. Because sometimes when you have to go someplace and your boss says, "No, I don't want you to leave, I want you to stay here in the office and do this or that. or take care of this. I don't want you to go anywhere yet, to the meeting." So, they wouldn't be able to make the meetings. But online, they'd still be sitting at their desk, available if anybody asked a question of them. But could still be there for the meeting. And Mike and I devised little games or trivia questions that

we'd ask people to answer while everyone was waiting to come online. We just gave them something to do, rather than just stare at the screen. And then we usually told them anything newsworthy that was happening within ITG. We also had little mini training sessions, showed them how to do new things. And many times we had guests from the ITG department come and talk to us. When we'd get new managers, they would come and be introduced to the IT contacts. And the manager, new person, would have to explain what their job now was, and that sort of thing. But also, have engineers a lot of times come in and talk about new projects they were working on and what was coming down the pike as far as their computers were about. And then they could ask us a lot of questions, which they did. We got a lot of questions. So, that worked really well, and we got that all going.

And then Bridget called us into her office and told us she'd like us to make a movie. We kind of looked at each other and thought, this is sort of way off what we were used to doing. She said she wanted to make an ITG movie because she'd been having trouble explaining to the OHSU Board of Directors explaining exactly what people in ITG do. What is it that they do?

So, we started making a list of all the departments that we could film that would actually work in a filming situation, or videotape. I guess it's really videotaping. And we picked places like, we thought the board of directors might want to see how we print paychecks and distribute them. Which is a fascinating thing to watch, anyway. I'd really recommend it. If you ever get a chance to see it, it's good. It's a fun thing to watch.

And then we followed field techs around like you and others. And one of them who was a field tech for the operating rooms, he took us into an operating room and showed us everything he did. And what happened during surgeries. And that was really interesting, too. So, we hit a lot of good places and talked to a lot of people. Not just people in ITG. We talked about some of the physicians, as well, about what they asked ITG to do. For example, teaching doctors how to use iPads to carry around while they're visiting patients. So, we got a lot of information. We put it together with some music and had the whole thing going. Wasn't shown to all of OHSU people, it was just shown to ITG and then the board of directors. And I'm not sure what happened. It was on YouTube for a while, but I'm not sure what happened to it after that.

But the day we were going to show it to ITG was the same day as our annual party. And so, weeks earlier, Bridget had informed everybody what Mike and I were doing. And said, "Now if any of you want to create your own movies, just for the heck of it, feel free, and we'll show them on party day." So, we had three departments, I think, who did that. And they were just hilarious. They all made theirs hilariously funny about dealing with what they had to deal with at work. And then we showed the ITG movie and we got some applause. And as far as I learned from Bridget, she said the movie really helped the board of directors understand ITG a lot better. So, that worked out.

Then we were given the job to create an internet website for ITG. So, we created websites before, but we'd never used CommonSpot. But now we had a website team, that we had to follow their rules. So, we had to use CommonSpot, which is not the easiest program to work in. But we learned it. And we created a web page for each and every department, and talked to each department about what they wanted to include and what they didn't. Again, we ran into this thing, we've got to conceal everything. So, some stuff that we wanted to put on the help desk page, we got vetoed, because again, they wanted to conceal certain things. And it was fine. It was

fine. Not a whole lot of information on the help desk that would actually help people. But we did what we were told. And I think, we got a lot of praise for the whole website from other customers, too. They said they were able to find information about things. So, that worked.

And we gathered, yeah, it was my job to gather statistics. I used a program that would gather statistics so I could tell what the most popular pages, what pages people weren't looking at, and other kinds of things I was able to pass on to the person who was creating all this data for each department in ITG.

Then 2010 came out and we had to deal with updating to Microsoft Office 2010. And they took away all their familiar file menus and replaced them with something called ribbons. And we looked at the new screen and we thought, people are going to have trouble with this, but we don't have training rooms anymore. So, I talked to Bridget and asked permission if we could just design some demonstration and take them on the road. And she said great, that sounds wonderful. And so, that's what we did.

I found a crazy PowerPoint slide deck that talked about different kinds of changes, and was sometimes funny, sometimes serious. And then we connected the Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop," which is also about changes, and added that to it. So, we had a really happy, happy, happy thing as people were coming in to sit down and get ready for the demonstration. We wanted to get them all having a good time, feeling relaxing. So, that's what we did.

And then afterwards, we started talking about the different ribbons. Mike and I team taught. So, we took turns talking about this and that. And we actually got people pretty excited. We even did a couple of demonstrations in ITG, and they started getting excited about all of the new stuff, too. So, it was really a fun time. And we enjoyed traveling. We went to all these places, on and off campus. It took us several weeks to get through.

But I have to say, the most gratifying presentation we did was to our graveyard workers. They, I guess they're not always included in a lot of things. And some of them would come to our training classes if they were offered early enough in the morning when they got off. And we did try to do that. But I guess they missed out on seeing information about new products coming out. So, we did the demonstration in Mac Hall auditorium. And afterwards, we started at about half an hour after their shift ended, so they have time to maybe get some coffee and a bagel or something before they came to the presentation. And afterwards, I was so knocked away by the fact that so many of them came up afterwards to shake Mike's hand and mine and say, "Thank you for thinking of us. People don't often think about us. And we really appreciate you doing this for us." It just almost made me cry. It just meant a lot to them that we did that. So, I was really touched.

Huskey: What do you foresee as major challenges for IT at OHSU?

Conrad: Well, I've been gone for five years, so it's a little difficult for me to foresee what might be going on now that's a challenge. I know as always there are funding issues. There always will be, I'm sure. IT groups across universities have come up with a certain percentage, and I don't remember what that is, it might be 2 percent of the total funding of the university that should be allocated to IT. And I don't believe, at least in my time in ITG, that we ever got up that high. So, we were always less than what the standard percentage should be. It really didn't seem to stop

us. I mean, we just kept working and kept doing. We couldn't take on as many projects in a year as people wanted us to, because we didn't have the workforce to do it, but we did what we could.

And I think, I think that technology, with technology, it's always going to be something's happening. All of a sudden, there's a hack, there's a big hack, which has happened here, where we need to clean up immediately. There's things that happen all the time. Technology changes all the time. And it just never stops. So, I think that's always going to be a challenge to any IT group is to always be aware. And I think security really has, should really get an applause every day for how much they protect this university from hackers, and other people who are trying to get in. And they're very good about making sure we all follow the HIPPA laws. And they keep things very, very secure. I think it's one of the most secure places I think I've ever seen, personally.

So, that's pretty much the end. I retired on Halloween in 2013. Even with all the issues and scandals I've talked about, I've had a good time, I had a great time in OHSU and in all the departments I was in and all the people I was involved with, I think I had a pretty good career. So, thank you.