

**INTERVIEW WITH  
ROCHELLE WEICHMAN  
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Sloan Oral History Series**

R: Rochelle Weichman

B: Bob McKersie

A: Alan White

B: The place to start is to ask you when you came to MIT, what brought you here, and what were your thoughts as you came to the Institute.

R: I came in the Fall of 1991. I had not been employed for the prior 10 months. I had been working in corporate America, and had been laid off. In those days, I got six months' severance, and six month's unemployment, so I was actually a very happy person! What I thought I was having was a sabbatical from working 100-hour weeks. By then I had a Masters in Engineering, and an MBA. Ten months into that period, I started looking for jobs. My MBA is from Simmons, so on the Simmons board was a job for an assistant director at the Sloan School for the MOT program and the MOT Research Center. They wanted a Masters in Engineering, an MBA, and five years of work of experience. At that point, I had 10 years. I thought, "In my life, I have never seen a job that actually wants my skills and my training!" I thought, "Well, that's the end of my leisure period," and I applied.

Roger Samuels interviewed me, because he was the director at that point of both the Masters program and the Research Center. He was struggling with the Masters program, getting along with the students. I remember doing all the interviews on campus, and then I interviewed with Ed Roberts by phone because he was in New Hampshire at his house.

I started in September – I remember, I got the call when I was on vacation in Provincetown and I got the call to negotiate. It was before cellphones, so I'm on a payphone somewhere, talking to HR. I started right after Labor Day. But the Jewish high holidays were coming at the same time. I said, "You know, I'm going to work for a week and a half, and then I'm going to be out...."

They were like, "Fine, that's fine. Just come, will you?"

I remember that soon after, I went to a lunch, and Roger Samuels' wife was at the lunch. She looked at me, after meeting me, and said, "Thank God you're here!" [laughter]

B: She was a professor over at Boston University, so she knew the challenges of running programs.

R: And he was working a gazillion hours. So when she said that, I thought, "What have I gotten into??" Because I didn't really understand what's the impact of running a 12-month program. Everybody outside the university thinks we have summers off, no big deal, don't have to work 80 hours a week anymore – and that's what I thought. I was SO wrong! And I had no international experience before I came to Sloan. I was very domestic. I moved from California to New Orleans, that was my first experience of culture shock – from Berkeley to the Engineering school at Tulane. I could not swear anyone! The culture was SO different for me. It took me a semester to figure out how to integrate myself. And I came as a senior to Tulane, so the whole thing was weird.

One of the first assignments Alan gave me was to work with a group of Italians, or Greeks? I don't know. But they were going to hire belly dancers....

B: It was the Sloan Fellows! I remember the year. I was teaching the SF program that year, and the Sloans wanted to bring in belly dancers.

R: These were executives. I don't know what the program was. I was just so blown away by their perspective, having never worked with folks like that before. I think I probably told them, in a very clear and impolitic way, that they may NOT. By the time I got to Alan to tell him there was a problem, they already had. When I got in your office, you already knew that I had offended them.

I got better at that, but I just had no experience doing that. I was a quick learner, though. I don't think I offended people *en masse* like that again. I don't even know what I said, but whatever it was, it wasn't what they wanted to hear, the way I said it.

B: This assignment lasted, then....?

R: While Roger was still running the MOT program, this was some executive program that came in, so Alan just asked me to keep track of it – which then, of course, I blew it up. But then we all settled it back down again.

Six months after I joined, Roger moved over to run just the research center, ICRMOT, and I was promoted to be the director of the Master program. It was just much easier for me to get along with the students than for Roger. So we split. I still had some affiliation with the research center. In fact, that's how I first met Duncan Semester. He was still a graduate student when I came. So we've been in and out of each other's career for these 23 years.

I took over the MOT program with the incoming Class of 1993. They were the first ones I admitted. That was a big learning curve for me. It was like, "Oh my gosh, now I'm in charge of marketing, admissions, student life, getting faculty to teach, and alumni relations – all at once." But it was great fun.

Jennifer Mapes was the Program Coordinator then, so we worked together at the beginning of my career, and then she worked for me when Sloan Fellows reported to me, basically at the end of her life. She taught me a lot of wonderful things, including "do my job, not hers." Let her do her job and stay out of the way, because generally my answers were wrong, as she demonstrated to me. [laughing] I was not as well-informed as I thought. It was great fun.

One of my jobs was to take the MOT program and grow it. I think it had 30-ish when I took it over, and my goal was to get it to 55, and we did. Then Dave Weber took it over, and then it merged with SF.

It was always a bit tough, because it always felt like a step-child compared to SF, and it was treated that way. The students felt that difference as well. There were SFs who would have preferred the educational content of the MOT program, but in their organizations they had to be SFs. They shared that information with me, but that was the politics of it. The SFs had the history and the prestige within their organizations.

B: There were conversations in the dean's office, when the numbers were low, as to whether the MOT program should be continued.

R: And of course, at that same time, the Program for Senior Executives was killed. So there must have been a lot of those conversations happening in the dean's office at that time.

A: Rochelle, one of the things I've admired over the years about you is your sensitivity to this place. So I would appreciate your comments on what you learned as the culture of the organization.

R: I think I came just at the time when the staff was professionalizing. There were more people like me starting to be hired, instead of just finding folks around who might be able to do the job. A couple things were quite impactful to me soon after I was hired. The first was actually the Gabriel/sexual harassment suit went to court. Bob, you were the deputy dean then, and we had a town hall with Lester. One of my MOTs from IBM asked a question to Lester, saying, "If he worked at IBM, he'd be fired by now. Why isn't he fired?" Instead of saying, "The case is in court, we can't answer that question," Lester just ignored it and called on the next person, who very quickly said, "Would you answer that guy's question, please?" So it devolved from there in the town meeting.

Right after that meeting, I called my partner JoAnn and said, "Do you care if I get fired?" Because I'd only been here a couple months, and I was thinking, "The Ph.D. students can't say anything; they need the faculty as their mentors. The support staff can't say anything; they need their jobs. I can get another job. I only just got here."

JoAnn of course said, "Yes, do what you need to do." I went and saw Bob, who, instead of firing me, created the Diversity Committee and put me on it. And I've never been let go. Mary Rowe and I have been on that Diversity Committee since that day. So thank you for not firing me; it's been a great career.

What I've appreciated is that at least I have had the freedom to act. Sometimes I've gone into Alan and said "this is what I think," and you've told me "Oh, OK, good. Thanks for letting me know." I remember giving you several options to tell me to stop telling you what I thought. You never took me up on that, you always wanted to know. So it made me feel like I could influence the culture, which I appreciated. It's probably one of the reasons I stay is that not only were you able to see where I could work next, since I get bored every few years. The School was small enough at that time that you had the overview and you could see where I could go to work. In fact, I've mentioned to the current dean's group and the senior staff, that no one could have a career like mine any more, where you just take someone who's good in managing

and thinking and put them in another role. Now we hire people who have already done it before, pretty much. There are a couple staff that we are starting to identify, that we might do that with, so they don't leave. Because within their own organizations, there may not be room for them to continue to grow. But maybe we'll put them in another role so they have that "stretch" assignment, and then they can maybe come back and lead the group. I've really been thinking about that as we look at other staff.

But because you were able to do that with me, I've seen a lot more of the School than most staff. Most staff are JUST on the degree side, or JUST on the non-degree side. I've watched the folks in ExecEd – they know nothing about the Masters side of the house. It has no relationship to them at all. The schedule, the names, the words – they just don't know anything about it. It took me a while to realize that I know a lot more than anybody else.

The second thing that happened is that Sloan was ranked #1 in the *Business Week* MBA survey, and Lester stood up – we had that big event in the lobby of E52, and Lester got up there and said, "I want to thank the alumni, and I want to thank the faculty, and I want to thank the students, for making us #1." The staff in the room all looked at each other, and then I went to Alan and said, "You need to do something about this or we're going to quit." And you undertook an effort – it took you 10 years but you got there – to make sure the faculty understood what staff do. I would say it's been tremendously successful. I have watched – certainly in ExecEd, but also when I was doing the EMBA and SF – that it is a partnership now. We expect each other to do their own work and let the other shine.

A:           You know, that was a contribution from Gabe also, in the dean's office, his theme of professionals working with professionals. That was an important theme.

R:           It made a big difference because we basically had to convince faculty to stop running things and give it back to us. I have to say, Ed Roberts and Jim Utterback were pretty quick to say "yes" to that.

B:           Happy!

R: Yes, happy, to the point where – I do feedback with the MOTs, and they would be sitting in the front row. And a student would say, “You know, I don’t like how we do X,” and one or both of them would jump up to explain why we do X. I finally had to say to them, “Guys, either you sit and listen, or you don’t come. I’ll tell you what you need to know, but you may NOT rebut what the students say. That doesn’t help us learn anything.” So they just voted not to come. [laughing]

B: Let’s get on the record your progression to more and more interesting and responsible positions. We have you at MOT....

R: Right. I started as the Assistant Director of MOT. I became the Director of MOT. I think I did that for about 8 years, so that was a long stretch for me, until I felt like I had just burned out completely. I was exhausted, I was wrung out, I had nothing more. As you both know, it’s a 12-month a year program, and doubles, because you’re admitting one while the other is still there. It’s relentless. I just crashed.

Alan made me an offer I couldn’t refuse, which was to work part-time. I had an 80% appointment. In fact, I worked for Gabriel when he became the deputy dean for the Master’s program. I worked 4 days a week. My deal was, from the end of the day Thursday (we didn’t have cellphones) until Monday morning, I was out of touch. I needed those three days, either that or I was going to quit. I was done. That worked out really well. I learned a lot working with Gabriel. Given the story I told at the beginning, it was a challenge for me at the beginning. There were women all across the School, from all different ranks, who asked me what I was doing, and why was I doing it. So it was not without controversy anywhere, first, that he was deputy dean, and that I – this stolid feminist – was working for him. But I did that.

Actually, before I did that, Alan gave me my first leave. When I was burnt out, I brought in the next class, and then took 11 weeks off. Alan hoped I would come back and take my job back, but I didn’t want to. I was just done in. But that was the first time a staff person had been given time off. I had 11 weeks without pay, but I had a job to come back to. Jennifer and Bob Halperin ran the MOT program for that summer.

B: If my memory is right, it was at some point during that period – and we had a conversation – you an interest in the negotiation, and the possibility of how you might fit in. You were talking with Mary, and you were talking with me.

R: That's right. One of the things I did early, that no one else has been able to do is, I TA'd for Mary in her electives. I don't think any staff person gets to do that now. And for Toni Robinson, when she taught. That was great for me. And I'm certified by MIT as a mediator, so I was able to take that training at MIT as well, all based on what we started to do....

B: Was that Carol Johnson?

R: It was Carol. I was thinking about her the other day but I couldn't remember her name. And then I coached some of the later mediation trainings.

B: You had the sabbatical, kind of.... Then what?

R: I took the sabbatical. I came back and worked in the fall, couldn't do it. Went to 80%, most of the time. It turned out I did 80% for 6 months, and then I'd come back full-time because there was a whole bunch of stuff that had to get done. And then I'd go back to 80%. It was very sweet because I'd show up at the School on a Friday, and somebody would say to me, "Who doesn't know what day of the week it is??? What are you doing here???" It was very sweet, once people got used to it.

The Diversity Committee was going through its upheavals then as well. The fortunes of the Diversity Committee had a lot to do with who was the faculty director and what his/her attention was at that stage. I remember one year just going in to – I don't even remember who the dean was – asking him to disband the Diversity Committee. Of course, no dean in his right mind would do that. I think he just knew I was coming in to vent. But it was pretty funny.

While I was working 80%, the Cambridge-MIT Institute was running, and Michael Scott Morton asked if I could start working with them. I switched it and I gave 80% to CMI and one day a week back to Sloan. I moved to Building 8. I got a bicycle because I was

going back and forth a lot. I did CMI for a year or two. Spent a lot of time in the UK. Learned a lot about that.

Then I called Alan and said...

A: "I want you to come back..." [laughing]

R: I want to come back! I was not getting along well with the leader of CMI, and I thought "This isn't going to be good for me, I need out." And he agreed, he was happy for me to go. So it was a mutually agreeable parting.

Marie had been growing ExecEd and BP was already in place and happening. My impression is that Alan told Marie that I was coming to work in ExecEd. I'm not quite sure, I wasn't part of that conversation. I didn't know Marie before that, and she didn't know me.

A: Ummmm, I didn't tell her, but I encouraged her.

R: OK. Good. That was around 10 years ago. Could it have been that long? Maybe not that long, because I ran ExecEd for 5 years, and I worked for Marie for maybe 3 years before that. Somewhere in there. I came back and worked for Marie, working on the custom programs, developing the custom business beyond BP, which was a lot of fun. Toby was working with us. Toby was working on BP at that time. It was great. And you know, when we first started, we were in E52 on the first floor in a space so small that we tripped over each other. Literally. Two people in an office. We were the first ones moved out of E52 into E48, into this HUGE corporate space. Marie had a big corner office, which I then moved into. But we had to learn a whole new way to communicate because now we were spread out, and we were busy running programs. So first we learned how to move materials in the snow down the street; that was something everybody had to learn to do. But also then, how did we communicate? It was my first realization of having a multi-generational office. So having people in their early 60s, to their mid-20s, that no matter what I said was not what they heard. Not at all!

I reorganized ExecEd and hired Peter to work with me. We were blown away at particularly the Program Coordinator folks in their 20s who had never worked in another business, didn't understand how businesses operate, and we didn't have a good supervisor for



them. She wasn't able to explain to them what they needed to know. Peter and I had a really quick learning about organizational change and multi-generational workforce and how to lead that.

B: Can you say something about how the School thought about this transition, either for custom programs or open-enrollment programs? I think back to the period where Ed Roberts had something in the summer; we had MIT Summer Operation; Mary Rowe and I would offer a one-week negotiation course – we had bits and pieces around. Somehow we turned a corner. Can you say a little bit more about how that happened?

R: That corner was turned by the time I got involved in ExecEd. By the time I got involved in ExecEd, the die was cast. CMR ran all the two-day courses, and did that the way they did. We ran everything else. Faculty were paid supplemental compensation for the work they did. The cost-sharing ended, and all the other unusual arrangements, all of that had already stopped. I'm not the one who can talk to that.

A: What happened is, prior to our moving in that direction, the School – along with Stanford and Harvard – had taken the position that custom ExecEd was not to occur in their universities. That was the position here too. These three schools, they were the three holdouts. Their view was that it was too much like consulting and that it shouldn't be a part of regular program activity. I think we were the last ones to adopt the idea that we would do this as a part of what we did regularly. We would start doing custom programs. But up until that time, it was all outside the School. But Harvard and Stanford moved.

Also there came to the School some cost pressures, a desire to have more income in the School. A decision was made to bring it in-house.

R: What I have been told, Bob, was that faculty had to use some of the funds they got from running those courses to support Ph.D. students and do other discretionary related things. What I was told was, "Just ask the deans for that money," right? Because all the money is going to the deans, so if they have those same needs, now the faculty just needs to talk to the

deans about it, not ExecEd, because we have no control over it. Those conversations I did have in the beginning.

I think the Projects Academy, where Don worked with Marie to put together that proposal and then win that business, that put us on the map for custom programs. It set the standard. They have very high standards for what a custom program needed to be like for them. They had 6 people with an office across the street, when we first started. The FT wrote an article “What Would You Do if Your Biggest Client Moved in Next Door?” about this, because that is what happened.

We learned a lot. We moved up the custom ExecEd learning curve really quickly with them as our learning partners. We did create the Projects Academy pretty much together, as a team. It was before I was involved; I came after it had already been launched. But it established that we knew how to do it. We were doing for a very large and demanding client. Therefore companies that never thought about Sloan, first of all as a business school, let alone a school that could do custom ExecEd, started to think that we might. I think that was a really important cornerstone in our ExecEd portfolio, to have the Projects Academy.

The Operations Academy came because BP needed the help, and no one else... It wasn't a bid. It was “OK, now will you create the Operations Academy?”

B: And in terms of relevant size between open enrollment and customs, how did that go?

R: It's shifted over the years. In the early days, open enrollment was 60%, custom was 40%. Now it's switched. When BP, or the Projects Academy came in, it started to switch. At its highest, the Projects Academy was \$11-12 million, all by itself, per year. That's a big chunk of the business. And they are getting closer to 50/50 now.

A: You didn't get to the end of your career description.

R: I am getting to it, in so many ways. I did Cambridge-MIT Institute. Then I came back to Sloan, I worked in ExecEd. I was with Toby, we were both director for Custom. Toby focused on BP; I focused on everything else. And I help Marie run ExecEd. I became her #2.

When she announced that she was getting ready to retire, she made sure I knew more than I did sitting down the hall from her. I actually encouraged the School to do a global search, because a lot of people weren't sure I was going to be the best candidate to run ExecEd. People like Don Lessard had in his mind someone with a Ph.D. because Marie had one and she did a really great job. Don thought I had the best Rolodex for faculty at the School, so he was happy. But he had no idea that I had a strategic thought. I encouraged the School to do a global search, to make sure everybody was happy.

I personally chose to go to CCL (Center for Creative Leadership) and do a program where a 360 was part of that, which gave me an excuse to go around and talk to faculty who were involved in ExecEd and have them understand what I was thinking about. In the end, the job was mine. It was a much bigger job than I understood. There were days in the past when I would wonder, "What does Marie do with her time?" That wondering passed pretty quickly! When I took it over, it was about a \$17 million business, and now it's \$30-32 million.

One of the first things I did was re-organize it. When I was in, Custom and Open didn't get along. People running Custom and Open weren't collaborating. I undid that, and just said "everybody is responsible for whatever, but we're not separating Custom and Open in the way we did."

I hired Peter so I had a partner to do this with, because two people think better than one, always. So he and I built the business. During that time, CMR (the folks who are running our two-day courses) decided that they couldn't do that well any more, that they were going out of business because they were completely print and paper. They didn't know anything about the web. All their marketing was mass mailing, and they felt they couldn't make the move to the web. So we took all that business back inside, without increasing our staff. We just found a way to do it. It turned out to be great, because we were able to create more synergies and more efficiencies, and work with the faculty directly now on our entire portfolio because we didn't even work on the two-day courses. Now the whole business was back in ExecEd. It felt like the snake swallowing a very large something. But it worked out really well. That was a huge change. So then the whole business began to grow and take off.

B: It became a strategic jewel for the School!

R: Thank you. Certainly my ability to run under the radar ended. That was one of the joys of the first 15 years of my career, that pretty much I got to just live out on the edge. I joked with Ellen Baum one day at a senior staff meeting, that my job was to make her life really difficult, and her job was to keep me out of jail. Her job was to always pull me back just before I went over the line – and she did. But my job was always to press the boundaries. And with Alan’s help, I was really able to. Sometimes I took Alan’s adage of “ask for forgiveness, not for permission.” I actually loved that ExecEd was in another building, because it gave us the freedom to move and do without worrying. Every once in a while I got in trouble for what we did, but that was OK because the rest of the time it worked out really well. We got to move the business forward, and move each other forward, and nobody noticed. Then ExecEd got to be a certain size and that was the end of that.

B: And the dean would say, at the beginning of the semester meetings, “We’re able to keep going, and we haven’t had to cut back, because we have this wonderful jewel.”

R: Do you know, in one of those meetings, he talked about how important ExecEd was to the financial health of the School. And a faculty member, who had declined our requests to teach in a program in ExecEd, called me right after the meeting to say, “OK, I’ll do it.” Specifically because Dave had mentioned it in that meeting. That made a difference. But it is pretty funny. Now that there’s so much visibility on it, there’s also a lot more scrutiny as well.

B: We will come to that. But then you got another thing added to your portfolio....

R: I did. I went from Executive Director of ExecEd (which was a long title for someone my size), and became Associate Dean, except then I also took on SF and EMBA. EMBA was coming into being, and SF needed to come out of its cave.

B: By this time, SF had merged with the former MOT, so you also had some ....

R: Yes, I had skin in that game too. It was the first time I’d been back working with the degreed programs in many years. It was both familiar to me, except EMBA was new. But I

hadn't understood, when I said, the real state and attention that both of those would need. So I requested that Peter then be promoted to be Executive Director, and that he basically run ExecEd, because I couldn't run ExecEd AND do what was needed for EMBA and SF. I just couldn't do it. So I needed the three directors to do their jobs, which they did. I said to them, "You're using the same faculty, and many of the same physical resources. So you need to figure out how to work it out. If you can't, bring it to me. But I don't think you're going to want to. We'll work this out." Because it did happen. It was the same faculty. We'd be thinking the faculty is teaching something in ExecEd, and it turns they already made a commitment to do something for SF or EMBA. There was that negotiation going on.

The other upside of it was that the same profile applicant was across all that group. Someone who was interested could think they were interested in EMBA, but it turns out they are really ready for a change so they are really interested in SF. Or, they couldn't quit their job, and they couldn't do EMBA, so they'd do ExecEd. So it gave us a couple years of cross-referrals, and really understanding the connections across the programs. I think that was good.

Then Jake was hired, and he was ready to take all the degree programs, which was fine. But for two years, I was responsible for all three – EMBA, SF, and ExecEd – and I have to admit, at the end of that, I was wiped out. I was beat. I would have taken that summer off if Dave had told me sooner that in the fall the two Masters programs were going to Jake. They went to Jake in the Fall, and I made it through to April, and then I took 3 months off down on the Cape. I was just done.

EMBA was a joy, because Jonathan thinks like I do, so he'd come into meetings with everything I wanted to know. I'd say to him, "How do you know what I want to know?"

He'd say, "Because I want to know too, Rochelle." So that was fun. We got to build that, and he was very good at what he did. And the faculty involved were all on top of it. So I'd have to say, those two years were exhausting, again.

That's when I started thinking about retiring. I was 58, because I'm 61 now. So when I was 58, I started asking myself, "What's next? I've been doing this for 3 years, what's next?"

The answer came back, "Paint."

I thought, "Who are you? You've never painted in your life!"

But that was the only answer that kept coming back, was "I want to paint."

It turned out Jennifer was a painter, she painted with acrylics. And I've inherited her paints and brushes. So last summer, when I was off and painting, every once in a while I'd say "Jennifer, I have questions. Where the heck are you??"

B: Is that oils?

R: It's acrylics, but a very high-end acrylic. It feels almost like oils. In any case, my career has been amazing. I sometimes joke that I'm the accidental dean! I never had a trajectory in mind, but working with Alan and others, I was able to continue to grow and change and contribute to the School in ways that were really satisfying to me as well.

A: What might you say about the culture, working across campus, versus working here in the School?

R: I think I was a bit isolated, as I was just in the CMI space. What I think is, it's only beginning now to change a bit. The Sloan culture, and the Sloan folks, we were always at odds. When I came, we were always at odds with main campus. We needed things faster/better/different than they wanted to contribute, and we weren't very graceful at building relationships and making that work well. We were a little too focused on just getting the job done, and we didn't really do the right things. Now we're much better at it, but at that point, we didn't do it well.

In ExecEd, what I have seen is that Bhaskar Pant runs professional education out of the School of Engineering. He is allowed to do things, and given ease, that we're not. So we have to notice that he's allowed to do something that we have been told no. And then go back and say, "Well, Professional Education is doing it....", and then they run out of reasons why we can't.

I've seen both the place of ease that comes especially to the School of Engineering – anything that has to do with SoE looks to me like it's pretty much approved. And anything having to do with us, USED to be stopped. It's now eased.

B: Stopped by....?

R: People around campus who just want to have a chance to say “no” to Sloan.

A: They worry about Sloan. Central administration has worried about Sloan for a long time.

B: What kinds of decisions would have to be approved??

R: The ones that comes to the top of my mind is – you know how there is the calendar on the home page for MIT? Every once in a while we wanted to put an open enrollment course that was coming. And we were told no. Then one day because I keep the MIT home page as well as the Sloan home page as my home page, every time I turn on my browser, I saw a Professional Education course listed. So I sent it over to Kate in our group and I said, “What’s this??” She called up the guys who said no to us, and they are like, “Uhhhhh..... ummmmm. OK!” I don’t know who they asked in the first place, who said no to us. But no is rarely what Bhaskar hears. In fact, he represents Professional Education as Institute-wide, even though he’s located in SoE. OK. He will run programs for other parts of the Institute, and not just Engineering. But it’s just the difference in treatment.

At the same time, now that I’m on the MIT Taskforce for the Future of Education – this is the big taskforce that Rafael put together – and Bhaskar is on one group, I’m in another, and there is Sloan faculty on those as well. In my group, we’re led by Israel Ruiz, who’s a Sloan alum. We’ve talked about ExecEd, and people have seen the ExecEd numbers. Now everybody is asking, “How do we do what you do for the Institute?” So the question has changed, the view has changed. The acknowledgement that we know how to do this better than anyone – that’s real now.

B: And on a much bigger scale than what they’re doing.

R: That’s right. We’re at \$30 million; I think he’s up to \$8.5 million now.

A: Let me give a couple of quick examples you might comment on. One is Alumni Relations. They didn't want us to do Alumni Relations. Our alumni were clamoring for activities, programs, etc. that were not coming out of central Alumni Relations. So we just went ahead and did it. That's an example of just doing things and it didn't lead to the best feeling across campus but we went ahead and did it.

Same thing is true of resource development, anyone who is doing any resource development. Under Lester, the companies in Japan said, "You know, the President was just over here asking for things, but we don't know the President, we know you."

I said, "What do you want to do about this?"

Lester said, "Go for it."

I said, "Well, I'm going out on a limb."

He said, "I know, I'll be under the limb!"

So we got all those chairs from Japan. But they weren't happy. I can remember Glen Strahley calling and saying, "OK, so what are you going to do with those resources?", he would say. "They want us doing resource development." Now the whole world has changed.

But in each case, we had to go ahead and do it first. It was almost like dealing with an attorney – if you ask them a question, he/she would find a reason why you shouldn't do it.

R: I was joking in my last taskforce meeting. Because now, with the Office of Digital Learning doing MOOCs and all those related things, and running ahead, which is of course the way to do it. But what's the impact? How are faculty being compensated? Are they following Supplemental Comp guidelines? There are just a lot of questions. The good news is, Peter Hirst is in those conversations now. So that's getting better. And Israel is aware of it because we raised it. And Andy Lo is on a team with me in that taskforce. So he's aware of it as well. And Jim Poterba, who has great respect around the Institute as well. He's an economist, right. So Andy and Jim and I are working with 2 folks in Israel's office – one is a Sloan alum, one is a Simmons alum. So we're happy. We just put together a non-earth-shattering report looking at could the TLO be a source of revenue? No, that's not really what it's been meant to do? That's not really what MIT wants from it.



So we looked at what we could do with ExecEd and Professional Ed and digital stuff, that that's really where the focus needs to be. It needs to be integrated, it needs to be not "these folks get to do it because they have the resources." Like Office of Digital Learning has resources, ExecEd doesn't. How do we move forward as the Institute.

What I do feel is that because of the work of this taskforce, we're now more often – and not just because of the taskforce – but we are more often viewed by MIT as sources of information and expertise, not the "bad guys." But that's a shift.

A: We're getting respect!

R: Yes, we are – I think. It feels like a slippery slope to me. Except that it's about how does the Institute make more money. ExecEd is clearly a way to do that. We are \$30 million and Harvard is \$130 million. Those are fine questions. I have a few answers.

B: I'm not sure we want to be \$130 million.

R: Exactly. And they have, what? Twice the number of faculty? Three times? And, by the way, they have limited – because of the conversation that you referenced, they are only allowed to have 25% of their ExecEd revenue can be from Custom. The rest has to be open enrollment, for this reason: the faculty are still uneasy about "Is custom consulting?" They do a lot of consulting, but they then purposely restrict what percent of their business can be custom.

A: I wonder if that came from the faculty, or if it came – well, it's probably some mixture of the extent to which Nitin was involved in it.

R: I think it's been like that before Nitin, because they feel like open enrollment is how they get their works out to the most people. And that's what they should be doing. And, by the way, open enrollment is onload for the faculty.

B: So they don't get extra pay.

R: No, it's onload.

B: But their pay scale is pretty good to begin with.

R: It makes ExecEd much easier to get done because faculty can choose – “Do I want to teach the Masters students, or do I want to teach the executives?” There's no downside, which is not our case. Because a day of ExecEd counts the same as a day of consulting, where many faculty can earn multiples of what we can pay for ExecEd, the faculty are often making that tradeoff. “How many days do I give to the School for less than I can make if I did everything outside?”

B: Well, let's go to some of the other questions. Before we went on air, you or maybe Alan mentioned about Chuck Vest being really concerned about the displacement effects that sometimes happened if faculty had easy ways to augment their income. They don't have to travel, they can just do it right here. Are there other questions, as you've seen the School change over your career here, that are worth reflecting on?

R: I think it's a good question about how much ExecEd do we want? I think that in our case, faculty who do Custom get a lot of value out of it because it's a chance to go deep with one company, really understand what their issues are, and often there's consulting for that faculty member that comes out of it, which is a good thing, because then the faculty member spends more time with the company, and learns more about it. When we come back to do the Custom in the classroom, they're bringing all that knowledge with them. Rick did it with Vale (Brazilian Mining company), it happens frequently, and I think it's a good thing from ExecEd's perspective.

The problem we have right now is that the way the current Supplemental Comp guidelines are written, faculty are paid more to teach than to do the prep work that we need to do for Custom. We've now dis-incentivized faculty from doing the prep work we need them to do for Custom. And Custom is where we make a lot of money. We are one of the highest-priced Custom providers in the world because we know what our faculty can do. But in part, faculty do that because they prepare. They read the material, they do the work, they talk to each other, and

they know what they are doing when they walk in the classroom. We can charge a lot for that. But now faculty are saying to us, “If I teach, I get this rate. On a day I prep, I leave \$3,000 on the table. Why would I do that?? The School is saying to me that they don’t value that type of prep, it only values what I teach.” It’s a problem. If the overall goal is to increase the revenue to some extent, maybe that’s not the Schools’ goal because that certainly won’t be the outcome. That’s something I’m concerned about now.

I know we’ve had conversations with Dave and SP, and this is where it is. There is some offense taken at the idea that faculty are just maximizing their income, as opposed to doing what’s needed. You know what? That’s where we are today. I’m not going to defend it one way or the other. This is the reality of ExecEd. I don’t know how that corner is going to get turned. Everybody is aware of it. But because, frankly, the Dean and SP don’t do Custom ExecEd, Jake does. In the past when Don Lessard, Steve Eppinger, and Rick Locke were the deputy deans to whom the executive director of ExecEd reported, they all did Custom ExecEd. They could represent that perspective in deans’ meetings. I have to admit – I’m not a faculty member. I was not a credible representation. I worry about how that will continue to go.

For ExecEd, where we go online – the avatar-based programs are interesting. I was thinking about that today, thinking what I expect the next generation will be. I have an avatar – she’s 5’10” (I’m 5’1”), and I expect the next generation there will be a camera looking at my face and that will be superimposed on my avatar. It will be like we are together because we can be in a room, we can be in a class, we can be together. Because for me, when I took one of our classes, I found when everybody else’s avatar was too close to my avatar, I felt crowded. That suggests to me that this has a nuance to it that we’ve just begun to really understand.

A: Rochelle, I don’t quite understand what’s behind the policy – is it a desire on the part of the faculty, or the School, to be sure that the regular programs of the School are serviced? Is that why this policy has shifted?

R: I think what happened is there are other schools, like Stanford, where routine prep was included in the teaching rate. The rate was higher. We’ve changed the rules. We used to pay everyone \$1,500 a teaching session, and we paid separately for prep. What we did was instead we raised the rate and built in routine prep. Routine prep is what you normally do – you review

your slides before class. But if you were going to totally revamp the session? We have funds to do that. That's not routine prep, that's something else, and we have funds to do that. In part, yes, because for EMBA, the faculty can choose to get supplemental comp anytime they teach in EMBA. For SF, just in the summer, they can still choose that. And for ExecEd, it's always available. We were, it turns out, incentivizing as they say faculty to teach in ExecEd because they could get more than they could if they were teaching in EMBA or SF because ExecEd was paying prep, and EMBA and SF weren't. Somehow this all got jumbled up, and the net result is, for a faculty that teach a day, they get \$9,200 a day for teaching. Whereas a day of prep – if a custom client comes in and we spend a day with them, the faculty get \$6,000.

A:               So they choose the day of teaching.

R:               Exactly. Which is not what they want to choose. They know that spending a day with the client is really critical, but they feel (the ones that talk to us) that the School has now placed them in a position of something they find unpleasant to have to choose. And for ExecEd, this is not a good outcome to have faculty say to us, "My kid needs....." or "My ex-wife needs..... I have to maximize my income. I can either go out and consult, or I can teach, but I can't afford to just do a day of prep."

A:               So the day that they teach in the EMBA is considered a consulting day?

R:               They could teach in the EMBA for supplemental or on load, that's their choice.

A:               Yes, but they don't.

R:               Some do, some don't. And for SF, it's only in the summer. But I think they still could choose to do it if they wanted.

A:               But it still would be ExecEd that would occur during the summer.

R: And faculty have the OPA maximum, and it's not just a total for the year, it's not just 52 for the year. It's this many in the academic year, and this many in the summer. Then we get into "Well, if you don't take your summer ninths, then we can pay you limitlessly, and make up for it." It's a weird financial arrangement. But Dave feels pretty strongly about it. I only get my head shot off every once in a while about it, because it's how he feels. This is a system he wants. And that senior faculty are paid more than junior faculty, and senior lecturers are paid less than anybody else. I lost that argument. I fought it, and I lost it. I don't know what engagement you have in this, but these are things that make life more difficult.

B: What else can we talk about? We've already gone to 1:30. Do you have other thoughts as you reflect on your "exit interview"?

R: I think one of the things that has been great to see is, after senior staff got created and ran for a number of years – so senior staff were everybody with Director in their title, full director or higher. Then recently, Dave decided to expand the deans' group to include the executive directors. So there's a Deans Group, and then there's a Deans Leadership Council, which is the deans AND the executive directors. So that group now operates in a way to help guide the School, including the whole budget process and things about development of staff. So I think that's a really great change. The Dean is involved in conversations, and the Dean and all the deans are involved in conversations with the top leaders of the School. I think that's a tremendous change.

A: That's the Leadership Council. And the deans' meeting now includes executive directors?

R: No. There's a deans' meeting that still happens, separately. The deans still all get together once a week-ish. Then in addition, the Deans Leadership Council meets, which is the deans plus the executive directors. I think that's a tremendous and positive change.

A: The senior staff...

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R: Senior staff started again, so I kicked it off and I handed it off to a governing group. So we recreated it and I kicked off the meeting with them and said, “We want to redesign it.” So we had a big brainstorming session, and what it ended up as, I asked a group of five people to be the governing board, and Tara Waller is the lead person on that.

B: And Donna is too.

R: And they create the content, and they get feedback after every one, a quick survey – What was good? What wasn’t? What are we missing? This is one of those “of the people, for the people.” This is of senior staff, by senior staff, and that’s who’s running it.

The other thing that’s happening is, the Deans Leadership Council is starting to ask, “What’s the dean’s office liaison? To what committee? And should it be a Dean’s office person or an executive director person who then comes back to Deans Leadership Council?”

END OF INTERVIEW