

**INTERVIEW
WITH
JOANNE YATES
May 19, 2014
Sloan Oral History Interview**

J: JoAnne Yates
B: Bob McKersie
G: George Roth

G: We usually go back in time and ask our interviewee to share with us their first awareness of MIT, and then coming to MIT. In some cases, that has brought people back to coming here as an undergraduate. I don't think that's part of your history. But in the same vein, your coming here, your impressions, and your expectations when you started.

J: My first encounter with Sloan was actually rather indirect. My first encounter was really MIT; Sloan was indirect. I had just completed my Ph.D. in English at University of North Carolina, and I was on the market. It was a bad year for people with Ph.Ds in English (laughing).

G: What year was that?

J: 1980. I got an interview to come to MIT to the writing program on the other side of MIT, for a job teaching technical writing. I had taught technical writing when I was in graduate school, and had done some as well. I came and was interviewed for that job. I liked the people I talked to, and I thought the interview went pretty well. But a week or so later I got a call saying, "There are two of you that we really like, that we've talked to on this search. But we have this other search, and we haven't liked anyone we've talked to on it. So we're wondering if you would come back and talk to us about this other job," which was to start what was then conceived of as a writing program in the Sloan School. The funny part was that having been trained in an English department, at that point I believed that while technical writing was OK, business writing was bad, which is the way they tend to frame things in the humanities. So I remember hesitating about whether I would come back and talk about this job or not.

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

2

G: Can you help me with the framing? What made business writing bad?

J: This was 1980, and we'd just gone through a long period in which people in the humanities, and elsewhere, thought of business as being part of the military/industrial complex. It was just "the bad guys."

G: The "evil empire?"

J: Yes. Although, luckily, my dissertation director said to me, "Never turn down a job you haven't been offered." I don't know if that's ALWAYS good advice, but... In fact, I know of many times when it wasn't good advice, but it was in that case.

I came back to MIT and was interviewed by another committee, this time made up of one person in the writing program and the other people from Sloan. Michael Scott Morton was the deputy dean then. They had apparently talked to a bunch of people who had much more experience than I in actual business writing, but much less academic orientation than I had. I don't know the whole story but....

The offer that was made was that I would be on a tenure track in the School of Humanities (SOH) in the Writing Program, but I would be paid by and teaching at the Sloan School. My starting salary was \$15,500 a year, which was very distressing to me. It was a SOH salary, but it was distressing to me because I had told myself that I had to get at least \$16,000.

My situation for the first three years was that I taught one course a year in the Writing Program across campus, a technical writing course, and the rest was what I was doing here –starting up a program.

B: Did you have two offices?

J: No, only one here at Sloan. I was based at Sloan.

G: "Start up the program" – what did that mean?

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

3

J: Phyllis Wallace had done a tracking study of the careers of MBAs as they graduated. Well, Masters --they weren't MBAs then, they were Masters of Science in Management. That tracking study interviewed them at two years out, and five years out, and ten years out. Among the questions they asked were: "What were the most valuable courses to you?" and "What do you wish you had learned that you didn't?" As we all know now because it's part of our lore, sometime between the second year and the fifth year, graduates moved OP [Organizational Processes] (or the equivalent course then) from near the bottom of the stack to near the top of the stack in terms of value to them.

But the other thing that was coming up a lot, at that point in her interviews, was when they were asked "What do you wish you'd learned?" they said communication. And it came up a whole lot. Based on that, a decision was made to hire someone to start a writing program. At that point, communication was conceived of as writing, not speaking.

G: Yes, and oral presentations?

J: Yes. When I had taught technical writing courses, although the main emphasis had always been the writing, there was always a giving-a-talk component too. But initially it was only seen at Sloan as writing.

I spent the first year interviewing lots of people and running little workshops, and sometime in the first five years developed a standard workshop that became a requirement if you didn't pass out of it. This was back when core courses could be waived by testing out. So the communication workshop was initially a workshop, but eventually it became a course. Initially, it was that you could waive out of it, but if you didn't pass the screening for waiver, then you had to take it. Eventually, of course, it flipped over (like everything else we do now in the core) so we don't now allow people to test out of anything.

Let me backtrack again to my appointment. My appointment was initially in the SOH, but my teaching was basically here, and I was being paid for here. So one of the problems for me was figuring out what I was going to do research on, and what would be demanded of me. The reason I went into business history was as a way to navigate that divide, because my English degree at North Carolina was a very historically based program.....

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

4

G: What was your dissertation topic?

J: “Gothicism in American Fiction Before the Civil War.” That went out the window. I never wrote a book out of it. It was wasted time. Not at the time, but never of use to me in a scholarly way from that point on. So I had to re-think, “OK, what do I do in this position I am in, between the two schools?” I wanted something that both sides could understand. I knew there was some business history and thought “Oh, this is cool.” So I could try to study how the genres of communication in the business world evolved, where they came from. That’s how I came up with the idea for my first book, *Control Through Communication*.

Meanwhile, at the end of the third year when we were preparing for me to come up for my fourth-year review, the associate or deputy deans on both sides, Humanities and Sloan, had turned over, so it was a different set of players at that point. The one from the SOH said, “This really doesn’t make any sense.” Because now they were at the four-year point where they were talking about possible promotion to Associate. They were saying, “This makes no sense. If you guys decide not to pay her any more.... She’s here because you guys are paying her, not because we are. This really doesn’t make any sense.” So they sort of pulled the rug out from under me and didn’t bring me up for renewal or anything. They just said, “Sloan, you should have her on your side.” And Sloan said, “We’re happy to bring her over to Sloan, but not on a tenure track. We don’t see communication as tenurable in a school of business.”

G: Wow, that’s a really hard review! You were kind of left in the gap.

J: Yup! Indeed. So I was brought back to the Sloan School where I started getting a slightly higher salary – still not up to what an assistant professor would make at Sloan but at least a lot better than SOH. So I was a lecturer, and then promoted to Senior Lecturer. There was a seven-year period when I was off the tenure track.

During that period, my first book came out, *Control Through Communication*, and it won a couple of awards, and it got pretty good attention. On a very small scale, but still, it’s required reading in Science, Technology, and Society here on campus, as it is required reading in most I-schools, information schools, they have it as required reading.

G: So it has legs.

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

5

J: Yes! Anyway, my husband was here at Wellesley because I was at MIT. We had gone onto the job market at the same time. We both finished our Ph.Ds at the same time. We had an agreement that whichever one of us got a job offer first in a place where there was any chance for the other one to get a job, we'd go there. So I got the offer from MIT first, and frankly, I wasn't sure he was going to be willing to actually drop the...

G: Were you married at the time?

J: No. We were supposed to get married at the beginning of the summer, but because of all this trying to figure out where we were going, we ended up putting it off and getting married at the end of that summer before arriving.

He did, in fact, come with me to Boston without an academic job. He worked for a publishing company for a year, and then got the Wellesley job.

Now we are maybe 10 years into my time here. He had an offer from Syracuse. They were interested in talking to me, the people who became the Information School there. Or maybe they had already become an Information School. They were interested in me, although I hadn't yet gone for my official interview. I made this clear to Lester Thurow, who was dean at the time. He agreed to bring me up to the Personnel Committee. I thought at the time that he was bringing me up for tenure and was initially devastated when I didn't get tenure, but I was put on a tenure track as associate without tenure. Needless to say, I should not have been devastated at that, but my reaction only lasted for 3-4 days and then I started working again. Essentially, Lester agreed to bring me up, and as a result of the review I was put on a tenure track again and promoted to associate professor.

I worked for another three or four years, and by then I started doing a stream of research, together with Wanda Orlikowski, on the contemporary side, and I had started work on my next historical book project as well. With those two things, in addition to my first book, I eventually made it through the tenure process under – Lester was no longer dean then, it was Glen.

I will say, Lester had a HUGE impact on women at Sloan. When he retired, the women did a dinner for him. I have this picture of all of us with him. It was very funny. But I

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

6

think he had a BIG influence during his time as dean, in taking people like me, who were kind of in anomalous positions and getting me back onto the track.

G: Who were the others?

J: Who did well under his tenure? You know, I'd have to look at the picture. I believe that Deborah Ancona got tenure while he was Dean. If you look at the current edition of the Faculty Newsletter, the one that has one of those graphs on the back about the number of women – if you look at it just for Sloan, the big jump in the number of women happened under Lester. At all levels – more hiring, more promotion. He really put an effort into that. So I think he should be credited with that on his watch. I think that was a big thing he did.

B: Backing up a little. When you started teaching communications here, who else was teaching communications? Did you recruit some people to join you as a small group?

J: I was by myself initially. Remember, the classes were smaller then, and a lot of people passed out of this requirement. So the first several years, I taught it all by myself. Then I added one person. And then, at the point where it became required and the School got bigger, it gradually scaled up to where we now have 12 sections of the core course, because we always split the size of the cohorts in half to be able to teach communication. We had 12 rather than 6 sections. So I went from one, to two, to four, to six people, eventually, to cover the 12 sections. Because it was pretty much physically impossible to teach 3 sections. I think one year one person did it, taught 3 sections.

B: And the appointment category is Lecturer, isn't it? Lecturer, or Senior Lecturer?

J: Yes. Right. And to come back to my tenure, at the time when I did get tenure, it was made very clear to me that I was not getting tenure for being in communication, and that we couldn't have people in communication writing the letters. They did see business history as a legitimate field, and they saw the research I was doing with Wanda in the IT and communication enterprise as legitimate. But of all the reviewers who reviewed me for tenure, as far as I know,

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

7

only one was in communication. And I was told the only reason she was allowed to review me was that she's someone who attends the Academy of Management. So they allowed her in the set. But yes, I was not handled as a communication tenure case. One of the things I think Sloan ought to be proud of, and that MIT is capable of too and should be proud of, is it's willing to go for people at interdisciplinary interstices between disciplines. We are not quite as discipline-bound as a lot of places, and I was the beneficiary of that.

B: Staying on the role of communications in a business school, for a minute. During this period, were you connecting with comparable people at other business schools?

J: Yes. Beginning in 1981 or 1982, I started attending the Management Communication Association, which was a small group of people who taught at Top 20 business schools. They were just starting up at that point. There had been a couple meetings before I joined, but I guess they hadn't been going for too long. I wasn't there right at the beginning of that organization, but shortly after it was founded, maybe 2-3 years. Chris Kelly, who teaches here now, was in charge of the program at NYU Stern. I hired her from there later. I got to know that whole group of people at the top schools and learned a lot from them about things their programs were doing.

Relatively early I put one oral presentation into what was then conceived of as a writing course. But pretty quickly we shifted the name of it to Communication, and oral presentation became a bigger and bigger part of the course. That was for several reasons. One is that students are much more willing (this was true then, and it's still true now) to admit that they need work on oral presentation than on writing. They feel like they write perfectly well-- they've been doing it all their life, thank you.

G: And they all have probably done very well in writing.

J: Well, academically. Some of them actually couldn't write their way out of paper bag! We've always had a certain number of international students whose English was not up to it. But that's not the biggest problem. Oral presentation is a way into communication because students KNOW they need that. They feel it, and using video tapes (then)--video recording

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

8

now—was a complete game-changer in that. Because when they could see themselves, they'd REALLY know; it really makes a big difference. They learn a lot from it. So students are much more willing, and happy, to get instruction for speaking. So for many years, we were half-speaking, half-writing.

It wasn't until 12-15 years ago – and Bob, you may remember the timing of this better than I do. There was a committee that re-did the core, and out of that came our new shrunken core where we really had only one semester's worth of core, the tools core? Communication came into the core well before then, but that was a full-year core. And we were not a full course, we were a partial course. When we went down to that tools-based core, we became one of the five tools courses in the core.

G: That was a semester core, not a year core?

J: Yes.

B: I don't remember what year it was, but that was a BIG change.

J: Yes. We went from having what you could think of as a functions core, to a tools-based core. We were one of the very few schools – we're pretty unique in that tools-based core. It was really a selling point for Sloan, too.

B: What I need to ask is an almost “schizophrenia” that we have with respect to communications. We see it as important, as a tool course. Phyllis Wallace finds out that people say “This was very important in my career.” Earlier we were talking about Neal Hartman. We go into these alliances with Chinese universities, and they see it as a must. Yet, we can't figure out how to bring people on a tenure track. It's really incredible.

J: It really is schizophrenia about it. Communication departments – I remember one of our Sloan colleagues saying we think of Big 8 schools as having communication departments, state schools, and we did not have a respect for the field of communication, even though there are parts of the field of communications, and certain individuals within it, who are very similar to

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

9

people in areas of the Academy of Management, like the OB area. In fact, Linda Putnam is a major name in both communication and management.

B: And negotiations.

J: Yes, but her degree is in communications. She's the one person who was allowed to write a tenure letter for me.

Communication was viewed very schizophrenically, and I was viewed that way too. Let me talk about that a little bit.

I was viewed very schizophrenically. The women faculty were very supportive, and some of my peers who came in the 1980s and were closer to my age were more supportive. But for many, many years, I felt like the older male faculty – I just was not there. In fact, I remember quite distinctly that you, Bob, were the only one of the senior male faculty who actually treated me like a real colleague. For years! You were the only one! I felt like I wasn't treated as a colleague, as a peer. So that was a struggle for a long time, which this schizophrenia about communication caused.

G: Are there any peers to economists?

J: No. Actually, there was a woman economist, who is now over at HBS, who was good. All along, from the very beginning, I was part of a women's faculty network.

G: Please say more about that.

J: It's very interesting. When I first came, Phyllis, Lotte – the year I came, Katherine Abraham, whom you may remember....

B: I remember her well.

J:she and I came the same year. We remember one of our senior male colleagues saying at a meeting "It's so nice to have some pretty feminine faces here in the room."

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

10

B: Ohhhhhh.....

J: I remember Katherine and I talking about it later. We weren't happy about it, but it just reflected the times. But the women did start getting together. Debbie Marlino, who ended up elsewhere and is now a dean at – she was a dean at Simmons, but now she's gone somewhere else as dean, relatively recently. Lisa Lynch came a few years later. But there were two women in Marketing – Debbie Marlino, and I can't remember the other one's name. They came maybe a year or two after I came. So all the way through the 1980s, we would have monthly dinners of the women faculty. We also included Ann Lipner in those early meetings. Ann was a financial VP, or whatever her title was.

B: In the Sloan School. Ahead of Donna Behmer, the same role.

J: Yes. Right. Ann was also an informal part of our group, too, for a long time, until she left. We were trying not to be too obvious, so we would often meet down in the E52 lobby. And here's another story that's sort of cute. We were meeting, there were maybe 3-4 of us who had already met and we were waiting for someone else. Ed Roberts came by and saw us and knew what we were doing. He said, "Oh, you guys must be the women getting together. You know, it won't do you any good. None of you has any power anyway. You need to hang out with people who have power. I know this, because I was one of the first Jewish faculty members at MIT. And we Jewish members NEVER hung out with each other because we knew we needed to get in with the people who had power."

We all talked a lot about that afterwards, saying, "He doesn't understand about support," as opposed to power– that we weren't networking for power.

G: It's the male approach.

J: Right. It was support we were looking for by these dinners.

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

11

G: But how does not being obvious combine with being in the E52 lobby? That seems to me....

J: Well, instead of up in the Faculty floors.

Later on, we stopped being quite so..... Before Abe stepped down, we invited him one time to come to a dinner. He taught us something about wine. Our first bottle of wine, Eleanor Westney had ordered for us, was a Vouvray, and we were ordering a second bottle. She asked his advice on whether we should get the same thing again. He said, "Well, the Vouvray is JUST a Vouvray," so we all felt appropriately chastened and let him pick the next bottle.
[laughing]

B: A much more expensive bottle, no doubt.

J: No doubt! So we did have him once. And then we had Lester Thurow. When he was stepping down, we had a dinner in his honor because we felt he had done so much to advance the cause of women during the time he was there.

One other interesting thing about the women's group. You probably know the date – what year did Phyllis Wallace die? She was part of the group early on. She didn't come every time, and she was the oldest in the group, but she did come sometimes. It was interesting that we all felt it was clear that the links – of course, she was the ONLY minority member of the faculty so she wouldn't have had a choice anyway – but we definitely felt she was part of us in the women's group. I remember various stories that she used to tell too. Not about Sloan....

B: Oh yes, she had a full career. She got a Ph.D. in Economics at Yale, and then could not find a job. Imagine? A Ph.D. in Economics from Yale. But she went to work for the CIA and became an expert in Russian Studies.

J: I didn't know that part.

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

12

B: Until she was “rescued” when the EEOC got started in 1964-65, now 50 years ago. She was hired as Research Director.

J: That’s the part of her background I know.

G: We interviewed Annette Lamond because she had worked with Phyllis, to help us with some recollections about Phyllis and her contributions. And Bob had tape recorded her memorial service, which we had transcribed and entered into our archives.

J: Wow! How did you manage to think ahead enough to tape record that??

B: Well, it was such an important memorial service. We had quite a few people speaking. She had been a director of Stop&Shop, and also State Street Bank, so we had Bill Edgerley and people from S&S. Marcus Thompson, a musician, put together a little group of students to play. We filled up the Bartos Theater.

 But going back to your situation, besides Ed Roberts, were there other “needles” about “Hey, you folks are off plotting...” or something?

J: No, I think most people either didn’t know we were meeting, or thought it was just silly! They weren’t even worried about it. I don’t think there was any sense in which we were plotting. It was, really, a support group more than anything. We would hear each others’ things....

G: It’s interesting just to think that men would think about your meeting as plotting, and accumulating power, and seen with the lens of their way and how the world works. And women are meeting just to have colleagues, and to have support. That, in itself, is very telling, and, I think, not uncharacteristic.

J: And people would talk about things. We would talk about handling students because they did push back more against the women faculty, we felt, and issues like that. The

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

13

advantage of it for us was that we could connect across all these fields, too. We didn't just have ties in each of our own groups; we had ties across areas, which was nice.

B: OK, staying with your trajectory here. What year was it that you then got tenure after you'd been appointed as associate without tenure?

J: I believe it was 1995. Might have been 1994; I think it's 1994. It was 14 years, the world's longest tenure clock. Actually not the world's longest, but it felt like it at that point. It felt like I'd been a junior faculty my whole career.

B: You came in 1980, so 1994. In terms of research, I don't know about the research you are doing now, but we ought to get it on the record. How would you describe how you pick topics or do research?

J: I would say that I had two separate streams of research: one historical, and one contemporary. The historical one started with *Control through Communication*, which looked at how communication genres and business evolved as the modern corporation evolved. Then I went in that stream to my second major historical book, which was about how a user industry transitioned to computers – I took a user industry, life insurance, and looked at how they adopted and used pre-computer technologies, and then followed them up through the transition into computers, in order to understand how the previous technology shaped their adoption and use of the new technology. I wasn't looking at communication genres any more; by then I was looking at IT and how people adopted and used it. And now, in that stream, I'm working on the history of standardization.

The other stream, which was primarily joint with Wanda Orlikowski, came out of me presenting on my book, *Control Through Communication*, to the IT group. Even before the book was complete, Tom Malone found my historical work interesting and involved me in his work on electronic markets and hierarchies. After I presented on the complete book in the IT seminar, Wanda was very interested in it, and we started working together. We took the notion of genre from my work and embedded it in structuration, which was her theoretical lens. We started looking at how people adopted and used electronic communication technologies. That's a much

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

14

more micro level of research, whereas my historical work is at the macro level. At the micro level we did things like code individual email messages by hand, and things like that. But we tried to study how people adopted and used these technologies, using primarily qualitative methods, some descriptive quantitative methods – counting and charting types of the genres that were used in different kinds of new media and how they evolved over time. We did our work with the support of Tom's Center for Coordination Science.

B: On the first stream, do we have people here at MIT in History, or people across the river? HBS has always had a strong business history. How did you create an intellectual community?

J: While I was writing my first book, I didn't have a whole lot of an intellectual community, except I had discovered Chandler's work. I started going to the Business History Conference, and I met Chandler and various other people there. So I connected with the business history group of professionals through conferences. There were a couple people here who did some history, but not in the area I was doing it in. I have to say, my first book, I really muddled through. I didn't have good support really, as I did it. I'm a very detail-oriented and compulsively detailed person anyway, so I just kept working at it. I ended up, I think, creating a better book than I had any right to expect that first time through. In some ways, I found the second book in the history channel more difficult because I knew so much more then about the historiography in the field, and it was harder at that point when I knew more than when I knew less.

Some would say that this is totally easy, even among the historians. Al Chandler was always supportive. But there were some of the business historians in the early days – I submitted a paper on DuPont's Chart Room, which was this elaborate room where they had these humongous cardboard, huge charts hanging from hay baling equipment. They had it in a room, and they broke out the pieces of their ROI formula and could bring any one of them in front of the board, who would sit in front of it and look at all that. So I had an article about the evolution of the charts and graphs in this particular chart room as the epitome of this method. I submitted it to the *Business History Review*, at Harvard. The editor was quite enthusiastic about it, but one of the reviewers he sent it out to was someone from accounting history who had done work on the

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

15

history of accounting at DuPont, and said “There’s nothing new about accounting in this.” They just missed the point that it wasn’t trying to be about accounting; it was trying to be about the method of communicating. That was turned down at *Business History Review* back then. It wasn’t always easy from that end, either. But Al Chandler was always supportive. I was too intimidated to go and visit him much. But at the conferences and stuff he was there. And at one point I think I asked him to read something. He was very supportive and thought it was good. And he told me that he wrote letters for my tenure review. So I know he was. So that was in that stream.

The other stream, I had lots of colleagues, of course. In some ways, there was a certain point when it got problematic as I was trying to write my second historical book. The historical stuff was all single-authored, until I started a new project with Craig on standardization, whereas the work with Wanda and various students was all co-authored. One of those laws, like Little’s Law: co-authored work drives out single-authored work. So I was having trouble, I took too long to get that second historical book done because a co-author is waiting for you, deadlines always push you more. But it was good, because we had doctoral students who got involved. So it was more social, and more fun, in that sense. I think I saw in our partnership, I was always more an empirical person, and she was more theoretical in orientation.

B: You really almost have a “dotted-line” relationship with the IT folks?

J: Yes. I had to put all my research on the back burner when I went into the dean’s office, and I have not picked up that side of it since then. Wanda has found new co-authors. So until there is a student who catalyzes it again, I probably won’t get back into the recent stuff. I’m just trying to get this historical project with Craig done.

Do you want to discuss the Deans’ Office?

B: Yes, we can segue to your four-year stint. It was four years, wasn’t it?

J: Five

B: What?? See, normally it’s supposed to be three. I didn’t have it stretched enough.

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

16

G: We've heard that JoAnne is obsessive-compulsive about details and organizing things, so.... You couldn't get it all done in three years!

J: Nope. Actually, this also connects with the women theme. Let me talk about how I ended up getting in.

I learned, when we already knew that Dick Schmalensee was stepping down, Steve Eppinger asked me if I would be deputy dean. At that point, there were only four women who were full professors, and I was one of them. Two of them had turned down offers to be deputy dean at a previous round. Wanda was asked first this round and turned it down. Then I was asked. And Steve said to me, "You know, if it's not you, it's going to be another guy! We're still not going to have a woman in this office." Which was the perfect guilt trip for me.

B: Heavy guilt, yes.

J: Yes. I said yes. I didn't at all think I was qualified, and I must say, I spent the whole time I was in the Deans' Office afraid that any minute someone was going to figure out that I really didn't know what I was doing. The Imposter Syndrome, as they say, among certain minorities and women, etc.

I didn't feel all that qualified, but I certainly wasn't going to ... if it was me or another guy, I was going to say yes. Because by then I was the head of the Gender Equity Committee at Sloan, and we had been saying for a while that they need to have more women in such positions.

B: What did your portfolio include?

J: It was Programs. So at that point when I came in, there were 2 deputy deans. We went up to 3 for a short period after Steve.... Steve became Acting Dean, and SP and I were deputy deans. But when Dave came on, Steve Eppinger went back to being deputy dean, and there were 3 deputy deans for a while. Steve thought perhaps we were up to the point where we

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

17

needed 3 deputy deans. What has happened since then is that Dave felt that what we really needed was not to chew up all our faculty but to get some more professional administrative people in there, so fewer fulltime faculty were needed. So that was during the high point of 3 deputy deans. But for the most part it was 2 plus the dean. One was for faculty, one was for programs. International often went with faculty.

I had programs. It was a period during which we actually launched a new program, the MFin. It was already approved, but was in the launch stage. So we launched that. The EMBA was also launched during that period. So at the point when there were 3 of us, ExEd was the major part of one of the portfolios. And Sloan Fellows had reported to me. But when they were going to launch the EMBA, that had all these connections with ExEd, so they decided to put the two of them together, under Rick Locke. Rick had been head of Sloan Fellows at an earlier point, and he was the ExEd and International dean, and he really wanted SF to report to him too. EMBA really needed to be connected to ExEd to a certain extent. So they pulled those two programs into Executive Education, and I had all the other programs.

Since then, those 2 programs have come back to the degree programs, because all kinds of – actually it did create a bunch of problems putting it with ExEd because people started thinking they should be compensated for degree teaching in the same way they were compensated for ExEd. So that caused lots of complicated problems. I was opposed to it moving over there, but not very strongly because I also understood that the EMBA had SO many anomalies that it wasn't going to fit very well. And indeed, it's come back.

But I was in charge of programs. I pushed hard on trying to get the number of women and minorities up. That was one of the things – and students, especially in the MBA. So I pushed on that quite a lot. It was a VERY hard job, especially for one of my temperament, who doesn't like having to be a tough person. It was very stressful for me. I felt like I had a duty to do it, but it was very hard. I was only in my second year there when Dave asked me to renew for another three-year term. I said, "How about if I do just one more year?" We negotiated back and forth for a while and we ended up agreeing on two more years in addition to my first three-year term, because then I was due for a sabbatical and I was going to take my sabbatical.

Even then, I'm not sure I would have been able to pry myself loose when he still wanted me, except that Craig actually put our proposal on the Standards project into the Center

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

18

for Advanced Study of Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. Once we got that, I said, “I have to take it. I’m not going to miss my chance on this!”

It was interesting. I learned a lot.

B: You learned a lot about the School.

J: Yes, a ton. You’ve been through this and you know how much you learn from it. But it is very difficult, and you’re balancing a million things. Plus, I lost my ability to concentrate during that period. Because you’re troubleshooting all the time. It’s like firefighting all the time. It’s like being a manager instead of being an academic. So you really can’t get—the kind of research I do requires long days in archives, and things like that, and I just couldn’t do it during that period.

B: Did you do any teaching?

J: Yes....

B: Some people find they can teach during that period, because it doesn’t require the same concentration as research.

J: I taught little things, but not steadily, because the Communication core course is actually a LOT more work than many other courses in that there is SO much grading, just infinite grading. I could never have done that and been in the Dean’s office. So I did a few little things, but basically not much teaching at all. And I was there at 7:00 or 7:30 every morning, until 7:00 every night. So it was a full-time job.

B: Well, it’s a major, major contribution, JoAnne, to do it for five years.

J: It was hard work. And also, it’s hard for me to say no, so when he wanted me to continue it was hard for me to say no. And it was a privilege to work with Dave. He is SO much more knowledgeable, savvy. On the one hand, it made me feel more like a fraud [laughing]

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

19

because I didn't have that kind of vision. On the other hand, I wasn't bad at trying to put into effect some of his vision.

I think the one thing that was the most strongly.... I guess there are a couple of things I did that I was proud of. One was working on the number of women and minorities in the classes, pushing those up. Another was putting Ezra in charge of the doctoral program. He really has done a huge amount of work upgrading the doctoral programs, so I was very happy about that.

But it was hard. I had to lay someone off for the first time in my life. I had to deal with MIT lawyers over various issues that went on in programs. It's a very stressful job. I don't know that I was cut out to be in that kind of job. But I did it. I survived, and at least no one told me I was a fraud before I got out of there. I was very happy I made it out of there before anyone discovered it! [laughing]

B: I think you're being too tough on yourself in terms of that image.

J: Yes. But it's also this Imposter Syndrome, which is very common for women and minorities, too.

B: One thing we've discussed with other people – and you alluded to this earlier – that when you came, we were not a traditional business school. We were still a school of management, we had a thesis, etc. When you were in the Deans' Office, did you see any evolution? Today, with the MBA, we're seen pretty much as a standard business school.

J: I think the critical piece of that evolution had happened before I was in the Dean's office, because the thesis had gotten dropped before then. But while I was there, I saw some pretty good changes. But they weren't all to make us just like another business school. In fact, I think one of the things that is terrific about Dave is that he saw that, unlike a Wharton that just has an MBA, that one of our strengths was having this portfolio of programs. He saw the value to that.

I think what he brought, and what I learned from seeing his point of view, was the ways in which Sloan is different from other places, and then when those ways of being different

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

20

are good, and when they aren't so good. For example, we were WAY under-invested in professional staff at the beginning, and it takes a big toll on faculty, having to do all those things. That one I think we were different and not necessarily in the right direction. But he was capable of seeing that all these programs we had, instead of just being a drain on our resources, were actually an asset that we could position ourselves as having a portfolio of programs, which I thought was a really good way to see the whole thing. I've spent my entire academic career at MIT Sloan. I had never taught anywhere else. I had never seen any other school. I didn't have a good idea of what it looked like elsewhere. So I knew, before and after, how we had changed. That changed during Glen's era, when we expanded the MBA so much, and things started looking quite different. But I hadn't seen other schools to compare it to. So to me, it was illuminating to see an outsider's point of view. I think we have always had insiders as deans, and I think it was useful for us to go outside and get a little bit of perspective for once, to bring in a different point of view. So I learned an enormous amount from him.

It was funny, going from being – I had always felt I was a low-power person. I was a junior faculty member for 14 years, and even after I was tenured, some people still didn't see me as that central, that much a part of Sloan. Going into the Deans' Office, I was suddenly in a position where certain people not only would talk to me, but they HAD to talk to me, [laughing], they were stuck talking to me, one way or another, which was sort of nice in one way.

B: That's right. "This is the Deans' Office calling...."

J: Right! And I got to know some people a lot better than I ever would have. Even if I had been hired in BPS, I would not have gotten to know the Finance people whom I got to know because of launching the MFin, for example.

Let me say one other thing about being in the Deans' Office. Most people say, when you're in the Deans' Office, you see the bad side of all your colleagues. To me, I saw quite the opposite. I saw unexpected good sides of a lot of my colleagues. People who I never would have guessed, went into MFin and they weren't at all – they had ZERO interest in administering anything. All they wanted to do was their research. But when they launched the MFin program, they stepped up, and stepped in, and did what they had to do and did more than that. So I actually

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

21

feel like I saw every bit as much of people's unexpected talents as I did of people – I'm a glass half-full, not a glass half-empty person, so that's coloring my view. But I was surprised at people who really did step up to things that I didn't think they would. So, in general, I don't think it ruined my view of human nature. If anything, it improved my view of a whole set of my colleagues.

B: That's a good point on which to end this. George, anything else you want to cover?

G: I have a couple little things. What about teaching contributions?

J: Developing the Communication curriculum. The three main courses that we teach in it are: the core Communication course, 15.280; the advanced course, 15.281; and then I teach the doctoral Communication for Academics, 15.289. I taught that this semester, and it was fun.

Coming back to teaching after the Deans' Office was VERY difficult, at least doing the MBAs. But it was a pleasure doing the Ph.D. students. Then, because of Leigh, we got started in the ethics business, which became part of our bailiwick as well.

The bad news, for me, is I never got to teach business history, for example. And it would have been nice. But it wasn't to be.

G: Yes, and the way our system works doesn't really allow – it would be such a luxury, a work of passion it would have to be.

J: Yes.

G: What about your sabbaticals. You haven't talked about where you've taken them. I was thinking about it when you were saying it was nice to have people come from the outside and gives us view. But sometimes it happens on sabbaticals.

Int. w/J. Yates
5/19/14

22

J: Yes. Up until last year, all my sabbaticals I've stayed in Boston because Craig and I had never coordinated our sabbaticals. That's not true. I spent one semester, once, down at Hagley. On my junior leave, when I still had that, I went down there and he came back and forth.

B: What is Hagley?

J: Museum and Library, in Delaware. I'm on the board of it now.

B: Oh! It has a famous business history because of all the DuPonts.

J: Yes, the DuPont records and lots of other stuff. I've been on the board for about 10 years now and I'm still very attached to it. I went down there. A couple times I sat over at HBS, not with the teaching faculty, but the last time I just sat--I had an office with their Visiting Fellows, near where the HBR staff were, etc., I got to see them. This last year I was at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford and it was WONDERFUL, absolutely wonderful. But it wasn't business school folks, so I wouldn't have learned about business school from that. Some of what I learned at HBS – it's such a different world, but it's just not directly transferable.

Plus I also became aware....one time there, many years ago, I sat in on a class and the gender dynamics in the classroom were much worse than they are here! It was pretty clear to me that I would never have wanted to teach there. I'm much happier at Sloan. It's not perfect here either, in gender, but there are issues everywhere, of course. But the difference is huge.

END OF INTERVIEW