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Patrick McLane, The Ames Library

July 30, 2014

Francine Krieger: Today is July 30th, 2014. My name is Francine Krieger and we are at Ames Library, on the fourth floor.

Pat McLane: My name is Pat McLane. I started working at Illinois Wesleyan in the fall of 1991 as the manager of the Interactive Learning Center, and then in 1996 became the campus instructional technologist, a position that I held until May of 2014.

Krieger: Cool. So to start, would you like to discuss the history of IT?

McLane: Great. I became the third person in what is now information technology when I came in the fall of 1991. At that time it was called academic computing and there were two people on campus working in that position so I only had two computer people on campus before I came. Trey Short, who has subsequently risen to the chief technology officer and assistant provost on campus, and Curtis Kelch who served as his assistant for the first few years. After I came, we had a networking specialist join us for a few years and a computer lab supervisor and then over the course of the next twenty years those positions have rotated several times. And in 1996 the campus determined that they would like to join the efforts of the academic computing services with administrative computing, which was managed and directed by a lady by the name of Jean Johnson. So we interviewed several people and hired Fred Miller in 1996. Fred came a little early that summer and in the fall, we moved his office into the newly opened science center, what we call the CNS Center for Natural Sciences. And Fred remained there for about a year and then several of us moved over to the IT house. After Fred came, there was quite a bit of conversation on campus about the needs of campus, and we ended up opening up several positions in IT and as we opened those up several people moved into those positions who already were here, and we hired new people to replace them. That's kind of been the practice for the 23 years that I was here. So at that time, the networking person moved off...and we replaced the networking person, and we decided to create an assistant for that person, who became the system administrator who was in charge of things like servers on campus and email, and the director of network services that was responsible for all the other network activity on campus. At the same time, we decided that we should have a wider web presence on campus, so they created a system administrator position, web master position and we feel that was someone that those of us who were already in IT were familiar with from a company that did some publicity for us. That person lasted about a year and a half and then we decided to split his position and hire a new systems administrator. And Curtis Kelch who had served as the assistant academic computing person moved into that position and Curtis still holds that position now. Curtis came to campus in January of 1991 from the University of Illinois—and we had been familiar with each other from there. I was also at the U of I—and sent me a letter in August saying that there was a

position open to manage the new Interactive Learning Center which was actually an instructional technology center in what we now call Buck Library, where we have the Language Resource Center, and the Interactive Learning Center. Together we had one facility for several years till we split that off in 1996.

Krieger: What would you say-what would you say have been how—excuse me. How would you say that your responsibilities changed compared to when you first started and compared to the most recent few years?

McLane: When I first came, there was two lines that we used to connect to the University of Illinois so that everyone on campus could connect to the Internet. So only two people at a time could connect to the Internet and we used the University of Illinois for the first couple years before we had our own server and our own domain, which now is iwu.edu.

Krieger: How did you-how did you get two Internet lines from the University of Illinois?

McLane: That was kind of the standard practice. The larger universities would allow the smaller schools and hospitals and stuff to tie into their Internet access because most people couldn't afford to have their own connection to the Internet at that time. It's still expensive but at that time it was very expensive. And there wasn't a lot of need at that time, believe it or not, there were only maybe 10,000 people in the world who had email addresses at that time. And that explosion all happened in the 90's while we were here, and we created our own network administrator position, created our own servers and connected to the Internet. We paid a fee to connect to the Internet, institutions do.

Krieger: Mhm. Who were the first users of the Internet?

McLane: Here on campus? There were several people in mathematics and physics who were using services from the University of Illinois. And then as interest in the World Wide Web, which is the Internet, and e-mail increased, we added those services. So adding those services required adding people in those positions, and then by that time many of the faculty on campus were requesting computers in their offices. When I arrived here, there may have been a handful of faculty on campus who had computers in their offices, and the only real labs we had were in Buck Library. The Interactive Learning Center was in the language area, and it has since become the Language Resource Center and then upstairs there was a couple of computer labs, one with IBM computers, and one with Apple Macintosh computers.

Krieger: That's kind of interesting. So since 1991 you said, we went from two computers to what, 200?

McLane: Oh, I would think more like—everyone on campus has one, so I would say a couple thousand computers on campus. So every faculty member and every staff member has one. Plus there are probably 6 or 700 in the labs. So we have labs in the CNS, labs in Buck, labs in Ames

Library, and then small labs in each of the departments on campus. So music and philosophy, social science, business, chemistry, biology, physics, psychology, languages, all have computer labs of their own outside of the major ones which were in Buck Library, Ames Library, and the CNS.

Krieger: Interesting. So beyond expanding our network and expanding our computer supply, what would you say have been some pretty impressionable advancements in your time?

McLane: Well, the introduction of the Web and the way that we use it on campus. So we use it as a promotion tool, through the admissions office and the advancement office so both can bring students to campus and to bring donors to the university. And then we use it academically so that every course on campus has its own website and now with Moodle, everyone has an opportunity of having all their coursework on the computer. So the Web was a big part of it. E-mail of course, the administrative services have changed quite a bit and we tied the administrative system into the Web so students can pay their bills and do all the things that they need to do on the computer now. And just the change in attitudes among the faculty of using technology in the classroom have brought us to what is now. State Farm Hall and a fairly modern classroom where nearly every classroom has electronic projection and the Web, video conferencing and the ability of anyone in the classroom to project whatever's on their system up into the screen.

Krieger: That's pretty incredible.

McLane: Well it's all happened since you were born.

Krieger: Right. [Laughs] I guess, to go back to some more general questions, where were you before you came to Wesleyan?

McLane: I'd spent six years at the University of Illinois. I started there in 1985. I know that because it's the same year I was married. I was married the year I started there and my son was born the year I came here. So those are easy dates to remember. I managed most of the computers on the south side of campus there, what is now the school of architecture, art & design, landscape architecture, and I did everything, administrative, computing, networking, and computer purchases. And I really wanted to focus on instructional technology and working with faculty to help them bring technology into the classroom, and that's what this position afforded me coming here, as manager of the Interactive Learning Center. At that time now those were the only computers on campus so we used that facility to train faculty, and as computers became ubiquitous and we had it in every building and almost every office and classroom then I was able to spread out and do different kinds of consulting and training across campus.

Krieger: Cool. Quite interesting. Which qualities drew you to Illinois Wesleyan specifically, or was it just an opportunity?

McLane: It was certainly different coming from the U of I, which was such a large institution with multiple scholars from all over the world and every discipline. It was not unusual to visit across the dining room table with somebody that had a Nobel Prize or a Pulitzer Prize. But it was just too big for me. I really loved the closeness and the family kinds of relationships that were built here. And I noticed that from the very beginning when I first came and interviewed. There were several faculty members who had their children here with them while we were interviewing, and I just knew this would be a different place. It was a wonderful place for me to grow and I had a terrific career here.

Krieger: That was actually—that was my next question. How would you say that the student body, the faculty, just the Wesleyan environment has changed since when you started compared to your recent years?

McLane: Well, we've gone up in the number of students since I came, and now are kind of coming back down and finding the right number for this institution. But the quality of the student and the relationship that they have with the faculty has always been very important here. And I think a lot of the reason that students choose Illinois Wesleyan over a larger state school, everyone seems to know everybody, calls them by their first name, knows when they're not there, and is aware of what's happening in their lives.

Krieger: That is important. Could you say that any IT advances or IT attributions have affected any of your close student or faculty relationships in any type of way?

McLane: One of the opportunities I had while working in the Interactive Learning Center was managing student workers. In every position I've had there have been student workers in IT at that time and I think that group of student workers and watching students come in either with a little bit of computer experience or maybe what they considered advanced skills when they came have had an opportunity working with IT or with Ames Library as student assistants. And if you give them an opportunity, and many of them have reported back to me after they left or graduated that the experiences that they've had in their work study jobs in IT was just as valuable as any course they took, and the skills they learned have given them an opportunity to go into the workplace and become the computer expert there, because a lot of them went into jobs and offices that were just beginning to get computerized. So we found a lot of our students that worked for us in IT went on and stayed in IT-related jobs even though they may have had degrees in psychology or music or chemistry when they left because they had developed those skills while they were here as students and student workers.

Krieger: That's pretty interesting. What kind of skills would you say that they just—?

McLane: Well a lot of them develop those customer service skills of being able to answer a telephone, find out exactly what the problems were, and direct the right person to assist them. Many of them learn a lot of troubleshooting skills, and customer service skills in relationship to helping faculty determine what their problems were without necessarily having to hand them off

to a second-level or third-level position. And then a lot of our students have gotten a tremendous amount of opportunity to work with the network services-network services director or the administrative services director or with instructional technology and learn a lot of things about computing and information technology and the whole technology realm that may not have been of any interest to them when they first started.

Krieger: Okay. Did you come across any major obstacles?

McLane: Well, the universities are slow to change. And then the faculty as a whole tend not to change the way that they do things, especially when they have lots of skills in teaching or instruction that has worked well for them over the years. So encouraging them was always a case of being positive and finding a reason for them to try something new. Resources has always been an issue. At times we've been state of the art, other times we've lagged behind because we just haven't had the resources in place to stay as close to the edge of technology as we might like. But I think we found a happy medium where we blend technology and the human experience so that that's been a nice balance for us over the last 23 years.

Krieger: Okay. Let me see. [Pause] How have Illinois Wesleyan traditions or customs affected your time here, whether professional or personal?

McLane: Wesleyan's always been this close-knit community within the larger city of Bloomington-Normal of students from not only Illinois and many of the outlying states, but students from all over the world, and I think that's probably been one of the real surprises for me is seeing international students come in and how they relate to students who grew up in Illinois and how much the local kids have learned from having an international community of students here. We have waxed and waned a little bit in the number of international students that we have, but it's always been an integral part of who we are and many of our students travel abroad either for semester courses or for what was once January and is now May Term courses so that there's quite a spirit of internationalism on campus. And that's been true I'm sure before I came but at least in the last 23 years since 1991.

Krieger: Have you had any international students in IT that have kind of taught you something or taught the other students something that they didn't know before?

McLane: We've had some very bright international students who worked in IT, and we've had a lot of international students who worked for us because they're here all the time and they stay through the summer and they stay through Christmas break. I don't know that there's anything in particular about what they brought that's different than what we get from the students from the States, but there's certainly a—we've always had a fairly high number of international students working either in Ames Library or in IT in the different divisions.

Krieger: Okay. Just to jump to a different topic I saw that you got the Starkey Service Award in 2012, and one of the things that you were awarded for was your multimedia systems at public events. Can you describe some of the public events?

McLane: Well it's just, I think a lot of that came from the fact that much of the technology used in the classrooms were also the types of things that people who were interested in using in campus meetings and presentations and events that were happening on campus. And it was natural that my connection with Ames Library and Michael Limacher, who's the audiovisual guy, who was in charge of the traditional ways of using those things. But Michael and I formed a partnership so that anytime there was a presentation on campus that included multimedia, Michael would take care of the projection and computing and all the setup that way and I would work with the presenters to make sure that they were aware of what was available to them and what they could use, and what format they needed to send and how they might get it here. And I think people responded well to that, so that was just a tradition that we continued. It was never set up that way, but it was just one of those traditions that kind of happened because you're in the right place at the right time, and people see the value of what you have to offer.

Krieger: Makes sense. So in what other ways besides the public events and instructing the faculty, in what other ways did you get to put to use that instructional technology that you were looking for?

McLane: Well we've done a lot of workshops on campus both for faculty and for students, and then I was responsible for much of the faculty training and there have been technology trainers-a group of technology trainers over the years who did a lot of workshops for students. But we are also involved with other universities who have IT departments and instructional technology resources. So over the years we frequently would have a group of colleges and maybe 15 or 20 colleges from across Illinois with their entire IT staff and we would spend a day talking about networking and administrative systems and instructional technology and the Web and how those are done at your school and how that differs from ours-us, and especially people who might have the same administrative systems. Like ours, we use Banner, Milliken uses Banner, so we have a very close connection with Milliken and work frequently with them. So we're very aware of the people who work at our institutions in Illinois, especially the Associated Colleges of Illinois, which is an organization of private, liberal arts colleges. And we've had a chance to spend a lot of time with them at their place or here over the last, I'd say, 20 some years.

Krieger: Okay. You didn't teach any classes here at all, did you?

McLane: I never taught any regularly scheduled semester courses. There were several courses that I guest-lectured in multiple times: the anthropology class, visual anthropology class that included moviemaking. At the very beginning we sat through a lot of that stuff and helped develop the first part of that class. There was a jazz history class that we were very involved in quite a bit to work with Dr. Tom Streeter when he began that class until he became comfortable

teaching the elements of that itself. And as faculty who have become new to technology would introduce it in class, they would frequently have us come in the first couple of times, and go through things with the students to make sure that they understood what was-what their assignment was, then over time the faculty would take over those responsibilities. But I taught for fifteen years at a community college part-time while I was working at the U of I and when I started here, I had a whole host of courses related to computing and technology.

Krieger: Okay. Which community college?

McLane: I lived down near Decatur so I worked at Richland Community College down there. I've also taught at Heartland Community College here in Bloomington.

Krieger: Very interesting. Do you have a favorite story or memory or multiple stories or memories about any aspect of campus life?

McLane: Well, the ones that come to mind the most quickly are the relationships that I've had on campus, the people I've had an opportunity to work with. I actually kept a list of everyone who's ever worked at Illinois Wesleyan in the last 23 years with whom I've had opportunity to interact. So I have a long list of all the people that worked in IT, of all the people that taught in biology, music, or social sciences, and those are the memories I have most is introducing myself to those people, finding out what their passions were, and seeing how technology might help them to communicate with their students, or to present material in the classes. The large initiatives that we've had, the building of the Shirk Athletic Center, the new science Center for Natural Sciences, and then the Center for Liberal Arts, which was the old science building, the building of Ames Library, and then most recently, the building of State Farm Hall with the new classrooms, are the ones that come to mind the most readily and both the most challenging parts of being here, but also the most exciting.

Krieger: In what way did IT interact with those processes?

McLane: Well, IT was always a big part of a new building on campus as you can imagine, putting the networking in, putting the computers in, connecting it up to the rest of campus. And especially with Ames Library, adding the technology that was state of the art for libraries when this building was started about eleven years ago, and then most recently it was quite a long process in putting State Farm together because we had started the building and designed it and then it had went on a two or three year hiatus before we actually started building it and completing it. So that was a long process and many people involved in the early stages had retired or transitioned or moved on. So it was a wonderful opportunity for me to be able to stay a little longer than I had planned and to spend my last year in State Farm Hall classroom building and see that get started and see the reaction that both the students and the campus community had to that building on campus.

Krieger: What was the reason for the hiatus if you don't mind me asking?

McLane: Oh. The building was built and-and-and opened in 2013, and the President had already declared that we would not build a building with money that we didn't have, so in 2009, we were starting the building process, we put a hiatus on the building until we raised enough money that we could pay for the building as we built it and not go into debt as we had previously in some of the buildings on campus. It was just a promise that the President had made to himself and to the community that we wouldn't build a building until we could afford to pay for it.

Krieger: Makes sense.

McLane: Yeah.

Krieger: And then, random question. Does each building have its own router, or how did—well actually, two questions. How did it work before Internet went wireless? How did you connect all of the computers?

McLane: Well the entire campus has a network grid. There are cables that run under campus that connect each of the buildings. And then each of the buildings are connected to the second floor of the Center for Natural Sciences, which is our data center. So every connection on campus goes through there, one way or the other, whether it's wireless or whether it's wired, and anything that's wireless on campus connects up to a wireless router or access point in the building and then that is transferred back over to the science center and then from there out through the servers that we have.

Krieger: Oh wow.

McLane: And that's true on every campus.

Krieger: Wow. So before things went wireless when you had the routers, it would physically connect from—?

McLane: Every Ethernet cable—and I think there are like 500 Ethernet jacks in Ames Library. That may be the wrong number; there may be more than that. So this table probably has three or four Ethernet jacks in there, probably three or four on the walls somewhere—so every room has an Ethernet jack, which goes back to a hub in the building, and then the buildings are connected to the Center for Natural Sciences.

Krieger: Wow. So did you have to—?

McLane: Similar to the telephone system, where every telephone had to have a wire linked to it.

Krieger: So did you have to have a whole construction process when you guys started implanting Internet into the system?

McLane: Oh absolutely. We dug up the entire quad at least three times laying conduit and putting cables all the way across from the south side of the quad to the north side of the science center.

Krieger: That's a really extensive process.

McLane: And there are—there were—when we built the State Farm Hall, they found a set of cables that was coming from Chicago to Springfield, IL, a large bundle of cables for the Internet that was buried through Illinois Wesleyan and we had to divert for a while until we could move those cables. We had to divert them and get them out of the way where the new building was going in.

Krieger: That's rough.

McLane: So for the first 50 years of the Internet everything was done with wires. And your generation knows wireless to be much more prolific than mine did.

Krieger: I could imagine that's a little bit cheaper to install as well.

McLane: In many ways it is, because you don't have the construction process.

Krieger: Very interesting. [Pause] Is there anything that you would like to add onto what we already discussed?

McLane: Well I started talking about the history of IT and I kind of left it hanging about 1996 when Fred Miller got here and then I realized that's been 18 years ago. So it might be helpful just to add that every couple years there comes the necessity to split some of the responsibilities in IT among different groups of people. So what we started off with one person that did administrative computing, we now have three so every three or four years we'd hand it off to somebody else to do that job. Networking computing was one person back in 1994 but now there are four people in that office. Instructional technology had one but then we've added a trainer and the computer lab supervisors kind of moved over into instructional technology. Desktop support systems has always had a couple people and telecommunications and the Help Desk has always had somebody. So every couple of years we see a need to add some positions or some opportunity for IT to change and it's usually when somebody retires. I was the first one to retire in a long time and the 23 years that I've been here only one person had retired from IT and that is Jeannie Johnson, who was here before I was, who retired in about 2004, I believe. So, had a lot of people come and go, but a lot of people have stayed. When I came here, there were two people in IT. They're still here 23 years later—they were a little bit younger than I was when I came—so it's been a great opportunity for the three of us and to see it expand to I think 16 people in IT now. And then there are people in Ames Library and people in Shaw Hall who do jobs that would really be considered computer jobs somewhere else perhaps, but there is a Director of Information Technology Resources for Ames Library, Technical Resources for Ames Library

and there are people all over campus doing jobs that include computers, but they work for different departments.

Krieger: Okay. What were some of the major projects that you were working on just before you retired?

McLane: Well, the summer of 2013 which was just a year ago, we completed and opened State Farm Hall, which has 19 brand new classroom buildings fully equipped with technology. We created a brand new phone system on campus, and went away from the Copper system that we used to have to Internet connected phones all over campus. We put in an entirely new wireless system in campus and we did all of that. We also at the same time redid the Dugout in the Memorial Center and added the technology for that building, and we opened a 96-unit residence hall on Empire Street...and put all the technology in that room. So that was one summer's activity.

Krieger: Wow. Do you have any idea what you'll be working on this summer?

McLane: I know this summer they are working on the copy machines. They're putting in pay-for-print, some kind of pay-for-print. They updated the campus website this summer and just opened it up a couple of weeks ago. They updated the training and the services for publishing to webpages which is Omni Update. And I know they upgraded Moodle, which is our classroom instruction tool on campus. So there's a lot of internal things and software things happening this summer where last summer there was a lot of building and physical enhancements to IT on campus.

Krieger: In what ways do you plan to, if you do plan, to stay interactive with your old responsibilities?

McLane: Well I've always told them that I would be an active retiree and I find now that I really enjoy retirement. I loved every minute that I worked here, but it's a wonderful opportunity to move onto a different phase in your life. But there are opportunities for retirees to be involved on things like the healthcare committee. That takes a look at the healthcare needs of not only the active employees but the retirees. The Max Starkey Award committee which helps choose the person who gets the award that you mentioned earlier, and I hope to be around like every time they serve cake or have a meeting and have a good time. If they invite me I'll come and be back.

Krieger: That's a good answer. What do you believe has been your greatest contribution to IT in your time?

McLane: I think the relationship that I built with not only with the faculty who I pledged myself to serve but also with the staff on campus. I was on the very first staff council and was elected as convener, the first convener of the first staff council, and promised myself then to get to know everybody on campus that I didn't already know. So I had an opportunity to meet folks in

Physical Plant or some of the custodians that I didn't get to know. I had an opportunity while I was here to move around to different buildings on campus and made a real effort to get to know people and to find out who they are and what their passions were, what their needs were on campus which both gave me a lot of resources to call on when I needed help, I know exactly who could help me, but also gave me an opportunity to get to know people here and it made every day coming to work a joy because there really are some wonderful people here and they feel like family.

Krieger: In what ways have any multitude of people helped IT in return from outside departments?

McLane: Oh, from outside the IT departments? Well, there's no way IT could do all we do on campus without the connection that we have to the administrative offices, to the Physical Plant that bend over backwards to assist us at any time that we need anything, to the student organizations, to the faculty who support us and encourage us, and to all of those trustees, friends of the university that give us an opportunity to do the things that we do year-in and year-out.

Krieger: Okay. Is there anything you would like to see improved in the near future specifically for Illinois Wesleyan?

McLane: Not at all, I think I'll leave the answer to that question to people that are still here, and spend my time continuing those wonderful relationships that I've built. I found it to be an incredibly friendly and vibrant community. I loved every minute of being here, and the people that I worked with, despite the politics that sometimes arise working in any institution. So I'll leave that to someone else to answer.

Krieger: Good answer. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

McLane: Well I want to thank you for the opportunity of this oral interview. If there's ever an opportunity to continue or elaborate I'd be more than happy to do that. It's been a delightful experience, and I hope that more people take advantage.

Krieger: Thank you very much.

McLane: Good. Thank you, Franny.