

**INTERVIEW WITH  
CINDY HILL  
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Sloan Oral History Series**

C: Cindy Hill  
B: Bob McKersie  
G: George Roth

G: We usually start at the very beginning, and for most people it's where they first heard about MIT, and their process of coming here. It gives us a chance to get your impressions before you even came here, and how they developed. We can talk about your specific work from there.

C: That's actually a hard place to start, because I'm not here as an academic. As an administrator, I was working at Lesley College. I was in a period of my life where I was looking for the next stage, and I was just hanging out in administrative work in colleges in the meantime. I had gone through school as a pre-med, spent a year in grad school at divinity school, at a time when the Episcopal Church wasn't taking women. Then I thought I'd better think about life, so I started working at Lesley nearby, and that extended quite a lot longer than I thought it would. I wanted to make a little more money and do some other things, so I was looking at other schools.

I came to MIT certainly knowing that it existed as a great school, but not much real detail. I'd been singing in the MIT Chorale Society for a lot of years. But it was a local school and I didn't want to have to move. It was a very good school, so I was looking at opportunities here. It just so happened that there was an opportunity at Sloan.

G: What were you doing at Lesley? What was the job there?

C: I was in the Treasurer's Office as support staff. There was a support staff position here. I looked at a few of them, and the one I was most interested in was one in what was then called the Master's Program Office. Since I wasn't thinking this was my career, it really didn't have to be anything high-powered. I certainly was just looking for something that would tide me over while I figured out what my career was going to be.

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B: That was 1985.

C: Yes

B: And was it Jeff Barks?

C: I was working with Jeff Barks, and Peggy Tyler was doing admissions.  
I started out as a secretary and within nine months they had shifted how the work was going to be done, and I moved into an administrative staff position. In those days, the Master's Program Office handled all sorts of things under Jeff, and then there was an Exec Ed office that handled all sorts of things for a different type of student, under Alan White.

I did that for a number of years. Then a few years in, Peggy Tyler left and they were looking for someone to run admissions. I had just started a part-time evening MBA at Simmons, so I did not want to take on a whole new role. But that was actually good learning for an MBA-in-training, that if you don't take the job but they haven't hired someone else, you'll probably have to do the job anyway, and not get the credit for it. I did admissions until they finally hired someone, who turned out to be Rod [Garcia].

I had a hand in admissions, and I had a lot of hands in Student Services. There was a period of time when the Program wanted to set up an Alumni office, a function that had existed off and on, at that time not as a full office. We created a half-time role and I was half-time Director of Alumni and half-time still with the Master's program.

B: Was that before Paula Cronin stepped in?

C: Paula was doing a lot of things, but she wasn't doing alumni at that particular time. Jane Morse had been doing it, then that role went away. When they revamped it, it started out half-time, and it was really just the Master's level alums, it was not dealing with the Execs. Then eventually it became a full-time job, and I stayed with the Master's Program, and someone else took on the role of alumni work. I was really closely tied with the Master's and MBA students from 1985 until 1999 when things shifted definitively for me.

To back up briefly, in 1994, MIT – I think that was the time period when a lot of government grants were shifting – was facing potentially a \$10 million deficit. Their way to

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solve it was that each school had to take on \$2 million of the problem. The four other schools were laying people off and cutting back. Glen Urban was the Sloan dean, and he was looking for ways that we could make money so we didn't have to lay people off. The School did this big reorganization into a matrixed organization. That was when the fiefdoms of Master's and Executive Ed began to blend. The program offices were slimmed down into much smaller offices, and there were service organizations created that were the rows to the program columns. Moving to that matrix was a major change for us. Staff were moved from the program offices into the new service teams.

That was when Educational Services was created. Dave Weber really created that team, and then he moved on to MIT's re-engineering effort. I had stayed with the Master's Program initially and at this point I moved into the Ed Services role and did that for a few years.

G: When did Tang building start?

C: It opened in 1995...

G: So maybe in 1993?

C: Even earlier than that. In the days before the creation of Educational Services, the Master's Program Office handled course scheduling. It was while I was with the Master's Program that I got involved with designing Tang. I oversaw the assignment of classrooms and Tang was a classroom building, so I was involved in planning it. I really liked doing that; it was terrifically satisfying work.

The upshot was that when the School was ready to go forward with the large project, I was involved. We did studies for it in 1997 and 1998 with MIT, then on our own as a Sloan task force, commissioned by then-dean Dick Schmalensee. In 1999, with the Sloan report and a founding gift from Bill Porter in hand, Dick was able to get a commitment from MIT that we were going to have this building. The general sense at Sloan was this was such a large project, it needed someone full time on it representing Sloan. I was ready for a change, but I was dealing with some aging-parent issues in Maryland and didn't want to get into a massive job hunt. It was perfect for me that there was something interesting I could move into at Sloan. That's how I got to capital projects.

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G: So that was from Educational Services....

C: At that time, it was from Educational Services to Capital Projects. The general sense of the first 10 to 15 years of my time at Sloan was student-focused. Very hands-on: counseling, advising, a lot of work directly one-on-one with students. My path moved toward the role in Educational Services, which was a bit removed from the hands-on. It was more thinking about policy, thinking about issues that related to a whole class of students at a time, but still focused on serving the student community. When I talked about the building project during the Dedication in 2011, I was able to clearly see that community is one of my core values. Working with the individuals in the community in my early time at Sloan naturally led to trying to create spaces that really served the community well, and helped the community do its work with ease.

G: It might be helpful – because we don't hear a lot about the MBA program – but to hear from you in those years how community was fostered, and other efforts that were made for the MBA class. Because that really is the impact that most – the largest population is the MBA students.

C: When I first came, Miriam Sherburne was here. Miriam was the face of Sloan to generations of students. She was in the end of her career when I knew her, but she was here 50 years across her career. People would write to her who had not even come yet but had heard about her. “Miss Miriam, I would like to attend Sloan, and be part of this...” She was a marvel, and she would do everything that was needed administratively and counsel students. I think of Miriam (even though I never saw her do this) but I think of her as having her arms out to hold the community, because it was so small when she started. I think that culture of caring and full service came forward from the time with her.

In the first year I was there, we had a bump in class size because of a glitch in the home-grown computer program, which a student had created for the Admissions team. We suddenly were up at 217, which was large in those days. The challenge was: how do you make those people feel really special, still, because we're used to serving, say, 180 or so? It was a very personalized place and was important to remain high-touch. You got to know everybody's name very quickly.

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One of my memories of that first year – I came in April '85, so I knew the classes that were leaving, but my first real strong association with a class was with the one that was about to enter, the Class of '87. I knew them from all the paperwork we did because we did everything by hand. We had typewriters. You knew everybody's name. The local bank called, which in those days was Harvard Trust, and they said, "We have someone here who's trying to set up an account, but school doesn't start for another few weeks, and we don't know if she's really going to be a student. Her name is..." and they started to spell it. And I continued the spelling: "Reinstadtler," because I had already seen her name so many times. Martha was so taken that somebody already knew her name; it created a link for us for a long time.

And that was how all of us operated. You were involved in admissions, you knew who the people were before they showed up, you connected with them because they did all of their student business in that one office, and we were very close. The culture, and supporting this group of people – when you were in an Admissions meeting in those days, whether Rod or Jeff was running it, everybody who was involved in the program was reading applications. And you all were thinking, "Would I like to sit next to this person in class?" "How is this person going to add something to these other individuals I've brought in?" Everybody was someone you knew. I think that was one of the nice things about the size of the program.

B: In terms of how the office functioned, I think anybody interested in how organizations get designed would be intrigued by the shift from this early period when people were wearing a whole variety of hats, to where the matrix was put in place. It was a dramatic change. What were your feelings about how things worked, from the more informal to the shift to the matrix?

Did it seem appropriate for a growing – the School was getting larger, there was a need to become a more structured...?

C: We were doing a lot of things in the Master's Program office – and I keep calling it that because it wasn't an MBA in those days. I think the real challenge that everybody understood when the matrix came along was, if we're going to avoid laying off people because of this hit to the budget, the whole School is going to have to figure out how to do more things, and we're not going to be able to do more hiring. How on earth can we do more? The thought was, there's admissions happening on our side of the lobby (master's). Over on the other side,

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where you have Sloan Fellows and Senior Execs in those days, and maybe the MOT around then, they had their own admissions. We're doing student services things; they're doing student services things. Maybe we can combine some of the people to do the work across programs, and then you free up some people to do these other things that we have to start taking on if we're going to make more money. The challenge was that some functions worked well when you did it that way, and some didn't.

Educational Services was one new team that worked well. You can still connect with a lot of students individually, but if you're going to schedule classes and you're going to worry about the paperwork of degree requirements, you can do that across the programs.

Admissions was highly tailored to the individual programs and that part of the matrix fell apart and went back to being Master's only, with Exec Ed admissions done again by that program's staff.

There were a lot of retreats to try to help people understand, "We're going to do this together, we're going to make something positive out of this thing. We don't want to be like our colleagues across campus who are closing things down and letting people go. How can we do more without having everybody go to 15 hour days?" The logic was that we combine some functions.

You also kind of felt things would be inevitable. You have a bump-up to a class of 217 and everybody survives? Well, you don't go back the next year to 180. You stay at the higher level. The same thing happened after we opened Tang. When we were planning for the Tang wing, the notion was, "We're not planning to increase the size of the class. We just want to provide the appropriate space to the people we already have who were so squeezed." We went through a process where some of the classrooms were taken off-line, like the room that is now E51-345, which used to be an auditorium where we taught a lot of classes. We had to shut it down because that was where Tang was going to connect to the existing E51, and we were going to reconfigure that space. We had to send some classes across campus; we had to crowd other things; people had less lounge space to sit in – all that kind of stuff. We survived really well. I was not privy to the deans' decisions, but it was clear that they saw this as an opportunity once they were faced with it. We managed so well in constrained space with that many students; we could increase students with the new space. We could increase students here because we had the treaty at that point, and it was money directly to Sloan that would help us do other things.

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G: We had what at that point?

C: The treaty. Remember, all of my comments are from being the person on the street...

G: No, I like the term. I know what you're talking about, but I'd never heard it called the "treaty."

C: It was the financial arrangement that allows Sloan to keep tuition money and pay an amount to MIT, instead of all the other departments who pass all tuition money to MIT and get an operating budget in return. I know it's more complicated than that, but that's the gist of it.

You add more bodies here, you are adding directly to the bottom line. After the Tang Center opened, the size of the class grew some. And the challenge is always: if you provide high touch and a lot of close conversation with, say, 250 students, what is going to happen when you go up to 300? You need more lockers, you need more chairs, you need other space, but you also need a way to make students feel good about things.

You asked about this earlier, and I don't remember particular ways that we tried to help the students through changing sizes. I know that when we were building the Tang Center, there was a lot of noise, and it was very hard for the student groups. They had to go to classes in the same building as the construction.

G: You mean the pile drivers that I remembered....

C: Pile drivers, and a lot of stuff like that. We did try to find ways – there were more student group meetings, for one. Dave Weber may have spoken about this because he certainly was involved in it – providing more pizza. You always provide food. In those days pizza bought you a whole lot of goodwill. Trying to help people understand, "We're going to make this a better place, and we're going to do whatever we can to make you feel good while you're here, too."

B: I hadn't appreciated the growth of our Master's program was – I somehow thought it might have been more stepped, but it sounds like it was quite steady and incremental.

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C: Yes. And I'm not saying that there aren't plans out there. But there were a lot of times when growth was a result of an unexpected event. There would be a year in which there was an unexpected yield, and nobody knew why the formula didn't work, and we got all these extra students. But if we made it work, and nobody complained they were being shortchanged, then that number became the new norm.

G: Especially with "the treaty." It gives you other resources that you can then pay back.

C: Right.

G: It strikes me that people are teaching their classes, and they have the class assignments. But the caring for the whole is what Educational Services does.

C: I go back to the original Master's Program, which was basically one suite with a few offices and a few people sitting out front, and every student always came through there for everything they needed. You knew them all, you knew their quirks; I knew which student it was who could read upside-down when he was standing at my desk, and I always turned the papers over because he could see whatever I was working on. He made no bones about it. You knew all of their little quirks. They were important to us, as individuals. I think they still are, but it's easier to know that when there is one location that students go to, and it's not six different offices to check in with. The CDO was the only other real student-facing organization, and they were directly next door, really a part of our group. The students knew that they kind of "owned" that space, and they could come in any time of the day or night and ask about a class they needed to be in, or quite frankly, it might be a young woman talking about an unwanted pregnancy – it could be anything at all. It was a place to go to be cared for. I liked that we could do that.

G: Does that still exist today? You're not involved....

C: I don't have the privilege of doing that kind of work right now. I enjoy the work I do very much, but that particular focus isn't there for me. I think now the Program offices are



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somewhat separate from the Student Life office, which is separate from the Educational Services office. There are a lot of places, and now it's more a question of where, as a student, you just happened to create a good relationship, a good rapport with somebody, so that's where you go. And somebody else might have that good rapport with a different office. I believe students still get that caring, but it's a bit more scattered across teams.

B: You were in these different roles as we went to the MBA, right? And gave people the option to graduate without a thesis.

C: That was such a bonus. Do you know how that came about?

B: Tell me what you meant by "bonus."

C: We had been wanting to offer an MBA for many years, and the Institute was not interested in doing that. We are part of the Institute, so we follow their rules. We got to the point where there were a lot of courses that included good research-type projects, and we were trying to make the case for dropping the research thesis. Our students wanted to take as many courses as possible. They were finding so many interesting offerings, and they really wanted to maximize their time – and the thesis was a burden, taking up 24 credits.

Paul Healy was Deputy Dean then, and we prepared the case that our students were doing research in so many of these good project courses, we would like to exempt them from the 24-unit thesis. A lot of negotiation went on that is not part of the conversation here, but basically the bottom line from the Institute was, "OK, we get your point, but we couldn't possibly call it a Master of Science. It's not technical enough. You'll have to call it an MBA." Okay, we can live with that! That is what I meant by "bonus." We got the MBA we wanted.

And the students got what they wanted in two ways. They were already using the term "MBA" everywhere they worked because that was the coin of the realm; now it was legitimate.

B: They had to explain it.

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C: But what they also got was, without the burden of the thesis as a requirement, they could choose to do a topic if they wanted to work with somebody in particular, or they could take a lot more courses, and they were really happy with that option.

B: And that also was about the time where we really constricted the number required. We had a major curriculum change. It's given them even more flexibility to do what they wanted.

C: It did. I think other changes we've made have been really helpful. For example, the bidding system, which was so hard initially to get people to live with, has been a real benefit to MIT in ways they probably don't understand. Before bidding, when anybody could sign up for any class they wanted, MBAs would go away for their summer job and they'd come back having discovered (a) I'm not as dumb as I felt in class; I've really learned some things, and (b) look at all this stuff I still have to learn. And they would shift their course schedules in September. The first day of class, faculty would walk into class and see perhaps twice as many students as chairs. What did you as a professor do? The only answer was to eliminate students, and that meant getting rid of the non-Sloans first. Faculty had to cut students until the class was a manageable size. An MIT student who thought he/she was in the class could be booted after the first day.

Then the bidding system was put in place. Yes, we give priority to the Sloan students in bidding. But if an MIT student got a course in the bidding system, it didn't matter what changes happened over the summer. The original bidder had earned that seat and got to keep it. MIT students got to be more connected with Sloan in a way that really mattered because they could stay in the classes they wanted, if they got into them in bidding. I think we did everything we could with the bidding system to advantage Sloan students initially, so we knew we were getting them the education they needed and wanted. But the system also allowed MIT students to really participate more than had been possible before. I'm not sure that people get that part of it, because they didn't realize that in previous years so many MIT students had lost out on the opportunity to be here given how we had to manage over-enrollment. With this system, you might not get the first course you wanted, but if you did get a course, it was yours no matter what. I think that has been good for the part of our culture that wants to really build better connections with the rest of MIT, and not feel so separate.

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B: Do you have anything else before we spend a chunk of time on the new building?

C: When I was thinking about this before coming, I was thinking about the difference in how we function as a community. When I came in, we had typewriters. There was a home-grown Admissions database that resided on a main-frame in the basement of the building. We used tractor-feed letterhead for the admissions letters that rolled out. I was the first person in the whole Master's Program staff to have a desktop computer because they needed one guinea pig in the suite, and that was me. You go from that to where we are today in technology, it's just an amazing change. I was thinking about that kind of difference in how the community functions.

One of the things I miss, as we've grown larger, is that in the old E52, when we were all in it together and it was a smaller school, any business I needed to transact with a faculty member, I just went right upstairs to an office, hung out, chatted with the person. People were uniformly receptive, open, friendly, and collaborative. A bigger school, where you're doing this by email, it's easy to ignore an email and focus on the work you'd like to focus on. I miss a lot of that connection.

G: Email is more efficient, but it doesn't connect in the same way, maybe. And you have to be more efficient with as many more people you have.

C: There are a lot – I used to know every single person on the faculty and in the support team in the academic areas, and I certainly don't now. And part of that is a bigger school, we're in a lot of buildings, the work flow is done differently. It's not management by walking around anymore.

B: And people aren't in their offices as much.

C: I think it's a good thing that you can do your work from a whole lot of locations that technology provides. But it isn't necessarily a community-building kind of thing.

B: You've also seen a change, I guess, in the makeup of the student body. When you came, we didn't have as many women in the Master's program, did we?

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C: No, we had fewer women. When I first came, our international students were generally just Japanese – and I’ve glad we have had those, but I’m really glad that we’ve branched out to a whole lot more people. Our international students, in the early years, were people who probably came from money within their country. Opportunities are much wider right now. I really like how that has shifted. Our students of color – we have a lot more diversity across a lot of ranges, and I’m glad to see that.

B: OK, shifting. You said it was ... the late 1990s when you picked up the role for the new building as it was being planned?

C: Yes, unofficially, in terms of my role. I was involved in the project as early as 1997 when we started working with MIT’s planning team, and then realized that they weren’t fully aware of what we really needed. We did an internal Sloan study. I was still Director of Educational Services at that time, but focusing energy on this. We finished our internal study – Paul Asquith was chairing this task force– and Dick Schmalensee got the first gift, which was from Mr. Porter. With \$25 million and the study, Dick went to the Institute and they said “You have our blessing to be a real project. Now go back and study again, this time with an unbiased outsider.”

We hired a programmer who came up with the same set of needs we had come up with. I think MIT expected that there would be a lot of “fat” to trim off the program, but we were the first, as far as I know, part of MIT to have to pay for a building ourselves. There was no fat in the program. We wanted to build as much useful space as possible. We’d already trimmed ourselves down wherever necessary. Sloan wanted to have somebody focused on this project full-time, I wanted to do the work because I really love that creative part, so that has been terrific.

B: When did you shift to full-time?

C: I shifted in the summer of 1999.

B: And you would be reporting to who, when you took that role?

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C: I had been reporting to Alan White when I was Director of Educational Services, so I was still reporting to Alan. But I was also working in collaboration with Paul. Dick was so intrigued with the process that I would often just wander through the Dean's Office, and if he was in there, tell him a couple of interesting nuggets about the process as we were going through.

It was a very interesting time. It was a job that hadn't existed before, so we created it. It actually was—for all the collaboration—it was also a tremendous amount of autonomy for me. I got a taste for what it must be like for you as faculty because everybody was so nice to me, and took my ideas right away—the contractors, and the architects, and the designers.

I worked with a lot of committees. The bottom line, though, is that it felt as if the School said, "Here's \$150 million, have a good time."

B: Sketch out the playing field here. You've got Paul Asquith and his committee, you've got MIT, you've got architects. Say a little bit more about the picture...

C: I'm sure that there will be people who think that they had a more central role than I'm going to assign to them, because this is coming from my lens. I just want to say that right up front. I don't mean to disregard anybody's involvement in the process.

Paul and I worked very closely. There was a building committee that he chaired, and at one point John Sterman was in a co-chair role with him.

G: This was the faculty committee?

C: It included several faculty and there was a student assigned at the time. We then picked up some people from SHASS and Econ, because in the early stages of the project, we were thinking they would be part of the building and we were still looking at different locations.

The very first step was a planning study. That went through quite well. We were working closely with MIT Facilities throughout all of this, and for them it was challenging because this was a new way of doing business for them. They were used to running the projects themselves, but since we were putting in well over \$100 million, Dick said, "Cindy has to be in all the meetings." They were very gracious about it, and they learned how to work with me, and I

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with them, really well. It turned out to be a terrific set of relationships. But this was new territory for them, to change their process, and I think they were really good about it.

We went through them looking for an architect, and got more Sloan people involved in the choice of architect, so it wasn't just the president and the president's architecture consultant from the School of Architecture and people from Facilities; we were there, too. We were able to pick the architect that we most wanted here at Sloan. So that was a great process for us.

The architect's first job was to do site selection, and that was quite challenging because Charles Vest wanted us elsewhere on campus, thinking it would be good for Sloan to be closer to central MIT.

B: The Hayward Garage?

C: Hayward Lot, yes. And we wanted to be here next to the Sloan building. We liked being here already, and we saw many good things about being at this part of campus. The architect's job was to provide data, because one of the many beauties of being a part of MIT is that data rules, and people respect data, whether it's the answer they hoped for or not. Again, this was part of the entrée that I got to have in this role, I sat in the final meeting across the table from Dr. Vest and watched his face as the architects presented their case for both sites, very clearly showing that this site had many more advantages for the School. There were challenges for the Hayward site because a street ran through it that was still partly owned by Cambridge and always would be, so we would have had to have the building bifurcated to allow fire trucks to go through and stuff, and there were many other challenges, too. I watched his face as they presented the data. I saw him accept that it wasn't going to be the answer that he had hoped for, but he really understood that the data supported this, so we got our site. A week later was 9/11. It was a terrible time to begin a major project and try to fundraise.

B: Oh, so we're up to 2001?

C: Yes. 2001. We started our part at Sloan in 1999. We got the programmer in 2000, and toward the end of 2000 we hired the architects and they did their study in 2001, culminating that summer in this site. It was the very first week in September because we had to wait until

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everybody came back on campus for the final presentation. Coming just before 9/11 meant it was very hard to have a big kickoff and fundraising blaze of glory. You just can't do it at that point.

We were already in this great marriage with the architects. You hire people like that because you're going to be joined at the hip with them for many years. I loved our architects. I still keep in touch with them.

We continued going forward with the design. This is where the decision at Sloan to have somebody do the role I was doing made a lot of sense because I was the client rep. I had been at Sloan long enough to understand a lot of things about the culture. Things like: "these two groups may look different, but they do this one thing together, so what if we co-locate them? Wouldn't that be great? Wouldn't that help them? They might like this. That kind of touches what those folks do...." It was about bringing together what, on the surface, could look disparate, into this whole of a woven community.

One of the things I learned about in the process, and needed to push in my role, was the notion of sustainability. When the project started, I knew very little about it. But John Sterman was part of our committee, and John was gung-ho green.

I had worked very closely with John for years when I was with the Master's Program. When we got to the building project, I might not have known what "green" was, but I knew how much I trusted John, and he believed in it so I was going to believe in it. I would sit in the meetings with the designers, and every now and then, I'd raise my hand and say, "Green! Green!" to make sure his point got in there. Then I learned, over time, what it meant to add green to the building, to make it sustainable.

B: You had architects who were also quite in line with this concept, right?

C: Right. And we looked for that in particular when we hired them. And the idea of promoting green before I really understood what it was – I was representing a contingent at Sloan that wanted it – I was building a building for the community, not for me. You can tell that by looking around because you don't see a lot of red in the building, and red is my color.

The job was trying to figure out what people needed. We had a lot of committees, and we had focus groups and town meetings. I had to distill that down and share it with the architects, then take "architect-speak" and translate it back to the community. That was one purpose of my role.

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We designed the project with a process that was not commonly used at that time, though it was certainly known about, and that's an integrated systems design. Instead of a process where an architect draws something and then, as they say, "throws it over the transom" to the engineers and says "Make it so...", we were generally working together. So a topic might come up, and in the room there would be people who could say, "We want this, but here's a challenge with building it. What can you do to shift it? What if we tried it this way? Or what if we did it that way?" We were really coming up with better ideas all the time.

The example I've used other places is: think about glass in the windows. Start with the lighting designer. We had a very creative fellow from the West Coast who wanted to know how much light was going to come through that glass and what impact it would have on the light in the room. The structural engineer cared about whether it was single, double, or triple paned because of the weight on the foundation of the building. The architect wanted to know what it was going to look like from the outside. Our sustainability consultant had his set of concerns, including heat transmission on the HVAC system and energy use. I wanted to know how it would impact the people in the rooms. Some of the glass we looked at was highly reflective, and I thought, "If I'm a PhD student or a professor here quite late at night working away, and every time I move my arm it's reflected in the glass like a mirror, how distracting is that going to be?" Each of us had a way to think about the topic, that we could share in the moment and come up with well-thought-out choices. I think integrated systems design was a terrific way to go.

We did a lot of green, and I know John Sterman's been working a long time on trying to understand the cost of it. I think one of the challenges for him was that there were so many things that we decided so early in the process, it's hard to ferret out whether this was an add-on cost or not.

For example, there are things in the terrazzo floor that are sustainable (recycled glass). There are also things that are there because of beauty, and that's the same kind of piece. The chips of glass make a quite beautiful floor when they reflect the light; they are also a sustainable feature.

So sustainability really was embedded in the process.

G: This light here... I've just pointed to the window of the conference room where we are meeting....



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C: This is called fritting,<sup>1</sup> and it can be etched or it can be film. It's custom-designed with a wave pattern because the architects were thinking of the river. The value of fritting is that a lot of light can pass through. But you can't really see a lot of what's happening out there. Once we turn the lights on in this room, something about how it all works, those in the hall can't see a lot of what's happening in here. You've got privacy, but you've also got light.

G: ...so it's not frosted or something like that.

C: No. We have a lot of light coming into the building. The centerpieces, for example, this structure is four clusters on a floor. Faculty were clear in our meetings that they wanted a sense of intimacy in these clusters. They didn't want a ton of people all together where the space felt too vast; they also did not want what I've seen in a lot of schools where there are big, heavy doors that are imposing that close off a suite, and you have to figure out whether you have a reason to go down that hall or not. They wanted a free flow. To get the clusters of 12-15 offices, we created what we call "soft boundaries." Between two office clusters is a segment with two glassy, small meeting rooms to get light into the building. It's the kitchenette, which draws people together for coffee, so it's kind of a natural soft boundary between the two clusters, but it stays connected.

G: 16 of those clusters.

C: Yes. And the two-story stairs in between office floors – an open stair can only go between two floors, by fire code – were also to help people feel really connected closely to each other up and down, and not just side to side.

B: The integrated system approach got all the stakeholders together and problem-solving occurred. Having said that, were there some moments where you hit a bump in the road?

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<sup>1</sup> Fritted glass is finely porous glass through which gas or liquid may pass. It is made by sintering together glass particles into a solid but porous body. This porous glass body is called a frit. [Wikipedia, 8/2015]

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C: We had an extremely good team. We also did this in two stages. We went through an initial design stage, and at the same time a different team at Sloan was fundraising and trying to deal with the aftermath of 9/11 and the economy. We worked for a couple of years, and it was clear that the design was zooming along, but the fundraising was difficult in that climate. Dick was very smart, because if he had kept going like that, the Institute would have eventually shut him down. Instead, Dick went to MIT's senior management and told them we would take a hiatus on the project, to let fundraising catch up. That was a very smart, political move on his part, because he saved them all the problem and embarrassment of having to close him down.

The project was on hiatus for two years.

B: And those were what years?

C: That was 2003 until 2005. We had gone through schematic design, which includes having a design concept and working out all the engineering factors. Normally the next step would be creating the construction documents, but we stopped at that point.

Fundraising was continuing to go on. They were using what is nicknamed "eye wash" -- the lovely watercolor pictures that architects create to inspire donors. Thankfully, rather than lay me off for those two years, the deans assigned me elsewhere.

G: I was going to ask what you did in those two years?

C: I did special projects for the deans. I worked with Paul Osterman, who was in the Dean's Office at that point. There was a curriculum review for the core. The School created SIP (Sloan Innovation Period). There was the joint venture with Mexico and the International Faculty Fellows from Mexico. I worked on those and other projects.

G: There's the real advantage of your breadth of knowledge, to be able to just step in to help others and not just be a client representative from the architectural side.

C: I was a client rep because I knew the community, so thankfully I knew enough about the community that I could help with some other projects in the meantime.

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We came back together in 2005. It was not intentional that we took two years out. I think Dick felt we might take only one. But that, as luck would have it, was the time when Chuck Vest stepped down. A lame duck president is not going to restart a project, and a brand new president is not going to start a project until she knows the team. Susan Hockfield wanted to wait and get to know us, so the hiatus took two years.

Once President Hockfield was fully established at MIT and we had been able to bring her up to speed on the project, we were able to start work again. We had a new head of Facilities, we had a new Provost, we had all sorts of new people. But Paul, Dick, and I were still here working on this when we restarted.

Our design architects were Moore Ruble Yudell (MRY), from Santa Monica. They originally paired with a local team, Sasaki, as the executive architect. The executive architect manages the contracts, they handle the consultants, they create the final construction documents. The design architect does the visioning of the picture, the real designing. A lot of work for both, but you want a local firm to handle some of those more nits-and-grits pieces.

During the hiatus, Sasaki also had changes in staff, and it made sense to reconsider that pairing, since our original team from there was gone. MRY, MIT Facilities, and I interviewed a few teams and ultimately chose Bruner/Cott, a local Cambridge firm, to be the executive architects. We started up the new team; again, a great team. We began moving, at that point, on finishing the design.

The Institute asked us to change our location a little bit at this point. Earlier in our design process, we had looked at getting rid of the Dewey library and placing our new building partly on that site. The challenge with that was, if we took the library down, we had to pay for a new one. That added to the cost. When we came back from hiatus, the Institute said, "We're okay with you going forward. We don't think you're ever going to raise enough money to also build a library, so you can't knock it down. You have to change where you're located. They shifted us on the site.

Some people will say that was a big problem. I think that was actually one of the best moves that happened. The reason is, the original design had us behind E56, and we were supposed to be able to take E56 down and have this massive front lawn looking out to the river. I will bet you any amount of money that in the economic climate we were in by then, they would not have let us take E56 down, and we would have had this beautiful building facing an ugly old building blocking sight of the river. The fact that the new location was on top of E56 is the only

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reason we got it to come down. The new location is between the historic buildings E60 and E52, connecting them and curving back toward Main Street. A great little building. It was a great project.

G: That explains those plans I saw, and what happened.

C: You asked if there were difficult points. One of my favorite meetings came out of a difficult point. Every time we got a construction estimate during our design phase, it seemed it was \$20 million over budget. We would VE (value engineering), which means we would cut things out, and six months later we would get an estimate, and it would be nearly \$20 million over budget again. After another of those disappointments, we had a meeting at the local architects. Twenty people around the table, and perhaps three of us were women. I had a larger voice in those meetings because I was the client. We were all frustrated because nobody wanted to give an inch. I looked around the table and said, "We're not building this building." And everybody looked stunned. I said, "At this price, we are not building it. Here's the piece I'm going to take out. What are you taking out?" Everybody went around the table, and they each gave a little bit, and we got it back in line. I had a lot of fun at that meeting.

G: Hmm, did you take Bob's negotiations course?

B: Good experience! With the two-year hiatus, and then back, there wasn't any delay because the fundraising didn't meet the timetable?

C: I don't think there was any extra delay at that point. We had to go back into the design, because having changed the location and shape of the building we had to start a lot of things over again. We very quickly repeated the Concept design stage. We had to do all of Schematic over. Dick was negotiating whatever he had to negotiate that if we didn't have all the money from donors, he had it in some back pocket. It all worked out there.

The Institute had gone back and forth many times on parking – which was to be at their expense. It had finally been left that they were going to do an underground garage, which was a great thing, but added a year to the project. We started design again in 2005 and were

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ready to break ground in 2007. The first year was the garage, and then we built the next two years, and we opened in 2010.

A lot of political maneuvering happened along the way, I'm sure, that was, as Dick used to say, "over my pay grade." I did my deals and trading and things with the Facilities project manager and the architect and the contractor, but I knew that there were political issues at the Institute level that I could provide data for, and I could help shape the case, and then other people would fight those battles.

B: The underground garage was also because of Cambridge and its requirements for off-street parking?

C: Well, we wanted a lot of parking space. We had gone a long time without having any because the former parking lot was destroyed to set up the building site. The longer MIT went without having available the number of spaces Cambridge had allotted, the more they ran the risk that Cambridge would decrease the allocation. "You're doing just fine without it, you must not need it." We certainly wanted to replace the parking that had been lost. And the question was: where would it go? It had been a very large parking lot. They talked about a structure above ground across the street, and that's not a long-term answer because above-ground space is where one puts buildings. That would have been taken down fairly soon. Underground was the only answer, and thankfully they came to that.

B: And MIT had to chip in.

C: MIT paid for that fully. And throughout the VE process, and estimates, and budgets – we used to get 80 pages of tiny, tiny line items – I would look for anything to make sure it was in the right place. One day I said to Dick, "I earned my salary today. I found a line item for "transfer beams" under Structural Steel, for \$1 million. You don't have transfer beams at the first-floor level unless you're transferring the weight because there is something underneath. So that's a garage cost." It was just trying to help sift out which was ours and which was theirs.

B: Good.

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G: And then a year, of course, to build the garage.

C: It's a 100-year building. That was part of our philosophy as we were designing it. With that, you are thinking about what's sustainable. Part of sustainability for a long-term building is flexibility.

One of the perspectives I brought is that I had spent many years in the small-renovations-to-create-more-space role at Sloan, so I knew that things were always being sliced and diced for other purposes. That contributed to the notion that the offices, which we intended to be as similar to possible to each other, should be flexible. With different furniture, they can accommodate one professor, two *emeritae* or non-teaching visitors, or 3 PhDs. We can now change them quickly as needed.

We had a lot of people who wanted horseshoe tiered classrooms because that's what they were used to. We also had a vocal but small group of people who wanted a flat floor classroom. The flat-floor people said it was the wave of the future; the tiered people said, "flat is a flash in the pan, it's going to be gone soon." We built all the classrooms with ceilings high enough that they could be turned into tiered rooms if that was the choice somewhere down the road. Additionally, the tiered classrooms were built without the mechanical systems being put into the tiering under the seats. If you flattened them, you wouldn't have to re-do the ventilation and the airflow and the heat and such. Either one could be changed with less problem in the future.

It was looking for ways for it to really be a hundred-year building.

B: From a teaching, pedagogic point of view, how has that played out in terms of the building and the two groups, one wanting tiered and one wanting flat? How is that sorting out?

C: I think more people are learning how to use flat and would be interested in it. The challenge for us is that one of the two flat-floor rooms that we have is too large for some classes. At the time we built it, it made sense. Nowadays, people are happier teaching in flat rooms because they've learned how to do it. It would be great to have our flat room smaller. We can't really go back and gerry-rig in a moveable wall that provides enough sound attenuation to make it possible to teach in both rooms at the same time. What we did at move-in was to buy rolling

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whiteboards, so if people wanted to, they could cordon it off a little bit. But it would be great to build more classrooms elsewhere now. Some of them would be tiered and some flat, but perhaps a more appropriate size.

G: What is the appropriate size?

C: I think there are classes in negotiation and communications that would be happier in a flat room for 50 to 60. A room that is officially 110 people feels large for some of those smaller classes. And you don't want to just add bodies to fill it up; you want the conversation tighter. That's my guess, as a non-teacher.

G: I was curious as to what you were thinking for that number.

B: I haven't even been in that room. I've been in one flat one in Tang, 325 is it?

C: No, it would be on the other side. 395, I think.

B: Where's the flat one in this building?

C: It's right next to the elevators on the second floor on the balcony side, open to Memorial Drive; E62-233.

Wanda would love to be teaching in a smaller sized flat-floor room. She's someone who comes to mind when I think about this, and there are others. But it was a challenge how to get as many classrooms as we could on a floor. You said earlier, sometimes people can't understand floor plans when they see them? It's like the numbers. You can say to somebody, "I've got 2000 square feet on this floor and I don't know what to do with it." Well, it makes a big difference if it's 2 x 1000. You can't put a classroom into 2000 square feet if it isn't a big rectangle. Trying to figure out how to be efficient with your use of space when you've got little corners and pockets to deal with can be challenging at times too.

B: Well, it's a great building, and I like my classroom – 250. I also liked 175.

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C: Which is coming back in a new version when we open the building.

B: And there will be a classroom?

C: There will be a classroom on the first floor of E52 when it opens. A Registrar's Office classroom, they are very quick to remind me.

B: Oh yeah, I got bumped out of there the last year it was there.

G: And when will that be there?

C: It will be finished at some point in late fall 2015, and the question is: Do we move in at the end of term, or do we move in during IAP? That's not fully decided right now. We've been planning for the IAP move.

B: Now, there may be some things that you may have jotted down that we have not had the wisdom to ask about??

C: There were a couple of things that I thought about.

One was, you know how you sometimes have a day when you kind of hate everything about your job? One of the thoughts that got me through some of those days was recognizing that in 30 years at MIT, some of the dearest and most important people in my life have come to me because I've been here. They might be people I met here at work, or perhaps they're in my life because I was here when I chose to go to an evening MBA program and that's how I met them. Being at Sloan has had a really deep impact in all parts of my life.

The other thought was, I used wonder what I'd do in retirement. This building is my baby, so I worry about how it looks at all times. Sometimes there are more weeds in the gardens than I like, and I pull them up as I walk by. I imagine that in retirement I'll go out into the Sloan gardens here at E62 and I'll pull weeds half a day throughout the week. People would come out and say, "Cindy, how did we used to do this? And what was the genesis of this issue?" I would answer these arcane questions about Sloan's history. They might not do what I suggest, but they could at least say, "Well, we checked into the history of it."



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B: The garden is down here?

C: We have them on both sides.

B: No, I mean the roof gardens.

C: No, you're not allowed out on the roof gardens. If you were allowed out on the roof garden, we would have had to have a high, solid railing all the way around, and all the third floor offices would have looked only at wall.

But the Gruber Court in front, what I call the North Garden on the other side, and the Fish Terrace – we have lots of green space all around here, and I can go out and I can weed it every day!

G: We always ask people one question. As you reflect back over these 30 years, and maybe still years to come, What do you think you will be proudest of?

C: I'm proudest of helping the community do its best. That's what I would like to believe I did when I was counseling and guiding students, and it's what I hope the building does for people.

G: I have heard that from the very beginning, your concern about culture, and being together and closeness to the community. I heard that in the background with all that you've done with the building, and having the space promote that into the future.

C: I hope it does.

G: Thank you.

B: Yes, it's been a great story. Thank you for agreeing to do it.

END OF INTERVIEW