



Lisa Templeton Oral History Interview, August 6, 2015

Title

“OSU Becomes a Leader in Online Education”

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Valley Library, Oregon State University.

Summary

In the interview, Templeton discusses her family background and upbringing in Cincinnati, her undergraduate studies at Ohio State University, and her relocation to Corvallis in 1994. She then shares her memories of the state of the university upon her arrival, her work as a marketing and membership director for the OSU Alumni Association, her experiences as a master's degree student in the OSU College of Education, and her involvement with the capital campaign that resulted in the building of the CH2M Hill Alumni Center.

Templeton next describes her initial move to OSU Extended Campus, known then as Distance and Continuing Education. She recalls the state of distance education prior to the Internet era, details the work that went into the creation and delivery of OSU's first online courses, and outlines the further development of a broader curriculum from there. She also speaks to the changes in institutional culture that were required for many faculty and staff to accept the move toward online learning.

From there, Templeton recounts the early phases of her work as director of Extended Campus and details the most significant issues that she needed to address as leader of the unit, including the implementation of a funding model that incentivized the creation of new online coursework within OSU's academic colleges.

The remainder of the interview is largely devoted to a discussion of the inner-workings of Extended Campus. Templeton describes the unit's activities administering the Open Oregon State program. She also shares her thoughts on the learning environment experienced by most online students, including lab work, 24/7 online tutoring, and special services for veterans. She likewise discusses the means by which new courses are created, vetted and approved; the accreditation process for online programs; the technical infrastructure deployed by OSU Ecampus; and changes in the types of feedback being directed toward the practice of online learning.

The session concludes with an overview of MOOCs at Oregon State, Templeton's hopes for the future of Ecampus, and her thoughts on the current direction of the university.

Interviewee

Lisa Templeton

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/templeton/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay, today is August 6th, 2015 and we are with Lisa Templeton, the executive director of Extended Campus here at OSU, and we're going to talk to her mostly about Ecampus and online learning, but we'll start out by trying to develop a bit of a biographical sketch. So, if you can give us a sense of where you were born and kind of your upbringing.

Lisa Templeton: Sure, I'd be happy to. I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and I did my undergraduate work at Ohio State University, and I then kind of started my career, moved around to different positions within the United States, and my husband decided to do his doctoral work here at Oregon State University, and that's what brought me here. So, I came out here and started my career. I started working with the OSU Alumni Association; I was the director of marketing. I have a background in marketing and communications. I was the marketing director for the Alumni Association before I took on the position as a marketing director of OSU Extended Campus, which at the time was OSU's distance and continuing education unit before it evolved, and then went on and decided to get my masters in Adult Education, as I was really enjoying this field, and earned my masters in Adult Education with my focus really on online education. And we didn't plan on staying in Corvallis. The plan was my husband was going to get his doctorate and we were going to move on, and really kind of fell in love with this community and the university, and twenty-one years later, still here.

CP: Yeah. Okay, we'll drill into those, some of those topics in a little bit greater detail here in a second, but I'm interested in knowing a bit more about your undergraduate experience. So, what did you study at Ohio State?

LT: I studied Landscape Architecture and City and Regional Planning.

CP: And so, you pursued that for a while, I gather, after?

LT: For a very short while, which is really interesting; it always, it's always a great conversation piece when people ask me that, you know, "how did you go from there to there?" and I always tell that to my kids too, when they ask that question about what do you study. I'm like "study something that's interesting and you'll find where you want to go." I mean, when I was a child online education, what I'm doing, director of online education, wasn't even in my wildest dreams, that I would be doing this. So yeah, I worked in landscape architecture for a very short time, but the skills I gained from there; project management, leadership, design, really carried me in a variety of directions, and I actually started continuing my education in marketing and communications and did a variety of things over the years and worked professionally in a for-profit, as well as nonprofits, doing marketing and communications before I came to the university and did that.

And educationally, when I was doing marketing and communications for distance and continuing education, I really was using the skills that I had gained throughout my career that have nothing to do with my prior education in this new world of online education, because at that time no one had any type of degree in online education. This was such a new field that my peers and colleagues, we were all coming in with different backgrounds and figuring out this field as it was growing.

CP: Another quick question about your upbringing; I'm interested just in knowing a bit more about Cincinnati as a community for you growing up.

LT: Yeah, Cincinnati was I think just a great city to grow up in. My father and grandparents emigrated from Germany during World War II, and I think they, when they immigrated here, they settled on Cincinnati because it had strong German community, and we had a very close-knit family in Cincinnati. Yeah, I went to just a great public high school in Cincinnati, still keep in touch with friends from there; went to Ohio State, so definitely have that whole land grant mission from having my undergrad there, and then my graduate work here at Oregon State. Have most of my family still in Ohio. I think they've forgiven me now for moving to Oregon, but I'm not quite sure. But really, like I said, it was a great place to grow up, but I knew it wasn't where I wanted to live. My husband and I both had visited the west coast and had fallen in love with it and knew this is where we would end up, somewhere up west.

CP: Yeah. Was that sort of German immigrant culture prevalent in your upbringing?

LT: Absolutely, yeah, definitely. You know, my father came and grandparents came not speaking English, and really having to start over and do—I guess it's the work ethic, I think that's what I gained from there, is a very strong work ethic; working, setting goals and figuring out your way to get there, and I think I gained that from my grandparents and father. So, yeah it was definitely kind of a tight German community that I grew up with, where my grandparents were living, and just I went to a really, I think, just a great high school in Cincinnati. It's Walnut Hills High School, and it wins awards always. It was a pretty diverse high school; it was a public high school but they took students from each area of Cincinnati and bussed them in. So, you had—it was very multicultural, my best friend from high school lived forty miles from my house, so of course I always picked the friend who lived farther away. But it was a great school, and I think it was just kind of a great introduction to education. I was college-prepared toward high school, so most of the students there, I don't remember the percentage, but it was like ninety-something went on to college. So, it was academically challenging, and I think really diverse and really had a big impact on me.

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CP: So, you came to Corvallis, your husband was pursuing a PhD, what was the area?

LT: Geology.

CP: Okay.

LT: And now he's a professor at Western Oregon University.

CP: What was it—I take it you hadn't been to Corvallis before?

LT: It was really funny, because I had visited once. So, we were at the time, before I moved here, we were just dating, but I thought Oregon State University, the big land grant in Oregon, would be similar to Ohio State, the big land grant in Ohio, and for those of you who have been to Ohio, Columbus and Corvallis, there's actually not much similar about it. And I was living at the time in Toronto, working for a company that worked for nonprofits in marketing and fundraising. And we decided to get married, and we married in Cincinnati and I was living in Toronto and my husband was living in Corvallis, and then we came out here and it was a culture shock, because I had lived in Toronto, which was a very multicultural city. You know, you get on the subway or the streetcar; there are five different languages being spoken, very dynamic, things were open late at night and I got here and it was very shocking at first, when I first moved to Corvallis. I think Corvallis has really grown and evolved in the twenty-one years that I've been here and is a very different place than when I first moved here, and I've really grown to love it.

CP: So, this is about 1994?

LT: Yes, exactly.

CP: What did you think of the university at that point? What was your sense of where OSU was at? I mean, it had come out of a very significant budget crisis four years earlier and was in a period of transition, I'm sure, at the time.

LT: It was. You know, I had never thought of my career, when it began, trying to plan what are you going to do with your life, I had never thought "this is what I'm going to be doing; I'm going to be working at a university and doing this type of work." I just feel like I've always been very fortunate to run into good people along the way, and I think that's happened here at the university. When I first got here and I started looking for work, everywhere I went said "wow, we could use you on our board, your skillset would be great, we could use you as a volunteer." You know, I need a job too. And I basically knocked on some doors, made some calls, and everyone was welcoming. It was just amazing to me the kindness, and people really willing to talk to me about the university and where I could fit in, where I could contribute.

So yes, there were budget cuts going on, and I think I might have been naïve to some of what was happening because I was focused—when I started with the Alumni Association, we were working on the capital campaign to build the Alumni Center. I was heavily involved in that project. So, we were really focused on kind of the next evolution of the Alumni Association and the Alumni Center. And I've worked with great leadership there and great volunteers. So, I always have told people, and continue to tell people, that OSU is a fabulous place to work with, fabulous people, and I really do believe that.

CP: Now, were you a student and working at the same time?

LT: I was, which is really, I think, very advantageous in my position, because in Extended Campus we are serving adult learners, and I was one of them. I had always planned on going on to graduate school, and we made the decision in my family that my husband was going to go first, and then we had two kids, and my story is very similar to the learners that we serve. And I kept putting it off and putting it off, and then I was very frustrated with myself. So, I had made a decision; when my son started kindergarten, I was going to go on for my masters. And we, you know, I looked at a variety of different programs. I knew what I wanted to do was get into Adult Education. I really enjoyed the field. I was working at Extended Campus, I wanted to better understand educational theory, I wanted to better understand instructional design; I wanted to better understand online education.

And again, with the whole online education, there wasn't much at the time. So, I decided to go on and I researched quite a few programs, and I would get the masters, my masters in Adult Education, and I really focused any work that I could focus, my projects, on online education and doing research on education and developing an online course. So, it was very hands-on for me. And I was one of those learners; I worked full time, I came home, helped with my kids with their homework, put them to bed, got back on the computer and did my work.

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And this is very much the story of our students, and I think it's really helped me in this field, which I've been in now for quite some time; fifteen years in online education, and leading the organization as an executive director since 2008, '9; understand who we're serving, because again, I was one of them, trying to juggle it all. A lot of our students, whether it be their first degree, whether they're trying to do their undergraduate degree or their masters or their doctorate, none of them are just doing it in that sense. They are all juggling things; career, family, military, carrying for older parents. So it's, I think was a really great experience for me to kind of go through that as well.

CP: So, just trying to construct the timeline here, I think I might have my years wrong, but it sounds to me like you were doing the masters work when you were working for Extended Campus.

LT: Correct. When I was in my—

CP: Okay, so it was after the alumni job?

LT: It was, yeah. It was when I was in my marketing position.

CP: Okay. So, yeah a little bit off there. Tell me a little bit more about the research that you did as a grad student.

LT: The work that we did, I really focused on looking at, was more of a market research, and our focus was—and it still continues to be—looking at the needs of adult learners. And I focused and we continue to focus on the state of Oregon. Now we do a lot of market research and we use some market research partners to look throughout the country, as well. But what we focused on, and what I was really interested in, and still are, what—if you are an adult learner in the state of Oregon and if you are thinking of going back to school to get that degree, first, are you open to the idea of online education, and if you're open to the idea of online education, would you prefer it be fully online, would you prefer it be hybrid, and if so, what kind of degree are you interested in, and learning a little bit more about the study patterns and preferences.

And so, we've continued to look at that at Extended Campus, and so I think we have a really good gauge of what Oregonians who are open to the idea of online education; what they're looking for, what kind of programs, and the design of the program. So, that was really what I started, when I was in graduate school. We were really focusing, and I really applied it to my job, which was great to be able to do that, to have that opportunity to look at the state of Oregon and the needs of adult learners. And as I said, now we look nationally also and see what are the degrees that are in demand. And it really helps us in our decision-making at Extended Campus, about what we're going to develop. It takes a lot of time, a lot of energy and a lot of resources for faculty and departments to develop online programs, quality online programs. And it's not "if you build it, they will come," it's not magical like that. You have to know what they want, and then you build it and then they come.

So, that was really what I was focusing on. And then I also really was looking at design. We did a lot in curriculum design and I designed an online orientation for my unit, which was really fun to do, because I wanted—at the time we were losing Blackboard. Blackboard is our learning management system, and we had a unit where I realized we were talking with students who were using Blackboard, and many of our staff and faculty had never been in Blackboard, and yet our students, this was their learning environment. So, we developed an online orientation for all employees in Blackboard and we made it just very fun and simple, but it was a way for everyone in the unit to go and take a quiz in Blackboard, to post something in Blackboard, to have a conversation in Blackboard just like our students did, so they could, again, get a little perspective of what our students are going through. So, that was some of the ways that I kind of tried to bring online education into my adult education program.

CP: Did you have a mentor within in the College of Education that you were working with on this research, or somebody who was helping guide you?

LT: I think at the time the project that I worked on was under Darlene Russ-Eft. She was there. Jennifer Webster was a faculty member that I can't say enough about in the program. She was a great leader of the program. I worked with a variety of different faculty in the different areas, and have kept in touch with many of them over the years. They're colleagues now.

CP: Yeah. We're actually going to interview Darlene for this project later this summer.

LT: Okay. Excellent.

CP: Okay, well as we continue to jump around back and forth in time, I'm interested in talking just a bit about the alumni relations position. You mentioned you worked on the Alumni Center project. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

[0:15:09]

LT: Sure. When I was hired at the Alumni Association, I was hired as their marketing director and membership director. And so, I did a variety—this is really far back in my brain, so I'm going to have to remember what I did, but we did a lot of like infinity programs, membership campaigns, raised dollars for scholarships for students; I managed a lot of the communications for those programs and the marketing efforts for events and helped with that as well. And then we were in the process of a capital campaign for the new Alumni Center, and I took on a marketing role in support for fundraising for the team. There was a development director who was in charge of it. And then there was a small group of us who I can't even begin to tell you the amount of hours we put in with events and getting the center opened and ready, and tours.

So, just very involved, because we were a small team and we were all kind of doing a little bit of everything to get the center to where it was ready to open, and it was really exciting. I still to this day, I go down to the center, there's still some people who still work there that I used to work with, and I just take a lot of pride in that building, and when I see it full and I go there for conferences when we're hosting conferences there, because it was, like I said, a lot of work at the time. But I think it really needed a facility for the university, for our alums. I remember when we held our first alumni event there. It was really exciting. I remember the launching of it when we opened the building, I remember the first University Day. I remember I said "let's open up and have the breakfast and lunch here at the Alumni Center," because it used to always be at LaSells. So, that'll get all the faculty into the building for the first time. And now that's an annual event they do. They bring people in every year.

So, we came up with a lot of creative ways to engage faculty and bring the university to the center to open it, and then we also, I manage a lot of outreach and marketing to get other entities around the state to maybe have a conference here in Corvallis and use the Alumni Center. So, it was kind of both using the center for alumni events, community events and university events, and then also reaching out and bringing outside entities in. It was a labor of love. Like I say, I still go there and I feel a lot of pride in that building, but it was also a heck of a lot of work and a lot of time. The team members who were a part of that know that we spent more hours together than we did with our families at that time.

CP: So, this was the primary focus of that chapter of your career, I'm guessing?

LT: Definitely, definitely. It was an exhausting but rewarding chapter.

CP: Yeah. Were you able to engage much with the founders of CH2M HILL? I believe they're the ones who...

LT: Yeah, you know not too much personally. A couple of them had come to the building and were part of some of the events that we had, but I wasn't interacting with them personally too much.

CP: Well, if my notes are correct about this, you moved to Extended Campus around the year 2000, is that correct?

LT: Correct, correct. What precipitated that? I think it was at a point with—I like change, I like challenges, I felt very good about where we were at the Alumni Association, I felt very good we've got a marketing plan in place, we had an operations plan in place, things were going well, it seems like a good time to kind of think about the next chapter of my life. And also they were crazy hours and I had a young family, and that was definitely a piece of it. We had a lot of evening events, weekend events; every football game day we had events. So, it was a lot. So, I was recruited—or I shouldn't say recruited—I was contacted by someone at the university who said "there's this position open at"—what was called Distance and Continuing Education at the time—"I think you should look at it."

And I looked at it and I thought you know, this is intriguing. It's a totally different area, but again, I think my skills would be very applicable. And it was a lot of market research, which I really enjoyed, as well as marketing. And so, I applied and accepted, got the offer and accepted the position. And it was a really interesting time, because it was a time of transition. We had just had a new dean, Bill McCaughan, who had entered the picture then. And so, he was building a new team, and I think it was a really transformational time with the Distance and Continuing Education, and we turned into Extended Campus in 2002. And in that time our leadership team, we really kind of started charting the future. And I don't know if we knew it, and I give Bill McCaughan a great deal of credit about where we would be today in 2015. I don't know if we could have dreamt that big. But those couple years were fascinating and exhilarating and challenging, as we were kind of starting this kind of new world of online education for Oregon State, the state of Oregon and beyond.

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CP: So, what had this division, or what had they been doing before? I mean, we're bridging to the period of online education, but what was going on that you're bridging from?

LT: It was definitely more of a traditional continuing education unit, so—and that's, again, typical amongst our peers, as well. So, what happened is we would create programs such as, I think when I came in we had a web design program, we had a leadership program, and they were site-based. So, what we would do is have faculty drive to Salem or to Bend, and then we'd have a group of fifteen people sitting in a room who wanted that information, who wanted to learn from that faculty. And then that faculty member would drive there, teach, and then drive home. And it would be maybe a week-long course or two-day course and it would be for—not be transcript-visible credit. It'd be noncredit and learning for learning's sake, which is highly valuable, and we still do some of that.

So, it was really, again, much more traditional. Now, as far as the degrees, we did have a couple degrees when I started with Distance and Continuing Education, but they were really—they were not necessarily engaging degrees. It was more us shipping videotapes, VHS's, to learners and them watching videos, and there was no learning management system. So, I mean it was just a different world in what we could do then, I know. So, it was just a different time. And I think we did well and we were creating programs that people wanted, but we were limited by technology.

CP: So, you join the team in 2000, and you mentioned this period of transformation over two years, the end goal always being to start delivering courses online.

LT: Right. We definitely knew at that time that we wanted to focus on online education. The internet was thriving at the time and we knew there was more we could do, and we—I don't remember the year that we added Blackboard, but that was huge, and we had our first learning management system. So, at that time, I think it was 2002, the dean at the time, Bill McCaughan, changed our name to OSU Extended Campus. And I think that was a really pivotal point, and I think our focus changed. We were still doing some noncredit work, but we were really looking at what can we do to help learners across the state, in particular, have access to OSU. And I think that's still today our core mission, is we provide access to learners, that we understand—we've always been focused, in my unit, whether it was Distance and Continuing Education, OSU Extended Campus; nonresidential learners, adult learners, that's our audience. And we realize, again,

as a land grant institute, it's very important for us to provide access to the learners of the state. Not everyone can drive to Corvallis Oregon for an 8 am class or a 10 am class. So, we as a university need to provide access to the learners who want access to OSU. And that was really what we were focusing on, is how are we going to provide access to the learners now, two years, five years, you know. What are the best ways, the highest quality ways to do this, to engage learners with the university? And we've been able to do that, we've been improving over the years.

CP: Now, Blackboard is a tool that has been used for all types of classes, not just Extended Campus classes. Was this something that Extended Campus introduced to the rest of OSU, or was it part of a kind of larger sweep?

LT: I think it was part of a larger sweep, but they were a whole team, so campus and Ecampus together partnered on the decision to go Blackboard. We're now on Canvas, but yeah, it wasn't just us up there on our own. We tried to integrate into the campus whenever possible and be a part of the campus, so the decision was not made just within Extended Campus. It was a university decision and purchase. And I think, again, knowing that it was not going to be just used for online learners, that campus users would—or site-based students—would also be using Canvas if the faculty member designed their class that way.

CP: So, it sounds to me like that was a big piece of what you guys needed to do to achieve your goal. I'm wondering about some other problems that you remember having to solve during this two-year period of transition.

LT: I do. I think there's quite a bad—I don't even know where to begin. We had a lot of problems. I think the biggest would be it was new; online education was new and scary and unknown, and I think people had a perception; many faculty, not all, many faculty members had a perception that it was impersonal, that it couldn't be engaging. If I'm not looking at my student and my student's not looking at me and we're not having a conversation, how would this work? We had the how do you do a lab online, how do you have students interact online. So, there were all these questions. And I think there were a lot of faculty members who didn't think we could do it well.

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And so, over the years we really went from—it's been a lot of work to change that attitude and it's been slow. And we've had a lot of champions, a lot of faculty members who stepped forward and took a risk with us and worked hard and developed high quality courses. We had others that we've had to go back to over and over and say "look what we can do now, let us show you again, let us show you this new tool that could work," and that's been really effective too. Adult learners, as we've done our research throughout the state, they really want degree programs. They don't just want two classes. That's not going to help them advance in their career. They need that next degree.

And so, that's been I think a really challenging, very challenging part of it, is having faculty and departments want to put a whole degree online, and determining if they can, they're so busy as it is. And it takes a lot of time to develop a high-quality online course. So, that has been very challenging over the years. It's gotten so much better, because I think what we can do is so much better now. So, I think there's been more buy-in because of that, and it's become more prevalent and common. Harvard's doing online education; prestigious universities are, so it's not as scary and unknown. But for those first years, we had some real champions. They took a chance with us, working with us, and I think it paid off.

CP: So, the first degree programs start being delivered in 2002, and then six years later you move into the interim executive director spot. What were you doing in that—

LT: How did that happen?

CP: Well, I meant—we'll talk about that in a second, but I'm interested also in the work that you were doing in that six year interim between 2002 and 2008.

LT: Yeah. So, there was, when I started with Extended Campus, we were a small staff and there were, we had a FIPSE, a large FIPSE grant, about three million dollars, and we were using that, or a portion of that, to incent faculty and departments to develop classes, because as I mentioned, it's going to take a lot of time and energy. And what I had noticed after being there and part of a leadership team of Extended Campus, is there really wasn't a process in place. It seemed to be, in my perception at the time, was that a faculty member would call, and it depended who they called; they would get one answer. You know, "maybe I want to develop this course." "Sure, we'll give you two thousand dollars to do it." If you

called someone down the hall: "sure, we'll give you four thousand dollars to do it, sure you could"—and so there was no system. It was kind of "sure, we'll help you a little" or "you can do it on your own." There were no processes. It was just very much—this is, again, my perception at the time.

So, I proposed to, at the time I think it was the associate dean, Mark Merickel. I said "I think we need a process for this." And it was one of those units, because we were small and we were very nimble and very innovative, if you had an idea, which I have a lot of, and you raise your hand, it's yours. And so, I said "I think we need to create a system, and I really think"—and I pulled together two other directors who worked with me on this. We created an intake system, and it was a system, and RFP, a Request for Proposal online for faculty and departments who wanted to do things. We actually had a list of questions and a way to evaluate proposals. So, if you wanted to do underwater basket weaving, we'd be "you know, maybe there's not a market need for it, and it's going to cost us a lot to develop it." But if you wanted to do a high demand science course that we know adult learners need to get this Natural Science degree, maybe we do it.

So, we created this whole system of a way that we could equally evaluate every proposal that came in; that we could equally determine what programs we should do, what we should prioritize. And then we created a team to actually work and develop the courses and programs. So, it wasn't just a course like this, a course like that and a student comes in and these two courses look nothing alike, I just figured out how to work this course and now I need to go and work this course, and it's working totally different. So, it was so—I worked to put so many systems in place, so many loose pieces. I worked very hard to pull them together and make it a more cohesive, communicative unit. So, that was a lot of that year. I found myself on a variety of committees, leading a variety of teams, trying a lot of new things. And then the dean resigned and we were asked to then—I might be jumping a little head, so maybe I'll wait. Did I answer that question?

[0:30:31]

CP: Yeah, definitely. I mean, it's very clear that it wasn't just a marketing job anymore.

LT: Oh gosh, no. I had a fabulous assistant director for marketing, and she was the director for marketing at that time, because I was moving in a lot of other places as well. I mean, I was doing some marketing, but it was an exciting time, but it was also a little chaos going on. But I think with chaos comes creativity, so it was a fun time, as I reflect back.

CP: Yeah. Okay, so you were eventually an interim directive executive director. Why don't you tell me the story there?

LT: Yeah, so again as I was in this field, I was really interested in the pedagogy, because I was doing a lot of this now and I felt like I should understand learning theory better, I should understand the adult education and adult audience, and that's when I went back to school and earned my degree, and was very excited to put it into place, everything I learned, and then the timing worked out quite well for me, I guess, is that the dean at the time, Bill McCaughan, announced his retirement. And the university did a search, a national search for a new dean, but the decision was made actually not to hire a new dean but to reorganize us. And OSU Extended Campus was put into a new division that was created, and the new division was called Outreach and Engagement.

And Outreach and Engagement was going to be the umbrella organization for OSU Extended Campus, as well as OSU Extension. And Scott Reed, who was the director of Extension, was appointed the vice provost for Outreach and Engagement. And Scott Reed asked me and Dave King, who was the department head of EESC at the time, to co-chair the writing of a strategic plan for the division. It was a year-long job, and that was when I first met Dave, who's now my boss, who's the associate provost for outreach and engagement. And so, Dave and I at that time worked incredibly close together and worked with people across campus, also alums, campus community members, and wrote a strategic plan for the division of Outreach and Engagement.

And Dave was hired as the associate provost for a new unit, which we're calling educational outreach, and that under that umbrella is OSU Extended Campus, a new unit we have now, which is PACE: Professional and Continuing Education, and the then EESC, which is the communications unit through Extension. And so, that was his oversight. And then Dave hired me as the executive director for OSU Extended Campus, and in that role I oversee what we call our Ecampus, which is our credit online degree programs and courses, which we've been talking a lot about, but it's also a summer session, and then a newer unit we have, which is Open Oregon State, which focuses on open educational resources. So, there is a lot of reorganizing and shuffling people within this new division, within these new units. It was, yeah, just a lot of

reorganization and organization as we were figuring out which direction we wanted to go in, we should be going in, for the university.

CP: So, I'm interested in sort of the agenda, or maybe the, again, the problems that you felt you needed to solve, or the ambitions that you had in this new position for Extended Campus.

LT: [Laughs] the problems I needed to solve. So, we...I think there were quite a few; there were quite a few things going really well at the time, but there were quite a few things that were challenging. I think a couple of things that happened, and in no particular order, was our unit, our Distance and Continuing Ed unit, and then when we became Extended Campus, or Ecampus, was really kind of a backburner unit. I would describe to people, you know, you think of a university, you think of the eighteen year old students coming here, living in the dorm. A lot of our systems on campus, a lot of our processes on campus, our services on campus are for those eighteen year olds, those twenty year olds, or those grad students coming here. There were no services or systems in place for a fifty-four year old working mom in Maine who needed something here, or a student in Afghanistan who needed something from here. You know, eight to five you come to this office, you fill out this form and that's how you do it.

[0:35:18]

So, as we were growing this population of nonresidential, nontraditional students, we were feeling their frustration that they couldn't get what they needed. And it wasn't we didn't want to help them as a university, we just weren't—we never had students like this, because you had to be here, so of course you could go to this office between eight and five and get this form. So, one of the challenges was creating what we have now, is our Department of Learners' Services unit. So, we really are focused on what type of services do adult students need, what type of services does the university provide campus-based students that our students need as well, and can they get those same services, can we provide an online version or a different version or a different support version. So, they might not be the same service, but they're equal services. So, that was one area that we were really focusing on, which was really challenging, because we had a lot of, as we were growing this population, the services weren't keeping up with it.

The second was in course design. We knew best practices and we were hiring great qualified people to work with best practices in online education, but it was such a new field that many faculty didn't believe that we knew best practices. And because they're the experts in their field, which they are, they felt they were experts in online design, as well. So, it was coming up with a way to partner with faculty. So, they're the content expert, they are, they know their field, and we never even touch that. We have to say that's, you're the expert, but what we really do study and focus on and go to conferences on and research on is best practices in online education.

So, if you put us together and come up with a way to partner, then we're really likely to develop a better course. And so, we spend quite a bit of time coming up with systems and processes and the right people and hiring the right people who knew to do this, to be able to work with faculty collaboratively so the faculty member didn't feel like he or she were off on their own. If they wanted, you know: "I have this great idea but I need a design that shows an animation of this, or if we cut it open and show a video of it," they should have to be, if they're a professor in field X, they shouldn't have to be an animator or a videographer or a marketer. They should focus on their studies. And so, we hired the people that could then partner with the faculties and they could focus on their expertise and we could focus on ours.

So that was a big piece, so we were really focusing on the course design, the pedagogy side and the consistency so it was—it felt like all these courses felt like OSU courses. We were really working on trying to make our courses three things: student-to-student interactive, student-to-faculty interactive, interaction, and also students with content interaction, and that was a really important one, that getaway from a talking head, just a videotape of me speaking. We're like well, that's not really engaging for a student, let's—we can do better than that. So, how can we have them engage with the content and engage with other students, and let's design it that way. So, that was a big piece.

And then the other area with that is finding - and I credit Bill McCaughan for this - was finding an incentive. And this was a big piece for us, just because faculty are so busy at our university, other university, and to ask them, "on top of what you're doing, we also want you to work with us to develop an online course," it was a lot to ask for. And so, we came up with a revenue share model for the university, and that model, I think that incentive really enabled us to get more folks to play, to want to build courses, because there was revenue now coming to the departments. So, if you decided to build an

online course and teach an online course, there was going to be revenue to your department because of that. So, that was a big piece that Bill worked on, getting that revenue, and then us communicating it and explaining it.

CP: So, was that a piece of tuition dollars that filters through Ecampus?

LT: Correct, correct. And then the third area was the area that was closest to my heart for many years; was the marketing piece. This was huge. We could be building all these fabulous online degree programs, these high-quality ones, but if no one knew about it, then it didn't do us any good. So, for us to create a name in a crowded world of higher education as a leader in online education; what's our strategy behind that, how are we going to not only serve Oregonians, but serve learners around the state—sorry, the country and the world. And so, we hired just a fabulous marketing team to get the message out in the state that if you are interested in online education, that Oregon State offers this, that this is now you don't have to go to a University of Phoenix, or a different brand, I shouldn't use names, but that your land grant institute, your public institution that you're very comfortable with, you know, you have an affinity to, is now offering online education, is now opening and providing access to adult learners.

[0:40:32]

So, we really focused a lot of our energy on getting the brand, the word out, the message out, the right message out in Oregon and then beyond, and we hired people who did just a fabulous job with search engine optimization, search engine marketing. So, if you Googled "Natural Resource online degree," we're going to be in the top five, so you'll find us pretty quickly. So, we got to just—again, a big part of my job is getting the right people in place, so just a fabulous team who did a fabulous job, and it's been an evolution, a constant changing organization. I always talk to people when I interview them, new people in our office, I'm like "how are you with change? Because what you're doing today might be pretty different next week, because we change a lot in our unit." So, that answer that question?

CP: Yeah. You mentioned leadership in online education, was OSU ahead of the curve relative to our peers, or were we—

LT: I think so, I'll say that. I think we have been, in particular, in the state; I still think we're the leader in the state. We're doing more, we have more programs, we have forty programs, nine hundred courses. Last year we had students from all fifty states, forty different countries, taking our courses. We have been asked, myself, Dave, other people in our office, we've been asked to come to other universities, to give them some information, we're asked to speak at conferences; we serve on boards in our fields. I think we're definitely viewed as leaders. And then this year we got the number five ranking by *U.S. News & World Report*, the fifth, number five for quality online education bachelor's degree program, which felt great. After all these years of working so hard, we got some—awards of those kind of rankings are, there's positives and negatives, but it did feel good, because we've been working hard at this, to get that kind of recognition.

CP: Yeah. So, it sounds to me like this was not a model that was created somewhere else that we just adopted. In fact, we're reinventing the wheel on some level, here at OSU.

LT: Absolutely. You know, when I go to conferences and meet with my colleagues around the country; I don't know two universities that operate their online education the same way. Everyone has a different structure. It's a brave new world, right? There are some universities that each college does their own online education, they have their own instructional designers, their own marketers. There's others that are kind of like us that are a central unit that supports the departments and partner with departments. There are some that have become their own institution within the institution's name. So, it's "blank State University," but then they have this "blank State University online," which is different, and they have their own admissions.

We made the conscious decision that our students, our Oregon State students, you don't apply through Ecampus, you apply through admission. You have to meet the same criteria as campus-based students. Your diploma is going to say "Oregon State University," not "Oregon State Ecampus." Our courses have the exact same learning outcomes as the site-based learned, and so our programs have the same learning outcomes. How you're going to get to those learning outcomes, it's going to be really different in an online world, but they're going to be the same.

So, that was a decision that we made, and I think it was a wise decision, because I think it helps with the quality. There's a big quality control if the departments own the curriculum. They're deciding; the department determines who's going to

develop that course, the department determines who's going to teach that course. It's their course, it's not ours. And I think that—but we've got this great team now that can support that faculty, to market it, to build the courses and then to serve those students so they can again focus on the content and the teaching.

CP: How big is the staff of Ecampus?

LT: We are up to sixty people now. I know, yeah, it's quite large now. So, and we're hiring more right now, because the nice thing is the way we work is very scalable. We have more students, then there's more revenue generation, so we can then hire more people to serve the additional students. So, we have been growing at a pretty fast pace to keep up with the student demand.

CP: And what is the enrollment these days?

LT: It depends on how you look at it. So, I have a chart that I can pull out that has—

CP: Full time versus hybrid, maybe?

LT: There's by term, there's degree-seeking, there's non-degree-seeking, there's a lot of different ways, and I can provide that, those numbers to you if you want to know, in a variety forms.

CP: Well, I want to drill into Ecampus details a little bit more here in a moment, but you mentioned Extended Campus does other things besides online learning, so I'm interested in knowing a bit more about the work that is done with summer session, and then also Open Oregon State, that's something that's new to me.

[0:45:14]

LT: Yeah. So, summer session was brought to Extended Campus a few years back, and I think the rationale behind that really made a lot of sense. We had already been building our staff. We had a marketing team, we had a student service team, and summer session was a small unit that didn't have a lot of people in it, and a lot of these services available. So, by bringing them into Extended Campus, they could kind of use our services. So, I remember once when I first, when I was in the marketing area, I remember looking in the *Barometer*, and we had an ad for Ecampus and for summer, you know: "go home during the summer, but yet take Ecampus courses, stay on track" and then right next to us was a summer session: "stay in Corvallis this summer, get ahead." And so, by bringing summer session into Extended Campus, we could then put one ad in and say "students, if you're going home for the summer, keep up by taking online. If you choose to stay in beautiful Corvallis, look at all these great classes." So, things like that just made sense. We could work together, we could support summer and we could help them try some new initiatives.

And that's what we've been trying to do. With a larger staff we've been able to do more. So, we've recently launched a few things like Natural Resource Leadership Academy, and that's a week or two-week long intensive credit program for graduate students to come to Corvallis and study natural resources, and different courses are happening at the same time and then they kind of all meet with a field trip and interact in between classes. And what's been great about it is we've been able to attract some of our Ecampus students, who have never been to Corvallis, because they work or they have a family or both, but one week, like a one-week intensive course, if I want to go there I could actually meet my professor face-to-face, I could meet some—I could see what, where is Corvallis. And so, it's been a great partnership. So, it's a summer session program, but we were attracting Ecampus students as well as current grad students on campus.

And we're trying some new things, we're doing some stuff with international, just trying what we can do in the summer. We have a little more flexibility with the smaller terms and the more options; what can we do that's innovative in the summer that we possibly couldn't do during the academic year. So, it's been a good fit to have the summer team as part of us. And then Open Educational Resources is kind of brand-new. I'd say we've been doing this for two years and we're still figuring it out. We are I think doing some pretty great things with open textbooks. Dianna Fisher is leading this initiative, and as everyone knows, the prices of textbooks is skyrocketing, and there are great things happening on this front across the country and world, and so we're engaging and partnering, and we've created a couple open textbooks that are going to save students—Dianna has the numbers, but I believe it's a large amount of money that we will be saving students by creating these open textbooks.

There's other things we're doing that are open, such as course modules. Let's say we designed a course, a credit course, and I'm just making this up, but let's say we came up with this really great animation on how to dissect a frog and it's in this course and there's thirty students in the course. So, only thirty students see this great animation that we spent a lot of time and resources on. What if there's a teacher in eastern Oregon, a high school teacher, who could use that animation and help her class? Why not take it out and make it open? So, we're looking at what are we doing in our credit side modularly that's open and that we could put out there and make it free and accessible. We are a public institution. So, we talk with faculty now as we're developing courses: can we put this out there, can we let others use this. So, we're looking at kind of the modular side as well. And then we're creating new modules for different audiences and courses. We're starting some open courses. So, we're doing a lot of things, and then MOOCs, which we'll talk about.

So right now we're kind of in that, it feels a lot like where we were with Ecampus when we started. We're trying a lot of different things and we're evaluating, seeing what's going well and what's not, and then rethinking it. So, it's kind of a brand new initiative for us, and I think we're all really excited about where it's going.

CP: So, how are these open resources being distributed?

LT: Great question. In a variety of ways. Right now we have some on our website, some that are through some partnerships that we're doing. It'll be within Canvas and then there's some other new initiatives that are happening with the university that will help us be able to distribute them coming up. So, there isn't a one they're all here right now, but they're—we'll get there.

CP: Okay, so back to the focus on online learning at Ecampus. I'm interested in kind of drilling into this initially from the student side. Many people, myself included, don't have any experience with what it's like to be an online learner. So, what is that environment like for most students, if we can generalize about that sort of thing.

[0:50:27]

LT: Yeah. To be a successful online student, you have to be a self-motivated person. So, online learning is not for everyone. And I put that out there, we put that out there on our website, our student service folks, our success counselors, everyone says that it's not everyone. If you're not self-motivated, you should not be in an online course. You really need that motivation to log on, make sure you're doing everything you need to do. So, that's a big piece of it. I think what's really great about online education is more time on task, and what I mean by that is if you go to a fifty minute lecture, you leave that room, you have your notebook or your computer where you took notes, that's it, you're done. If you miss something, if someone coughed next to you while the faculty member was saying something, and you missed it, it's gone, you don't get that. If you didn't have a chance to ask your question, unless you make an effort to go to office hours, gone. There's just this final timeframe.

In online education, we've alleviated that. You can, if there's a video clip for fifteen minutes, you could watch that six times, and then that sixth time, like "I still don't get what she said," you can then at that point send an email right to your faculty members; "what did you mean by that last point?" Or you could put it in a discussion group to your other, the other students, saying "did anyone understand what Professor X meant about this?" So, it's a broader amount of time. You can spend more time—if we have an activity in the class, you can do it over and over until you get it, and I think that's really advantageous for some learners.

The other piece about online education is I think it's a good equalizer in a lot of ways. You know in a classroom, large lecture hall, you have those students who sit in the front row or two, and when the faculty member asks the questions, usually those are the hands that go up. What about the students in the back who may be more thoughtful, you know; he takes a little longer to kind of get his thoughts together and doesn't want to embarrass himself and ask a question. Well, in an online classroom he could write his question, say "oh, gosh I don't like how that sounds, I'm going to delete that" or "what's that term mean again? I'm going to go Google it and look it up and research it a little further, and then I'll ask my question, because I know it makes sense now." So, there's more, you know, there's more thinking, research, and then they hit the send button.

So, in an online classroom you can require, actually, if it's designed well, you will require everyone to contribute, and in a big large classroom, you can't always necessarily do that. You can say "I'm posting this article today and I want everyone

to give two original thoughts on it and comment on one of yours, and that's not a 'me too,' you know, it's your thought, what do you think about this?" So there's—and I honestly have to say this, that there are so many faculty that I've worked with, I've talked with over the years, who say there's more interaction in their online classroom than there is in their site-based, and that's probably their biggest surprise. If designed well. If not designed well, that doesn't happen.

So, we generally try to week by week, so it's a ten week course so every week we have what they're going to be doing, what your reading is, what your work is, your project. So, it's designed nice and kind of methodically, again, if designed well. So, a student can kind of plan ahead, because again these adults are juggling a lot, so they'll say you know what, week nine I'm going to be traveling for a work meeting, so I can get ahead or talk to my faculty member, say "well, I'm not going to be able to get this done, can I do this week eight instead?" So, we really try to design it with that in mind, that there's some flexibility that these adult learners will need. And again, as I said earlier, if we can design the course that the faculty and the student are interacting, the students are interacting with other students and the students are interacting with the content, it's really usually a good learning experience.

CP: How do labs work?

LT: They are—there's a variety. We have some that are virtual. So, we've actually created or purchased virtual labs where you click on things and you move them and you spill them and you fill them and you are manipulating things, which is really kind of fun. You can make more mistakes in an online lab, as nothing will blow up. So, we've got a lot going on there and we're constantly trying new innovations with that. That's always been the challenge, is the labs, but we've got some faculty members here doing pretty incredible things and willing to try new things. So, we are doing some virtual. We still do some kits, though, where students are required to buy kits and kits are shipped to their house and they do some labs there. And we do have some hybrid courses where the labs are done on campus in the summer. So, during summer session they actually come here for a week and do the labs in a laboratory. So, we meet the faculty where they want to be met. The faculty member—we always say "give us a try, tell us what we're trying again, we can work backwards. We start with the learning outcomes and then we design backwards; what's the learning outcome we're trying to achieve? Let's see if we could do it wholly online and give them some ideas. And if we can, great, if we can't, well then we don't; well then we do the kit or we bring them here, or whatever we need to do, because again, it's all about meeting those learning outcomes.

[0:55:35]

CP: There's also the 24/7 online tutoring.

LT: Right. So, we've hired a company, NetTutor, to manage this. And again, that comes back to the student service piece, that we found well, our students on campus have access to a writing center, math tutoring. Our distance students, if they're not here, have a harder time with that. So, we thought it was worth purchasing a tutoring service. And knowing that a lot of our students are in different time zones, or they're juggling and they're doing homework on—I've talked with our students, you know, "I do my homework from midnight to two in the morning. Those are my hours." Okay, well at one o'clock in the morning he or she may need some help; there's someone there to help. So, it's a service that we provide.

CP: And there is a specific service or a set of services for veterans, as well.

LT: You know, for the veterans we try to assist them in the best way we can. Again, it's getting—if a course is going to start on a certain day and we have to get a textbook to them, we try to work with the bookstore; we try to help our veteran students out as much as possible. It's a growing population for us, and we encourage our faculty to be understanding, and it might be a week with no internet whatsoever, and let's budge. If there was a test that needed to be done that day, that week, let's do it the week prior, or a week forward. So, we really do our best to be military friendly. We think it's a really important audience for us and we're really glad that we can provide access to OSU to veterans and military. We have a growing population of military students, and from a few that I've talked to recently, it does work quite well for them.

CP: Now, from the faculty side, we've talked about this a bit already, I guess I want to try to clarify if my understanding is correct. It sounds to me like Ecampus is essentially presenting to a department the existence of a marketplace on some level, where courses can be created by them for inclusion in this marketplace, and Ecampus is going to provide guidance

on best practices, but that's how we eventually wind up with a full curriculum, that somebody could do an entire degree online. Is that roughly what we're looking at?

LT: Yeah, there's two different routes. We could get a proposal from a faculty, from a department. Everything we do is approved by the department, first of all, so a faculty member just can't say "I want to develop this course." The department chair needs to approve it. So, we do do individual courses, so we have one RFP through our intake system that comes in that is just for individual courses, and then we have one that's for actual degree programs. And courses are a lot more simple; as I told you earlier, we created this whole system where we kind of evaluate the course, what it's going to take to develop it and if we want to fund it, and timeline. Programs are definitely more, there's more time involved.

And so, what we do is we meet with the department or department representatives to talk about the degree program, the rationale; why do you want to develop this degree and is there a market for it. And again, we work with two market research firms, with Eduventures out of Boston and EAB out of D.C. And before we ever create an entire degree online, we make sure that we feel that there is a market for that degree, because it takes a lot of resources and time to do this, and we want to make sure, again, that if we're going to build this program, there'll be an audience for it. So, after the market research comes in, and if it looks positive, we talk about what the curriculum should be. And the department proposes that to us.

And then it has to match; if it's a current campus program that's already been approved, it has to match that curriculum. Sometimes our degree programs are more narrow, they don't have as many options. They're the same degree program but they might not have as many electives, but they determine who's going to be teaching the course and they put a proposal to us listing the courses that we need in this degree program, who's going to be developing them; we take two terms to develop a course and we have a training program that all faculty go through to learn how to develop an online course, and they do it as an online student and in an online community, so they get to feel what it's like. And then they develop a module of that course and then they go off on their own, but that way they've got someone with – an instructional designer in that course kind of guiding them their first time doing it. And so, that department comes up with a plan for which courses are going to be developed when, who's the course developer, who's going to teach it, when we're going to launch, and we work with them on that to make sure it meets our calendar, meets their calendar.

[1:00:03]

And we also then work with them on kind of the marketing of it, you know, how are we going to—who are the audience, who do we need to get a hold of, and then we work with them on the whole university logistics side; so how are we going to get it into the place where students can see it so they can register for this degree and pick this degree, and there's committees and curriculum review. And there's a lot. It's not quick. And we also fund advising, so if it's an undergraduate degree program, we want to make sure that we have an advisor for these students, because they can't keep knocking on the advisor's door and saying "I need help," so we make sure we have an advisor who's there to serve online students so they can get their needs met as well.

So, it's a proposal. So, the department writes a proposal that "we want to develop this degree program and these are the courses, this is the timeline, this is the funding we need, here's who the advisor's going to be." We kind of go back and forth on the proposal and say "wow, this works great," or "have you thought about that," or "maybe we'll need more library resources for this," or "how are we going to get the—"and we go back and forth and then we get to a point where we're like "yep, this works, this is fair," they say "yep, this works, this is fair." We write an MOU and then the dean of that college signs the MOU, and then we get busy and start working and developing it. So, it's a long process with a lot of different people touching it. But it's been working well.

CP: Is there a separate accreditation for online learning, or is that part of the university's larger process?

LT: Yeah, right now the way we work is that the programs belong to the academic unit and they're the exact same programs. What is different is the delivery method. But again, we make sure the university does, the departments, that the learning outcomes that have been approved are the exact same learning outcomes in the course, in the program. So, they're the same program, but what is different is the delivery. And you know, another thing I think's pretty interesting is when you think about a course with different sections on campus; you could have one class being taught in three different sections by three different people; they're all doing it differently too. One might be showing video to get a point across,

one might lecturing, one might be doing a field trip, and now we're just kind of another, now we're doing it online. But we're all getting to the same learning outcomes. It's the same course, so program, it's just a little different because it's online and they're not here in Corvallis.

CP: Well, speaking of delivery, I'm interested in learning a bit more about the technical infrastructure that's in play here. Ecampus delivered a hundred and fifty-seven thousand credit hours in 2013/14, and somebody has to make sure that everything is working properly on the technical end. Can you talk about that a little bit?

LT: Sure. So, we have a great team within our course development and training unit, and they work, like I said, with the faculty to develop these courses, and now we're developing in Canvas. But we really rely on university systems. We're a part of the university, so we have not created our own this and our own that. We, just like the campus-based students, are using Blackboard, or were Blackboard, now Canvas, we're using the same structure. So, it really hasn't been an issue, because we have made the decision, like I said, to integrate into the university and be a part of the university. So, the systems that are in place to make sure the campus courses are all there and doing well is the same infrastructure that we use. We're not using our own or a separate infrastructure. So, [knocks on the table], no problems.

CP: Well, we talked a bit about pushback earlier on; I'm wondering if—I'm sure that there are still people who are critical of the idea of online learning. Has the pushback changed at all, or is it sort of the same types of arguments as it's always been?

LT: It's gotten so much better, thank goodness. It used to be we would invite ourselves and say "can we come to your department meeting and talk about online education? Our market research show there's really a demand; many Oregonians want this degree," and they would let us in to the department meeting and they'd sit around a table [crosses arms and makes skeptical expression]. And it didn't feel very welcoming, it felt like yeah, they're just listening to us and they were going to get us out of here and then they were going to go on and do things the same way. Well, now we get invited, and it's pretty exciting. We still every now and then have the person crossing arms across the table, and generally there's always someone at the table who says "you can't possibly teach my field online," and then we generally say "have you ever been in an online course?" and then they generally say "no," and we're like "can we show you one, and maybe you'll have some different ideas, we can show you some new ideas. Maybe it won't work." And just as I said online education doesn't work for every student, it doesn't work for every faculty member. Not every faculty member should teach online. And if they don't want to, they shouldn't. I think it's a lot of work; it's different. But the ones that do I think find it very rewarding.

[1:05:07]

But yeah, so we now have been invited to department meetings, we're invited to university committees, I mean the culture on this campus, I said we were kind of that backburner unit; we're not. Now we're a part of the front burner unit, which is really for our students. So, a lot of us, our leadership team, we contribute to major committees in this university and they want to talk about the campus-based students and the online student, and they'll look in a—talking about "what are we going to do in this area," and they'll say "Lisa, what about for the online student, what do we need to do there?" which is remarkable, because as I said, fifteen years ago when I started at the Extended Campus, no one even thought about that for online students.

So, we're really evolved. I think it's much more in the thinking, and I think because it's become more mainstream. I think faculty go to conferences or meetings, or have good colleagues who know, that they respect, who are doing really innovative things in online. They say "you know what, if they're doing it, why can't I?" I think the university—I've gotten a lot of really positive feedback and the people really proud of their online courses and programs. They're proud of our rankings. I think there is a lot of pride in what we're doing; that we are leading the state, and a leader in the country in this.

So, I think it's not perfect. We still have some departments, some faculty members who just don't believe that a student can be engaged if they're not sitting in a classroom with him or her. But that's becoming more the minority. I think there are many more faculty members who are teaching online having good experiences, or open to doing it. So, it's been a huge—I've seen a huge shift in the fifteen years that I've been doing this. Still have a ways to go, yes, but I'm thrilled with how far we've come.

CP: Well, you mentioned MOOCs.

LT: Yeah.

CP: I'd like to know more about sort of the idea behind them and where OSU is at.

LT: Yeah, it's a great question. So, we lived through MOOC mania, that was a really interesting time. So, Stanford launched a MOOC that had just tremendous success, and from there MOOC mania started. Every university thought it was a really innovative idea to take a course that had a massive appeal and make it open and free. And so, many universities across the country were jumping in and just trying this, and then there were private companies that popped up that were assisting universities in doing this. And we watched for a little bit, which I think was very smart. We didn't get caught up in the mania and the hype. And we had been doing online and felt really comfortable in online, but didn't know if this was really the area that we wanted to invest in.

So, we again went to a lot of conferences and meetings where this was kind of the highlights, and we all shared ideas with our colleagues across the country, we spent some time at Stanford and other universities looking at what they were doing and learning, and we kind of finally decided to move in this direction when we had what I think the right faculty and the right department to work with. And the faculty member was a faculty member in our College of Education, and she had connections because of her graduate work at Stanford, to partner with them on a MOOC. And they have just a ton of experience working with MOOCs, and so we were kind of delighted to partner with them, and the mission of what the MOOC was for was right on. It was for Oregon teachers through the Department of Education in Oregon.

And so, we had the right faculty member who was a content expert, she had the right connections who could help us with this, at Stanford, and partner with us, and to have a platform. We helped with the filming, we went to a lot of the schools to video what the—we were trying to get across, we did it with all the marketing, so it was really just I think a fabulous partnership. So, we launched this last year and thousands of students completed; the evaluations were outstanding, so we felt really good about it. So, it was kind of our first kind of dip-our-toe into it. It was I think a really good way to do it, and now we're looking at—we put our proposal out, an RFP across campus, to ask if anyone else wanted to try this, and we sent some criteria and we got a few takers and now we're pretty close to an agreement to do our second MOOC.

CP: Now, is this sort of in the spirit of continuing education? Is that one of your-

LT: It is, it is, and we are an open education resource, as our Open Oregon State, so it's falling under that unit. We're doing it collaboratively with PACE, which is the Professional and Continuing Education unit, which is also part of our division, so we're going to do this one with—and the one, the first one we did was a partnership with the College of Education, which I think was just fabulous. It was a great partnership and the results were, I mean, was just outstanding. So, I think it, again, we didn't dive in headfirst and invest millions of dollars like some universities. We kind of watched for a while, and now I think we're being very strategic about making the decisions of what we should do and when we should do it.

CP: Yeah. So, probably more of a gradual uptick heading into the future.

LT: Yeah, if it makes sense. I mean we're really open to—we want to learn from it. I mean that's the beauty of it, is we think if we do this we can learn. We can learn about learning. You know, if you look at the analytics of this, if you get thousands of learners in one class and design it well, we're going to learn about learners; what's working, what's not working. So, that's for us a really exciting thing. That we get excited about, to understand learners and what they need and how they thrive and how they succeed and how to help them achieve their goals, whether it be a certificate program, a course, a degree, an undergraduate degree, a graduate degree; everyone has different goals, but we want to help these nonresidential learners achieve those goals. So, understanding how they're learning and what's working and what's not, what we're designing that works or not, is really beneficial for us and our operations.

[1:10:54]

CP: Well, a couple questions as we sort of close things up here, both about the future. You've talked about backburner/ front burner, and Ecampus is clearly on the front burner now, as we've established. It's something that's in the rhetoric of

the president all the time, such that it might almost be considered a third branch campus at this point. From where you're sitting, what is your hope, what do you hope to see from Ecampus in the years to come?

LT: You know, I think our focus remains the nonresidential adult learner. For me I think that's really important, because that's kind of where we came from, and I think we're really the primary unit on campus who is focusing on this group, and as a land grant institute, I feel very strongly that we need to provide access to all learners, not just traditional learners. So, I hope we don't lose that focus. I want us to continue to strive to develop high-quality programs to serve adult learners that can't get to Corvallis. While that's going on, I do understand the demographics are changing, and campus is becoming nontraditional and many learners here aren't the traditional eighteen year olds. They're now juggling family and work, and so right now we're figuring out how do we serve these students too. And then regular, the millennials that just grew up in this online world, and they like online course and they're going to take them. So, how are we serving them?

So, I think for me how do we grow and make sure that we don't lose sight of the nonresidential adult learners; how do we make sure we're serving them and creating high-quality programs, but also these other audiences now; the nontraditional campus-based, the traditional campus-based, how are we going to serve them, what are we going to look like in ten years? Is there going to be a menu and you pick, you know, "I want these two courses online, I want this one hybrid, I want this one site-based," and will the cost be the same, and faculty load? Which faculty members are going to teach which ones?

So, it's going to be an interesting time, because these two groups are starting to demand more online, as well. So, my goal is to not lose the focus, but also think really creatively how to include more people, more learners, whether they're being credit, noncredit, graduate, undergraduate, who want online education. How do we provide quality education for those learners as well, learners who are in their companies, you know, what are we doing for companies that want to provide additional learning for students? The cost; what can we do, is there something creative we could do to help with the cost of learning, and then the analytics is really big for us. We're really focusing on understand what's working or what's not and improving and making sure that we really provide all online learners with a high quality OSU experience; it's critical.

CP: And then the last question I have for you is one that we're asking everybody for this project, and it's just their thoughts on where they see the university position as it heads into its sesquicentennial, and maybe in a broader sense than just online learning. You've been here for twenty-one years; you've seen a lot of things change.

LT: I have. I think it's a really exciting time. I mean, the change, again, I don't focus so much on campus, but obviously I walk across campus every day, and I think the new buildings and then new initiatives, the changes that have happened are fabulous. I think we're really a lot more student-focused and student-service focused than we ever were. I think there are a lot of great leaders on this campus here who are doing innovative, student-focused type work. So, I think looking forward, I hope we continue, and I look forward to the university, whether it be at the faculty level, department, college, administration; really embracing the adult learner. And yeah, I go back to that as part of the OSU community, and that we create ways to make them feel even more connected to the university while they're here, and as alums. So, I think things look bright and I'm really excited to be a part of this chapter of OSU.

[1:15:17]

CP: Yeah, me too.

LT: Yeah.

CP: Well, thank you Lisa, this has been a lot of fun for me, and this is a really important issue that I'm glad that we were able to sit down and dig into the details of a little bit. Thanks very much.

LT: Yeah, thank you.

[1:15:29]