Allison Dean (00:09):

TheoremOne is the leading innovation and engineering firm for the fortune 1000. We design, build, and deliver enterprise-scale technology solutions and are very excited to present The Breakthrough Podcast, an ongoing series where we interview technology leaders to share their experiences and perspectives on what's next in tech.

Alison Dean (00:37):

Welcome to The Breakthrough. I'm Alison Dean, VP of Operations at TheoremOne. And today we are talking with Helen Norris, currently the Chief Information Officer at Chapman University, which happens to be my alma mater. She sent me a quote that resonated with her recently: "Absence of failure isn't success." So hello, Helen.

Helen Norris (00:57):

Hi, Alison. Great to be here. Thank you for having me today.

Alison Dean (01:00):

Thanks for talking with us. I'm curious what that quote means to you?

Helen Norris (01:03):

I think sometimes we go along, we're not hearing anything bad, so everything must be okay, and that's not necessarily the case. So as leaders in technology, I think it's really important for us to be intentional about getting feedback, building our relationships, talking to our community, to make sure that what we're doing is really working for everyone. Not a big quote person, but our chief information security officer quoted that to me yesterday kind of saying, okay, just because we haven't had a breach doesn't mean we're all secure. The absence of failure isn't success. And it really resonated with me at that moment. Don't be complacent because you haven't had a problem.

Alison Dean (01:43):

Amen to that.

Helen Norris (01:44):

That really was helpful for me yesterday.

Alison Dean (01:47):

Helpful in general.

Helen Norris (01:48):

Yeah, yeah.

Alison Dean (01:49):

Yeah. I listened to an interview you did with the CIO Talk Network, and one thing you said was, "Our jobs are going to change, even as a CIO. My job in five years is going to look completely different to how it looks now." So what changed in your first five years at Chapman and how has that changed still?

Helen Norris (02:06):

Well, there's a lot that does change, and then there's also a lot that stays the same. So as leaders in technology, I think we get very focused on technology and so we're inclined to answer about how the technology will change. And certainly, the technology has changed dramatically in the last five years and will change more in the future, but it's really about the people. And one of the changes that I see sticking around for us following the pandemic is that people are working in a different way. A lot of the things that we used to say before the pandemic, we said, "Well, we can't do this because this is what people do." And then we had a pandemic and all of a sudden we could do it. I think the change in how people approach work, whether it's as simple as we're going to see more working from home, a lot of the things that we put in place during the pandemic to help us collaborate are going to continue. A lot of things that we took for granted before, even when we come back into our workplaces, or into our universities, aren't going to be available to us.

Helen Norris (03:09):

I go to the office two or three days a week right now, and I still can't meet with people in a conference room. So a lot of the ways we use to do collaboration are changing, and I think that that's going to be a big driver. That's where the change in the work culture, the change of business process is really going to drive some of the tools that we put in place. And we need to lead that on behalf of our organizations to find the right mix of technology tools, to help encourage that different way of working that we're going to see in the future. It's also really going to continue to push us from a security perspective. We really want to make sure during the pandemic that people can get their business done and we're going to do what it takes to get people to get their business done. And that's introduced a different type of risk into the environment. So figuring out how to manage the different risks that we have with a more blended approach to work is going to be critical for us as leaders in IT.

Alison Dean (04:13):

Was there anything about the pandemic or how things really shifted with how everyone worked that surprised you?

Helen Norris (04:20):

It was just so surprising that there was a pandemic. I've talked in other interviews about this. When it became obvious how big it was going to be, I asked my team to move into overdrive. Virtually every other project my team was working on, we stopped it and we put everyone on supporting the faculty who are moving to remote teaching — the staff and the faculty who are moving to remote work. I think the thing that caught us off guard that surprised most of us is we thought we'd be back in a couple of months. So I've used this phrase before, I asked my team to really go all out like it was a sprint, but it's really been a marathon. And I don't think any of us really expected that it would be like that. So trying to move from that breakneck pace. In fact, I would say at the beginning, while we were shifting to working from home and teaching from home, in some ways it was really exhilarating because it's like, "Oh my God." The adrenaline, you're helping people directly, you're seeing the results of what you're doing in that precise moment.

Helen Norris (05:22):

But that just gets to be exhausting after a while. So figuring out how to try to get to a more stable place where people are not stretched the way they were at first, and that's across the organization, it's not just in the IT group. I think every group at the university had the same situation and were like, "Okay, we can do this, because it's just going to be for a while." A year later, we're still doing it. And that was something that we didn't plan for because we didn't expect.

Alison Dean (05:50):

Are students back on campus yet?

Helen Norris (05:52):

No, we're actually going to bring some students back on Monday. So where we've been for the last year is, you're in California so you know we have this tier system, and Orange County has been in the purple tier and a couple of weeks ago, we moved into the red tier.

Helen Norris (06:10):

So that allows us to bring students to campus at about a 25% capacity. This is actually our spring break, so we made a decision to stay fully remote even though we could see that we were going to move into the red tier pretty quickly and bring students and faculty back after spring break. So students do have the option to remain remote because you know, there's a lot to work out. Maybe vaccines aren't as available in that particular age group as say in my age group, but faculty will be in the classroom, and in many situations we'll have some students in the classroom and some students remote, which we're thinking of as a high flex environment. So a lot of the work that my team has done to prepare for that, we did a lot of technical work last year over the summer, ensuring that all classrooms were ready for this high flex environment.

Helen Norris (07:02):

And we've also done a great deal of preparation and consulting with faculty because it's a very challenging environment in which to teach. So you can see the demands that have been placed on our faculty. The value to our students is that you're in a small class with your faculty member. We have a very low student-to-faculty ratio. We have not been a university that wants to move things online, because that's not why students come to Chapman. So our faculty have taught them that way, then all of a sudden they had to teach remotely. And now they're being asked to teach in this kind of high flex environment. So a lot of pressure on our faculty and our students and our role in IT is really to support them as best we can and give them the tools that they need to be as successful as they possibly can in these new environments.

Alison Dean (07:52):

What does the high flex environment look like optimally?

Helen Norris (07:56):

In an optimal situation, you have some students in the classroom and some students on Zoom essentially having some of the same experiences. There's not a huge difference between what you experienced when you're in the classroom and what you're experiencing remotely. That's very difficult because going to college, it's not like your classes, the faculty members standing at the front of the classroom, speaking, just lecturing. That's not the model anymore. Hasn't been the model for several years. The classroom environment is very collaborative. Students are working together, working with the faculty. There's a lot of interaction between the faculty and the students. And that's pretty complex to manage in a blended environment because you want to make sure to include students who are in the classroom and conversation and students who are fully remote in conversation too.

Alison Dean (08:47):

How is the selection made? Who gets to be in class versus be on Zoom?

Helen Norris (08:52):

We give the faculty the flexibility to do that. Some students just select to not come to the classroom. In the red tier, we can be at 25% capacity. Faculty are taking different approaches. If you have a class of say 30 students, but at the 25% capacity, you can only have 10 in a room. I think they're doing things like on Monday group A comes and on Tuesday group B. That's my sense, but the faculty member makes the decisions in the classroom and the university is not demanding that a faculty member do it in any particular way. The intent is to give the faculty member as much flexibility as possible.

Alison Dean (09:31):

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I'm curious about the dorm life situation, which doesn't necessarily touch you as significantly, but how's that working?

Helen Norris (09:39):

I've seen it peripherally. We followed the guidelines from the county and from the state of California. So we have a much smaller percentage of students living in the residence halls than we would normally have. Not a hundred percent certain, but I think at this point, students are in residence halls and single rooms. I'm not a hundred percent certain of that, but it's a very, very small number. one thing I do know is we don't have our regular dining halls open. So as students need food or as faculty and staff need food, it's a kind of a box lunch and a takeout. So students can get food, but it's not the same as what you might remember — "I go to the dining commons, I fill up my plate and I sit down, I connect with my friends." That is not there at the moment.

Helen Norris (10:25):

The other thing I'd like to mention, and this has an IT piece to it. one of the things over the year, if you look across the country at different universities, there's been different levels of success. You see it on the news where a university had a massive outbreak of COVID. A lot of universities have very successfully managed having students be on campus. If you study that the critical difference is frequent testing. If you test people all the time, you're going to have a lower infection rate. And so we at Chapman have been doing weekly testing for faculty, staff, and students. If you're on campus, you need to be tested once a week. I think in the residence halls, that's been very successful. If a student or a faculty member or a staff member shows up with a positive test, we have robust contact tracing in place to kind of prevent the outbreak.

Helen Norris (11:18):

It's really interesting to remember. The first test we did, we mailed it in, it took a couple of days. Now the tests come back in 15 minutes and contact tracing kicks right in. And so if in the unfortunate event that someone tests positive, we're able to really contain that situation. I mentioned that as an IT issue, because one of the things that I would not have expected through the pandemic is how we use data to help manage the situation and keep the campus safe. So whether it's because we had to gather some data because of a requirement from the state or the county, for example, from a workplace perspective, either the state or the county requires that anyone who's coming to a campus complete some training around how to stay safe in this environment. There's also a requirement that on a daily basis. If you're coming on campus, you attest that you have not been exposed to COVID or you don't have COVID symptoms.

Helen Norris (12:18):

So we have pulled that data together, the data about who has taken the COVID training. We have an online survey, "Have you completed our daily survey that says I don't have symptoms and I haven't been

around a person with COVID? Have you been tested in the last week?" That's what you need to be on campus. And the situation in terms of collecting this data and setting up the systems to kind of manage that and ensure that people are getting the right access they need to campus keeps changing. Now we can get vaccinated, right? Many of us have been vaccinated. We still are requiring people to be tested weekly, even if they're vaccinated, but we want to gather the data where we can about who's vaccinated because that's good information to share with our community. And at some point, it will probably make some difference in how we can open and how we can have more people on campus. I wouldn't have expected that we would have had such a big impact of data on these processes.

Alison Dean (13:16):

Right. So shifting gears a bit, I want to talk about your leadership style and how that has evolved through the years or what you've seen to have changed.

Helen Norris (13:27):

I have a pretty traditional IT background. When I graduated from college, I think my first job was as a computer programmer and I've done a lot of technical work over the years. The traditional technical person, if you will, who moved into a leadership role. A couple of things about that. First of all, I think that leadership is a skill that can be learned and needs to be nurtured. I've seen it a lot in my career where you're a really great programmer, so now you're the director of the programming team and you just do it. That really does not work. So I'm a big believer in, as you move into a leadership role and as you expand your leadership role, I think it's really important to become a student of leadership. Whether it's taking a traditional leadership course, continuing to follow leadership materials and engage in learning from other leaders, I think is really important.

Helen Norris (14:25):

I've had that approach, I think since the beginning of my journey in leadership, but certainly I would say the skills I've chosen to focus on over the years are all reading what people might think of as the soft skills. I think it's critical for a leader to have a high emotional intelligence, and you can work on that. To be empathetic I think it's very important to have empathy for your team, but not just for your team. In IT, I think it's really important because you're serving everybody in the community to have empathy for everybody in the community. I've been in situations all through my career where there's a kind of blame the user approach. And really, I think that's a terrible approach. So you've got to take that leadership around empathy and use it in your relationship with your colleagues. So listening skills, I think are really critical, active listening skills for a leader.

Helen Norris (15:21):

I think for me over the years where I've grown as a leader has been in developing a deeper sense of empathy for other people. Whether they're on my team, as I said, or outside of the organization. Moving away from the technical pieces and allowing people to do their jobs. I think one of the things that I

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struggled with early in my career as a leader, I was a strong technical person, the right way to coach people is not to come in and show them how to do the technical work, and you're inclined to do that if you're a good programmer or a good project manager, now you're elevated and there's another person. You're implying to tell them how to do their job and what you really need to tell them is what you want them to do and coach them in getting there. Finally, I think it's really, really important for a leader to have a strong moral compass. I think it's very important to have your values and live by your values. It's important to be honest, then sometimes as a leader, you have information you can't share with people and you just have to have a way that you can explain that to people, but it's important to be honest and trustworthy, I think.

Alison Dean (16:34):

Do you think it's the company's responsibility or the organization's responsibility to support leadership teachings or do you think the onus is on the individual?

Helen Norris (16:44):

That's a great question. When I think about it for myself as a leader, I think we own our own careers. The organization, or your manager, it's their responsibility to give you the opportunities, but you own your own career and you have to do the work to develop yourself. Having said that an organization that doesn't invest in its people, it's more expensive to not invest in them than it is to invest in them. I do think that as leaders and as organizations, it's important for us to provide the financial resources for people to get training. A number of my staff enroll in our MBA program. Now that's a great way to develop leaders, right? It's a really great development tool for a technical leader to get an advanced degree in a field that's not technical. It's a really great way to grow your career. So I think as organizations, it is important for us to invest. I feel in the past, I used to hear these old-fashioned phrases, things like, well, what if you train your people and they leave? Well, what if you don't train them and they stay? Because that's way worse. You are going to lose some people as they develop skills, and that's the evolution of how things go and you need to just be prepared for that.

Alison Dean (17:57):

I completely agree. What do you want your direct reports to remember you for?

Helen Norris (18:01):

Well, as I said, I think it's really important to have a strong moral compass and for them to think of me as being somebody who has integrity, I think it's very important. The role that I try to take with my direct reports is that I'm here as a coach for them and hope that that's what they take, that I have coached them to take their next job, whether it's my job. So I hope that they think of me as a person who has integrity and a person who has provided coaching to them personally and help them develop in their careers.

Alison Dean (18:33):

Help them to grow.

Helen Norris (18:34):

Help them to grow. Yeah.

Alison Dean (18:36):

Love that. Is there anyone past or present that you would have wanted to study with?

Helen Norris (18:41):

one of the things that I used to enjoy before the pandemic, and I know we will again soon is, you go to a conference and there's a great keynote speaker. So I think of some of the great keynote speakers I've seen who I would love to have studied with. People like Malcolm Gladwell. Boy, can you imagine how much you would learn from that guy if you got to work up close and personal with him? He's a person that I find pretty inspiring that I can imagine really learning a lot from.

Alison Dean (19:08):

I think it's a fun question to ask people.

Helen Norris (19:11):

And here's another one and this is maybe just a little bit more current, so maybe it's just today's news or yesterday's news in my head. When I see people step outside their area of skill and speak up for what they believe in. I really admire it. So Megan Rapinoe, she's an athlete, but she goes to Congress and she represents women. Actually, I just really want to be her. If I could just be her, that would be better than studying with her.

Alison Dean (19:37):

Okay. So shifting gears a little bit. IT strategy. So in your opinion, what is the most crucial aspect of a company's It strategy?

Helen Norris (19:44):

I think that the IT strategy just has to be hand in hand with the business strategy or the organizational strategies. So I will tell you that at Chapman, I don't have an IT strategic plan. The university has a strong strategic plan, and that's what I use. I think the value of a strategic plan is in guiding your resources. So I take the university's strategic plan and use that to guide how we will prioritize the work that we need to do in IT. What's the strategic plan of the organization, and then how do we use technology to move us in that

direction? I think that the IT strategy is really the organizational strategy, augmented with the pieces that help the technology run more efficiently.

Alison Dean (20:35):

Right. So how often do you seek out outside consultants?

Helen Norris (20:39):

It really depends. There are projects that you do where it's important to bring in consultants or outside resources because you really want to accelerate the timeline, and you're not going to be able to do it with your own staffing. So I think it's a combination. The pros and cons. If I think about security, for example, we're not a huge IT organization. I have a staff of about 80. It's not possible in that size organization to bring on people with every aspect of the skills that one needs in security to address all the risks we're going to see. So in that case, you really need to find expertise elsewhere. That's a great example of how we might use that. I think one of the things that IT organizations have struggled with in the past is outsourcing some work and then when it's time to support it, they haven't done the appropriate knowledge transfer.

Helen Norris (21:34):

And it is really hard. I've experienced this myself as a project manager. It's the old project management thing. There's time, there's money and there's scope. And usually, time and money are the drivers. You've got to get it finished by a certain time and you only have so much money. So what you lose is the scope. And one of the pieces of scope that often falls out is that piece of knowledge transfer because knowledge transfer costs money. Your consultant and your in-person have to spend the time together to do that knowledge transfer. Realistically, we have to use external resources, but do your best to plan for that because you're going to own it. In most organizations, there's a lot more decentralization or it's much easier for a department. You can use a credit card and buy a service, right? That happens a lot at universities and it surprises CIO. Sometimes you go, "Oh my God, I didn't know they were doing that over there." I think we've worked on our relationships at Chapman, so many times this happens, we're in the loop. We're part of the discussion. I always have to say to my team, "Now remember, we're going to help them with this and we are going to own it just because it's a cloud solution. They're going to be coming to us and we just need to be ready."

Alison Dean (22:46):

So when you started spotting all this rogue, SaaS spend that was happening, how did you then transition to the IT department really stepping in and saying, "This is now the process."

Helen Norris (22:58):

This has been going on for a long time, and I've worked in organizations where the response is, "Well, we're just not going to let them do that." And it's like, well, can we do what they need us to do? Because we probably can't. Even if you think about things as simple as Dropbox, right? When Dropbox came into existence, the services are so great from Dropbox or email I can't do an email system that's going to be as good as Gmail, right? That's just not going to be the case. And people can go out and buy Dropbox by themselves or different tools. So it's really listening to what their needs are. And why is it a problem for our partner to use an outside service? It's really only a problem if they're putting the university at risk. So it's important to know that they're using it appropriately, that they're not putting sensitive data in.

Helen Norris (23:45):

And that's what our role is, is more consultative. And we want to work with them to make sure that they're protected. This is going to sound kind of simple, but from a student perspective, I want all of our services to look like they all come from the same place, so I need everything to be single sign-on.

Helen Norris (24:02):

So they need to come and work with us so that the students can use their single sign-on to get in. And that's the time that we consult with them and we offer them that service. So it's really about thinking of us as offering a service rather than being a barrier. Truly, if there's a service that somebody is trying to connect with that's really problematic, that's the time when you do put your line in the sand and say, "I'm sorry, we just can't do that service that's going to ask every student to put their social security number in their portal." We're just not doing it, but you don't say no to people wanting to do things to make their lives easier. If you can do it in a secure way, in an appropriate way, and in a way that works for the community.

Alison Dean (24:45):

Has the CFO invested in any tooling that digests all of the SaaS that's currently utilized to get a picture of who's using what and what the spend looks like across different departments?

Helen Norris (24:58):

I don't know that we have a tool that does that, but we do a pretty good job, I think with our internal purchasing systems to just categorize purchases. I'm not saying some things don't slip through the cracks, but mostly people are pretty good about noting these purchase orders for software as a service. And in fact, I think my group is even in the approval process in our financial systems, when people buy, say software or hardware. It comes through my group for approval. And again, I think we have to take the approach of, we're approving this, it's a service. We want to approach it from a service perspective, more than a compliance perspective. We want to be compliant, but our goal is really to provide the services that the units need across campus.

Alison Dean (25:45):

You mentioned the chief information security officer. So are there other department leaders that you work with often that affect the outcomes of IT strategy?

Helen Norris (25:56):

Obviously, we worked, as you mentioned closely with the CFO. A lot of what we do is around the resources involved. So cost is involved. In a university environment, I work very closely with the provost. I mentioned classroom technologies, that's the provost. And I work hand in hand to ensure that faculty have the right technology in the classroom to do what they need to do. And also, I think we have a shared responsibility about training and supporting the faculty because my group is responsible for training people on how to use technology, but the provost, he has groups that train people on how to be good teachers. It's a little bit like leadership. You've got to be learning how to teach and different trends and things that come up. So those two pieces really happen together. The provost owns one piece and I own the other, if you kind of think of it in that way, but it's really a shared responsibility at Chapman.

Helen Norris (26:53):

And it's true at many universities. We do a fair amount of research and it's an area where we're continuing to grow, is in the sponsored research area. Sponsored research usually involves a lot of data and in the sciences, a lot of computing. And so I work very closely with our vice president for research. Sponsored research can often have large security and privacy implications because many times people are collecting data. And a lot of times data is about people. The vice president for research, it's his kind of responsibility to ensure that human subjects of research are protected. And I have to partner with him to ensure that we're doing the right things to have their data be protected.

Alison Dean (27:36):

Right. And I'm sure the CSO is also involved with that as well.

Helen Norris (27:39):

Yes, absolutely.

Alison Dean (27:41):

I want to talk about IT solutions that you've implemented in your career that have really excited you, and what made those stand out for you?

Helen Norris (27:48):

Oh, okay. What has excited me? I have to say, I have been doing IT for a long time and I know it sounds geeky, but almost everything. Because that's one of the reasons we work on IT. You put in solutions that

make people's lives easier. Now some things are harder than others. Some things make life easier for one group and actually harder for another and we get to deal with that. But there are so many things that I've done over my career that are really exciting, ranging from wow, we put in a system that makes it so it used to take this many weeks to get your travel reimbursement, now you get it in three days. That's a big accomplishment. That's really exciting to see. But I do have to say that I'm especially proud of the work that my team did during the pandemic, and that it was really exciting to see us move in a matter of days, to support our faculty in moving from fully in-person, to fully remote and to provide a way for students to continue their education. That really couldn't have happened without the work that my team did in supporting the faculty. That's one of the beauties of working in higher ed. You see the results right there every single day.

Alison Dean (29:03):

Yeah. To transition everything to a Zoom environment that quickly and have it work.

Helen Norris (29:08):

I think the issue is it's always people before the technology. We obviously use Zoom pretty heavily, but when the pandemic occurred, we were in the middle of changing our learning management system. And actually, in some ways that was really a positive for us because we had scheduled all these trainings around our new learning management system and it was like, well, all of a sudden where we thought we'd have 20 people, we now have 80 people in that training also. But it was such a transition for the faculty. What was, I think most important for us to do was make sure that were there to provide the consulting and support and listen to what their needs were and put things in place that they needed.

Alison Dean (29:49):

Right. So all of IT is exciting, which I love. Has there been a project that was the biggest one that you've spearheaded? So when it comes to mind, it had the most complexity, perhaps was the most intriguing.

Helen Norris (30:02):

When I think back over the years, I've done a lot of big projects. I know the phrase that people use today is around digital transformation. I think I was doing digital transformation back in the nineties. I don't know for sure. But even some of the things that we've done around implementing our first enterprise systems really changed how people worked. Very big projects, very complex. I have done a lot of enterprise systems implementations, and they're very hard because it's not so much the technology, although there were issues with the technology, but changing how people were. It's the change management piece.

Alison Dean (30:38):

The PMO piece.

Helen Norris (30:39):

Yeah. I think that they are some of the biggest pieces. In the pandemic, some of the tools we put in place to help people collaborate in the workplace to replace that collaboration we used to do in person, that's been interesting and exciting to see how people take to different tools. There's so many.

Alison Dean (30:56):

I know, you're like I can't think of one.

Helen Norris (30:59):

I can't pick one. And the other thing that's interesting is I'm a bit of a data nerd. I've done a couple of different data warehouse implementations, and it's great. Even what we've done in the pandemic here to see how we can use data to help keep the campus more safe. Or I know in one of my prior institutions, we did a lot of student data projects that really, I think helped the university serve students better. I'm a data person. I love the data. So it's exciting to put the data in the hands of the people who can really use it.

Alison Dean (31:34):

I was reading something about nudge tech in the world of higher ed, where if people see that a student is having trouble with something there are gentle nudges like, "Oh, you can get a tutor over in that building."

Helen Norris (31:47):

Yeah. I think that in higher ed, there is a big trend towards these student success kind of systems. I'll give you a quick example. There's research that shows students that attend an event on campus are much more likely to be successful in the university than a student who never attends an event. If you're engaged in campus life, you're more likely to be successful. So there are certain tools that are developed that leverage that data to try to do some early interventions with students who might struggle later.

Helen Norris (32:21):

Now I would say I'm cautious about those because I do think there's a privacy issue there and there's a bit of a nanny state kind of thing. I remember speaking with a colleague about this saying, "Oh God, I hope they never make a system that tells my doctor what I bought at the grocery store, because I just don't want to be having that conversation." I think we have to be very careful about how we implement systems like that. People share data in one way and they don't expect it to be used in a different way. And we see it all over the place. So if I share my data with you, that I attended a particular event, I don't expect you to necessarily use that when you're thinking about am I going to be successful in college. So I think we have to be a little bit careful.

Alison Dean (33:05):

I think with the nudge tech stuff. It's interesting, as long as it's opting in.

Helen Norris (33:10):

I do have some concerns that some of the tools that have been developed, that are using AI, have some biases built in, and that's a reflection that we've struggled to have real diversity in technology hiring. So naturally, some of the tools come out with some of our own biases built in. You talked about how different will our jobs be in five years? I would say that there's an IT ethics field that we could see explode about, is it okay to use that data? How do we make those decisions? I think one of the things that we have to do as universities is figure out how to make sure that when we educate people about technology, that they're considering these privacy and ethical issues at the same time. I think that's kind of parallel to maybe what has happened in the past in the medical field, where doctors have to think about the ethics. I mean, this isn't life or death, but it's the ethics of what you're doing because the technology can do something. Should we be doing it? I think is a fair question.

Alison Dean (34:11):

For privacy, what are the really glaringly obvious changes that you saw?

Helen Norris (34:17):

Well, there's been a lot of change on the privacy front in terms of legislation. So to me, the biggest thing has been initially the GDPR, the European law that protects the privacy and now we have the California Information Privacy Act, which has a lot of similarities to that. Not-for-profits if I understand correctly are at the moment exempt from that, but that will change. So I think we're just going to see continued legislation and the way that we have to approach it because we are a decentralized organization working very closely with our campus legal counsel, especially as we move more things to the cloud. Making sure that we've got the right contractual obligations for our vendors. I think education is very important. We talked about if I'm in a department and I can just put something on a cloud, I think my responsibility as the CIO is to make sure that person is aware of what the issues are and the

risks are.

Helen Norris (35:13):

So I think education is really important in terms of the legislation. And just really reviewing our business processes. I can remember, I go back many years ago where I've worked in an organization that had some patients visit and as a routine, they just asked patients for their social security numbers. There's absolutely no reason for that. And I still sometimes go to a dentist or an eye doctor and they'll ask me for my social security number. I'm almost like, why do you need that? Because I'm going to give you my insurance information. You don't need my SSN. Kind of thinking about what data do you really need to collect? What

data do you really need to share? And so those are areas where I think we'll continue to see the challenges.

Alison Dean (35:59):

Yeah. And change. How do you keep up with new technology news and trends?

Helen Norris (36:04):

I think again, one of the things as a leader, you step back from the technology a little bit more, but it's really important to know what's going on because you've got to make decisions and you've got to be able to be taken seriously by your team. I think a couple of things, I read a lot. I have a great network outside of Chapman that I lean on. Higher ed is very collegial, so I work with other people in higher ed. And I lean very heavily on my direct reports because they're close to the technology. I think I've hired a great team. I think they bring great knowledge and they stay very current and I lean on them to help keep myself current.

Alison Dean (36:40):

I like it. What future innovations are you maybe most excited about?

Helen Norris (36:47):

Oh my goodness. I'm not really sure. In the past, when I think about it, what's the technical innovation that has changed our lives a lot? It's the iPhones, the smartphone. I would never have predicted that. So I'm not saying I'm a good predictor, but I will say I see not necessarily for my work at Chapman, but I think that we're going to continue to see more explosion in the IOT area and the wearables area. We all have smartwatches or whatever. I think that's going to continue and help us figure out ways to change our lifestyle and to be more healthy.

Alison Dean (37:20):

More data.

Helen Norris (37:21):

As long as they don't send my grocery shopping list to my doctor, I'm all good.

Alison Dean (37:27):

Okay. So lastly, I'd like to punctuate any recent breakthroughs that you've had, that you can speak about?

Helen Norris (37:34):

I'm not sure that it's a breakthrough, but I think I mentioned that through the pandemic, it's really important as a leader to be intentional about taking care of your team. And it's harder in the virtual environment. So I think one of the things that I've known, but I've seen it punctuated in the pandemic is, it's important as a leader to be visible with your team, to be there for them, to watch what's going on, to really take care of your team. And you don't just do it by saying, oh, people can come to me. I have an open-door policy. You have to intentionally go out and seek that. Through the pandemic, I do a weekly check-in with my entire organization. I often just don't really have anything to talk about. I answer their questions or we'll share photos of who had the most beautiful sunset last night. So kind of retaining that connection has been very, very important. So I don't know if it's a breakthrough, but it's something that as time has gone on, it's become more and more important.

Alison Dean (38:37):

And on that note, thank you to Helen Norris.

Helen Norris (38:39):

Thank you Alison.

Alison Dean (38:40):

That was so great.

Helen Norris (38:41):

Yeah, it was fun.

Alison Dean (38:43):

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