

# Cindy Schuster Interview

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library, Baltimore city, 100th anniversary, campus, Turner

## SPEAKERS

Interviewer: Courtney Trang

Interviewee: Cindy Schuster

### Courtney Trang

Okay, so we start off with a little statement. This is Courtney Trang. It's October 25, 2023, at 2:31pm. I'm with Cindy Schuster via the online team platform. And we're going to begin our oral history interview for the University of Baltimore stories, the 100th anniversary oral history project. The purpose of this project is to celebrate the University's Centennial, by preserving the memory of those influenced by the University of Baltimore over the years, we will be creating a digital archive and exhibit and making these recordings available online. Okay, Cindy, it's a pleasure to be here with you.

### Cindy Schuster

Thank you.

### Courtney Trang

So how about start off by introducing yourself and I guess your current title at UB and then we'll get into some early background and thank you.

### Cindy Schuster

Okay, well I am Cindy Schuster, actually given name is Cynthia Schuster. And my current title is Director of the Office of Shared Services. And we report within the A and F organization I report to David Bobart.

### Courtney Trang

So, we'll start off with some early life things. You know, where were you born, where you grow up?

### Cindy Schuster

Well, I grew up in Baltimore City, and also, I was born there. So, I grew up in Lauraville, which is on the outer area of the city. And I actually lived there until I got married. So, I lived in that area for a long time.

### Courtney Trang

Right? What was your childhood like?

**Cindy Schuster**

Very traditional, you know, mom and dad and a sister. I'll say even though it was the city, it was more like the suburbs. Went to this. You know, we all went to the VOC to elementary school. I was part of the busing changes in Baltimore City in the late 70s. So, I ended up going to Catholic school for a couple years. And then I transferred to IND [Institute of Notre Dame, which is down Asquith Street talk about taking a jump that was quite a bit of busing for me. And then I transferred to Western, which probably has a lot of relationships, even with University of Baltimore, then a lot of city identity. I will say.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah, so were you a first gen [generation] college student, or what was your relationship with when you started college.

**Cindy Schuster**

I am a first-generation college graduate of my family. And I actually picked University of Baltimore as a student, not as a staff member. And I think, you know, just traditional and what UB [University of Baltimore] brought to me was location, affordability, and a good education within my means. So, I think that that was a defining thing for me.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah, absolutely. What major did you start with?

**Cindy Schuster**

I actually did my undergraduate in Administrative Management in the School of Business. And then I got through that and realize it's sort of funny, because my job now it's really business. But I got through that, and I wasn't 100% sure, that's what I wanted to do. So, then I immediately went to the master's program, but I switched schools. I went through Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts at the time. And I went ahead and got my master's in public design.

So, I've done the different roundabout. And then I kept with that for quite a long time. And I worked with like manuscript type things, and different things in the university that related to that. But then another degree came up through UMBC [University of Maryland Baltimore County]. Now the Global Campus, and that was a master's in distance education, which has really served me well in a lot of different ways, especially when I worked with media.

**Courtney Trang**

Absolutely. What year did you start at UB [University of Baltimore]? Your first steps?

**Cindy Schuster**

I started as a student in 1985.

**Courtney Trang**

Okay, so it was a lot different at that time.

**Cindy Schuster**

Yeah. When I started the campus, definitely an upper division school. I'm probably one of the few people at that time. I wasn't 21. I was still 20 When I started. And it sort of really surprised me it just sort of the availability, like faculty members used to bartend as guest bartender at local bars and stuff. And then it was really an adult population. I did day classes, and there were sort of a cohort of us. But it was really very heavily an evening School of Professional people felt a little bit out of my being for a period of time, but I think was also a really good experience.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah, absolutely. Did you come to work at UB straight from being a student or did you take a gap or anything like that?

**Cindy Schuster**

I was one of the people I just did a variety of jobs. So, I you know, pay for my own education. I always had three part time jobs. I was always doing different things. But a portion of it was being like a student assistant I worked for the Law Library was actually my first place of employment at University of Baltimore. And then when I was in grad school, I became a graduate assistant for the Merrick School of Business, which is interesting that I was in pub design [Public Design] doing that. But it was for the Baltimore business review.

So, it was a journal. Okay, which was the originator of the Center for Business and Economic Studies. I'm not sure if the name today but the Jacob France Center [Jacob France Institute]. So, what is today's Jacob France Center [Jacob France Institute], I was the probably the original grant assistance for that. And then I just sort of worked my way through different positions. And then I landed at Langsdale Library, my first regular employment.

**Courtney Trang**

Okay, so yeah, I was going to say you had, you've had a ton of different roles at UB [University of Baltimore]. So, Langsdale Library, and then from there, what?

**Cindy Schuster**

I stayed at Langsdale Library for quite a long time, but in different roles. I started out there as a library technician, to do their strategic plan to have a new building built that took 20 something years to have done. We joked, I used to joke about it with Lucy Holman, who was the director, the time when the library became a new building. And I was like, God, it took that long to have that done. That was my first assignment, I always would, I would love to find if there was a copy of that somewhere in archives. This is like an 80-page document. But after that is when we started with the beginnings of the internet, I'll say.

So, I switched to more to automation coordinator. I worked with library systems training employees, which sounds so funny now, but how to use a mouse, that kind of thing. When I started at Langsdale Library, we still dialed in to the main system. And that way for a while, and we they used to University of Baltimore at that time divided out administrative computing and academic computing. So, the library

was administrative, but had a lot of relationship to the academic areas. So, it was sort of an interesting thing to be in.

So, we learned some different things. And then once the internet really sort of came more into being in the beginnings of the web, I moved more towards media. And then just, you know, the craziness of the of everything that happened and how quickly it happened. We originally did interactive video, which is what it is today is crazy. That's suddenly the precursor.

So, we had Interactive Video Network at the University of Baltimore, which linked all the University of Maryland system schools. And then I also coordinated the Maryland interactive Distance Learning Network, which no longer exists. But that put together K through 12, community college and higher education within the state of Maryland. Wow. And it's crazy, Interactive Video Network, which was called Ivan still exists today, they still use it. Oh, wow. Just not as heavily. I would actually have to check. But University of Baltimore, we were still taking classes to Shady.

**Courtney Trang**

Grove. Okay,

**Cindy Schuster**

I think part of that when COVID hit a lot of that more disappear. But it really is the precursor to what we use today. And it's amazing how far we've come. But in some ways. What we did back then was pretty amazing, too. Yeah, exactly.

**Courtney Trang**

That's, I can't even Well, I mean, like I was born in 89. So yeah, like I kind of had like the boom of it with school and everything. But the Think of like how much you've seen and how much you helped implement, like throughout the university? That's, I mean, the groundwork for what we have.

**Cindy Schuster**

now, the development of the Internet of getting the internet, I should say, yeah, exactly. The development of the start of our web pages. I did the first library webpage. I didn't do the first I think the university page was out there first. But we were the first to have content. And yeah, linking to other resources and how excited we were at that time.

Like it used to be a big excitement to try to break to get into another library catalog. Yeah. You know, using all the different you know, Archie and I mean, just using Veronica and all the different tools that you could use them, and the slow development. First, it was text base links, to do web pages. And then we slowly developed and went to mosaic and then to Netscape. And then we were all against Internet Explorer at the time. But how far you know how all the different changes we've gone to. And now you don't even have to think about coding things anymore.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah, no, you don't. You don't have to think about any of that. You just click in and that's it. Yeah.

**Cindy Schuster**

And also, all the different tools. I mean, up has really progressed. I mean back in that time was when we first had first computer labs, and you had to exchange out the floppies to use your different software services. And there was very limited you had to like schedule time to be able to do that. And then get to today where we do still have labs, but you have so many different with Wireless, and all the different options that you have.

**Courtney Trang**

And the number of computer labs we have on campus and the different buildings even. Yeah, exactly. I'm

**Cindy Schuster**

a long way.

**Courtney Trang**

Really? Yes. So, from there, what was your next jump?

**Cindy Schuster**

Media always because we had interactive video and such, we needed to be a truly a neutral component in a lot of different ways. It's, you know, a lot of the things like at one point, we even did coordination of classes with other institutions where there were students from other institutions. So, it was always a place.

So, the library was a good place for us to be. But with the growth of electronic classrooms, and the growth of the internet, we needed to enlarge. And at that time period, the more business center really came into being. And at that time, it was the smartest built building in the system. So, it had satellite downlink. It had the Maryland interactive, distant learning network. And all the classrooms were electronic classrooms.

And it started out being over Silicon Graphics machinery, which was a Unix based system, but it needed a whole lot more support to the whole group of us were sort of merged in. So, the media really grew, I would say, almost by 300%, at least, to be able to support faculty members, some of them honestly, like joking around, but they obviously didn't know how to use the mouse at that. Yeah. So, it was a lot of training, a lot of facilitation.

And that became our job. So, I moved really out of automation in the library and into I'll say almost public services for the campus and supporting faculty students more in the classroom situations. And when we were doing interactive video, we also traveled to different sites that we worked with. So, we Shady Grove, and Annapolis at the time and Catonsville rock Valley, and we would go help our students get started in their classes. But the media really changed with all the different classrooms we had. I mean, we really did start out with we had one in the law library that really was just used for like recording.

Classroom moot courtroom exercises, and that stuff, I would consider that our first electronic classroom on campus, but the Merrick School of Business was the second to get widespread. And then we started moving carts. And then eventually, as funding developed all the schools, then had rooms that were of that component. And about at that time also, we then got merged into what was then CIS is today's OTS. They felt that because it was electronic classrooms, they added labs to it. And that worked better in the computing area than the library area.

And that was done. Jim Qualls was the Chief Information Officer at that point, but not too long afterwards, Judy Woods became the CIO. Okay, so I stayed, reporting to her in that role for a good period of time. And that group also totally rebuilt, and totally changed. We no longer like academic and administrative services went away. You know, we're bringing in this thing called PeopleSoft, you know, and all these other different technologies. So quite a good core of people in different divisions and departments. I'll never forget the first meeting Judy would held, we had, we didn't know we were all in the same big department, same division.

So it was that rapid, so many things were happening at the same time, you know, growth in technology changes in the university. So, it took quite a bit of time to get all that underway. But once it was, God would offer me the opportunity to become the business manager for the group, which was a huge shift for me. But at the time, I had two young children. And the evening weekend work was getting to be a little bit more than I wanted it to be. Yeah, so it was a good move. And I stayed with that for a long time to over 10 years.

And we, I mean, OTs developed into the organization. We know it today. But yeah, that's been great. And then from that point, the university decided that they wanted to look at the shared services model of different areas. And business management was one of the areas that was looked at included, and Administration and Finance thought that that would be a good thing to explore. And that's what became office a shared services which I'm now the Director of, currently that does report to date Bo Bart and his role in A and F. And for a period of time, they were moving me around to see how the growth potential the area would be. So, I think it's you know, to have the experience of going through all the different there So the university really, I went from academic to administrative. Yeah. And was also in some ways Student Services.

### **Courtney Trang**

I had your hand and everything, every different pot around.

### **Cindy Schuster**

I'm very neutral, because I've worked in every single area.

### **Courtney Trang**

Well, and that's the thing. So, you experienced a ton of growth in a very short time, comparatively, you know, like, and you clearly persevered through that, and you've grown through that, but what were some of the biggest challenges during those times?

### **Cindy Schuster**

I think, a huge shift. Well, we had to, we have a couple of them almost on the, I'll say, more academic side. And when we became an upper division university, that was pretty big. It really was, I mean, you go from really having a great majority, truly adult students to having to experience even 17-year-olds, really young people who needed a variety of services different from an older student age with their. And although a lot of it was adventurous and wonderful. I think that it was quite the challenge. I still wonder today, if we had not gone upper division, what UB would be, but yeah, there will be no way to ever know that.

I think it was a good decision, knowing all the things that was known at the time, and it brought us a new variety of students that has been great. So, I think that that was good. So, sort of a challenge at the beginning. But looking back on it, the thing for University of Baltimore, and the other pretty big one was going from three to four schools. And as an alumni, I'm still happy about it. But I always say I graduated in college. And I did. I did want to change that. But yeah, I split. Yeah. So, it's sort of, you know, sort of funny, but as a staff member, it was just a lot of the backdoors work that happened with that.

**Courtney Trang**

I was going to say it looks like it should be so simple. And yet, it was not.

**Cindy Schuster**

know. And making, those kinds of changes are just huge, you know, and at the time, you know, we've done a quite a few huge PeopleSoft upgrades to not change. I mean, while challenges in themselves and making everything work correctly, and we're getting ready to go to workday, now in July. So that will be another big one. Um, other true challenges, honestly, I mean, he's really been a good place for me to work and grow. And, you know, I love the ability that I had to have some flexibility for my children. To me, that was the only reason I could work. So, I will always,

**Courtney Trang**

and now we have one of them here. Yes.

**Cindy Schuster**

And he, he really did come here for when the time was kid because we had different celebrations where it was good to have your family with you. And he's always been a family organization. And you know, a lot of different ways. I hope we get more back to that I know we're coming out of COVID still in the variety of services we offer, like getting more of the Family Centered events was always fun. But yes, and also, I did forget to say I met my husband here. So, I'm like, we met an undergraduate in the School of Business.

**Courtney Trang**

They were both students. Yes. Nice.

**Cindy Schuster**

And coming up on our 34th wedding anniversary, so

**Courtney Trang**

I have to tap you for some Valentine's Day things, you know, later down the line. But so Okay, speaking of those kinds of memories, you know, what kind of good memories do you have, like colleagues of yours throughout the years?

**Cindy Schuster**

We can't tell stories like

**Courtney Trang**

These are the stories that we could tell.

**Cindy Schuster**

While we think I've been probably one of the few people that have served under three presidents here at the university, I'm going to say you've seen three of them. I will say I'd worked with each one of them. And they each pot brought a really interesting spirit and strength to the position. No, President Turner, Mayor of Baltimore City, Midtown, they used to call him wasn't a technology person.

So, we used to go on road shows and stuff with him. But always a gentleman we always used to joke because I was a media, we set up equipment, we did stuff, and he did that he was all fashion. But he always would bring us to the table make sure we got introduced to all the politicians at any of the events and always went out of his way to do that. And I will say even most students would always know who he was even if they didn't know you're him. He walked the campus and always had the bow tie outfit on and was dedicated to the arts. And I think, you know, part of his legacy also is, you know, the lyric theater is still there, I think University of Baltimore had a heavy hand in its troubled times of getting the Lyric, some backup at least. And then President Bogomolny was our modern president that shocked the world. But at the end, it was really fun. It was you know; I think he brought in some needed change, we needed to modernize certain things. And of course, President Schmoke gave us the Baltimore identity.

**Courtney Trang**

to tie more into the community.

**Cindy Schuster**

Yes, I will say from a technology standpoint, He's the least demanding. Of all the things there's certain things that no matter what my job is, I still do here. And that's one of them. But no, and in the staff, you know, we've had so many different funny things. But if I think if you really go back to events, well, block party, of course, always stands out both as a student and staff member. Yeah. But the University of Baltimore holiday parties. Everybody knows everybody. So that was always a nice thing. And are years of service awards, which I still miss they joke about it I for my wasn't my 20th or 25th. I bet some people that I would hug or kiss the president, which was President boba Moni at the time. And it ended up I do, I did it.

And he was shocked, but really well, but then they never did stage things. After that. Everybody said it was me. But my favorite, favorite person to this and I want to shout out to him is Bob Kennedy, the



videos he would do for his staff. So, on your 25th, or whatever, are the best. And I hope that that piece of that's included in the 100th anniversary that says we're always just really to the heart. But I've worked with so many good people, I don't want to forget anybody. But unfortunately, we're starting to lose people that.

**Courtney Trang**

a lot of staples. Yeah, but

**Cindy Schuster**

just really, I think that's the reason I've chosen to work at a university is it's always has had the diversity, but the reasoning always to come together as a community. That's really important. And I know you know, there's a quite a few things to work towards. But education is a wonderful thing. We really do change people's lives truly Yeah. You know, in graduations have always been my favorite day. And even though I'm in administration more now I try to work graduation when I can. Because it is the day of success.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah, I really have. So, as we kind of look back and go forward, you know, what, what kind of observations you make about UB going forward, or you bought going forward? I should say,

**Cindy Schuster**

going forward. I hope we create our student volume a little bit more again. I mean, I think we're okay where we are, but I think a little bit more I hope we diversify and can grow international students again. Cuz always fun just to meet people from all over the world.

I mean, how many companies can do you know, people can get to do that we get to do that in a university. I think our plans for always, I think we always were Baltimore's university. But I think we're going a little bit more towards that, which I think is also a really good thing. Technology [is] constantly changing, I think, though, our current system really needs a change out which we're getting. So, I think that that's going to be a really good thing going forward.

We still have location, location, location, that's a president Turner thing, that's what are you still we say we have location, location, location, and just seeing how the area of Mount Vernon in Midtown are going to change and how that also develops, you be like all the different people coming in from the train, and we're going to get that cohort.

You know, the police academy, I think we do a lot of different growth, both on both ends on training police officers, but also our students who flee being able to participate in different things. It's so exciting to see what's going to happen in three to five years. It's as little as three years as we get the new building put up for where the postal offices now. And what that brings to, I mean, tons more people living in the area, it's going to make a change no matter what I mean, I grumble every morning trying to get into parking right now, but it was for a purpose. It's for a reason and it's you know, just being able to also have community place and what that brings to you be I always thought you'd be was so great. We had a classroom right outside our door. You know, we had the lyric we had the Meyerhof we have

Walters, our gallery, easily within walking distance I took the history of Baltimore course and I just I reregistered as a student, because I never got, I never use tuition remission for an undergrad degree. So, like, I'm just going to do this sort of for fun. So, I was taking classes, I really wanted to what a fantastic course, I would like to take that class again, I was going to do that, because just to see all the different things. And it's being in the in a city hub still and having all and also all the other academic institutions that surround us. Yeah. We're such an area of learning. So that's, I think, one of the things.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah, I agree with you, I think. I think that's something to look forward to for sure. And then even, you know, what the possibility that city high school might come and like, that's another way to tie us into the community and, you know, make us Baltimore's University.

**Cindy Schuster**

They always say in Baltimore, people, don't you asked where you went to high school, high school is a big identifier for Baltimore residents.

**Courtney Trang**

Yes, it is. Western is a huge identifier. Crazy. I'll

**Cindy Schuster**

never forget, I was on the women's forum for a couple years. And one day, we were just in every city. Oh, what's your high school? Almost half of us were Western graduates. Just mean, it is the oldest girls public school in United States. But still, it was just amazing to me. And it showed, you know, female leadership starts at an early level.

**Courtney Trang**

Yes. I mean, you think, you know, Western poly City, Paterson. They're, like, huge names, like, I mean, they're just very identifiable high schools. You know, I went to digital Harbor, like I was a part of the second graduating class from there. But it was southern high school before that. And again, another name that everybody's like, oh, that's where you're where southern was.

**Cindy Schuster**

And I think Baltimore is starting to go back into the neighborhood. Like, we used to have the Baltimore City fair, a long, long time ago, in each neighborhood would have foods down at the Inner Harbor before the Inner Harbor buildings were there. And I think it's a lot of it, it is Baltimore identity. But grew up as a cornerstone, and it solidifies the area to

**Courtney Trang**

it's us. Does I agree. I'm going to say, I was going to say something else. Oh, recently. I learned that Turner because we're just talking about smoke and the things that he's kind of brought up. I recently learned that Turner was just a collector of things. Like he was a member of the post society. And that's how Poe ended up on the plaza, the bell that came to UB, do you know of any other things that Turner brought to the campus?

**Cindy Schuster**

Of those areas? What's the group that will sing to you when you go there? He was on every board in Baltimore. I'll put it that way. I do know that. And he did. Love collections. And one of my early members have memories of him is and this is when I was a student assistant. There was a baby shower for him for his son. Really? Yes. And I'll say, you know, man in a bow tie opening baby gifts. Always really remember that.

**Courtney Trang**

That's so funny. I,

**Cindy Schuster**

I went, I was part of his ending tour where he did a lot of different things. And we went to Annapolis, and they really did give a lot of kudos to him. And they did have everybody. And granted, there's not that many law schools, but everybody stood up and it was over half the people. Wow. But everybody who gave up and came up and gave speeches. And he really was called the Midtown mayor. And there's a reason for that.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah. He had a hand in everything.

**Cindy Schuster**

Well, we were joking about I mean, he was on the Board of Trustees at UB, originally. And, you know, definitely most of the older artwork that hangs around up was from him coordinating the collection of that. Within the library, some of the special collections work was also he had quite a hand in WoW, at different times. And sometimes getting some of the politician's archive work to UB was through his efforts. He always took a very strong interest in the library.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah. And it seems like what history what Baltimore history that the library could preserve is what he like he loved to collect. Yes, that's really cool.

**Cindy Schuster**

Yeah, interesting, man. I'm very glad Yes, sir. Under

**Courtney Trang**

a lot of A lot of people who have been here through the last three presidents, they have very fond memories of Turner, from what I've heard. Is there anything else you would like to say about your career? And looking back on your time that you'd be? A lot of people

**Cindy Schuster**

have said, oh, how could you stay here this many years, and I feel like I've had so many changing jobs. And the other thing that's so wonderful about being in a university is the student base always changes. So, it's never the same experience. I'm glad I stayed here. I love education. I always did go towards

libraries. But I like the IT area too. And it's been a pleasure being here. And we'll see how much longer I'll stay.

**Courtney Trang**

Hopefully, it's a while longer.

**Cindy Schuster**

I really look forward to the 100th anniversary year, I think there's going to be a lot of fun and a lot of different things that we can do. I think at one point, like when we were doing female leadership, well for Women's History Day, and I was really looking back at all the different female leaders in there first. So, I'd like to write that up a little bit more. But we've really had, you know, the first female business school dean, and there's just been a variety different people. And I would say UB was among the first I think smaller institutions have an easier time of being first.

Yeah, like for interactive video, just for instance, we did stuff in College Park couldn't do. Just because of the nature of who we were at the time, to be able to coordinate a course between three different institutions was unheard of. And yet we did it. We were the first to incorporate a computer into a classroom situation over interactive video, probably even early even in a classroom situation. Because it was when projectors were first starting out. And were very cost prohibitive at that time.

So, the fact that that was able to be done. And just a lot of the different things that are not all technology based, but it's just I always look back, if I could say what was my favorite time of working at UB, it was the start of the internet, it was just exciting. Everybody was interested in wanting to you know, they were very willing to take any type of assistance, they were willing to pilot some of our faculty members just put themselves out there they had, you know, and it was fun. So, I think that that would be my favorite time of being here.

**Courtney Trang**

And things change so quickly, when it came to technology that, you know, we've moved from floppy disks to CDs to you know, the cloud, I mean, as a cloud everything. So, I can imagine that that was a really fun time. Very stressful, but probably, you know, excitement will also.

**Cindy Schuster**

say through the years, the variety of student employees, you know, people who came here and then also, I mean, but work truly as student assistants, I'm still in touch with a lot of people from 25 years ago. And that to me, also says the community of UB they want to stay in touch may not even be in the United States anymore, but they're still want to know what's going on at UB.

**Courtney Trang**

Yeah. Well, that was awesome. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

**Cindy Schuster**

Can't think of anything?

**Courtney Trang**

I think we touched on every question that I had for you. Thank you!