Marie Dence Celebrates 30 Years at CNS

UFIT
2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100
Gainesville Florida 32609-8942
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>
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When Marie Dence started at CNS, there was no e-mail, computers were not on every desktop and UF had 25,019 students enrolled. Three decades have shaped what we know of computing today and Dence, currently an associate director of the data center, has been a catalyst for many of those changes.

At CNS, she initiated our first online documentation system and helped to formalize a computer training program to serve UF. She was instrumental in bringing Gartner Group and NETg to campus. She also participated in developing campus-wide training programs for administrative (DANCE, DAta Network Computer Education) and technical staff (the UF Computer Challenge and Peer2Peer).

The biggest changes, Dence said, have been in computing technology, publishing technology, and CNS itself. "When I started, only computer programmers and researchers used computers. Now they are used by almost everyone to do daily work," she said. The availability of computers has also changed. "People didn't have workstations on their desks like we do now. Computers and terminals were a shared commodity at best," she said.

Publishing has also drastically changed in those 30 years. "When I first started, I was the whole publications staff. At that time, I started /Update (the monthly newsletter for CNS) and the Guidebook for New Users, developed a 20-volume set of user manuals for CNS systems and services, and re-organized the Memo system, ancestor of today's CNS NEWS," Dence said.

"I typed our first /Update on a typewriter. The first manuals used punch cards to generate the text," she said.

Her current projects at CNS include coordinating training, documentation, consulting, CNS user groups, and serving on the CNS budget committee. Dence also oversees the distribution of software copyright information for UF.
She was a member of the first UF IT Task Force, chair of the Council for Information Technology Administrative Services (CITS-Admin), chair of the UF Technical Training workgroup, and is currently a member of the UF IT training committee.

Statewide she has served as President of FAEDS (the Florida Association of Educational Data Systems), been an active participant in FETC (the Florida Education Technology Conference), and has served as a member of the Editorial Board of the Florida Technology in Education Quarterly. She helped to develop the original proposals for statewide services which eventually became Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA) and Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN).

"Most of all, I have been fortunate to work with many incredibly talented people who are really good at what they do, which has made it easier for me to do what I have needed to do."

Your Comments are Welcome

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UF Information Technology

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