

I'm excited to have you join us this morning. My name is Jan Gascoigne.

I'm the associate vice chancellor of student affairs.

And here with a team of women who, have been gathered over the last, I think, six years to, reach out and,

develop a series of speakers of women leaders on our campus to share their journey in leadership.

So we are thrilled and excited this morning to have Charlotte Russell with us.

Charlotte is our CSO and Assistant Vice chancellor for information security and IT compliance.

She joined C.U. in 2022 and oversees the connection between cyber security and the compliance missions of the university.

Charlotte was most recently the AVC and chief information security officer for the University of North Texas System,

and also served as the interim CIO overseeing the enterprise technology operations for the Multi Campus System.

She has served as a leader and Information Technology IT for over 25 years,

and is dedicated to the collaboration and partnership and supporting our university mission.

So this morning, Charlotte is going to share with us a bit about her leadership journey.

At the end of her talk, we will then open it up for questions.

And my colleague Laura Borgelt will help navigate those questions.

And we look forward to a great morning. So I'm going to pass it off to you, Charlotte.

Thank you, Jan, and thank you all. Good morning.

It's great to be here and I'm so grateful and thankful and shocked that Jan and Debbie asked me to do this thing.

I said, there's absolutely nothing interesting about me or my journey.

I don't know why anyone would find this to be exciting, but there are people that want to hear how I got here.

And as I started preparing for this, I realized there have been some pretty funny moments.

So maybe some of this is interesting after all.

So, as Jan mentioned, I am assistant vice Chancellor for Information Security and IT Compliance.

I have the privilege of working within the Information Strategy and Services Division,

which is part of Central Services Administration, which is led by Terry Carruthers.

And I'm quite excited to be here at Anschutz. I also in my role in supporting security and compliance, support CU Denver.

And we collaborate heavily with the other campuses as well.

So CU system and also Boulder and University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

So, the kinds of things that we do every day are very exciting.

We tend to dabble in a little bit of everything just to be able to help everyone and meet the mission of the organization.

So what I'm going to do now is share my screen with you. This presentation.

Are you all able to see? the first page.

Yyou are the firewall. Okay, excellent. A little bit about me.

I worked for the University of North Texas system for 29 years.

There were three campuses within that system, and the flagship institution, University of North Texas, is located in Denton, Texas.

For those of you who don't know where that is, that's just an hour north of Dallas, which is in the north central region of the state.

It looks like it's close to the Panhandle, right? It's several hundred miles from the Panhandle, but it looks like it's very close.

At that university, I oversaw security operations, and I'm very, very excited to be here at CU Anschutz.

I've been here now two years and very excited to be part of the team.

A little bit about my family. They are very dear to me.

They are in Texas. They include my husband. I have two children, a daughter who's 27 years old, a son who's 23 years old.

And we have a little doggie, actually a large dog named Gracie, who we found in a shelter.

She was gorgeous and beautiful, and she had golden eyes.

And she was a mix of an English pointer. She's some sort of a hound mix, and she's also part pit bull.

And she is quite adorable. I love your doggie, Jan.

She's quite adorable. We are a very musical family.

Just so you know, we all play at least two instruments.

I'll talk a lot about music in this presentation. we visit one another very often, often chatting all day.

Phone calls. FaceTime.

And we even, have an opportunity to chat with the dog.

So she calls me as well. So I miss my family.

I love them dearly. But, you know, it feels like they're here with me. Even at a distance, there's never a dull moment with my family. So in the middle of some really critical things like today, really important things.

I might get a text or a call from my family to tell me about the wonderful things that they're doing.

For example, a few minutes ago, my daughter sent me a note saying that she voted.

So if you haven't voted, make sure you vote. And she called.

So I didn't pick up because I knew that would be a very engaging conversation about every aspect of the voting experience, which is great.

So a little bit more about me. My focus has always been on making things better for our organization and our students.

No matter where I've worked. It's the number one reason why I work in a university environment.

I'm fascinated with education, and I'm also fascinated with learning.

You may be wondering why this presentation is called you are the Firewall.

Well. It comes with understanding what a firewall is.

A firewall monitors. It controls the incoming and outgoing receipt and delivery of information and data.

It's used to manage events within an environment. It only allows the activities that are authorized and approved.

It only allows communications that matter and prevent those that don't matter from getting a foothold.

It has to be fine tuned with new information from different qualified and appropriate sources in order for it to be effective and to do its job.

It has to be improved over time. So how did I get here?

That's an interesting story. And I'll tell you about my firewall.

It has a lot to do with perseverance, overcoming the musings of naysayers, gaining support and listening to those who were my champions, knowing when I made a wrong decision and learning from it.

Doing what worked for me. But it was also filled with good people, mentors, people that took chances on me.

And there were a whole lot of firewall lessons along the way.

So the beginnings. So throughout this presentation you'll see a few images.

They were all pulled from Microsoft Copilot. Some were pulled from the internet.

Some look very real, especially the one in the middle with little girl playing the piano.

So I didn't find the sources to give credit.

So I want to make sure everyone understand that we're going to follow copyright expectations here to give credit to those that own these sources.

So on this slide, you see images that represent my earliest fond memories and my influences that led me to where I am today.

The teacher in the first image represents my first grade elementary school teacher who would read daily to our class.

I distinctly remember James and the Giant Peach and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

I can still hear the pages of the hardback book.

The sound that it made when you were turning those pages,

the crispness of the pages and the vivid images of the characters and the adventures.

There's another image on the slide, of a teacher playing an autoharp for class.

It always calmed the room of the 20 very energetic six and seven year olds.

And at that time, I didn't realize this. This was a different experience, that many students didn't have this experience.

So you're seeing the intermingling of education and reading and music, those things that influenced who I am today.

I also started playing piano at age seven, and it was fascinating and a very exciting thing for me.

I'm told my great grandmother also played, so it seems to run in the family, and I'm told she played other instruments.

I spend many hours and spent many hours playing, tinkering, composing and transcribing the music that I heard.

Forpan. My day started early, waking at 530, getting dressed, arriving early at school,

which allowed me to spend time in the school library where I often volunteered and skipped lunch and never told my parents that I did that.

To go and sit with the library and to talk about new authors and stories and grab books that were new,

that just arrived at the library so that I could get them before they were on the shelves.

And then other students would grab them so I wouldn't be able to read them.

I suspect by the time I left elementary school that I probably read all the books, or at least touched all the books in that library.

It also helped me to understand, censorship, in the kinds of books that students were allowed to read.

So where I couldn't get a book, not necessarily in my school library, but also in public libraries, I worked really hard to try and find those books,

whether they were in a bookstore, or I'd go to another library, a public library, to find what I needed to read.

I was fascinated with all things science, science fiction.

I would, if you remember the world Book encyclopedias that we all had, I think many of us had our parents purchase.

I would read every one of those in the entire series back to back,

including the dictionary, just, you know, learn new words and do goofy things like that.

And there was one book in particular that had information about the science of the human body.

So, and it had the pages where you could see the body, you could turn the page and you could add the different systems of the body.

And they were in color. Everything flash back, right?

All the memories. So that was me. That was me at home doing those sorts of things and learning more about everything as much as I could.

And when I would go to libraries, I always looked or, music scores.

For, if I could find those music scores and bring those home and play those as well.

Any sort of music. I'm the middle of three children.

My mother was a computer graphics artist before she retired.

At the time, I had no idea that she was really in this field called information technology.

My father worked in physical labor at a warehouse,

where he had access to everything that could be shipped to be, the large trucks, trucking system.

So, that included frozen food. And so that meant we had ample food supply.

He was an avid reader. So that's where I learned.

Now I know where I learned to read and get excited about reading.

But he particularly loved nonfiction, particularly natural science, including any information about, sharks and amphibians.

At home. As a child, I was the IT person. I figured out how to connect equipment to our embedded stereo system.

For those of you that had homes with this, with the speaker systems in the ceiling, and I bravely learned how to wire those systems, and deal with electricity in ways that I probably shouldn't have.

I'm surprised I'm still here today. Digging around in those, those ceilings and walls and trying to connect things.

I would take the piano apart as well.

Just opening it up and trying to pull some of the pieces out of the keyboard, whether it was the dampers or the,

touching the pedals or the strings, just to figure out how everything was connected and how everything worked.

How did it all come together? Watching movies and television was a favorite pastime.

But what I enjoyed most about that is looking at the ending credits to see who wrote the musical scores,

who the producers were, and where things were produced. That was more important to me than the actors and the acting,

because that helped tell me how the story was created that was presented. Home with a safe place.

Physical security was very important. I lived in a home that was safe.

It was in a lovely neighborhood, but security and protection were always at the forefront.

My home was protected, especially, in regard to my going from coming.

So I was a latchkey kid. For those of you who may have been a latch key kid or may not know what that means,

you basically had, your parents, didn't bring you home from school.

You were, able to walk home or get home on your own, and you had your home key, and you unlock your door and you got into your home.

For me, that is the steps that I took.

Except I rode a school bus home, and I walked about a quarter of a mile to get to my house, and then I locked the door.

I call my parents when I made it safely and to let them know, and then I would proceed to do homework, practice piano, or read.

So that's where I began to learn about physical security and safety.

Those were aspects of my life that I felt were part of my personal firewall, right?

Those were the things that protected me.

It was about ten years ago that I learned that my father, in his also very protective way, was acting as a firewall to me.

He was all of six foot four, and if you met me, you know that I am nowhere near that height.

He had the build of a professional football player.

His physical presence was always felt when he walked into a room, and sometimes it was ominous to others.

But he didn't frighten me because he was dad. Somehow he found a way to communicate to all of my friends,

especially the male friends in our neighborhood and at school, that his daughters were off limit.

And that explained a lot about why many of my friends acted weird when he came around, so I don't know how he did that,

but apparently there he was, being my firewall and protecting me again. In many different ways.

So one of my favorite things also to do was to take information and cook.

Make changes to those, to the recipes that I found.

But I wasn't like other, my other siblings who would eat whatever was presented before them.

I wasn't interested in, the foods that were very popular in my family or in the neighborhood.

I preferred chef's salads and any sort of salad of any kind at the age of 11.

So that was what I survived on for years. Different types of salad, different types of food that weren't the norm.

So in summary, all of this is critical to, I think, who I became as a person in my makeup.

The people that stood by me and watched over me at that young age, the teachers who were reading,

the teacher who played the music, me playing the piano, working in the library were very instrumental.

And I have to tell you that one of the things that really grabbed me,

how I got here to Colorado was I would always watch Children's Television Network or PBS,

and I don't know if you all remember this too, but many times there were,

always commercials about related to how to contact a different entity in the government.

And for some reason, the address was published in those commercials, and they always referred to Pueblo, Colorado.

In the PBS shows that I watched, there was a TV show that was filmed or produced in Pueblo, Colorado.

So I just kept seeing Colorado come in.

I wasn't so fond of those government commercials, but I was very fond of the PBS station and all the TV shows that were for children.

So I thought there had to be something really special about Colorado.

And at the age of, very young, age 10 or 11, I decided someday I'm going to go there.

I need to check Colorado out and see what's going on in Colorado, because they make these really great TV shows and they have these really.

And everything seems to happen in Colorado. So I knew I had to be here.

So computers, pipe organs, pianos and pipe organs.

At the end of middle school, I had an opportunity to attend a magnet school.

That's a school where they specialize in a domain or an area that, and they and the students learn as much as they can about that particular domain.

For me, there were three that were of interest, but I could only attend one.

The first one was the science magnet, where you go to learn about the sciences, technology, engineering.

The second was the health magnet, where you learn about the health professions.

And then the third was the arts magnet, which was the fine arts school where you could perform, play music, be an artist, theater or dance.

I chose the Arts magnet because I wanted to focus on music.

And I felt that the courses there would be substantial to give me a little bit of what I

was missing from the other schools that were related to the sciences and the technology.

So I thought that was a win. And after being accepted there, I began to look at focus on some of the classes that were related, not just to music,

but to computer math and technology. So that too fascinated me.

And what I really got interested in is that school helped me to learn more about experimentation and the great things that you can do in,

in life with something that normally you take for granted.

So a piano, for example, a group of us got together to decide how we could make music from what's inside the piano versus just playing the keys.

So I don't know how many of you have ever done this.



Taking your taking your pianos apart, kicking the boards off the piano and climbed inside and just played, the soundboard.

There are massive strings inside of a piano, and then there are knobs inside of a piano.

So improvising with a group of students, that collective was very exciting to me.

Being in that music school. For those of you who are musicians, you may know about John Cage.

John Cage, was an experimental piano composer.

He, created a piece for piano that.

Was very interesting. It wasn't actually played. He created the composition called it four minutes and 33 seconds.

And all he did. All the performer of this this piece would do is sit at the piano, open up the lid on the piano a couple of times within the four minutes and 33 seconds.

This piece came from John Cage, and it was about his musings about silence.

It wasn't about the music. It was about the creativity and the experimentation that comes from it.

When he sat at the piano, you could hear the sounds of raindrops on the roof.

You could hear the wind stirring and you could hear the audience movement.

In fact, at that time, some of the audience members laughed because they were. They didn't think that, they were appalled at that

this was the performance. There was no music. But it was an improvised piece, and the goal was to help everyone understand that they were the music,

they were making the music, and they were part of the experience.

So those are the kinds of really exciting things that I would do in the experimental stage.

I also worked at a point to learn as much as I could about other instruments.

And here's where it gets really interesting. I was, the piano majors in my high school were approached to learn about this new instrument.

This teacher, a new teacher, was coming and she was going to teach everyone how to play the pipe organ.

Who was interested in that, who would be interested in learning how to play the pipe organ?

Well, I was because it was different and I always was different.

To me, it was the grandest of instruments, and I could have a full orchestra at my fingertips.

And all I had to do was pull. Pull on a stop.

Push a button, pull a knob. If I wanted to hear string, I could choose a viola or a violin.

If I wanted to hear woodwind or reed.

I could pull a knob for a bassoon, a clarinet, or an obo. If I wanted to hear the bass sounds, which were my favorite because they were the deepest,

and you could feel the rumbling inside the room when you play those eight foot, 16 foot or those really large 32 foot pipes, you could hear that.

And that was just a wonderful sound. And you played the pedal board, which is a large piano board for feet.

I had opportunities also to learn how that instrument worked. I had opportunities to walk inside of an organ loft,

and there learn about the mechanics associated with what happens after you press the key on the organ and the console,

and the electro pneumatic and mechanical works that happen to release the stops.

That allowed the airflow to flow for that particular key.

It was absolutely fascinating to me.

For those of you who don't deal with technology and things like that, that was just so exciting to learn how this massive instrument worked.

It was an honor to be able to play that instrument.

It was an honor to be able to work, to work with others.

One of the pieces that I played at my senior recital in high school was on the organ, with a full orchestra.

The sound in that room was massive. I love orchestras, right?

I love hearing music of all kinds in all types.

And I'm thank, I'd like to thank my organ teacher, who's no longer here, but she was one of a kind, supportive, encouraging and tough.

But she introduced me to a new world that changed my trajectory.

She was my champion, and she helped to fortify my firewall.

These learned lessons were learned and applied, and they were daring me to do things beyond what I was normally accustomed to.

This was my first understanding that musical instruments were also technology.

And I was very excited about that. They could be tuned.

They could be experimented with, and they allowed you to be able to communicate with others freely and openly without barriers.

This next slide I'm going to show you includes an organ on the left.

This organ is in the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas.

And the Meyerson Symphony Center was built around the time I was in high school, and I had opportunities to play this organ.

So this is, what I find absolutely fascinating. It fills the room and it is incredibly grand.

It is part of the stage. It is actually center stage. So this is what I found really fascinating.

You see the piano, it's a wonderful instrument. But, you know, when I see the organ there, it's.

It really does take my breath away. The beauty of it.

So when I began to search for a university after I graduated from high school, I decided I was going to major in music.

I met with my counselor in high school, and the counselor talked to me about some different options.

We talked about different majors, and we talked about honors programs.

And I was very excited about, joining

honors programs in college because I wanted to do some of the advanced work related to, the academic areas.

And I was very interested in. But my counselor gave me some pretty troubling news.

He said he didn't think the honors courses were for me.

He said he didn't feel like I could handle the harder courses. So that was my, one of my first experiences with a naysayer.

That person actually helped to fortify who I was. They helped to fortify my firewall.

So here is where this person helped to,

add a block, unfortunately. That I put into place to prevent negative influences from impacting the positive courses that I intended to take.

The positive path. An example of another naysayer.

Right around that time I was graduating, was a friend of my brother's visited our home, and he learned that I was planning to, make music.

My major in college, I was chosen music,

and he worked really hard to identify and share with me all the reasons why that would not be a good idea, why I would not be successful?

And that I should spend my time doing other things that he felt were important.

Another naysayer. So he helped to fortify my firewall and help filter out that sort of negative language.

For some reason, my brother never invited him back to the house again.

So I think my brother must have heard about that whole conversation and decided, you're not.

It's not good for you to be here. But I had, so I had the support of my family from the very beginning.

They were my champions,

and they helped me to focus on the things that I wanted to do and help me take a path that I felt and they felt would be beneficial.

They helped carve that path for me and remained my champions.

So when I started my career at the University of North Texas, where I worked, in my later career. I chose music as my major,

but I also chose computer science because I couldn't get away from the math, computer math that I was so very interested in in high school.

And I did take some of those those computer science courses. And I did, what was a dual major for a couple of years.

But it grew to be very difficult to spend time daily in computer labs and practicing, sometimes up to 6 to 8 hours a day.

So, I had to make a decision if I was going to continue that path or if I was going to make change.

So I decided, you know, let's take advantage of this opportunity to go into music permanently.

That's where I get my excitement. I'm more excited about that in the computer science right now.

And then I can always come back to the technology part of life, so I waited.

And I became a music major. I worked multiple jobs.

For those of you who don't know, I worked as a telecommunications operator and a payment processor in the suburbs.

I had jobs working in music work study as a TA.

I was a clerk in the College of Music's main office, working very closely with the faculty and the students there,

helping them develop programs and manage some of the services that were made available to the students in that college.

I also worked as an IT assistant in the computer department.

And so, unknowingly, I had begun working in IT, even though my major was in music.

So. I also performed professionally, working with some of my friends and perform.

Was a musician at church as well. So that's where you find the pipe organ.

So that's where you're going to play. But I also did quite a few piano gigs and got excited about those too.

So back to the counselor. Before I graduated from college,

I made the Dean's List multiple times and I repeatedly joined, was invited to join the honors colleges and all the honor societies.

So I knew what I was capable of, and the naysayers did not win in that case.

After graduation. Here's another turn, another turn in trajectory for me.

I looked for, I was graduating and I was working part time,

and I was looking for jobs in the Denton area, which is where my university was located.

I had just gotten a new car as part of my graduation present to myself, and I let my dad know that I was going to continue working in Denton.

But he said. He didn't want me to go.

He didn't want me to work there. He wanted me to work in Dallas, where he felt it was safer for me and I had better opportunities.

He was steering me in a direction that I didn't want to go. But I didn't argue with my father.

I didn't exactly agree either. I kept working in Denton.

And, because I'd already prepared a path of working there. I did not

add my father to my firewall. He's still open,

we still had good conversation and good discussion, but he was still part of my life because he was instrumental in supporting me all the way.

So my career began in IT and I'd been working for the department for four months, and my supervisor resigned after I'd only been there four months.

So I wondered what's going to happen to me and to the other students that are employees that work in this department.

My supervisor was responsible for access control and account management.

And so here's where I was getting, being exposed to information security, not just IT and technology and computer programming languages.

She ran the administrative office also, and ensured that the technology resources that our campus faculty and staff needed,

to ensure that they were appropriately receiving the services they needed to manage the academic courses that they were taking or teaching.

So, when her position was posted the vacant position, my supervisor asked if I would be interested in applying for the job and I said no.

I wasn't looking for, I was going to work in the music field. I was going to be a musician.

I was looking for full time employment there,

and there was no way I was going to sit in an office when I could travel and be self-employed and work at my own leisure.

I just was not excited about sitting in four walls all day long. Because that's what it looked like.

That's that's the representation that I saw from my former supervisor.

So I continued working part time, but I did pick up my supervisor's responsibilities.

And as I waited for someone to be hired for the position. So a month passes, my supervisor asked me again, and again

I say very respectfully, politely. I don't think I want to do that.

That's really not something that I'm looking forward to. I'm wanting to work in the music field.

I continued to work part time and do the work of my supervisors just to make sure things got done.

And this time that supervisor, came to me and elicited support from

another team member who chatted with me and showed me how, told me how great it would be.

I was already doing the work. I would be good for this job.

Well, I'd already put my firewall up, and I decided that this wasn't a thing that I was interested in.

So I made the decision mentally that I wasn't going to do it.

But then there was a critical factor this third time around when they asked me to take this job.

It was that I was engaged and I was going to be married in a year.

And I needed to find ways to help fund or pay for my wedding.

So I said yes, I'll do it finally, because I was going to have to pay for my wedding.

But I'm going to quit after a year because after a year I'll be married and I will be doing something in the music field.

I won't be doing this work inside of an office with these four walls that prevent me from traveling and being self-employed.

So I took the job. I had inadvertently almost lost an opportunity that directly impacted my trajectory to get to this place.

I removed that block, I accepted that job and that started my IT career.

I stayed in that job for four years and I really, really enjoyed it.

What I learned to do was take breaks and go outside, take walks, meet with other people.

So the four walls weren't as ominous as you know they seem to be.

So it was very exciting. I worked in the academic computing department and started to build IT relationships with the faculty, the department heads and the students.

And I worked very closely with the teams within the IT unit to help build their services.

I worked very closely with the IT helpdesk for those of you that are in IT, you know, that's a really important, in supporting the campus, the users.

So I worked in that position for four years. And then I had a little girl.

I was out on parental leave and my supervisor called me and she asked me if I was interested in doing, work in information security,

because the state had just passed a law. And that law required all the universities and agencies to develop security programs.

I didn't know a whole lot about security, but I didn't realize

I did know a lot about security because I was doing that security work, and they weren't calling it security.

I was managing accounts, produce and managing, access to users for our information systems.

So I said, okay, here's an opportunity. I'll do it. This is something different.

I'm excited about it. I'll do it. So I took that job and became the information security program manager and studied different. other aspects of IT.

I had an opportunity to meet with those teams that were responsible for infrastructure services like networking,

client server environments, applications, internet protocols, data management, and information security interlinked, all of that.

It was very exciting. even as the technologies changed, I was learning and growing.

So another opportunity came up, this time for another position.

The supervisor that I worked for was leaving again,

I had another supervisor leaving after a few years of me doing this job, and I thought, I can't keep a supervisor.

What is it? Me? Is it the reason why everybody keeps leaving?

So I took on her responsibilities, and they asked me to work in a position in the interim.

While she was out, I worked in the interim position for nine months.

And when that, they were publishing and posting the job opening,

I went to the executive director that would be managing this position, and I asked if he had any concerns about me applying for this job.

And he told me no. He said, no, I don't think you're a good fit for this.

And I said, But I've been doing this job for nine months. Why wouldn't I be a good fit?

I had created budgets. I had, managed annual budget preparation for \$20 million budgets.

I created business continuity plans for our our team.

I had authorized financial expenditures. I created, I developed critical projects that were successful.

And that was all part of that role. But he didn't see that I was ready for that yet.

So at that point, I assumed that he too was a naysayer.

But maybe he wasn't.

So because I was turned down for that position, which I thought I was very qualified for, there was no way I wouldn't get that job.

I realized I had some inward reflection that I needed to take to understand why that was the case.

So one of the things that I did is to look inward, do some, take some leadership training.

I worked very closely, went back to my single role as the information security program manager, but I worked very closely with some of the other IT teams and developed programs, developed security teams, and just focused solely on the security world.

It gave me an opportunity to build a robust, network of colleagues in the academic area with our faculty.

It helped me make great friendships in the student affairs and student services areas.

On the administrative side,

I grew very close to our bursar and our CFOs and many of the leaders in the campus by solely focusing on the security world.

And so I was engrossed in that and wrapped up in that for about four years.

And, really grew the program.

And we met those expectations that the state expected in regard to developing security programs.

So I just waited for other opportunities and just

did some personal reflection, professional development and personal development to make myself more.



I guess I should say more, amenable to what I thought our leaders were looking for.

But I mostly did this because I really wanted to see the success of those programs.

It was very, very important to me that the university's security program was great.

It met their needs, and I had to meet with everybody to figure out what that was for them.

So I focused heavily on that. A few years later, another job opened.

The opening was posted, and this was going to be also, supervised by the executive director, who I thought was a naysayer in the past.

This time the position opened and I had done,

I had been working for about six years in the former role, and the, I talked to the director about this vacancy,

and I said, you know, I would like to apply for this, and I'm going to apply for this and the last time a job opened of this

caliber It was a director position. It was an assistant director. It was a director position.

I said you were the person who told me I shouldn't apply for this.

I'm going to apply for this now, and I'd like to know if you have any concerns about it, but I am going to go forward because I feel like I can be.

I would be great at this. And you've worked with me long enough to know what I'm capable of.

I think he had forgotten that conversation that we had about the assistant director position, because he was taken aback.

He sat back in his chair. I'll never forget it. He took his glasses off with them to the side and he said.

Charlotte. Yes. You do this, you go ahead and you apply for this position.

I said thank you. We talked a little bit more and I left to go do my job.

I wasn't prepared to

actually do what I had done, but I knew I needed to for my own self-fulfillment.

Just to make sure he understood, because we hadn't had a conversation in and about that topic about that situation in years.

But I still respected him as a leader in our organization, and I wanted him to know that I respect you.

But I still, I think that this is something that I can, where I can benefit this organization and provide to you what you're looking for in this job.

So I interviewed for that position and he hired me.

It was an assistant director of administration and compliance, and he was responsible for overseeing IT,

the \$20 million, it's \$25 million at that point, IT budget.

It was responsible for software licensing, developing business continuity plans, project management,

human resources and also information security.

And the person who filled the assistant director position

now reported to me. So that was a twist as well.

When I became the director of that position, it was 2005,

I was the first female director and the only African-American person in a leadership position in IT.

So it was very, challenging for me walking into that culture which had been developed.

You know, I was in Texas. I was in the South. there was a culture and it wasn't to be pushed,

but the fact that I was hired in that position helped me think that things were changing

and that they were ready for a different perspective and a different view on things.

So I was very excited about that. I was able to collaborate with those directors, with the leaders of the campus in a different capacity.

I was invited to the leadership, to leadership meetings where I could present and share,

obviously, on the critical functions that I was now overseeing.

And one of my first tasks was to.

One of my first actions was to normalize the budget. So unknowingly, I made some changes to the budget practice and the way things were done,

and one of the team members in that IT leadership meeting was very concerned about that.

And they said, you know, we have done this a certain way and we are not comfortable with the changes that you made.

So in this leadership meeting is my executive director who hired me, the CIO for whom he worked for, and the other senior leaders.

As I sat in the meeting with all eyes fixed on me, I said as respectfully as I could.

And I was nervous. As calmly as I could.

I made the changes because I was trying to prevent the very thing that you were very concerned about.

Prevent those things from happening. Losing track of expenses.

Bringing transparency into spending. Ensuring that the budgets were allocated properly.

Consolidating expenses to save revenue and to create a database to track it all.

I must have appealed to them because they were comforted with this response and asked that I just work with them and coordinate with them and keep them in the loop on the progress.

So I think this was a win for everybody.

It helped me to understand, too, that while what I was working on was important and good, and was going to be helpful,

I still needed to be sure to collaborate with others to bring them along so that they understood what I was working on.

So this was a good, a win. Change this slide.

So there are more opportunities for growth came and I eventually became the chief information security officer for our system office,

which helped me to oversee the three, the security programs for the enterprise, security programs for the three campuses.

I had a second child within that time frame, and both of my children were focused on music.

So I lived in that world with them. I live vicariously with them.

They are, my daughter is a vocal jazz singer, and plays percussion and ukulele and classical guitar.

My son sings. He was in band. He plays bassoon and saxophone.

My husband plays saxophone and bassoon. And along the lines, while I was going through all that career growth and development,

I also learned how to play classical guitar and saxophone and a few other instruments as well.

The executive director and I are still, are very close.

We remain in contact to this day. He is one of my mentors and he is my champion.

I earned a master's degree in information science as well, because I knew that was probably important in my career.

And, for those of you, information science is a field of study.

How information is created, is organized, it's stored, it's retrieved.

It's a really for me, it's fascinating because it brings me back to my,

brings back all the technology and learning and how everything comes together.

But it incorporates the data as well, which is really important.

When I saw an opportunity to join CU Anschutz, and in the position that I'm in today, I moved very quickly because I thought, oh my gosh,

this is an opportunity to not only oversee an information security program,

but I get to work in an academic setting that's focused on medicine and health sciences.

And oh my gosh, that is the place where the children's television programs were filmed and produced.

I had an opportunity to get to Colorado from my childhood dream to figure out what was going on in Pueblo,

Colorado and the rest of the state because I was incredibly excited about it.

So Christopher Smith hired me two years ago, and he has been my champion too.

You see, I've never taken or chosen a straight path or an easy path, to take me on this adventure.

Most of what I've done has been carved or forged.

I've gone down roads that work for me, and I had mentors to help me along the way.

And I also dedicated time for my own professional and personal development and learning, which led to growth.

So building and tinkering and analyzing and creating programs are what energizes me.

The best parts of my career were those, and the success that came with the career happened only when I connected with others,

when I collaborated, when I invested in myself, and when I supported the growth of others. That is the only time I grew.

And became a better person. Going forward.

Please remember that you have opportunities and decisions that you will make that will continue to forge your path.

Every decision to support you and effects your firewall.

What you allow in, ho you allow to impact you and you will choose, make choices that will influence your decisions.

I am thankful for those music instructors, the teachers, the librarians,

the executive directors, and all the other supporters who helped shape my firewall.

You are your firewall. Remember that. Thank you.

Are there any questions? Thank you so much, Charlotte.

I just love this story.

It's you, really. You you really weave such a beautiful story for the way that you came into this field.

And I'm just so happy you are here at our campus.

So I'm going to open it up for questions. What we will do is, ask you to put your questions in the chat.

I'd love to call you in to ask the question, directly for Charlotte.

I know she'd love to see and or hear from you.

So, Jamie Price, would you be willing to come on as a mute and ask your question?

Yeah, I wrote the question before you said you're going to make us talk.

I'm just curious if you ever perform out and if it's something that we could ever hear and watch.

Oh, my goodness. I haven't performed in a very long time, Jamie.

I would have to really practice, a lot, so I don't do it today.

But I do., I'm still very excited about playing.

I do have a piano. I don't have a pipe or a pipe organ in my house, but I do have a piano.

I do plan to get an organ, someday.

You wouldn't want to hear me play today because it's a little rusty.

But if I have, there's an opportunity. I will let you know.

I will let this group know if there's an opportunity where I do perform.

Well, we would love to have you join, I'm sure the campus orchestra.

There is a campus orchestra even with, your new saxophone or newer saxophone learning or, there's a there's a campus orchestra.

And I think that, I mean, I've heard them several times at a holiday concert coming up for campus.

You can maybe get inspired and see if you want to come back into the fold.

Okay. I will check into that. I heard about that when I first came.

I haven't, you know, I have I've seen the signs and I don't know where to go to find the information.

Is that, Jan. Is that you who can help me learn?

Very good. I will check into that.

Do they have space for organ player? I'm not sure, so,

Brin. Do you? Ah, I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing your name correctly.

Do you want to come off mute and tell us a little bit about it? We've got somebody here who's in the campus orchestra.

Hi. I'm Sabian and I am in the campus orchestra.

How it works. We, you have to bring your instrument right now because we don't have a consistent space.

But, everyone.

We have someone who brings, I guess like an iPad that they do the piano on for rehearsals, and then they bring the actual piano for performances.

So if there's a creative way to pull it off, you're more than welcome.

We don't have an organ player, but we do have a really great brass section.

Okay. Very good. I don't know if I've played brass.

Huh? We'll see. We'll see what I can come up with. And Jan put a link in the chat.

Thank you, Jan, for putting that link into the chat so we can maybe get a few more interested folks to,

if not play, then at least attend the concert. The holiday concert coming up.

Little did I know it was going to be a little promo. So there. I'm happy to do that.

It's great for our campus. It's another place for us to connect. I'm checking out the site now.

This looks so interesting. I oh wow, that seems like it's wonderful.

So I'll be checking into that. Great. Other questions of Charlotte.

I'd love to ask one. I played piano as a child and have been recently reintroduced, and I find it interesting to me how the music brain and the science brain are really well connected, even though I think there's a perception that they're in different worlds.

I'd love to hear how your music brain, you know, impacts the way in which you work now in your IT life and how you think that. I love that question.

When, and let me try to I'll try to say succinctly as I can't.

When I think about music play, whether I'm playing piano or playing any other, instrument.

What, the work that goes into actually learning that piece and creating something is substantial.

You are looking at, you're measuring.

You're doing lots of calculations when you're playing. So you're measuring time.

You're measuring distance. There's weights involved in it.

Your physical body, requires some coordination.

It requires, the timing is incredibly important so that when you you play the notes at the right time, at the right speed, at the right depth, and you're looking not just at playing those individual notes.

You're looking at the music across the the page.

You're creating a form, you're collaborating if you're performing with others.

And so you have to be in sync and you have to play, with the entire group, and perform play at the right time.

And you're trying to create an emotion. You're trying to, you're creating something.

You're looking holistically at the entire piece. Where at different moments.

You'll have different types of tension. You'll have different types of stress.

You'll have different methodologies in which you will approach that music and deliver that emotion that you're trying to deliver.

With technology, I do the same. I see things holistically, and I also see the small things that bring it all together.

So when someone approaches me and we talk about a security issue or an IT issue,

I'm looking at, okay, these are the, this is what we have in front of us.

Say we're playing a piece of music. There's a score. We have to figure out how to read this.

We have to understand it. We have to figure out what our goals are and what we want to achieve.

So what do we want to emote? What do we want to accomplish? What do we want to deliver to that audience?

And if I am directing the the orchestra or the piece, or if I'm a member of the orchestra, the group, or if I'm a member of the team,

I still have to be in sync with everyone and make sure we're all going in the same direction and doing things the right way so that we can all get to the same ending.

So I see a whole lot. I see the entire picture.

I don't know if anybody else thinks like this, but I see the entire picture.

I see the pieces and how they all have to come together in order to create and get us where we need to go.

Yeah, love. I love that analogy.

People a little crazy when I think like that, because sometimes some individuals are thinking about that point in time.

And how do I address this one thing? And I'm always looking, well, if we don't play this piece fortissimo or it's not,

we're not using the sostenuto pedal or we don't engage or shape it in this way.

When we get to the point that the next point we will have missed the intent, or we may have missed a piece of what we're trying to achieve.

So, yeah, I love that. I didn't do that succinctly as I want to, but that's a great analogy.

And I, I was with you the entire time.

We did have one question come in prior to the session today, which we would love to hear your advice on setting a 16 character password.

I love it, I love that, and I knew that was coming.

I had a feeling that it was coming.

So let me first share that a 16 character password is really, really strong, and attackers won't be able to break your password.

It takes, a lot longer to crack a 16 character password.

But what I do is I like to think about phrases, lines from a story or in a book.

Songs,

phrases from a song that you put together and add some special characters and convert some of the letters to some special characters or numbers.

Find something that's interesting to you, but that nobody could guess about you.

And that's the way you create a password. It's not, remember, it's not the whole password all at once.

Think about the pieces of it that you can create and develop and design, how you can make it creative along the way.

And then you will have the bigger picture. Once you do that in sections and bring it all together.

So think of it another way to use the music analogy.

Yes, yes. We will think of you as we're studying our passwords, each time.

I know we're at, close to 8:30. Jan, is there anything else you wanted to close us out with today?

Charlotte, I cannot thank you enough for your time and your story.

What a beautiful story. And it's just great to know you in another context and, in the way that this all came together.

And again, I'm so thrilled you're at our campus. You're getting a lot of love in the in the chat as well.

So make sure you read that. Jan, take it away.

You bet. Charlotte, I echo, what Laura said what a beautiful, story this morning.

Everyone, mark your calendars. Our next women in leadership will be January 21st.

And, as we send out the recording of this, you'll also get, save the date and a sign up for that.

So wishing everybody, great holiday seasons.



And we, if we don't see you on campus before that, we will see you in January for women in leadership.

Have a fantastic day. Thank you.