Alumni

GORDON CONWELL

# Alumni Spotlight: Joe Porostosky (MDiv ‘04)

**Current title**: Director of Facilities Information and Technology Services at The Ohio State University, & Executive Pastor at Revive Church Hilltop

**Family**: Wife: Tricia, Children: Eliza, Jillian, & Vanessa

**Favorite professor(s):** Dr. Sean McDonough & Dr. Dean Borgman

**Favorite class:** New Testament Interpretation

**A favorite memory**: Studying Greek with my friends for hours on end in Bell Hall.

**Please tell us more about your role as Director of Facilities Information and Technology Services at The Ohio State University.**

I lead a team at Ohio State that manages a lot of different data about our buildings and our campus. We maintain accurate 3D models of all our buildings on the campus along with detailed information about what department is in each space and how each space is used. We also provide mapping services for the university similar to Google maps. (Our public version can be found here). Our campus is constantly under construction, so the team is always busy ensuring our floor plans and campus maps are as up to date as possible.

The goal with all of this data is to help all departments on campus make better planning and operational decisions more quickly. We do this by providing all sorts of simple and complex reporting on the data that we manage in many formats. We are always pushing the boundaries of the kinds of technology we use to serve our customers. For example, we use different types of drones to gather aerial imagery to keep our campus maps up to date and to provide more detail.

**How did you come to be serving in your current position?**

Before attending Gordon-Conwell, I felt God was calling me to bi-vocational ministry, and I knew that I would be heading back into secular employment following my time in seminary. Following graduation, my wife and I returned to Columbus, where we had met and joined Chi Alpha Campus Ministries at The Ohio State University. It was my desire to work at Ohio State to make it easier to do ministry on campus. After working in a different technology role in Columbus for a couple of years, I was eventually able to find my current position with Ohio State. How that happened was very much a God-story in itself. I never actually applied for the job I have today. I applied for a different job, went through the interview process and decided it wasn’t the right role for me, and removed myself from the process towards the end. A couple weeks later, I got a call for this position because human resources had referred me to the hiring manager and they wanted to interview me. Ohio State is a dynamic place, and the position and the opportunities have grown a lot over the last seventeen years**.**

**What are some things you love about your position there at Ohio State?**

My position gives me an opportunity to make the work life of people better every day. The most obvious part of this is for the people that I manage. I am driven to provide them the best work environment I can so that they can feel fulfilled in their career and enjoy what they do each day. This drives me more than anything each morning to have a positive attitude when I come to work. I have the privilege of leading and serving a great team.

The other part of this is that I get to help lead the team in how we serve the university in many ways. When we find new ways to use data to support decision making or when we develop a new tool to help a department collect and report on a data set they are interested in or when we release a new version of the campus map (which we recently did as a major upgrade to the prior one), I am reminded of why we do what we do. We have opportunities to significantly impact the work that many of the employees at Ohio State do each day.

**What are the challenges of your role in managing Ohio State facilities and in implementing innovative technology in higher education in general, and in your context specifically?**

Prior to working in higher education, I worked in a smaller private sector company. The biggest adjustment I experienced at first was the pace of change. I was used to being able to implement technology changes quickly and in a top-down manner. I found out quickly that even at a place as technologically progressive at Ohio State, change does not happen quickly or in a top-down manner. I have learned to have more than one initiative going at one time and to push them along at the fastest pace I can, given the environment. In addition, working in higher education means that many stakeholders have to be engaged to accomplish goals. It's more about serving your customers and users, helping them to see the value of what you are proposing, rather than mandating something is going to be done. This takes more time but has the benefit of encouraging you to listen to their needs and concerns while developing solutions that are more in line with what will serve the larger community.

**How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your work in higher education?**

So much of my seminary experience, combined with my mentored ministry experience, prepared me for beginning my pastoring ministry. At the same time, it also prepared me for secular, professional leadership. From a purely skills perspective, it refined my ability to speak in front of people, something I do often in my role. It helped me to think more deeply about what I am reading and to bring more ideas together. It also taught me to care deeply about people as individuals and to see crossovers between my work and ministry life. This has allowed me to have success in this environment in building a

healthy, supportive, appreciative environment while still having high expectations for serving my work community.

**Do you have any publications or links you would like to share?**

- Ohio State Facilities, Information, and Technology Services
- Revive Church Hilltop
- Video of a presentation on some of the work my team does