Personal perspective - "looking back"

1. **What did you find intellectually rewarding about the position?**

The strength of our Education and Outreach program allowed us to teach students, from elementary to graduate, about this new interdisciplinary approach. Additionally, developing the world’s first retinal implant to restore sight to the blind has been the most rewarding part of my career and research.

1. **What was your ERC’s most important impact and why?**

The vision of the Biomimetic MicroElectronic Systems Engineering Research Center (BMES ERC) was to develop the science and engineering of novel biomimetic microelectronic systems based on fundamental principles of biology. The *broader impact* to society will come not only from alleviating human suffering and improving quality of life, but also by reducing the health care costs now directed to assist people with disabilities. In 2013, the Argus II, became the world’s first, and to date, only FDA approved retinal implant to restore sight to the blind. The goal and the end result motivated our entire team and made the coursework and lab work more a passion than actually work.

1. **What was the most challenging aspect of leading your ERC?**

The challenge of forming together an interdisciplinary research team to identify and provide solutions to unmet medical needs of blindness and central nervous system cognitive impairments and avoiding the silo mentality.

1. **What gave you the most satisfaction?**

After 25+ years of research and development, seeing the first blind person regain useful vision with the retinal implant was a moment of great satisfaction and accomplishment.

1. **What would you rather not have had to do?**

Deal with university administration as many departments and schools do not want to work collaboratively

1. **Of the things you learned, what has stayed with you in the intervening years?**

The three-plane chart, which I continually use, is an excellent mode of organizing across disciplines and running a large research effort.