

Balance & Time Management

On the Cutting Edge: Early Career Geoscience Faculty Workshop – June 2009

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Everyone should have a blank schedule.

You will fill this schedule shortly with your IDEAL balance of activities...

BUT FIRST... SOME IMPORTANT TIPS

#1: SET YOUR PRIORITIES

Don't let others choose your priorities for you.

My example:

#1: *My mental, spiritual, physical health*

#2: *My family*

#3: *My job*

a) *The students*

b) *My future career desires*

c) *My own academic education*

d) *My department*

e) *The college as a whole*

#4: *My friends, home, etc.*

Shouldn't everyone's #1 priority be his or her own health?

In an airplane, you have to put on your own oxygen mask before that of your child.

PONDER THESE QUESTIONS:

Is your career more important than your health?

Is your relationship more important than your health?

Is the image you present more important than your health?

What good are you to anyone else if you're not taking care of myself?

PRIORITY REVIEW

Right now, on the backs of your blank schedule, make an ordered list of your priorities.

(You have 5 minutes.)

If you finish early, consider sharing and reviewing priorities with someone else.

#2: AVOID TIME PITS

- Set time limits on activities in which you lose track of time *like unscheduled office hours, e-mail, research, graphics, etc.*
- More time spent on a task does NOT mean higher quality, but it does mean a different product.
- Give up on perfection—it's endless and impossible.

Dinner example:

How much time do you have to cook dinner?

If you have an hour, you will create a different meal than if you have 5 minutes or an entire day.

Is one kind of meal better than another?

Which option best helps you meet your top priorities?

WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL SCHEDULE?

(You have 8 minutes.)

- ***Aim high!***
- Include personal, family, and work activities
- Don't overbook yourself
(include some unscheduled time)
- Be honest!
- Schedule time for your #1 priority first; then move on to the next priority...

If you finish early, consider sharing and reviewing priorities with someone else.

SCHEDULE REVIEW

Look carefully at your schedules. Did you include time for?

- Emergencies
- Friends
- E-mail

(If left out intentionally, that's fine!!!)

MORE SUGGESTIONS...

- Break large projects into small steps and goals. Schedule each.
- Do the highest priority tasks ASAP- something else ALWAYS comes up.
- Do the easy stuff right away (don't waste time assessing it and putting it aside multiple times – e-mail is a perfect example!)
- Avoid overcommitment – Learn to say NO
- Stay organized – Make a To-Do List
- Schedule exercise into your work week (at school).
- Make your scheduled personal time unchangeable except for emergencies. (Treat like a class.)

WHAT OTHERS DO TO MANAGE THEIR TIME AND BALANCE THEIR LIVES:

- Don't work weekends – Achieved through efficient work practices (refraining from distractions and idle conversations during the day AND ensuring that one BIG thing gets done daily)
(Richard Yuretich, 2007)
- Stop worrying about what others think, and focus on your own priorities. Figure out what your values are and live your life accordingly. Failing to get tenure is not the worst thing that could happen to you; living a valueless life is much worse. *(Randy Richardson, 2007)*
- Turn off network access for a set amount of time each day (Macfreedom.com)
- Set timers/beepers to warn of end-times or to make you stop and assess whether you want to continue with a task
- Create a calendar with moveable sections/tasks, so you can keep track of tasks, even if you need to move them
- Organize: purge paper from your office.
- Put files close to where you're working, so it's easy to find things and store things (instead of creating files that need to be perused again)
- Make clear delineation between personal and work time
- Change meeting places so you are more alert during tired times (like meeting outside after work)
- Set a standard from the beginning of who you are and what your needs are, instead of letting your department impose standards on you.
- At the end of the day, make some sticky notes about where you want to start the next day (to keep track and avoid inbetween transition times)
- Meet students in common areas so it's easier to exit

- Reduce distractions by hiding, or closing door up to a crack, and/or having a sign on your door explaining you are “writing” or “grading” or ...
- Avoid doing e-mail first thing in the morning (get something productive done first)
- www.davidco.com (tips on Time Management)
- Consider scheduling ONLY the things you have difficulty getting to and leaving the rest of your weekly time open (and dictated by goal lists)

CHALLENGES

In groups of 4, discuss and make a list of the BIGGEST CHALLENGES you face making your schedule a reality and SUGGESTIONS FOR OVERCOMING these challenges.

WHAT WAS EACH GROUP'S TOP SUGGESTION?

WHAT ARE THE TOP SUGGESTIONS OF THE CO-LEADERS OF THIS WORKSHOP?

PRIORITIES REVIEW

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00 AM							
6:30 AM							
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