On the Cutting Edge
An NAGT Professional Development Program for Geoscience Faculty

Preparing for an Academic Career in the Geosciences

How to write peer reviewed papers while balancing teaching and research

Session Description (11 - 12noon):
Being a professor is a balancing act between teaching, service, and research. How you manage your time will dictate, to a large extent, your ability to achieve your research goals. Acquiring this balance is easier said than done. In this session, we will explore some time management techniques aimed at achieving research success.

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Disclaimer: below are Dr. Kirby's opinions based on 11 years experience...obviously, there are many other views on how to write a paper…please consider them all, as appropriate

How to write peer reviewed papers while balancing teaching and research

- Tenure beckons!
- Welcome to chaos?
- Finding time that does not seem to exist...
- Perfection is your enemy.
- Collaborative publishing.
- Incorporating and advancing students.
- Let's do something fun!
  - Make your five year publishing plan
  - Outline your next paper...now!

Tenure Beckons

- What does your university/ department require for tenure
  - find out ASAP
    - quantity vs.quality
    - impact factors?
    - h-index? (easy to track on Google Scholar)
  - do not rely on hearsay and opinion
    - ask the Dean and Chair
  - make a five year tenure plan for publishing
  - be realistic

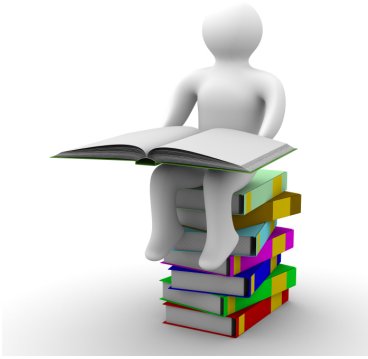
Definition of TENURE

m-w.com

1: the act, right, manner, or term of holding something (as a landed property, a position, or an office); *especially* : a status granted after a trial period to a teacher that gives protection from summary dismissal

Welcome to chaos

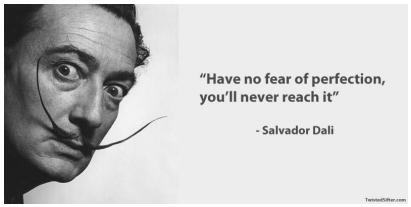
- Being a professor is controlling chaos
  - balancing…
    - research
    - teaching
    - committee work
  - generally, success in all three is required for tenure
  - *however*, one of these 3 is harder *generally* to find time for success...guess which one?



Finding time that does not seem to exist

- time management is critical
  - are you easily distracted?
    - can you focus with email on?
    - can you focus with your phone on?
    - can you focus with iTunes playing?
  - saying "no"
    - committee work is important and rewarding *but* it is also a huge time sink...pick your contributions carefully
      - note: you should/must be an active and collegial department member!
  - keeping your office door closed is ok
    - office hours are office hours…
      - students fail often to appreciate that you do more than teach
  - how many trips to the coffee shop per day are really needed?
    - coffee breaks with colleagues are rarely 5 minute experiences
  - how many hours of class preparation are required per lecture?
    - teaching preparation is essential to good, effective teaching but it is also the number one way to procrastinate
      - for example, how many hours should you spend looking for the perfect Google image for a lecture?
        - the answer is zero hours...only seconds to minutes.
          - case and point...making this presentation was super fun! why? I was listening to my favorite music and enjoying thinking about all the things I've learned...*but*, I should have been writing a paper...and writing is *not* fun...it hurts my head much more than class preparation.

Perfection is your enemy



- When is something scientifically good enough to publish?
  - in other words, your research need not answer all of science's questions in a single paper!
  - think of your publishing career as a pyramid
    - you must build a solid foundation to reach the top
    - that means that sometimes your papers are not glamorous or <u>Nature</u> worthy
      - *but*, they are essential to your career
  - Perfection in scientific writing is like a writer's block in literature.
  - Finally, publish everything...why not! Let the reviewers determine if it is not worth publishing...

Collaborative publishing

- Collaborations are important to developing a robust research program
  - they can increase your publication record via co-authorship
    - how much credit are you given for co-authorship?
    - how do you document this credit?
  - beware - does your research/paper depend on a collaborator's productivity?
    - multi-author publishing is sometimes like herding cats...it can be slow, painful, and futile.
    - other times, it is easy, wonderful, and rewarding!
  - choose collaborators wisely!
    - similar styles, expectations, goals, and work habits…
      - note: it is ok to turn down a collaborative invitation.

Incorporating and advancing students

- Do you have students that will publish their results?
  - BS vs. MS vs. PhD vs. post-doc
  - How much time will you spend revising a student's paper vs. simply writing the paper yourself?
    - depends on student level and writing skills
  - What credit do you receive for student co-authorship?
  - How do you document this credit?
  - Is your publishing dependent on a student's productivity?
    - BS vs. MS vs. PhD vs. post-doc
  - Note: publishing with your students not only benefits you *but* it also helps to advance your student's career.

Make your five year publishing plan

- topics?
- what journals?
- consider time from submission to publication
- visibility

My Five-Year Plan

Paper	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5
Submitted (Date/Journal)					
Reviews Returned					
Revisions Submitted					
Accepted for Publication					
Paper	**Paper 6**	**Paper 7**	**Paper 8**	**Paper 9**	**Paper 10**
Submitted					
Reviews Returned					
Revisions Submitted					
Accepted for Publication					

Write a paper, now!

- brain dump
- free writing
- outlines
- words
- figure writing

My 10 Minute Paper!