

## **BALANCING WORK AND LIFE and still getting tenure**

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**My goal is to enjoy life.** Being a professor, I get to do the things I want to be doing but just a bit faster than I'd like. Untenured faculty walk fast.

### **Avoid the tyranny of the immediate**

Make time for the things that make a long-term difference and do them first each day.

I make my research the first thing I think about every day, even if only for 20 minutes. The first thing I do in the day sets my mind at work on that issue. Idle moments for the rest of the day are occupied by this task.

Do not open email until you've done some research; if you do, someone else's email will set your thinking agenda.

### **Scope out everything you have to do, then get the critical people on your side:**

*Department Chair*

should be aware of what you are up to and how you are progressing. He/she can help to get resources for you and/or time. If your chair knows what's going on, he/she will be more sympathetic and help to keep you off of committees.

*Your family*

Kids prefer to see you happy at 6:00 pm than anxious at 3:00 pm.

Your family needs to know what's going on with your research. They can help, or at least be sympathetic and help you through genuine crises. But you have to let them know "I need 4 hours on Sunday to work on this." or "I don't know what time I will finish tonight, please go ahead without me." Then stick to it. If you say you need 4 hours, then hang it up after 4 hours. Don't make them always wait for you. Give and take.

*Find Mentors*

in your profession, both colleagues here and out there in the larger world. Talk with them, show them what you are doing. Send them your publications. These people might send opportunities your way, or write letters for you when the time comes.

### **Manage time**

Schedule research into your day, every day. Even 20 minutes at the start.

During the year, keep doing your research and writing.

Do not put it off, imagining that a big chunk of time in the summer will let you make up for time in the year. You have time all the time, in small bits.

Do not make research time open-ended. It's impossible to write for more than 4 hours at a stretch. After 4 hours, you're done, so you can feel some satisfaction even if the task is not finished. I like to think in terms of progress rather than deadlines. Break large projects in to a set of smaller goals and check them off as you complete them.

Offload any tasks that you can: cleaning house, committee work.  
You'll need support of colleagues and family here.

**Do not teach in the summer under any condition**

That's when you can afford large blocks for research and family. It's better to be poor during your tenure-earning years than out of a job at the end and facing divorce.

**Focus**

Do the thing you have chosen to put in front of you. Do not multitask.

**Email**

Answering email before noon won't get you tenure.

Email can wait and must wait.

Do not keep email open on the computer desktop.

Do not let it beep at you when a new message arrives.

Save the bulk of your email for the end of the day.

**Avoid student sinks**

Learn teaching strategies that make the students do the work.

It's easy to get sucked into doing their work for them.

Make them more independent, self-learners.

**Parental leave**

UFF bargained for 6 months of parental leave, for one child. It stops the tenure clock, effectively for one year. If you have a baby or adopt a child, exercise this option. You can always request to come up early, but it's harder to request coming up late 2 years after the discovering that your baby slowed your progress.