Time Management and Family Life

Bobby Schnabel
Indiana University

CRA Academic Careers Workshop, February, 2012
Time Management Advice I Gave Early-Career Faculty as Department Chair

• Teaching is important, but don’t let it take all of your time
  – Limit hours available to students (work outside your office sometimes?)
  – Teach each course you develop several times
  – Don’t reinvent too many wheels

• Make sure your work with research students is focused towards producing research output: ideas, software, publications
Time Management Advice I Gave Early-Career Faculty as Department Chair, continued

• Be a good departmental citizen but don’t overdo it; people will love you but it won’t get you tenure

• Get started with professional service before tenure review but don’t overdo it; select opportunities that help your research career

• Productive time, not hours logged, is the key – know yourself, your need for balance in life, how productive your work time really is
Time / Career Management Advice I Gave Early-Career Faculty as Department Chair

Don’t try to be a full professor as an assistant professor

(Next three slides are for reference only)
Things I Did as an Untenured Professor

Research

• Grant support from other faculty first summer, first grant in second year, multiple grants started later
• About 3-4 graduate students / year by 3rd year
• Wrote reasonable number of papers and one book
• Designed software, students did programming
• About 3 conference, 5 colloquium talks / year
• Developed research collaboration with local laboratory
• Got a great colleague!
Things I Did as an Untenured Professor, cont’d

Teaching
• Taught 6 courses (only 4 really different), most several times

Service
• Departmental search, executive committees (young dept)
• Local arrangements chair for national meeting
• Vice pres. and president of regional professional group
• First editorial position start of 6th year
• Organized several conference sessions, gave one short course
Things I Did as a Beginning Full Professor

- Headed department-wide research infrastructure grant
- Supervised about 7 graduate students / year, on multiple / larger grants
- Wrote more papers, with more student participation
- Taught fewer courses (but moved into new area)
- Branched into new research area and stayed in old one
- About five conference talks / year, turned down others
- Lots more university and professional service including multiple department/college/campus committees; first college-level leadership role; several professional society officer/board/committee positions; started new professional society group; four editorial positions
Perspectives as a Dean

• Make sure you have a good mentoring relationship
• Make sure you get to repeat teaching courses
• Use startup funds wisely, but use them!
• Don’t be reluctant to request leaves and/or flexibility for family or personal reasons
• Get advice, and partner, on grant proposals
• Slow starts are common: don’t despair, but don’t dally
• Tenure is / should be about impact
General Time Management Principles

• Organize
  – What needs doing (lists! – daily, weekly, monthly)
  – Where you’ll be working

• Prioritize
  – Do what’s most important, not what’s easiest

• Constrain
  – Know how much time a task is worth / you can afford

• Delegate
  – Students; departmental staff; household help

• Just say no (nicely)
Reflections on Family / Life and Career
Reflections on Family / Life and Career

• You need to decide what is important to you and enforce your priorities, the world won’t do this for you
  
some personal examples:
  – NSF PI meeting on Mother’s Day
  – Early morning meetings vs. child care

• Children still need lots of attention after they turn ____ (1? 5? 13? 20?)
Reflections on Family / Life and Career, continued

• Dual careers and children requires accommodation, compromise, planning
  – Travel; work schedules; family responsibilities

• Can you have an academic career and still have time for
  – Children’s activities?
  – Community service?
  – ________________?

Answer: see first bullet on this topic
Reflections on Family / Life and Career,

• You need to decide what is important to you and enforce your priorities, the world won’t do this for you

• Can you have an academic career and still have time for
  – Children’s activities?
  – Community service?
  – ____________________?

Answer: see first bullet on this topic
Closing Thoughts on Life and Career

What do tombstones say?

You all are major successes already