IT’S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT
Balancing Work and Life in Grad School and Beyond

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Who Am I?

• Assistant Professor of the Practice
  – (focus on teaching with some research)
• Duke University
• CS Bachelor’s, Univ. of MD, College Park
• CS Master’s, UC Berkeley in Computer Networking
• CS Ph.D., UC Berkeley in CS Education

Computer Science Education

• The study of how we use CS in education
• The study of how we learn CS
• Focus: How do we scale learning?
Kristin Stephens-Martinez (My Journey)

I want to learn how to learn from academia!

Happy to chat about any of this or otherwise!

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Who is James Mickens?

• Poet, scientist, philosopher, foosball expert
• BS in Computer Science: Georgia Tech
• PhD in Computer Science: Michigan
• @MSR: 2008—2015
• @MIT: Fall 2014
• @Harvard: 2015—now
• @Harvard: April 2019 TENURED
Three Pieces of Advice

• Find time to have fun
• Learn to say “no”
• Build a supportive community

Captain Obvious
Find Time To Have Fun

Grad student

Academia

Industry
Find Time To Have Fun

- There will always be more things to do!
- If you struggle to make time to have fun, add calendar items to block out time for fun
- Your “fun time” should be as inviolate as your “work time”
Find Time To Have Fun

Won’t I hurt my career if I don’t work all the time?

ABSOLUTELY NONE OF YOUR COLLEAGUES WORK 80 HOUR WORK WEEKS ON A CONSISTENT OR A SEMI-CONSISTENT BASIS

– Work culture may encourage “hour boasting”
– To a certain extent, you may need to play along . . .
– . . . but the real goal is to do good work!

CRA-WP
Computing Research Association
Widening Participation
Find Time To Have Fun

Don’t be like this toast

Be like this toast

Getting burnt out can have lasting effects on your mental health and your career

– Deadline sprints and project pushes are normal (and can be enjoyable!)

– But ultimately, your goal is to do work that makes you happy and/or is meaningful: work for the sake of work isn’t healthy!
Learn To Say No

“You’d be a perfect fit for...”

• There are an infinite number of things that you could do
• Women and people of color often get asked to perform additional service
• Be strategic about how you spend your time
  – In many cases, the person asking you for time will not take rejection personally
  – Think about how doing task X will further goals that you have for yourself
Build A Supportive Community

• You are not the only one who:
  – Has papers get rejected
  – Occasionally says something incorrect during a meeting
  – Isn’t sure which career path is the best one

• A strong support group is important
  – Talk to grad students (even in other departments!)
  – Network at conferences like GHC!
  – Don’t be afraid to talk to mental health professionals

This paper is amazing
This paper is okay