TIME MANAGEMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Mary Hall
School of Computing

CRA
Computing Research
Association

TIMELINE

• BA Computer Science & Mathematical Sciences, Rice	May 1985
• Marriage	Apr. 1988
• Research Scientist, Rice	Nov. 1990
• PhD Computer Science, Rice	May 1991
• Research Scientist, Stanford	June 1992
• Visiting Professor, Caltech	Jan. 1995
• Research Asst Prof, USC, and Project Leader, USC/ISI	June 1996
• Jamie born	Aug. 1996
• Jackie born	Oct. 2000
• Research Assoc Prof, USC	2002
• Moved to Utah as tenured Assoc Prof	Sep. 2008
• Full Prof, Utah	May 2012
• Joined CRA Board as ACM Representative	July 2015

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ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE: ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

My priorities

1. FAMILY FIRST: Everything else will take care of itself
2. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: Diet, exercise, "me time", fun
3. WORK: Still an important part of your life
4. EVERYTHING ELSE

Things to remember

- Successful work-life balance occurs if you are happy, even if your life doesn't look so balanced from other peoples' viewpoint
- You are in charge of your life and career
- Some partitioning of work and home life is healthy, but integration can be more efficient

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PLANNING YOUR WORK AND CAREER: NAVIGATING ALL THE DEGREES OF FREEDOM

Takeaways:

Enjoy your work!

Work efficiently by focusing and leveraging strengths

MACRO:

What do you want to be the impact of your work? Focus on that.

What is unique or particularly strong about your talents and background? Leverage that.

Are you working on problems that energize and excite you? You'll work harder, wake up thinking about them, etc.

Figure out where you have to do a great job, and where a competent job is ok

MICRO:

How do you want to spend your day? What is your most productive time of day?
• Write or plan then!
• Block out uninterrupted time

Email/meetings ok when you are tired

Schedule meetings back-to-back

Delegate whenever possible

Set deadlines for task completion when possible

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APPLY THE SAME THOUGHT PROCESS TO OTHER ASPECTS OF WORK

Takeaway:

Adapt and make the most of what you have!

- Managing students
  - Allow them to pick their projects based on their interests
  - Steer them towards projects that leverage their unique talents
- Managing multi-investigator projects
  - Guide the work you do by the strengths of the team
  - What can the team produce that makes a unique contribution
  - Ask people what they want to do
- Managing service activities
  - Divide up the work according to talents and interests
  - Get "buy in" by figuring out what individuals want to get out of the service
  - Form teams that cover the requirements

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ABOUT SERVICE

Takeaway:

Try to simultaneously (1) serve; (2) help establish your reputation; and, where possible (3) show leadership.

INTERNAL

DOs:

Ask yourself what you can do that will make a visible or measurable difference?

Is there something you particularly care about or do you have an idea about how to do something better? Volunteer for that.

DON'Ts:
Avoid busywork or time-consuming but not valued service.

Beware of taking on a service role that is too big for an assistant professor or may put you at odds with senior faculty.

EXTERNAL

DOs:

Program committee service at top tier conferences/journals.

Other reviewing of papers for which you are an expert.

Consider organizing a workshop or tutorial for which you are an expert.

DON'Ts:
Avoid taking on too much: e.g., too many minor program committees.

Avoid service as a replacement for research excellence.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

- Academia offers a very flexible career, and there are no hard and fast rules
  - Listen carefully to all the advice you receive
  - Some of it will be conflicting
  - Some of it comes from people who are evaluating you
- Beware of someone telling you that there is only one way to do things
  - And don't be put off by it

Ultimately, you'll need to decide what works for you