

# Work / Life Balance & Time Management

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Andrea Danyluk  
Williams College



# My Story



Education	B.A., Vassar College (1984) M.S., Ph.D., Columbia University (1986, 1992)
Jobs (post PhD)	NYNEX Science & Technology (1990-94) Williams College (1994-present)
Service	CRA-W, LACS, CS2013, College and Research Community (ICML, AAI, SIGCSE)
Family	Married to Andrew (1984) Son (college senior) Daughter (college sophomore) Elderly mother
Fun	Family activities, time with friends, outdoors (hiking, biking, skiing), travel

# Seven places for your time



- Personal
- Partnership
- Family
- Home
- Job
- Friends
- Community



# Seven places for your time

- Personal
- Partnership
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- Home
- **Job**
- Friends
- Community

Teaching  
Research and Scholarship  
Service: Department, School, Community  
Career development  
Advising and Mentoring

# Seven places for your time



- **Personal**

- Partnership

- Family

- **Home**

- Job

- Friends

- Community

Physical (exercise)

Intellectual (reading novels)

Spiritual (meditation)

Just chores (cleaning)

Enjoyable tasks (cooking, gardening)

# Time commitments will differ



- Different focus at different institutions (even within the category of “teaching colleges/ universities”)

# Time commitments will change



- Status of career
  - Grad student
  - Pre/post tenure
  - Assistant / Associate / Professor
- Single/Married/Partnered
- Ages of children, parents, ...

# Maintaining work-life balance: Know your goals



- Know your long-term and short-term goals.
  - Have goals for all your roles, not just work.
- Prioritize them.
- Use them as a guide.
  
- There was a time when I found it useful to prominently post a list for myself.





“You will never ‘find’ time for anything.

If you want time, you must make it.”

Charles Bruxton

# Maintaining life-work balance: Carve out personal time



- Put it on your to-do list.
- Schedule a regular activity (or a special one) with a partner or friend
- Streamline & parallelize
- Hire help when you can
- Get good child/parental care
  - Aim not just for care that gives you time, but for quality of care that gives you peace of mind
- Share responsibilities with friends & family

# Time management: Enemies of effectiveness



- Mental clutter (and other clutter)
- Procrastination
- Perfectionism
- Overcommitment
- Indecision
- Poor prioritization



“It’s not enough to know the projects you’re working on.”

*101 ways to make every second count: time management tips and techniques for more success with less stress* by Robert W. Bly

# Time management: Get organized



- To-do lists
  - Long term
  - Weekly
  - Daily
- Keep a calendar
- Break your day into manageable segments
- Be realistic about timing of tasks
- Allow time for interruptions and distractions
- Set aside time to review your schedule
  - Commit to revisiting and updating your schedule if you need to



“Why do hour increments work so well? Precisely because they give you a deadline - one hour - to get things done. Work expands so as to fill time available for its completion.”

*101 ways to make every second count: time management tips and techniques for more success with less stress by Robert W. Bly*

# Time management: Overcome procrastination



- Break your task/day into segments
  - One-hour increments good
- Reward yourself for completed tasks

# Time management: Overcome perfectionism



- Break your task/day into segments
  - One-hour increments good
- ~~Reward~~ Stop yourself
  - “My flight will arrive in Atlanta in 30 minutes. That’s when I will need to be done.”



# Time management: Design a good workspace



- A cluttered desk can mean a cluttered head
  - Develop a filing system that works for you
- Make the space comfortable
  - Don't underestimate the importance of a good chair, pen, cup of coffee...

# Time management: Avoid distractions



- Acknowledge your bad habits
  - This is another case where I've sometimes found it useful to post it where I can see it.
- Set aside quiet time
  - It's ok to close the door from time to time!
  - Put it on your schedule/to-do list
- Set aside time for email, phone calls
  - Or, if you're like me and can't resist email, find a productive workspace where it's hard to read email
- Pick a time to work when others aren't there
- If a stray worry, idea, to-do item pops into your head, write it down and deal with it later.



One cannot manage too many affairs:  
like pumpkins in the water, one pops up  
while you try to hold down the other.

Chinese Proverb

# Time management: Saying “yes”



- Saying “yes” to one thing means saying “no” to something else.
  - Or, at least, it means having less time for the things you’ve already committed to do.
- Does it fit into your goals?
  - Don’t fall victim to thinking you must take all career opportunities presented.
- Don’t do it out of guilt
  - Say “yes” or “no” to the task, not the person.
- Take some time before you decide.

# Time management: Saying “no”



- Do it as soon as possible.
- Suggest someone else who might be available and want to do it.
- If you really want to say “yes”
  - Decline but indicate that you’ d like to be asked again. Indicate when you’ ll be available.
  - Set parameters.
    - “I can’ t review 10 papers, but I can do 5.”
    - “I could get it done in 6 weeks rather than 4.”
    - “I’ d need such-and-such resources...”



# Life is full

- Family, friends, work will place demands on our time.
  - Pressures don't disappear; they evolve.
  - In a moment of “no pressure”, enjoy!
- Enjoy the positive
  - Our family and friends are amazing!
  - There are so many cool things we can do!
  - We have awesome jobs!
- Empower yourself for the rest
  - Remember there are only 24 hours in a day, and you're human
  - Live to your priorities





# References

- Bly, Robert W. *101 ways to make every second count: time management tips and techniques for more success with less stress.*
- Prochaska-Cue, Kathy. *Thirteen Timely Tips for More Effective Personal Time Management.*
- Covey, Stephen. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.*



# With special thanks to

- Deborah Knox (2003)
- Joan Francioni (2005)
- Jan Cuny (2007)
- Kathleen Fisher, Anne Condon (2008)
- Carla Brodley, Carla Ellis, Judy Goldsmith, Tessa Lau (2009)
- Marie des Jardins (2012)

... who've given similar presentations from which I've borrowed for this one.



# Possible discussion points



- Ideas for
  - Getting out of a commitment gracefully?
  - Allocating thinking time; setting aside longer periods of time for projects that have high start-up/shut-down cost?
  - Dealing with a steady stream of students?
  - Coordinating time management with others (colleagues, students, partners, family, friends)?
    - Reconciling your need to manage time with the culture of your department/institution?