

How to Stay Afloat: Tips from SWRC Mentors and Newer Faculty

September 15, 2017

Research is Job #1

* The most important thing is to focus on your research agenda
* Schedule research as your #1 priority
* Do something every day towards your research (read an article, print one, edit a passage)
* Don’t worry about perfection in your articles, just submit them and keep going
* Focus on your research priorities and don’t spread yourself too thin
* Stay focused on your research goals, work hard when it is going well, wrap up your work time with a list of next tasks
* Be sure to focus on writing your research not just doing conference presentations
* Submit, submit, submit
* Find research collaborators and hold each other accountable

Managing Your Time

* Set target dates for task completion
* Close your door to minimize interruptions and avoid distractions or work at home
* Work at one task until you become inefficient then switch to a new task
* Minimize interruptions
* Dedicate one day per week for writing and research
* Make yourself a work schedule and reschedule when you need to cancel a task
* Set up a dedicated workspace and keep it always ready to go as opposed to packing up all the time to move from one space to another
* Use even small amounts of time efficiently, look at what tasks you can complete from your to do list in the time you have available
* Biggest tip: Get an extra monitor so you have two screens to work with
* Create a to do list and stick to it

Managing Your Service

* When you are untenured use the need to focus on your research as a legitimate justification to say no to service
* Do not join demanding committees (BUREC, CAP) until you have tenure
* Limit service and additional work with students
* Be strategic about which committees you join
* Stand up for yourself
* Limit committee work
* Be aware of what you are drawn to (service, students, colleagues), then do enough to energize you but not so much that it takes away from research
* Find what you love to do and do it
* Have one involvement at BU outside your faculty

Getting Tenure

* General advice avoid conflict and gossip as a new faculty member
* The only thing that counts is the evidence of your work that shows in your C.V.
* Don’t allow yourself to feel threatened
* Do your homework and speak your own mind but be careful until you have tenure
* Review the CA and know the guidelines well
* Find a mentor you trust and consult them, not necessarily your Department Chair or Dean

Managing Your Health and Wellness

* Stay healthy and get enough sleep
* Self-care
* Exercise regularly
* Don’t give up
* Find allies
* Find a critical friend you can vent with
* Find a mentor and support system and use them
* Find support for yourself to handle the emotions of the job
* Develop a plan for isolation if your job is isolating, how will you cope with it?
* Pay attention to the reality of your position within the university
* Have fun
* Focus on the positives
* Don’t compare yourself to anyone else, just focus on your path
* Take one day off university work per week

If new to BU find one involvement in Brandon outside BU