

DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ACADEMIA

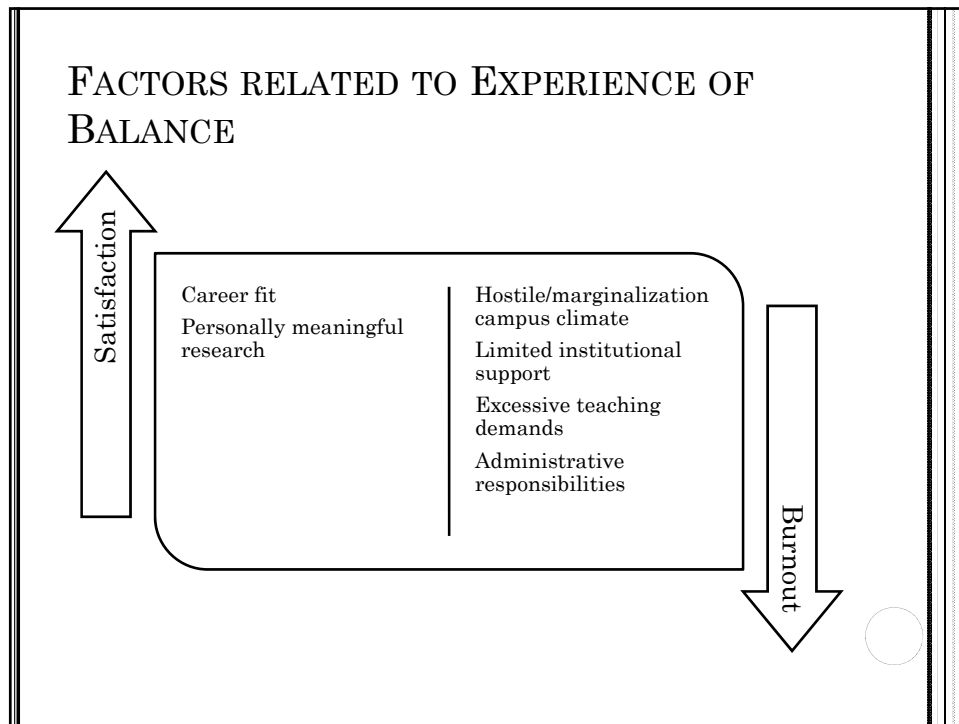
Miranda Kucera, Arizona State University
Rachel Brown-Chidsey, University of Southern Maine
Bryn Harris, University of Colorado Denver
David Shriberg, Loyola University – Chicago
Marlene Sotelo-Dynega, St. Johns University
Jamie Zibulsky, Fairleigh Dickinson
Amanda Sullivan, University of Minnesota

Friday, February 24th, 2012

OBJECTIVES

- Normalize complexity and fluidity of process of developing and sustaining balance
- Discuss personal challenges and strategies from various individuals across career stages, institutions, roles.





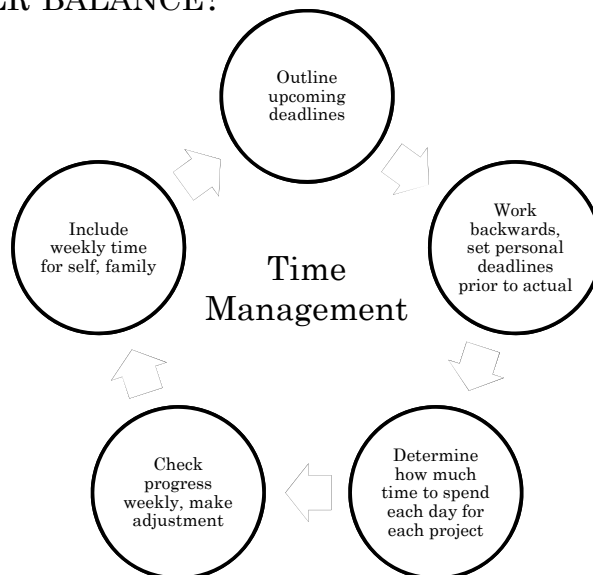
MIRANDA KUCERA

Arizona State University
Doctoral Candidate

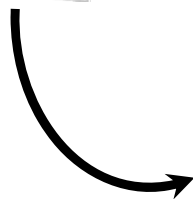
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

- Finding “enough” time
 - Academic year 10-11
- Priorities that constantly shift
- Knowing my limits
 - Sometimes through trial and error

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?



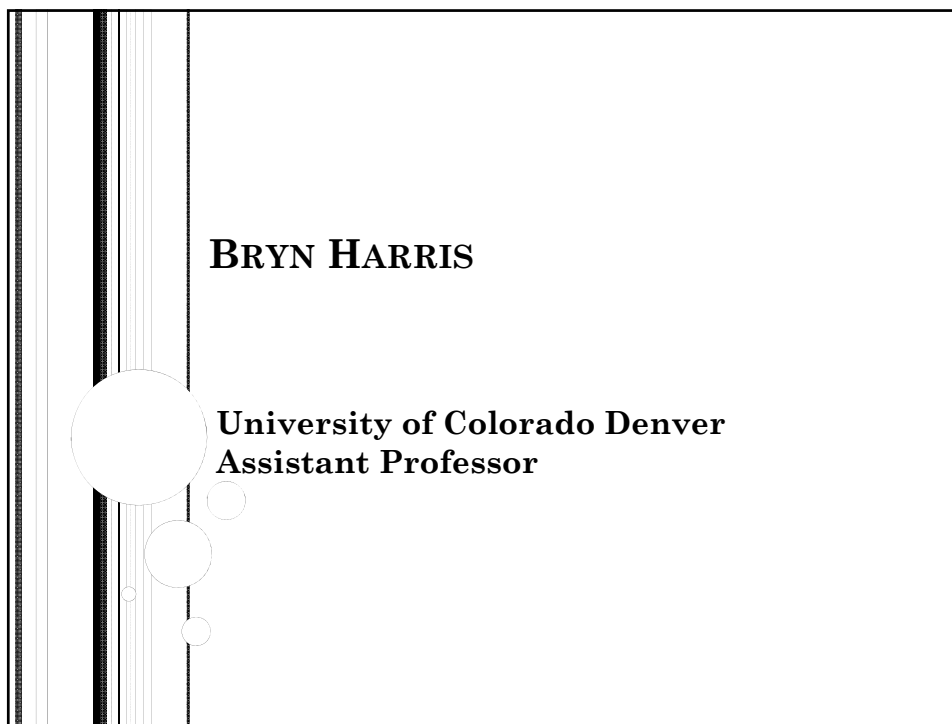
REFRAMING BALANCE



STRATEGIES CONT.

- Using time efficiently
 - E.g. one whole day for dissertation only
- Acceptance
 - Cannot give 100% to everything
 - “Balance” constantly shifts





WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

- Our work is never over, constantly looming
- Fears/unknowns about the tenure process
- Nontraditional work “schedule”
- Unpredictability of work (i.e. when revision requests come in, student having crisis at practicum site)
- Partner with very different work schedule

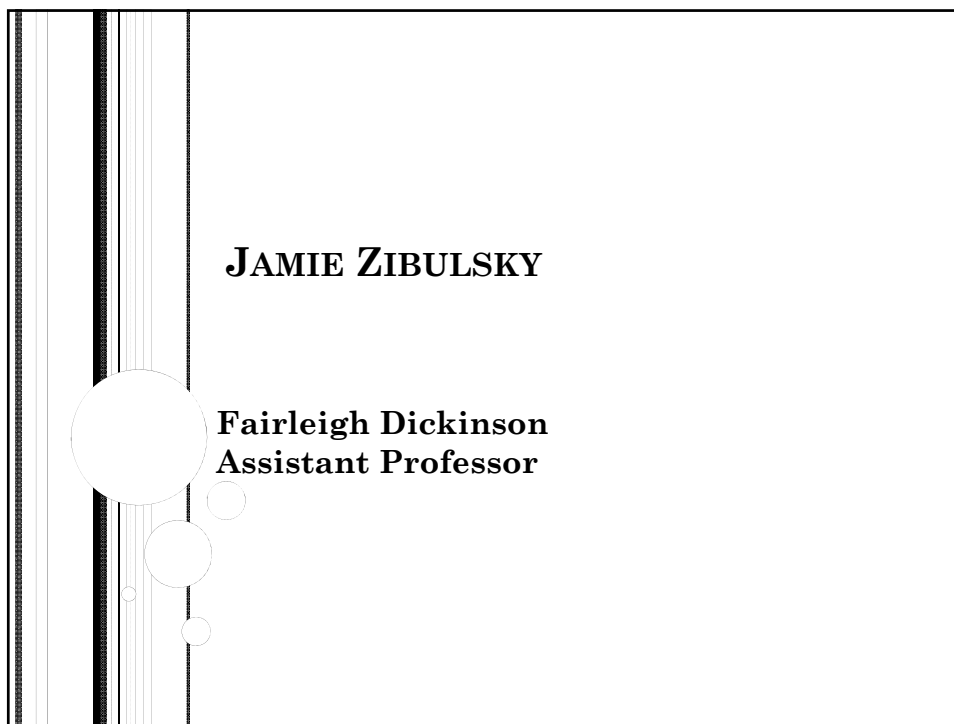


WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

- Lists
- Scheduling time for all aspects of my job and personal life (writing days, teaching days, mentoring days)
- Time off on certain days of the week
- Reviewing what I have accomplished during days where I feel like nothing got done
- Not physically going to the office every day (limiting potential distractions)
- Think carefully about substantial social activities with work colleagues
- Thinking about the big picture – how will this responsibility help me towards tenure, being a better teacher...or other goals I have

WHAT ARE THE SUPPORTS I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

- People
 - Knowing who you can ask for assistance – no need to do it all yourself!
 - Campus mentor from a different school/department
 - Talking with colleagues at other institutions in similar positions, informal mentorship
- Activities
 - Where you can completely remove yourself from thinking about work
 - Goal setting with colleagues
 - Scheduling social time – not being defined by my work



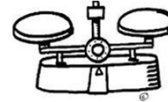
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

- My own ego
- Fears about the tenure process
 - Will cooking dinner tonight/reading a fiction book/appreciating the flexibility of my schedule be the reason I don't get tenure?
 - Even if I find balance, does this environment and job support it?
- Work that can't get done during business hours; life that gets taken care of during business hours



WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

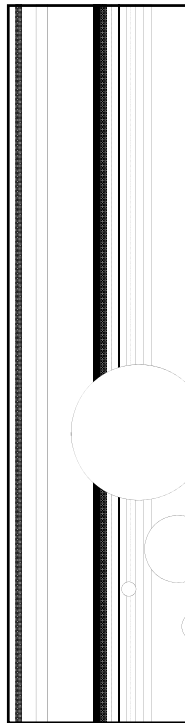
- Remember what balance means
- Recognize that balance is dynamic
- Set proficiency goals, rather than aspirational goals
- Schedule time on my calendar for meeting those goals (even the personal ones)
- Operationalize short-term goals and keep a bucket list of long-term goals that I have yet to tackle
- Recognize that “life” also requires balance – spending time with family and friends vs. self-care



WHAT ARE THE SUPPORTS I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

- People
 - Mentors are necessary in professional life and personal life, and within and across institutions
- Places
 - That support physical health
 - That support mental health
- Things
 - That foster mindfulness
 - That provide distraction
 - That reinforce my efforts (e.g., contingent reinforcement)

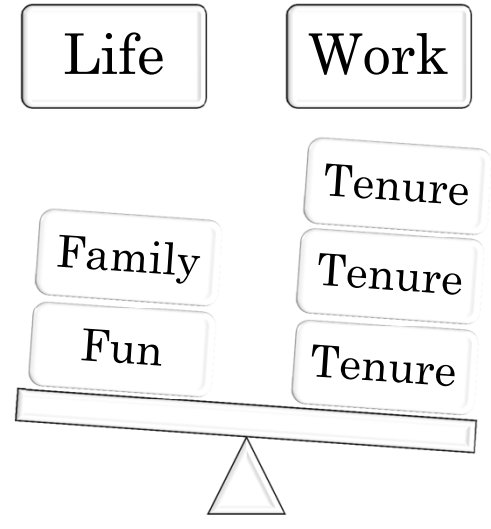




MARLENE SOTELO-DYNEGA

St. Johns University
Assistant Professor

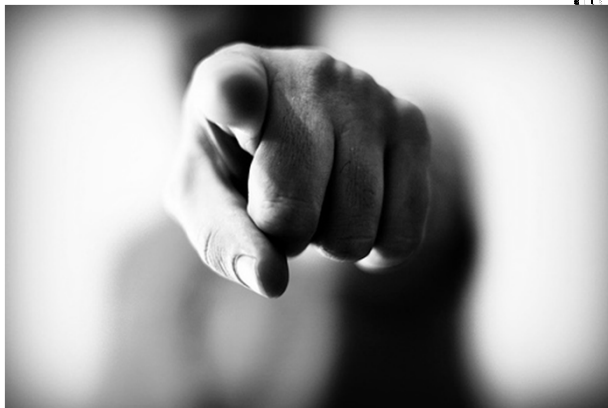
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?



Life	Work
Family	Tenure
Fun	Tenure
	Tenure

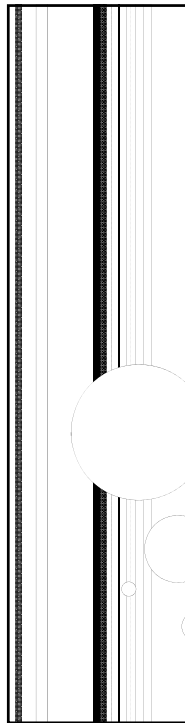
WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

“The greatest obstacle to your success is probably you”
-Frank Tyger



WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

- Setting Realistic:
Priorities:
 1. Health
 2. Family
 3. Work
- Smart Scheduling:
 - Prep days
 - Writing days
 - Student meeting days
 - Free time (NO WORK)
- Setting Goals:
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Yearly
- Delegating Responsibilities
- Positive Reinforcement:
 - Of goals achieved
- **Saying NO!!!!!!**



AMANDA SULLIVAN

University of Minnesota
Assistant Professor

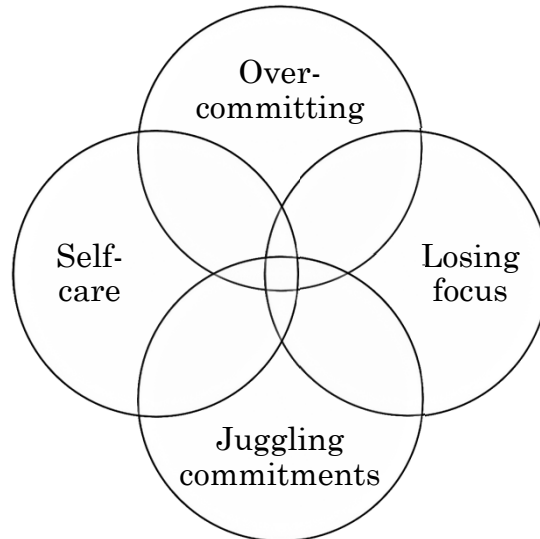
REALITY CHECK

This career provides considerable freedom.

There are a lot of things I can do.	There are a lot of things I should do.
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Not necessarily the same.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?



Most Days...



Good Days:



Some days:



WHAT STRATEGIES DO I UTILIZE TO FOSTER SATISFACTION?

Short- and long-term goals

Lists, lists, and more lists



Establishing boundaries and routine

Maintaining protected time for writing, self-care, partner.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

Develop positive relationships with senior faculty and administrators.

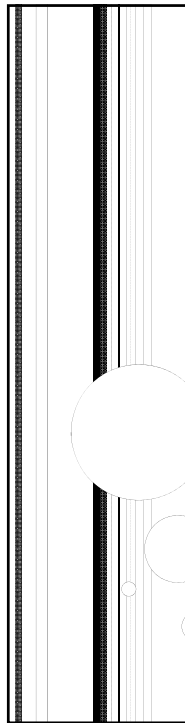
- Ask for support
- Mentoring
- Time
- Funding
- Seek input

Develop professional network.

- Find other junior faculty within your department, college, university, and discipline.
- Support each other.

Engage in self-reflection.

- What are my goals?
- What do I need?
- What do I enjoy?
- What is and is not working?




RACHEL BROWN-CHIDSEY

University of Southern Maine
Associate Professor

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

- Being present in the moment
- Not being resentful
- Being able to say “no” without guilt
- Enjoying down time
- Being clear about priorities

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BEING PRESENT IN THE MOMENT

- It is often challenging to keep my focus on the situation at hand
- I find myself thinking about family at work or thinking about work at home
- My attention feels constantly divided and then I end up trying to re-focus which adds another layer of executive thinking

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NOT BEING RESENTFUL

- When trying to be present and engaged and I am interrupted by home or school demands, I can end up resentful toward the interruption
 - Work interruptions at home
 - Home interruptions at work
- Feels like a constant race against time to get things done

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BEING ABLE TO SAY “NO” WITHOUT GUILT

- There are more demands than can be met
- Saying “no” is hard when it’s clear that there’s no one else to do the work
- Saying no may mean some tasks will not get done
- Can leave a lingering guilt that invades family time

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ENJOYING DOWN TIME

- Since there’s always more to be done than can be done, it can lead to a sense that one should always be working
- This makes it hard to have or enjoy any down time
- Constant sense that “I should be working”
- Can make one’s presence at family events very disjointed

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BEING CLEAR ABOUT PRIORITIES

- When there are multiple competing demands that all have value, it's hard to rank order what is most important
- Others' sense of priority may not match yours
- Prior to tenure, it's harder to separate work and home priorities because supporting the family is dependent on tenure
- One's personal priorities can get lost

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WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

- Set boundaries and try to stick to them
- Set personal and work goals each year and review them monthly
- Have a mentor for de-briefing

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SET BOUNDARIES AND TRY TO STICK TO THEM

- Time Boundaries
 - Be available only during certain pre-set hours
 - Let voice mail and email take your messages at other times
 - Communicate your time access with others
- Space Boundaries
 - Work only at the office (or home office)
 - Relax only at home

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SET PERSONAL AND WORK GOALS EACH YEAR AND REVIEW THEM MONTHLY

- Have a few key goals for each academic year
- Write them down and share with a mentor and/or family member
- Review them monthly to track progress
- Use them each time you are asked to do something new
 - How does the request fit with your goals?

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HAVE A MENTOR FOR DE-BRIEFING

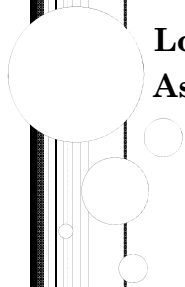
- Having a colleague who understands work-life stress is very helpful
- Meeting at regular intervals can provide a way to review goals and priorities
- Agree to be a mentor to new faculty so they have supports too

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Rachel Brown-Chidsey



DAVE SHRIBERG

Loyola University - Chicago
Associate Professor



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES I ENCOUNTER IN SEEKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

- Being the professor I want to be without becoming the 24/7 professor
- Always having something that needs finishing or that I could be adding or expanding in some way

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES I UTILIZE TO FOSTER BALANCE?

As a family man:

- Marrying well!
- Creating clear work/home boundaries
- Communicating with my kids about what my job is like and why I need to work

As a professor:

- Making my work minutes count
- Continuously working to develop my skills in **facilitating individualized student growth**, including delegating when appropriate. Seeking to be a strong mentor to your students helps balance (and productivity) considerably.
- Doing my best to become “Mr. Consistent”
- Working smarter, not harder—data-based decision making!

RESOURCES

- Work-Life Balance: Reclaiming Control
 - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/work-life-balance/WL00056>
- Work/Life Balance Calculator:
 - <http://www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/worklife/06/04/balance.calculator/>
- Blogs that may resonate
 - <http://getalifephd.blogspot.com/>
- For scheduling meetings and office hour appointments online
 - <http://www.tungle.me/Home/>
- Books on balance
 - *The Joy Diet: 10 Daily Practices for a Happier Life* by Martha Beck

Questions for the Presenters?