

September: Time Management & Organization

- How do you spend your time?
 - New faculty tend to spend a lot of time on teaching, often to the detriment of their research and writing (Boice, 2000)
 - Researchers suggest spending no more than 2 hours of prep for every class hour (Boice, 2000)
 - Spend at least 3 hours per week on scholarly writing or 30-60 minutes per day – even if you’re not feeling ready to write (Boice, 2000)
 - Carve out time to network with colleagues and discuss teaching and research – the most productive new faculty members did this on average of 4 hours per week (Boice, 2000)
 - Block-out times in your schedule for teaching prep and scholarship and hold these sacrosanct – during what time of day do you best write?
 - Consider limiting email correspondence to certain hours in a given day rather than responding at all times – keep it closed until that time comes

- Keep your Promotion/Tenure materials organized
 - Have a separate file for Teaching, Advising, Research, and Service and put in items such as teaching evaluations, unsolicited emails/notes from students and advisees, papers published/accepted, grants submitted, etc.
 - Update your CV semesterly using these files or every time you submit, revise/resubmit, get accepted, etc. update your CV

- Keep your teaching files organized
 - Consider a 3-ring binder (or electronic version) for each class that includes sections for (a) syllabus and class agendas/notes, (b) readings, (c) attendance/student information, (d) handouts or materials distributed in class, and (e) a section for future ideas when teaching the class (what worked, what to do differently, etc.)
 - Give each class agenda/lecture notes a specific meeting number (Class 1, Class 2, etc.) and save them as such on your computer. Makes for easy recall when re-teaching the class
 - Take the time at the end of each semester to jot down ideas from teaching evaluations and update your syllabus while your memory is fresh

- Keep your scholarship organized
 - Plot out your monthly, semesterly, and annual goals for scholarship and post them near where you work
 - Consider the “typical” expectations for scholarly output in your unit and plan appropriately:
 - For example, if expected to produce 2 refereed publications per year consider the 2/2/2/2 rule:
 - Two in conceptualization
 - Two in data collection/analysis
 - Two in draft/writing
 - Two under review
 - Keep an updated table of scholarship submitted including title, where sent, when, outcome and post near where you work – keep updated on CV too

- Don't forget to have a life!
 - Take care of yourself: Eat well, get enough sleep, exercise
 - Take care of your family & friends: Put life first before work
 - Celebrate accomplishments: Take time to celebrate little and big wins in career and in personal life
 - Need help with balance? Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help!

Resources

Boice, R. (2000). *Advice for new faculty members*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Employee

Assistance Program: Call toll-free at 877-622-4327 or visit CIGNA on the web at <https://apps.cignabehavioral.com/web/> (**Login with the employer id ums**)

Employee Wellness Program RISE UP

<http://staticweb.maine.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Wellness-Guide-FINAL-2017.pdf?2c9c5a>

Human Resources – Promotion and Tenure Resources 2017 – 2018

<http://www.maine.edu/about-the-system/system-office/academic-affairs/tenure-and-promotion/>



Mentoring in a Can

October: Advising Students & Improving Your Teaching Effectiveness

Advising Students

- The documentation of student advising is expected as part of your Promotion/Tenure materials at UMaine and is included under the umbrella of Teaching
 - For example, you will be asked to document the following:
 - Do you have regular meetings?
 - How do you make contact with advisees that don't come to your office?
 - How do you ensure that your advisees are meeting the General Education requirements?
 - How many undergraduate students? (majors, undeclared students, honors students) do you typically advise during the academic year?
 - Include the results of any evaluations by your advisees
 - Provide a brief statement describing your recent advising commitments for honors theses, master's, and doctoral dissertation committees
- Like many other things in academic life, the amount of time you will dedicate to advising will vary during the year. Peak times:
 - Prior to spring semester enrollment (end of October-beginning of November) and fall (end of March-beginning of April)
 - Add-drop periods
 - End of semester/beginning of semester
- Seek out assistance from experienced colleagues and department support about forms, handbooks, and norms around advising
- Utilize resources available in your college – for example, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the College of Education and Human Development have Advising Centers
- Consider creating forms and guidelines to assist you in assisting students – timelines, procedures, etc. may be unfamiliar to many of the first-generation students at UMaine

Improving Teaching Effectiveness

- In addition, in P/T documentation you will be expected to address “special efforts undertaken to enhance your teaching effectiveness” or “teaching innovations”

- Even the best teachers can use some tips! In fact, in his extensive study of the “best college teachers,” Bain (2004) found that “part of being a good teacher is knowing that you always have something new to learn” (p. 174).
- Utilize the many resources available on-campus, such as:
 - **The Rising Tide Center** – offers workshops, brown bags, and other events to assist in networking with others to discuss topics related to teaching, research, and service
 - **Your Colleagues** – ask to observe their classes and ask them to come observe yours and provide documentation of your work for your P/T application
- Utilize resources off-campus, including:
 - Empirically-based resources such as the following texts:
 - *McKeachie’s Teaching Tips* (McKeachie, 2013; Cengage Learning)
 - *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Bain, 2004; Harvard University Press)
 - *Teaching at its Best* (Nilson, 2010; Jossey-Bass)
- Get more feedback from your students
 - Many instructors provide additional feedback mechanisms for students beyond the typical end-of-the-semester bubble sheets provided by the university
 - Consider a 4-week assessment – this is early enough in the semester that concerns can be voiced and changes to the class can be made : A half sheet of paper provided to students asking them a few simple questions: “What’s working so far? What could be improved? What other suggestions do you have for improving the teaching/learning experience in the class?”
 - A mid-term assessment asking similar questions– another chance to get feedback early enough in the semester
 - An additional end-of-semester form that includes questions such as students’ thoughts about (a) course pacing, (b) classroom environment, (c) student-instructor interactions, (d) assignments, (e) texts/readings, etc.
 - Also, consider asking students about how much they have *learned* rather than simply focusing on your teaching – after all, that’s what it’s all about, right?

Resources

ADVANCE Rising Tide Center, umaine.edu/advancerisingtide

Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nilson, L. B. (2010). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Svinicki, M. D., & McKeachie, W. J. (2013). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers* (14th ed.). Cengage Learning.



Mentoring in a Can

November: Summer Funding & Preparing for Annual Evaluations

Summer Funding

It may seem too early to start thinking about summer plans but many on-campus summer funding opportunities have upcoming deadlines:

- Office of Research: www.umaine.edu/research/faculty-research-funds-program
 - Regular Faculty Research Competition (mid-November)
 - Scholarly Materials & Equipment Competition (mid-November)
 - Summer Faculty Research Competition (mid-January)
- Maine Physical Sciences Partnership: www.umaine.edu/mainepsp/project-initiatives
 - Incentive Grants (March)
- Faculty Laptop Incentive Program:
<https://umaine.edu/it/2017/01/16/faculty-laptop-incentive-program-20162017/>
 - Up to \$750 for laptops (due before April)
- IT Faculty Technology Stipends:
<https://umaine.edu/research/faculty/faculty-research-funds-program/deadline-dates/>
 - Develop technology-based resources for courses

Off-campus funding opportunities are also prevalent. Contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) for assistance on seeking external funding and registering for the following resources:

- PIVOT – database of funding opportunities
- Foundation Tracker
- Limited Competitions Registry

Research & Sponsored Programs (Pre- and post-award support) 581-1484
www.umaine.edu/orsp

Preparing for Annual Evaluations

- Per AFUM (Union) guidelines, pre-tenure faculty are expected to be evaluated annually for reappointment
 - In the first year of employment, this process begins in early January
 - In the second year, in October
 - In the third and subsequent years, in March
 - In year of promotion/tenure, in September
- These annual evaluations are in place to provide you and your peers with opportunities for feedback on your progress toward tenure/promotion
- Being specific in your annual communications with your Peer Committee will assist you greatly in this process
 - Being specific requires that you remain organized and recall important details (see September's tips).
- In your first year, you need to do the following:
 - Submit your credentials to your Peer Committee by January 3rd – this usually entails a letter detailing what you have accomplished in Teaching, Advising, Research, and Service up to this point
 - Be specific in your letter but realistic – no one expects that you are ready for tenure in the first six months of employment!
 - Ask newer faculty for examples of their letters – use these as templates for your own
 - ➔ Please note: In Years 3-5, you are expected to follow the format provided by HR in this letter. This format mimics the format you will use in the Promotion/Tenure Process. See <http://www.maine.edu/about-the-system/system-office/academic-affairs/tenure-and-promotion/> for more information.
- Your letter is then considered by the Peer Committee, who forwards its recommendation to the Chair in mid-January
 - You will receive a copy of this and all subsequent letters
 - Should there be any inaccuracies in this letter, you have one week to respond in writing
- The Chair then considers your letter and that of the Peer Committee and responds by the end of January
- The Dean then considers all previous letters and responds by the end of February
- The Provost then considers all these letters and responds by mid-March

- You will then receive the final recommendation of the President by the end of March

Should you have any concerns or problems throughout this process, you are encouraged to contact your AFUM representative, Lisa Neuman, umaineafum@gmail.com.

December: Final Exams, Grading, & MaineStreet

Final Exams

- Most classes are assigned a final exam date and time
- You can see this schedule on MaineStreet in the Faculty Center in the box labeled “My Final Exam Schedule”
- Final exams cannot count for more than one-third of the final course grade
- Students who miss the final exam for a legitimate reason can make arrangements to make up the examination
- No final exams should be scheduled for the final week of classes without permission of your department chair

Grades

- The general grade system used by the University the standard A-F scale
- You have the option of adding +/- (no A+) to these basic letter grades
- There is no standardized grading scale (i.e., 90-100=A) for the University – this should be laid out in your syllabus
- In addition, the following grades are provided as options:
 - AU – Audit option
 - DG – Deferred Grade – only for courses extending beyond a single semester
 - F* - Fail in Pass/Fail Option – no credit earned and GPA is not affected
 - I – Incomplete – in consultation with student, you have postponed the assignment of a final grade for work not completed before the end of the semester. This should only be used when you feel they have completed at least 50% of the class.
 - For undergrad students, you will be asked to complete a form (“Undergraduate Incomplete Grade Reporting” form) that describes the reason for the Incomplete, what assignments yet remain, grade of work submitted to date, and the date by which the work is to be completed. The maximum amount of time is 140 days from the end of the semester.
 - Extensions beyond the 140 days require the completion of the “Extension for Incomplete” form
 - L – Failure for lack of participation – participated in less than 50% of the class but did not formally withdraw – this grade counts the same as an F

- LP – Low Pass – for a course passed on the Pass/Fail Option with a D+, D, or D- - credit is earned but the GPA is not affected
- P – Pass – for a course passed on the Pass/Fail Option with a C- or above– credit is earned but GPA is not affected
- TH – Final grade deferred – only used for undergraduate theses
- W – Withdraw – indicating student officially withdrew from the course

For more information visit Student Records website: <https://studentrecords.umaine.edu/>

Submitting Grades: <https://studentrecords.umaine.edu/home/grades-and-grading-policy/>

- Grades are due one week after the class ends
- All grades are submitted on MaineStreet
- All students must be graded in order for the grade roster to be set to *Approved* status, which then allows for posting of the grades
- You may change grades for classes in MaineStreet by accessing the grade roster for the appropriate class and selecting the “Request Grade Change” button
- After choosing each student’s grade, carefully check for missed entries and then change roster’s status to *Approved* and then click on *Post*
- Problems? Questions? Send an email to grading@umit.maine.edu or call 581-1288

General Tips

You’ll begin to learn what works and doesn’t work by the end of your first semester in regard to grading.

As you prepare for next semester, consider the following:

- Include your grading scale in your syllabus with specific percentages and letter grades
- Make grading easy for you and your students – if you go with a straight point system, students can determine their own grades at any given time during the semester
- Whether in hard copy or electronic format, a grading sheet will help keep you organized and will assist you in answering students’ questions readily
- Commit to a policy on returning student work within a certain time period. It will keep you on task and organized and will make students happy (or happier about that piece, at any rate)
- Engage colleagues in your department about their grading policies, such as how they determine things like participation, attendance grades, and how they grade lengthy essay or written work

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January: Developing a Coherent Research Agenda

One of the more allusive aspects of being a new faculty member at a research-intensive university is creating the coherent research agenda (Sternberg, 2013)

- Think coherent
 - It's very easy in your first few years to get distracted – a colleague may ask you to collaborate on a study, you might get asked to contribute to a book chapter, or you might consider applying for some appealing extra funds – all great things to do but you need to ask yourself: How will this fit into my research agenda?
 - You have your entire career – post-tenure – to mold yourself differently. Pre-tenure years should be focused on one or two main themes in your research
- Think flexible
 - At the same time, there should be some room in your research agenda to be flexible
 - Consider if you can frame your topic or scope a bit more broadly to be able to include off-shoots of interests or some room to grow
- Think concise
 - While you may be able to wax eternal about the wonderful plans you have for your research in the next 1, 5, 10, and 20 years, your peer committee and colleagues most likely want to hear a brief one-sentence overview
 - If they want more, then you can have the slightly longer, paragraph-long overview
 - Save the extensive, long-winded version for your promotion-tenure materials

In his *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, “Self-Sabotage in the Academic Career,” Robert Sternberg (2013, April 29) remarked,

“You need a certain quantity of published research, but you also need a rational and organized research program. If there is no consistent theme, or perhaps pair of themes, professors will wonder if you have a meaningful future as an investigator, or if you are merely someone who flits from project to project, aimlessly pursuing investigations.”



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February: Service Do's and Don'ts

Service is one part of the tri-partite faculty role but knowing when and how to serve is important for new faculty members.

Regarding Tenure-Promotion expectations at UMaine, service is listed under Section D, "Documentation of Department/Campus/College Service," including items such as "committee membership, and advising student organizations."

Do

- Select your service work carefully
 - One department-level committee
 - One college-level committee
 - One university-level committee
 - One professional association committee or set of duties
- Connect your service to your scholarship as much as possible
- Remember that you're representing your department in college and university-wide committees – not yourself
- Keep in mind that your colleagues on these committees may someday be voting on your promotion-tenure – be a good committee member
- Recall that service can be a chance to make yourself known to the larger university community
- Remember that different kinds of service count more than others
 - For example, serving on an editorial board is going to be valued more by peers

Don't

- Over-commit – service counts but, at the same time, it doesn't always...
 - You want to be a good community member but service ultimately may take away from research time
- Be afraid to say "no"
 - Let's face it: we can't say no to the dean or provost asking us to serve on a committee but we can say no when we're over-committed. Pre-tenure faculty are always expected to have a lighter service load – it's not an excuse, it's reality
- Forget your passion(s)
 - If there is something you're particularly passionate about – a student group or a particular cause – you should certainly consider that in your service commitments



Mentoring in a Can

March: Balancing Work and Life

An academic career can be stressful and certainly doesn't follow the typical 9-5 work schedule. For new faculty on the tenure-track, in particular, striking a balance between work and life can feel difficult. Presented below are a few tips in efforts toward finding balance.

- Make time for self
 - Make time for interests – sports, music, reading
 - Make time for health – eat right, exercise, get plenty of rest
 - Make time for relationships – family and friends

- Lose the guilt
 - Understand your limitations
 - Be realistic
 - Expect imperfection
 - Don't compare yourself to others
 - Accept your work style

- Say "no"
 - Never commit immediately. Ask for time to consider
 - Is the work something important? Something you care about? Something that will help you in the future?
 - Saying "no" now may enable you to say "yes" in the future

- Be present
 - Enjoy the now moments
 - Set parameters around what is done at home and what is done at work (e.g., no email after 8pm, no computers on vacation) and stick to them



Mentoring in a Can

April: Faculty Database & Taking Stock

Faculty Database

Around this time each year faculty are asked to complete the Faculty/Staff Profile Database by the Office of the Vice President for Research. The database is an overview of the work you have completed throughout the fiscal year. These data are provided to chairs and academic deans who are able to produce annual reports on the activities of faculty in their units. In some units, the database provides an opportunity to discuss your progress related to annual evaluations with your department chair. In addition, you can use the information stored in the database for your own information, as a place to “house” professional information.

The database is available at <https://library.umaine.edu/fsprofile/login.aspx?ticket=ST-1072347-nhsdQdpNvinku5GqGX2a-identity.maine.edu>

Recently, the database has become searchable in a beta format, allowing those within and outside of UMaine to find potential collaborators and expertise on given research topics.

As you enter data, should you encounter any problems, contact Curtis Meadow at 581.3929 or by e-mail: meadow@maine.edu.

Taking Stock

April is a notoriously hectic month for academics – with the end-of-the-semester looming, end-of-the-year events, and general burnout after a busy academic year.

You are now nearing the end of your first year as a faculty member at UMaine. Here is a chance for you to take stock of what worked this year, what didn't work, and what you can change for next year.

- What worked for you this year in relation to:
 - Teaching
 - Advising
 - Research
 - Service
- Where can you improve next year in relation to these areas?
- From where or whom can you seek assistance in improving in these areas?



Mentoring in a Can

May: Using Summer Months Effectively

Tips from Noah Shusterman

("Planning a Productive Summer," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2/28/2013)

- Treat your summer writing projects like a long road trip
 - Know what you want to work on first then start writing early (avoid too many pit-stops!)
- Have an insanely ambitious plan
 - Prioritize what you will do and when before summer begins – give yourself something to strive for
 - Words per day?
 - Time per day?
 - Publication goals by the end of summer?
- Set achievable goals
 - Keep in mind what's in your control – and what's out of it
- Never double down
 - Didn't make your goal of 1,000 words today? Don't go for 2,000 tomorrow. Stick to your daily goals as well as weekly and monthly goals or you'll feel overwhelmed
- Focus early, wander late
 - Accomplish some of those goals before you broaden your scope (do your sightseeing after you get there, not when you still have driving to do!)
- When it's vacation, it's vacation
 - It is summer, after all! Take a break (or two!) and enjoy your hard work.
 - Taking a break means taking a break. Don't go on vacation and bring your laptop. Focus on one thing at a time.