

TIME MANAGEMENT — Irreverent Thoughts by Esther Rothblum (3-07)

1. Separate the Urgent from the Important.
The urgent is never important; the important is never urgent
Be sure to get away from your desk (filled with urgent tasks) and ponder (focus on the important)
2. Eat out a lot
Be sure to meet people in your field locally and nationally
Do not contact people only when you need something from them
When you contact people, ask yourself (1) am I creating work for them, and (2) what I can do to help them out?
For tenure you will need letters from people outside the university network; students will need to know people to write letters of recommendation
3. Create your infrastructure
Spend time arranging your office, your file cabinet, your computer files so that things are organized and easy to access
A little organization now will save you hours of time later on
A good time to work on this is at the beginning of the summer
Back up your hard drive and keep the back-up file in a different building (e.g., at home). Your hard drive will crash.
Keep a “wait on others to do” box filled with things you have completed but you need someone else to do something about it (e.g., a letter requesting a reprint, a signature on a grant) and check this box several times a week.
4. Make time for writing and publishing
This is really what academia is about; you were hired for this and will receive tenure for this
Have a 3-year plan for getting articles and books out
5. Don't get hooked
Department politics will get you hooked into minor details that seem urgent, that create lots of emotions, and that will take up all your time
Stay detached from these
6. Don't be an inefficient teacher
Research indicates that junior faculty spend too much time preparing courses, and that this is not related to course evaluations
Do not change your course texts and materials every time you teach the course
7. Throw things out
If you don't know you have a file, you might as well throw it out
If something is on your pc (and backed up), there is no need to keep a hard copy
8. Collaborate
Some disciplines assume teamwork, others frown on it
Some people are “starters” and others are “finishers”--find collaborators who complement (rather than match) your style