Doing What Matters First
Time Management for Busy Professors

Tim Slater
University of Wyoming

CAPER Center for Astronomy & Physics Education Research
caperteam.com  timslaterwyo@gmail.com
Summary of Pre Survey of June 2013 NFW Participants

Submitted by C. Henderson, June 11, 2013

This report is based on results of a web survey administered to all June 2013 New Faculty Workshop (NFW) participants prior to the Workshop. Responses were received from 66 of the 79 (84%) expected attendees. The main purpose of this document is to provide workshop organizers and presenters with some background information about the attendees.

Primary Concerns

| How concerned are you about the impact of each of these issues on your role as a new faculty member? |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Very concerned | Somewhat concerned | Not at all concerned |
| Time management | 65 | 27 | 8 |
| Grant writing | 63 | 27 | 10 |
| Developing a research program | 63 | 32 | 5 |
| Motivating students | 60 | 38 | 2 |
| Efficiently preparing for class | 57 | 38 | 5 |
| Preparation and submission of papers | 54 | 35 | 11 |
| Balancing work and family | 49 | 44 | 6 |
| Managing graduate students | 44 | 19 | 37 |
| Improving your end-of-course student evaluations | 40 | 52 | 8 |

Twitter Hashtag: #aaptnfw
Doing What Matters First

Time Management for Busy Professors

Tim Slater
University of Wyoming

CAPER Center for Astronomy & Physics Education Research
caperteam.com  timslaterwyo@gmail.com
The best thing about being a professor is the flexibility ... you can work any 80 hours a week you wish!
Without talking to the person next to you…

- Now that you have been a faculty member for a little while, list THREE job-related things you wish you were doing MORE of?
Figuring out what’s most important

- Now that you have been a faculty member for a little while, list three job-related things you wish you were doing MORE of?

- If you could do just ONE of those three things on your list really well that would help you progress professionally, which one is it and why?

#aaptnfw  “Which ONE thing do you wish you could do more of at your university?”
Figuring out what’s most important

- Now that you have been a faculty member for a little while, what are three job-related things you wish you were doing MORE of?
- If you could do just ONE of those three things on your list really well that would help you progress professionally, which one is it and why?
- In a small group, ask volunteers to share ONE of the items. *Try not to offer solutions, but to focus on areas of improvement.*
What is the consensus of the group?

- If you know what is most important, why aren’t you doing it?
- Ok, if there is just not enough time
  - What steals your time?
The Omnivore’s Dilemma

If you can buy just about anything you could ever want in a grocery store, what do you decide to eat for dinner tonight?
The Academic’s Dilemma

If you can do just about anything you could ever want to do during your work day, what do you decide to do today?
Successful time management is about keeping the **main thing** the **main thing**

- You can do anything you want; but you can’t do everything
  - Technology sometimes fools us into thinking you can
  - You can have >200 friends using Facebook
  - You can submit multiple grant proposals several times a day with NSF *FastLane*
  - You can deliver by email all of your students a homework assignment in a single click without going to the photocopier
Successful time management is about keeping the **main thing** the **main thing**

- You can do anything you want; but you can’t do everything
- You have to identify what you really want
- You have to clearly define what success looks like, both for work and for non-work
- Life that frantically runs around touching all the bases doing a little of everything is a very unhappy life
You’ve got to know before it happens…

- Imagine a student comes to your office door for help on a HW problem…
- It’s 415pm and you’ve got to hit submit on fastlane.nsf.gov by 5pm, what do you do?

**BOTTOM LINE:** If you don’t know before it happens, you’ll try to do both and do a lousy job of each
Time Management Strategies

*This only works if you know what is most important*

- Awareness of how you spend your money
- Awareness of what steals your money
- Barriers to people stealing your money
Time Management Strategies

*This only works if you know what is most important*

- Awareness of how you spend your time
- Computers can multi-task, humans can’t
- *Level 0*: Email is on constantly and you notice every “receive”
- *Level 1*: Turn off your email for at least one hour per day
- *Level 2*: Don’t access your email before noon
- *Level 3*: Don’t access your email before 3pm
- *Level 4*: Set your email to SEND/RECEIVE only once a day

#aaptnfw

“What steals your time when you are trying to get work done?”
Results of Slater’s email challenge

Time Management Strategies

This only works if you know what is most important

- Awareness of how you spend your time
- Computers can multi-task, humans can’t
- **Level 0**: Email is on constantly and you notice every “receive”
- **Level 1**: Turn off your email for at least one hour per day
- **Level 2**: Don’t access your email before noon
- **Level 3**: Don’t access your email before 3pm
- **Level 4**: Set your email to SEND/RECEIVE only once a day
Time Management Strategies

*This only works if you know what is most important*

- Awareness of how you spend your time
- Computers can multi-task, humans can’t
- Batch your work – do all of your email at one sitting, then turn it off
  - Make a separate email address for your teaching, tell students that is how to contact you, and that you only check it every other day.
  - Students are enthusiastically happy if they know you if and when you will respond.

#aaptnfw

“What steals your time when you are trying to get work done?”
Time Management Strategies

This only works if you know what is most important

- Awareness of how you spend your time
- Computers can multi-task, humans can’t
- Batch your work – do all of your email at one sitting, then turn it off
- Dedicate yourself to OHIO
  - O: Only
  - H: Handle
  - I: It
  - O: Once

#aaptnfw

“What steals your time when you are trying to get work done?”
Time Management Strategies

*This only works if you know what is most important*

- Awareness of how you spend your time
- Computers can multi-task, humans can’t
- Batch your work – do all of your email at one sitting, then turn it off
- Dedicate yourself to OHIO
- When I sit down to do my 100+ emails in my inbox at the end of the day, I
  - Delete it
  - Respond in less than 2 minutes
  - Archive it
  - Put in a “to deal with on Friday” directory/folder
CONFESSION

Yes, I fall off the wagon sometimes

www.hassleme.co.uk
CONFESSION

Yes, I fall off the wagon sometimes

What are you doing right now?
What are you NOT doing?
How do you feel about it?

www.hassleme.co.uk
YOU NEED A SYSTEM TO CALL THINGS TO YOUR ATTENTION SO YOU CAN FORGET THEM

- Your email inbox is an ineffective to do list
- My calendar is my to-do list

Successful time management is about keeping track and batching similar tasks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Time Management Session at NFW</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ASTRO 101</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Weekly GTA Meeting</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>catch up on email from DC trip</td>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Flight BWI to Denver</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Weekly Research Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Astro 101</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>LPI teleconference</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Keynote Talk at Colorado AAPT Meeting in Denver</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Physics Colloquium</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>TDO LIST</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>submit travel receipts</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>set up Facebook page</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>draft final exam</td>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>get NSF budget appr</td>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>review applc. files</td>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>arrange travel to DC</td>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Jeep oil change</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>purchase daughter birthday gift</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tasks: 0 Active tasks, 0 Completed tasks
- Time Management Session at NFW
- Advised students on classes
- Jeep oil change
- Weekly GTA Meeting
- Submit travel receipt
- Set up Facebook page
- Grade students assignments
- Catch up on email from DC trip
- Flight BWI to Denver
- Keynote Talk at Colorado AAPT Meeting in Denver
- Physics Colloquium
- TO-DO-list
  - Keynote Talk at Colorado AAPT Meeting in Denver
  - Attend physics colloquium
  - Review NSF budget proposal
  - Review AJP manuscript
  - Call plumber
  - AAS Strat Plan
- Tasks: 0 Active tasks, 0 Completed tasks
What all is in my calendar?

- When I have recurring class, meetings, & tasks including exercise, birthday cards & lawn mowing
- Time dependent to-do items
- To-Do items with no deadline listed in Saturday column
- Done-items moved from Saturday column to either WHEN I did it (*for my reflective time accounting*) or to the Sunday column
- I color code weekend items that aren’t moveable to-do items
You MUST know where you are going!!!

- Spend the first ten minutes at your desk quietly PLANNING instead of reading email or anything else!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO DO ITEM</th>
<th>Must Do Today (Number)</th>
<th>Do Today or Tomorrow</th>
<th>For Another Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Every Monday Strategy

- If you want to implement a new teaching strategy….
- Every Monday, I will assign a JiTT
- Every Friday afternoon, I will deal with my backed up email.
- Every class day I will do ONE Pi-Clicker Q
- Every Tuesday afternoon, I’ll work somewhere outside my building
- One day each month, reconsider your list of NEXT 10 title I’m going to write
Do you want to write more?

**COMMON TRAIT**
- People who write the most refereed articles, most grant applications, the most …

**WRITE SOME EVERYDAY**

Everyone’s goals are different, but I write 1,000 words every day **BEFORE** I’m allowed to look at my email
Be sure to climb the right ladder
Pat is an assistant professor teaching 2 courses, one for majors (9 students) and one for non-majors (80 students) in a small department. Pat has 4 papers that are ever so close to getting out the door, a proposal due in a week which hasn’t yet been started, a stack of ungraded mid-terms, and is three assignments behind in grading homework for his majors-class. Each morning, there is often a student to two in Pat’s office getting help. Each afternoon you walk by Pat’s office, Pat is madly banging out emails; the ones you get are often in incomplete sentences. Pat is often late to meetings and class, bursting in apologetically, but out of breath. Pat always responds to “how are you?” with “crazy busy.” Everything seems like an interruption to Pat, so you don’t speak much anymore. If you were Pat’s chair, how would you advise Pat?
You are going to slip up occasionally

- Dust yourself off, and recommit to doing what matters most instead of what is in front of you
- Watch an Internet video on time management
  - Time Management Video by Randy Pausch
- Read a book on time management
  - 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- Attend time management workshops at your institution (new trick every time)
Task

- Write **down three specific things** you are going to do in the next two weeks to enhance the way you manage your time so you can focus on what is important instead of what is in front of you.

#aaptnfw  "Which time management strategy do you think will work best for you?"
My greatest fear is that I’ll look back on my life and not know what I’ve done with it –

unknown

timslaterwyo@gmail.com thebusyprofessor.wordpress.com

#aaptnfw “Which time management strategy do you think will work best for you?”