

Where Does the Time Go?

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"Unfortunately, volunteering was relied on not only for emergencies, but for a good deal of everyday work that should have been organized as routine, and the inevitable result was that the willing horses were overworked."

From *The Worst Journey in the World*
by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, who was a member of
R. F. Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole.

You have taught your classes for the day, prepared your lectures for tomorrow, answered homework questions during your office hours, so perhaps now you will have time to do a little research? Well, there is that one committee meeting you need to attend.

We all experience these sorts of time pressures at our academic institutions. Service to the department and the institution is an important part of an academic career wherever you are. Academics are wonderful at coming up with new, innovative, exciting ways to care for and educate students. They also are not known for letting go of good ideas that were instituted by some former well-meaning faculty member. Similarly, the number of administrators at many institutions blossomed in the past twenty years, all bringing with them more good ideas for nurturing our students. All these ideas pile together, seemingly begetting ideas of their own to the point of erupting into a panoply of events and activities which can fill even the most Herculean Day-Timer, leaving little time for reflective thought or trips to the bathroom, let alone research.

Interested in finding out what, exactly, was making us so busy¹, we asked our colleagues to send to us a list of non-teaching, non-scholarship activities that took up their time. We were amazed at what we found; the sheer number of requests on our time alone was daunting. When one considers that many individual items in the boxed item accompanying the article could require many hours each, the demands on time seem even more dramatic.

The listed items were culled from all the responses that we received. Although based on the Carleton survey, it seems to reflect the general situation at many PUIs. Items that pertain to all terms of our academic year are presented first. Next is a list of demands that occur in particular terms (Carleton College operates on a trimester system), then by a list of items that come up irregularly.

As we examined this list with an eye toward paring it back and recapturing time for research, it seemed that none of the items were frivolous or a "waste" of time. The implication here is that if we pare back, we will necessarily have to drop or cut back on something valuable.

A previous survey conducted by Carleton's Faculty Affairs Committee indicated that female faculty members reported greater pressures on their time than male faculty members. In follow-up conversations, we found that there may be some expectations of faculty members (held by both students and faculty members) that differ by gender. For example, women faculty members may be seen as more nurturing and willing to take time to discuss personal issues. Men may be perceived by students as more career-oriented and hence less interruptible. Moreover, it may seem more "natural" for women to plan social events and tend to departmental "housekeeping."

We brainstormed both small ideas (those requiring neither major policy change nor substantial amounts of money) and big ideas (those requiring major policy changes or substantial amounts of money).

Here are some examples of small changes. We could inform ourselves about what we actually do with our time, perhaps by conducting diary studies with a randomly selected group of faculty members. This information could then be used with some outside time management experts to do workshops for the faculty. We could also educate students as to how our scholarship contributes to their education and what student expectations of faculty members should be in terms of time, support, and informal counseling. Standing united to make a strong statement on the importance of scholarship, faculty members could create coordinated door signs that say "Don't Interrupt — Research in Progress."

¹ A 1995-96 survey by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) of academic institutions including Carleton indicated that Carleton faculty felt much of their time was being taken up by "other administrative duties," even relative to faculty at four comparable liberal arts institutions. We wanted to know what Carleton faculty included in this category, so we asked them.

Cutting down on some of the bureaucracy, we could make small changes to academic advising by decreasing the number of signatures needed and putting more things on the web. We could move the drop deadline earlier in the term. In this way, failing students (who it's clear by the midterm are not going to pass a course) do not take up many hours of a faculty member's time in an ill-fated attempt to pass, only to drop on the last day of classes.

Finally, we could give teaching credit, appropriately prorated, for independent studies and for teaching extras, such as working with students on the writing requirement or heading up a concentration.

As examples of big ideas, we could establish a term-in-residence program in which a faculty member was entitled on a regular basis to a "term in residence." During such a term, she or he would remain on campus, remain on committees, continue with all non-teaching responsibilities, but would not teach (or, conversely, would teach but would do no other non-teaching activities). During a term-in-residence, full participation in the community would be expected, but the faculty member would have time to think, reflect, plan, etc.

As a way of providing assistance to a faculty member doing research, we could establish a "Fifth-Year Intern Program" by hiring some recent alums to assist individual or small groups of faculty members on a focused purpose. This could involve running a faculty member's research laboratory or supervising a faculty member's research program for a year. Another way would be to give faculty members assistance on both professional and personal matters by hiring a staff person to work with faculty on professional development and personal planning. The assistance provided could include activities such as grant writing, gathering information on day care options, and helping to educate faculty members about retirement planning.

We could restructure the advising system and have first- and second-year advising (majors are not declared until the end of

a student's second year at Carleton) done by class deans or trained students or a small number of interested faculty members (in exchange for a course release). Perhaps committee and ad hoc assignments could be restructured by figuring out a better way of parceling out equitably, across all faculty members the tasks that they are called upon to do. We could make attendance at parent receptions a committee assignment, and have a group of faculty who like social events receive service "credit" for attending these. Departments should take a fresh, hard look at who does what over the course of a year, making certain that a disproportionate share of "housekeeping" tasks are not falling on the shoulders of women, junior, or minority faculty members.

A final suggestion would be to allow faculty members to offer "directed research" or "directed reading" courses once every four years. Such courses would be centered on a faculty member's own research program and students would serve as apprentices. Faculty members who conduct summer research with students could be offered the option of counting this experience as a "directed research" course.

The list of draws on a faculty member's time and the smattering of our ideas we have suggested are not meant to be complete (our discussions and brainstorming are still continuing); nor are they meant to accurately represent a normal school year at all schools. They are merely something for faculty members at PUIs to reflect upon, and, time permitting, to use as a starting point for discussion about how they might find more time in their schedules for research and other things they value most.

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Draws on Faculty Time Outside of Teaching and Scholarship

Throughout the Year

1. Participate in standing committee meetings (some committees meet weekly, including most elected committees; others once or twice a month; a few once or twice a term).
2. Attend and present at faculty meetings (once or twice a month).
3. Attend and prepare for department meetings (usually once a week).
4. Attend program and concentration meetings.
5. Organize and attend departmental or program colloquia, tables, lunches (once or twice a week).
6. Advise recent alumni on career decisions.
7. Mentor students on personal issues and decisions.
8. Attend and make presentations at workshops designed to enhance our teaching and keep us active learners.

9. Participate in ad-hoc task forces.
10. Be a member of internal review committees for departments under review.
11. Train, supervise, and evaluate student workers.
12. Supervise independent studies.
- 13. Perform academic advising.
14. Create, distribute, collect, and evaluate midterm and final course evaluations.
15. Host departmental visitors.
16. Attend student recitals, competitions, social and sporting events.
17. Organize and attend departmental social events (bowling night, picnics, potlucks, all-night readings, camp-outs, pumpkin-carving, cookie-baking, movie nights).
18. Discuss departmental curriculum in committees.
19. Discuss textbook selection for multiple-section courses.
20. Perform important departmental chores (run pedagogy seminars, write newsletters, archive, organize bulletin boards, be the contact for career and graduate school information, act as liaison to library, computer center etc.).
21. Organize and/or attend lunches, receptions, holiday parties, and campus traditions.
22. Fill out surveys from on-campus committees and administrators and from professional organizations.

Fall Term

23. Attend and/or present at faculty retreat.
24. Attend receptions for parents of new students.
25. Administer and evaluate placement exams.
26. Attend academic advising workshop.
27. Attend academic fair or other New Student Week activities.
28. March in regalia at the opening convocation.
29. Prepare departmental budget request for following year.
30. Write letters of recommendation for graduate or professional schools and for special fellowships (Rhodes, Fulbright, Watson, etc.).
31. Prepare for hiring (write the ad, start putting out feelers, make schedule).
32. Visit classes, review dossiers of tenure candidates.

December "Break"

33. Make tenure decisions.
34. Award grants.
35. Participate in faculty workshops.

Winter Term

36. Prepare department teaching schedule for following year.
37. Write letters of recommendation for summer internships.
38. Participate in hiring (interviews, departmental discussions, entertaining each candidate from the time he/she arrives at the airport until he/she leaves 24-48 hours later).
39. Visit classes, review dossiers of colleagues under review.

Spring Term

40. Prepare department computer request for following year.
41. Write letters of recommendation for on-campus jobs (e.g., resident assistant) or off-campus study programs.
42. Host departmental interest meetings.

Draws on Faculty Time Outside of Teaching and Scholarship (continued)

43. Attend dinners with accepted students, parents' weekend receptions, and lunch with high school counselors.
44. Finish senior integrative exercise or senior projects: prepare and grade exams, help students decipher research papers, help students prepare for oral presentations.
45. Organize and attend departmental picnics and attend departmental receptions for graduating seniors and families.
46. Participate in Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi elections, initiations, and banquet.
47. March in regalia to Honors Convocation and Commencement.
48. Participate in reunion receptions.

Summer

49. Teach in or administer summer programs (like the Carleton Summer Teaching Institute, Summer Writing Program, Summer Math Program for Women, Elderhostel, etc.).
50. Advise research students (especially in sciences) for 10 weeks.
51. Occasional Requests Throughout the School Year.
52. Participate in senior faculty development program (every 10 years post tenure).
53. Give talks or presentations to Board of Trustees, Elder Collegium, Phi Beta Kappa.
54. Participate in panel discussions for faculty or students or alumni.
55. Participate or organize groups of students or faculty (e.g., Women in Science, Women in Social Science, Applying to Off-Campus Programs, Writing Grants, Writing Textbooks).
56. Meet with alumni groups on or off campus.
57. Give colloquia at other institutions.
58. Plan special campus events (convocations, special celebrations, Black History month, Accessibility Awareness Week).
59. Help plan and write institutional grants.
60. Recruit students.
61. Talk with concerned parents.
62. Host regional disciplinary conferences.
63. Serve as reviewer of books, journal articles, grant proposals.
64. Serve on a grants panel (e.g., NSF, NIH).
65. Serve as an external reviewer of a department or program at another institution.
66. Serve as an external reviewer of tenure candidates at other institutions.
67. Serve as officer in regional or national organizations.
68. Plan for new space, remodeled space; decorate or redecorate.



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