

Diversity and Inclusion Lunch, 2/22/2011

Claudia LaBollita-James: Work-Life Balance

What is work life balance?

- No single definition
- 7,590,000 hits on Google search
- Work-life balance translates to satisfaction with one's entire life -- professional and personal -- and it can be reached even while working long hours. (Emily Berry, amednews staff. *Posted Jan. 4, 2010*)
- Work life balance is personal – you need to figure out what works for you
- Ongoing process – need to adjust work and life as needs change
- 4 quadrants of work life are work, family, friends, and self
- Assess what you need and what will make you feel satisfied in your whole life; reassess on regular basis

MIT Resources for administrative, support, and research staff

- Center for Work, Family and Personal Life
- A Guide to Job Flexibility at MIT
- Backup Childcare and Adultcare referral program
- Community Wellness at MIT Medical
- MIT Federal Credit Union
- Personal Assistance Program (counseling and referrals)
- Work-Life Resources 24/7
- Human Resources

Things you can do to help you on path to work life balance

- Consider what you want out of your work and personal life
- Set realistic goals & work towards them
- Communicate with colleagues and supervisors
- Be proactive
- Figure out what work life balance means to you
- Set up end of day routine – go over what was done each and what needs to be done the next day
- Plan stress reducing activities and put them in your schedule
 - “Recharge batteries”
 - De-stress
 - Relax
- Explore flexible working hours
- Set priorities – work and personal
- Track how you spend your time
- Schedule one thing you look forward to each day
- Put private time in your schedule
- Assess personal habits and general lifestyle – sleep, nutrition, exercise
- Ask for support
- Set boundaries
- Find a mentor (career development, time management, setting priorities)
- Be focused and clear on priorities
- Stop doing activities that drain you of energy and your time
- Set realistic goals and deadlines
- Celebrate success; don't dwell on failures; life is a process
- Learn to say no

Prof. Pablo Jarillo-Herrero: Work – Life Balance

Considerations to achieve better work-life balance for faculty (especially junior faculty):

Becoming more effective (so that you have more time for family and other activities):

- Learn from colleagues (grant writing, seek advise for various faculty matters, get official and unofficial mentors)
- Make use of support staff (so that you can concentrate on those tasks only you can do)
- Learn to delegate (idem. Also, your students and postdocs are probably happy to help with grant preparation, slides for talks, reports: it makes them feel responsible for their projects too)
- Take training management course and make use of department resources (<http://web.mit.edu/physics/policies/index.html>)
- Learn to limit time dedicated to teaching preparation (max half of work load)
- Learn to say no to grant/paper reviewing petitions
- Try to shift focus from "urgent" to "important"

Things that help reduce stress (and that I'm working on):

- Do some exercise (at least a couple times a week)
- Keep inbox almost empty (helps a lot)
- Read something (book/magazine) non-work related before going to bed
- Sleep at least 7.5 hrs on average (better everyday)
- Eat healthy (but without being too rigid!)
- Take it (occasionally) easier (especially after success!)

Family matters:

- Reserve time for partner and kids daily
- Go out for dinner/brunch once a week (even if you have babies!)
- Limit travel, work related dinner/appointments (or shorten them)
- Take family to conferences (no substitute for vacation!)
- Do some work at home instead of going to office (e.g. on weekends)

Things Department and MIT can help:

- Provide more (hours) support staff
- Childcare (benefits, more spaces)
- Job assistance for partners
- Include benefits as part of start-up package (e.g. relocation training or partial support for partner)
- Limit committee work for junior faculty
- Encourage good mentoring
- Wiki on "how to get started" or "10 Things all junior faculty should know?"