

# Retreating in mid-career: Addressing the challenges faced by the unhappiest faculty in the academe

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# Challenges faced by mid-career faculty



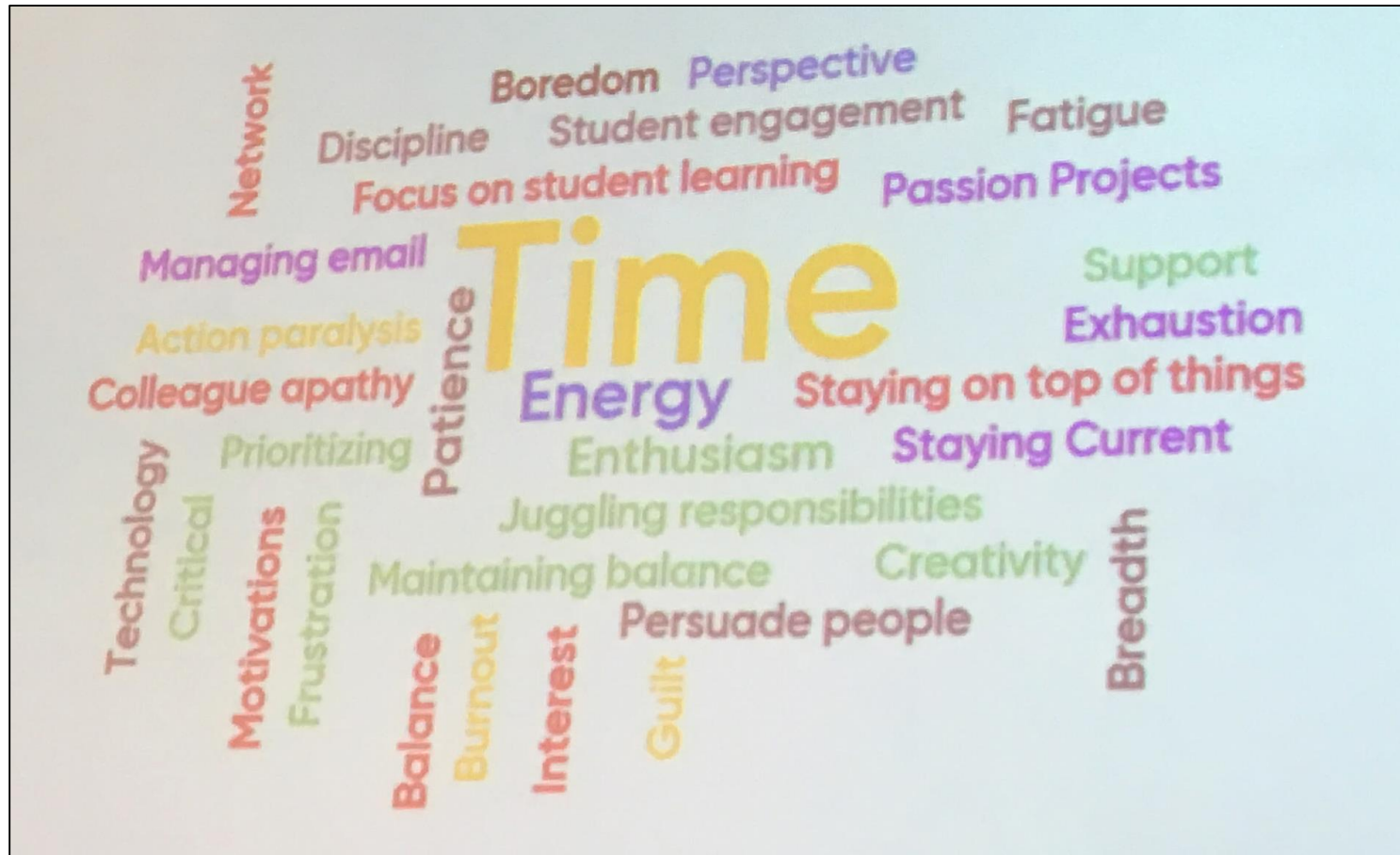


# What are your two biggest challenges



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# Their challenges



# FACULTY WORK EFFORT, PRODUCTIVITY, AND DISSATISFACTION BY LIFE STAGE

	<i>Early Life (39 &amp; below)</i>		<i>Early Midlife (40–49)</i>		<i>Late Midlife (50–59)</i>		<i>Late Life (60 &amp; above)</i>	
<b>Variable 1: Work Effort (n = 10,315)</b>								
<i>Hours per Week</i>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Paid activities at institution	48.02	13.63	47.15	12.71	46.94	12.78	44.93	13.60
Paid activities outside institution	2.03	5.65	2.51	5.81	2.73	6.36	2.12	5.74
Unpaid activities outside institution	1.07	2.65	1.67	3.20	1.94	3.65	1.80	3.61
<i>Percentage of Time Spent</i>								
Teaching	49.14	29.27	48.44	28.28	50.57	28.66	53.45	29.34
Administration	11.21	16.68	15.20	19.94	18.27	24.06	16.13	23.25
Research	22.83	25.82	19.61	22.27	16.53	19.75	16.32	20.28
Consulting	3.44	10.74	3.37	9.28	3.83	10.27	3.77	9.86
Professional development	4.37	7.71	4.38	7.57	4.08	6.67	3.95	6.71
Service	9.02	18.38	9.00	16.43	6.74	12.68	6.39	13.53



# FACULTY WORK EFFORT, PRODUCTIVITY, AND DISSATISFACTION BY LIFE STAGE

	<i>Early Life (39 &amp; below)</i>	<i>Early Midlife (40–49)</i>	<i>Late Midlife (50–59)</i>	<i>Late Life (60 &amp; above)</i>
<b>Variable 2: Productivity (percentage who produced in the past two years; n = 10,315)</b>				
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Articles	61.0	62.4	59.2	52.6
Books & Chapters	20.2	28.0	31.6	32.5
Presentations	77.5	80.2	77.8	69.5
Creative Work	37.1	42.0	41.0	38.6
<b>Variable 3: Dissatisfaction (% somewhat or very) (n = 10,315)</b>				
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Time available to advise students	23.0	26.9	22.5	15.2
Time available to keep current in field	50.3	54.0	51.0	36.0
Workload	35.2	40.0	36.1	22.5
Job overall	18.5	20.2	16.8	10.1



# Challenges: mid-career faculty

**Purpose/  
motivation**

**Workload  
changes**

**Time**

**Power &  
politics**

**Burnout**

**Relating to  
today's  
students**



# Challenge 1

Purpose/  
motivation

- Distant from/lacking enthusiasm for original training/research/courses and question if they can continue
  - » Austin (2010); Baldwin et al. (2008)
- Overwhelmed, distressed, career confusion, lack of direction ... what next?
  - » Baker-Fletcher et al. (2005); Rockquemore (2011); Strage, Nelson & Meyers (2008)





# Challenge 2

Workload  
changes

- Higher expectations post-tenure
- Increased responsibility in service, leadership & administration
- Increased demand – presentations, research, grants ... fatigue
  - » Baldwin et al. (2008)
- Feeling neglected and taken for granted
  - » Baldwin et al. (2008); Trower (2011)



# Challenge 3

Time

**“I am forced to choose a lot and I sacrifice a lot all the time. My family gets the short stick.”**

Baldwin et al. (2008)



# Challenge 4

## Power & politics

- Navigating through the politics and expectations of varying levels
- Should be freedom – but, having a voice can have consequences
- Leadership changes (Heads, Deans, Presidents, etc.) can impact everyone within the hierarchy

» Petter et al. (2018)



# Challenge 5

## Burnout

- Burnout is a gradual process -3 pillars
  - » Maslach & Jackson (1981); Tuma (2017)
- Faculty often ignore feelings of emotional and physical exhaustion to continue to meet deadlines and professional demands
  - » Weimer (2012)
- Faculty struggle to find balance between teaching, scholarship, and health
  - » Baker-Fletcher et al. (2005)





# Challenge 6

Relating to  
today's  
students

- Growing gap between students' and our age can make relating a challenge
  - Heightened by ever-changing tech
    - » Gappa et al. (2007); Sorcinelli & Austin (2006)
- Diverse student body – different learning styles
- Email and communication – need to be available all the time
  - » Shih & Sorcinelli (2007); Petter et al. (2018)



# Take-home/summary

- You are definitely not alone!
- There are many challenges – understanding them is the first step
- Stay positive – strategies coming next!

