

Time management

Penny Beuning

Time management

- If you wait until the last minute, it only takes a minute.
 - SS
- Everything takes π times as long as you think it will.
 - MW
- Work (especially teaching) is a gas; it expands to fill the space available.

What are your goals?

- Career: teaching, research, service
- Personal: family, financial, self
 - Others?

Clearest goals
will get most of
your time
(even if you
don't realize it)

J. Morgenstern "Time
Management from the
Inside Out"

Priorities

- Avoid public humiliation
 - Seminars, teaching, presentations
 - Research
 - Grants, manuscripts, students
 - Visibility
 - Reviews, seminars, conferences
 - Internal visibility
 - Student/university/dept committees
- *note, adjust order to fit your circumstances

Priorities

- I say yes to...
 - Most scientific opportunities
 - Non-scientific opportunities that lead to increased visibility
 - Causes I care about
- I say no to...
 - Anything else I can reasonably say no to
- Learn to say no!
 - Can you suggest an alternative w/o throwing someone under the bus? Check with that person first!

“The Black Academic’s Guide to Winning Tenure—without losing your soul”

Service

- Important, but...
- It will find you
- Decide how you want to make your mark and focus on those things
- National, and a little local, visible service is probably most useful to you

Teaching

- Important
- The first time through a class will probably be time consuming and difficult
- Start the term “tough” to minimize special requests
- Take good notes throughout the term (and year!) about what works and what to change
- Use classes to recruit research students (and to do research!)
- Limit prep time?
 - At least, don't reinvent the wheel too much

Research

- Invest time in quality training for the first few students—set the culture early
- Project or idea baskets/boxes/notebooks
- One binder per student (project) for data, notes, ideas
- Don't reinvent the wheel

Research: Staying organized

- Time is your limiting reagent
- Electronic calendar for group (and PI)
- Electronic task manager
- Lab listserv, wiki
- Quartzly, google docs
- “Clear your desk”
- Spreadsheets
 - Mind-mapping, to-do lists

	A	B	C	D
1	Task	subtask	deadline	
2		subtask	contact person	
3		subtask	subsubtask	
4			subsubtask	
5	Task	subtask	materials needed	
6		subtask	deadline	

Spreadsheets for Projects and People

Projects

Project	Personnel	Progress	To do	Misc	Manuscript
Active site 1	Grad student (postdoc), undergrad	C1A, D2A, E3A, F4A decreased activity	Kinetics, binding	Then mutagenesis	
Active site 2	Grad student	Survival, mut assays completed			In press
Dynamics	Grad student		Need to re-make constructs		

People

Grad Student 1	Co-workers	Progress	To do	Misc/Long-term	Manuscript
Active site 1	postdoc, undergrad	C1A, D2A, E3A, F4A decreased activity	Kinetics, binding, two more constructs	Then mutagenesis	
Active site 3	Undergrad, collaborator	Substrate specificity of G5A, H6A, I7A			In press
DNA		DNA structures designed	Need to re-make constructs		

Hypothetical examples

Current Manuscripts Spreadsheet

Current Manuscripts

#	Project	Personnel	Outline	To do/Waiting on	Manuscript Status
65	Protein active site	Grad student, undergrad	Loop impt for activity		Submitted 12/19/2016 Reviews received 2/1/2017 In press 7/5/2016
66	Protein dynamics	Grad student, collaborator	Single Cys	Backup journals X, Y, Z	Submitted 5/31/2017 Reviews received 6/20/2017 Revision submitted 7/25/2017
67	Protein activity	Grad student, collaborators	Kinetics, structures, thermodynamics	Backup journals A, B, C	Submit by 9/1/2017
68	Protein active site	Undergrad, Grad student, collaborator	ranking vs activity	Fold in with theory paper Target journal X Backup journals A, B, C	
69	Protein-protein interactions	Grad students	Localization	Activity, Grad student is writing	
70	Dimers	Grad student, undergrad	Distribution, kinetics	Spectroscopy; UG writing	
71	DNA damage responses	Grad student, MS students, undergrads	Genetic profiling, UG part written	Replicate of blots; Grad student is writing	

Hypothetical example

Life?

- What is most important to you?
- Can you keep it that way?

- Try not to sacrifice sleep, diet, and exercise

- Simplify your life
 - Clothing, travel (too many choices increase stress)
 - Delegate, outsource, automate
 - Travel organization/apps/checklist

You can't prepare for everything...



Are you effectively managing your time?

- Don't mistake activity for achievement.
 - John Wooden
- Use time-logging/time-tracking software
 - A basic spreadsheet works fine
 - Figure out how long things actually take!
- Prepare for your week, Sunday night prep time, schedule your work
- Practice productive procrastination

Managing multiple demands

- Keep track—write down everything you have to do/are doing
 - But avoid the 15-page to-do list
- Decision-making process
 - Delete, delay, diminish, delegate
 - Does it have to be done? Now? In this way? By me?
 - Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good enough.
- When are you going to get everything done?

Distinguish between:

	Not Important	Important
Not Urgent		
Urgent		

From “Making the Right Moves” HHMI and BWF

Where do these things fit? How do you prioritize them?

Poster for meeting in two weeks
Edit manuscript
Update web page
Reschedule home produce delivery
Book rental car for trip in Sept
Email class that starts in Sept
Watch *Game of Thrones*
Finish making list of goals
Edit research proposal for job application

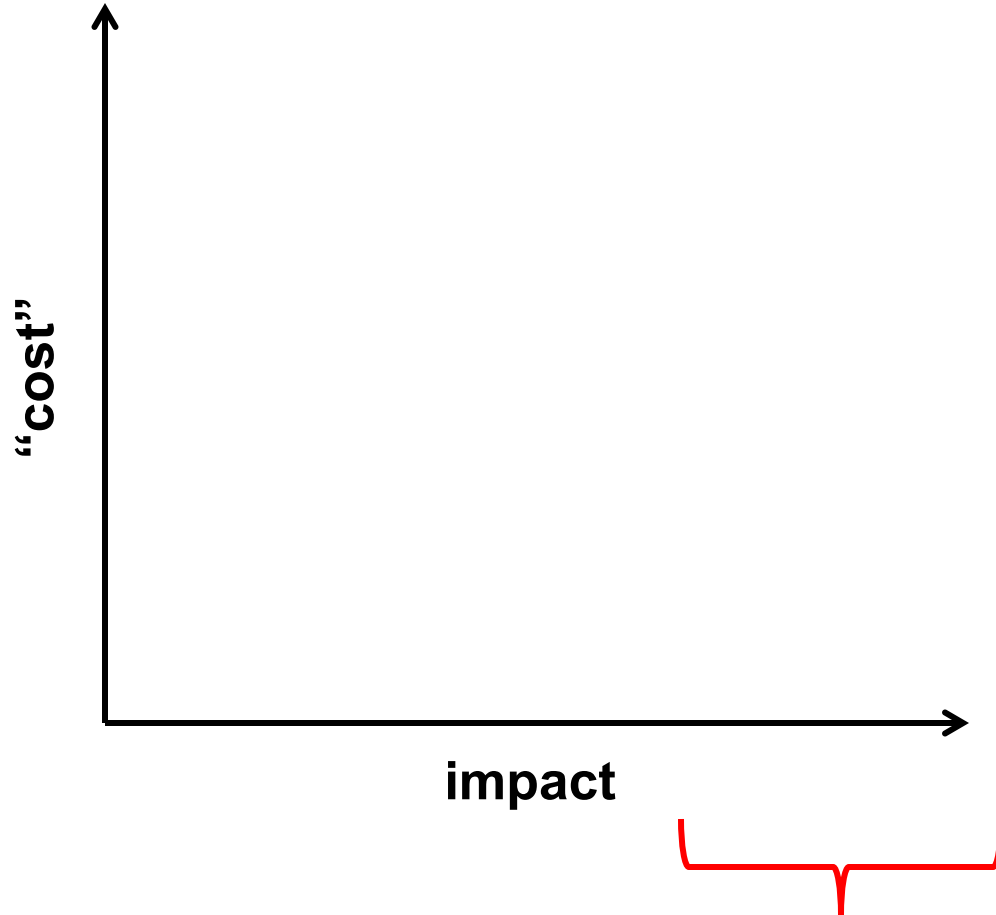
	Not Important	Important
Not Urgent		
Urgent		

From "Making the Right Moves" HHMI and BWF

Find quality time

- “Stack” your meetings/commitments
- Turn off alerts, set times to answer email rather than in real time
- Manage the “tyranny of tiny tasks” (Timothy Wu)
 - (automate, outsource)
- Do you always need to answer your phone? (*No!*)
- Open-door policy? Always available?
- Take a writing/thinking retreat and/or a research group “retreat”

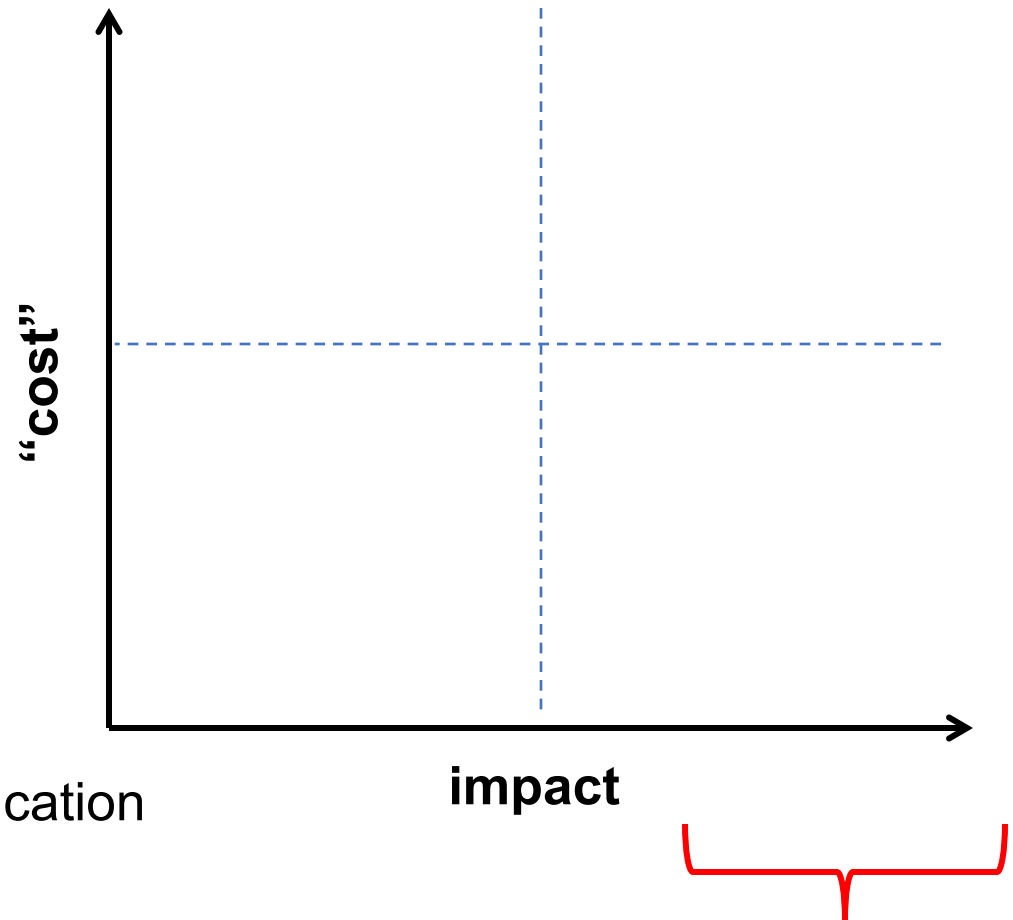
Make your time count



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Get help?

- Professional services
 - Coach, project manager
 - Organizer
 - Therapist/social worker/counselor
- Mentors, colleagues
 - Everyone here today!
- Don't be the person who goes to your advisor or chair with every trivial problem

Resources

- “Getting Things Done” David Allen
 - Labeler
- “How to Write A Lot”
- Get-It-Done Guy
 - Sticky index cards

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