Helping Faculty with Work-Life **Boundaries:** *Mentorship, work-life myth, and the future of academia*

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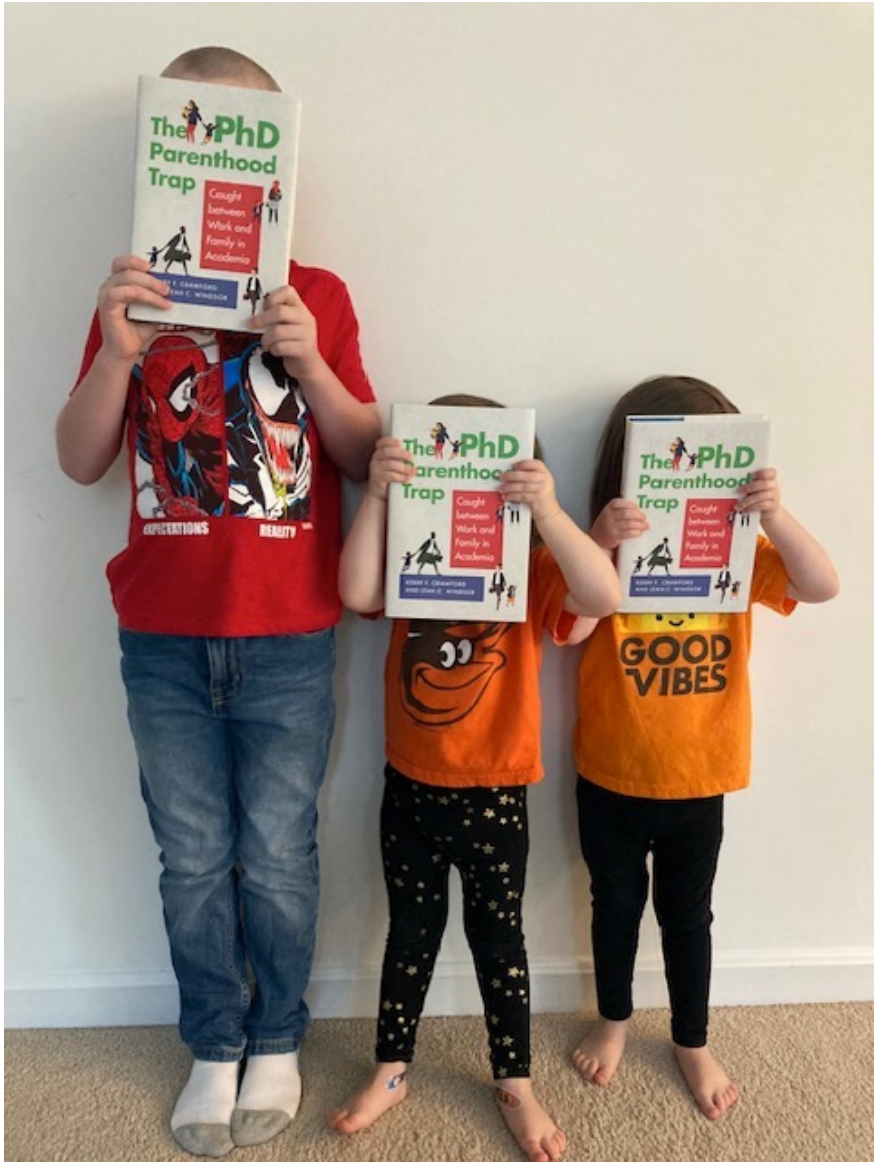
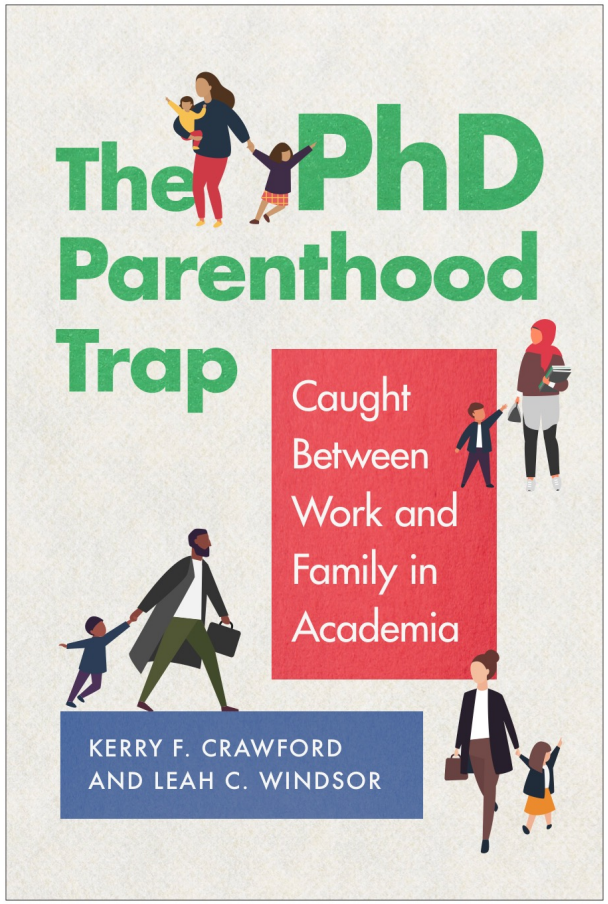


The PhD Parenthood Trap

Lower-order processes lead to higher-order outcome disparities that disadvantage women+ and other under-represented groups.

The day-to-day challenges and wins affect overall progress and success.

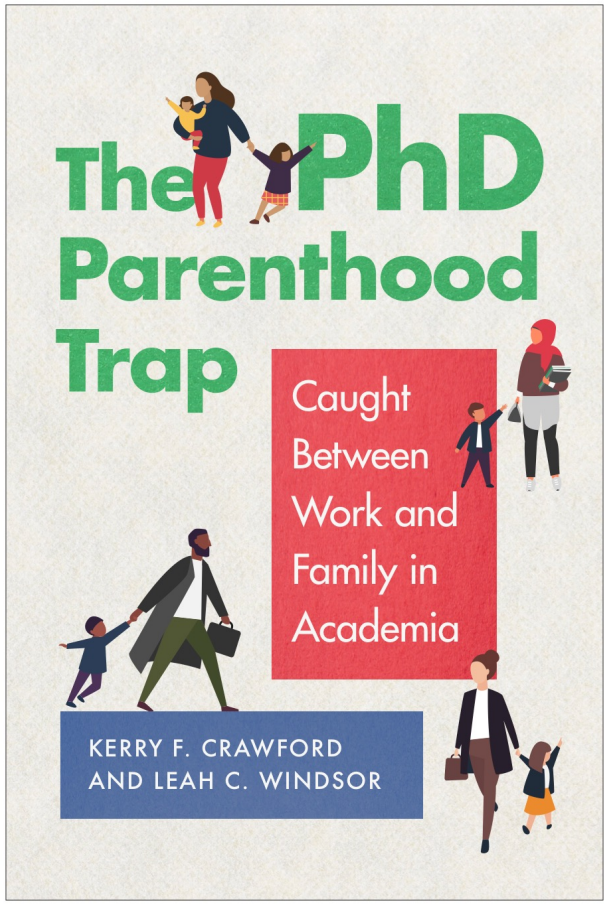


The PhD Parenthood Trap

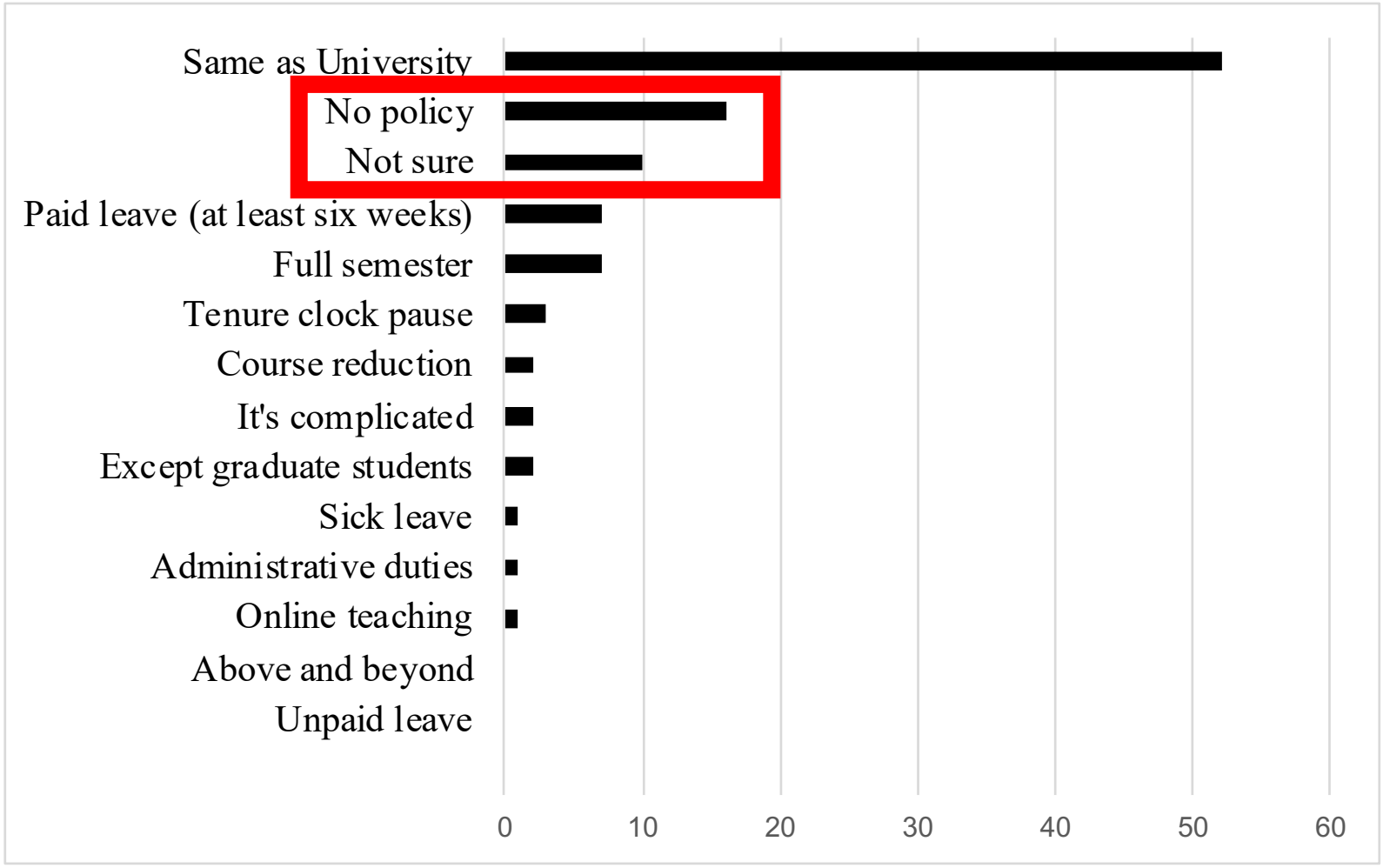
Family leave:

A snapshot measurement of work-life balance on campus.

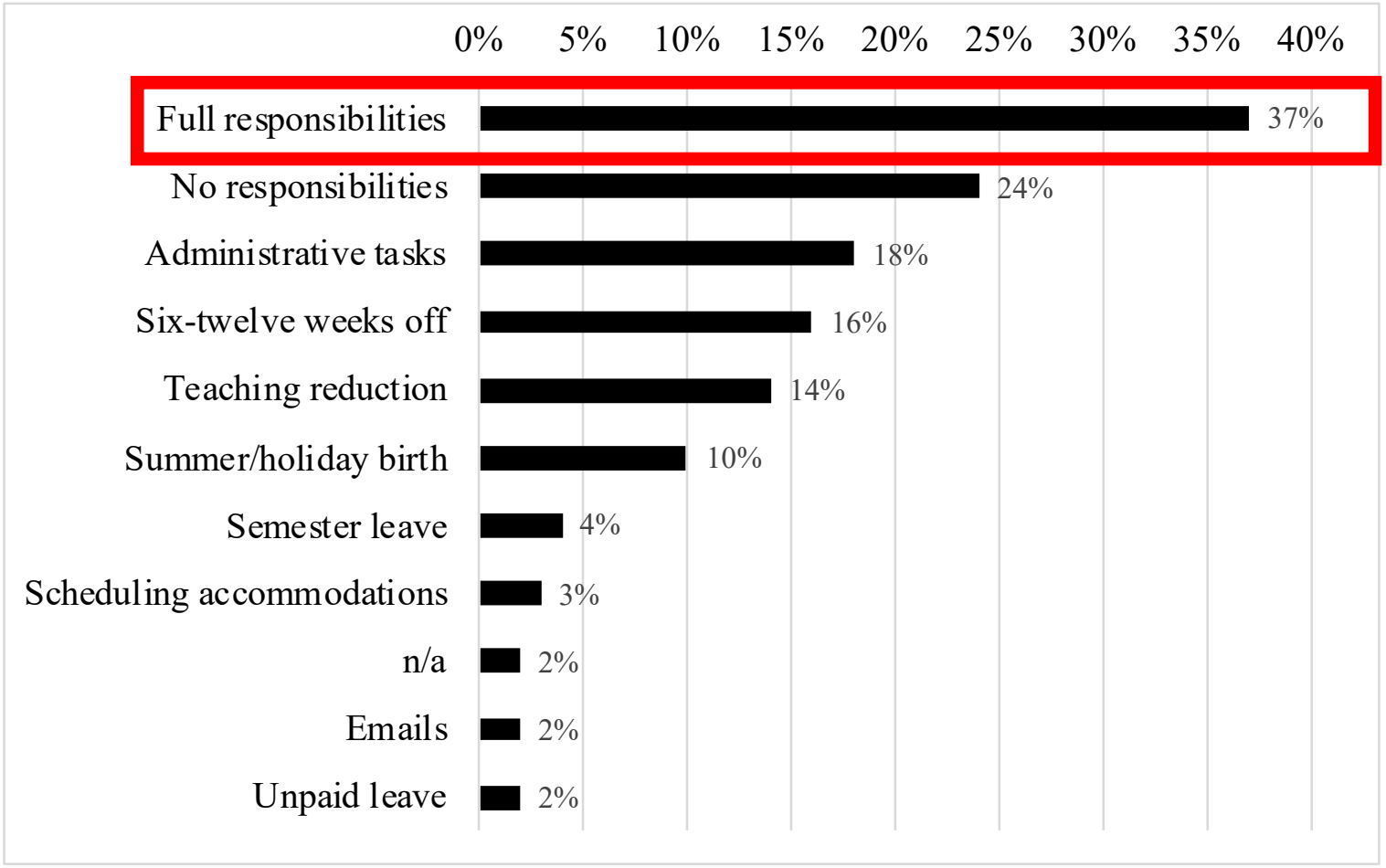
(But work-life considerations are broad, diverse, and nuanced.)



What is your department's family leave policy?



What were your professional responsibilities after birth, adoption, or family status change?



Moving forward and making it work

Clearly, universities need to do better, for everyone.

Book #2! *Chutes and Ladders*

- Academia is NOT a "leaky pipeline"
  - Talented scholars don't just "leak" out of academia
  - They fall down the chutes as a result of consequential life events
- It is a game of Chutes and Ladders
  - Mentors and supportive academic leaders extend the ladders and show where the chutes are.

Moving forward and making it work

Practical considerations to help faculty manage work-life boundaries:

Moving forward and making it work

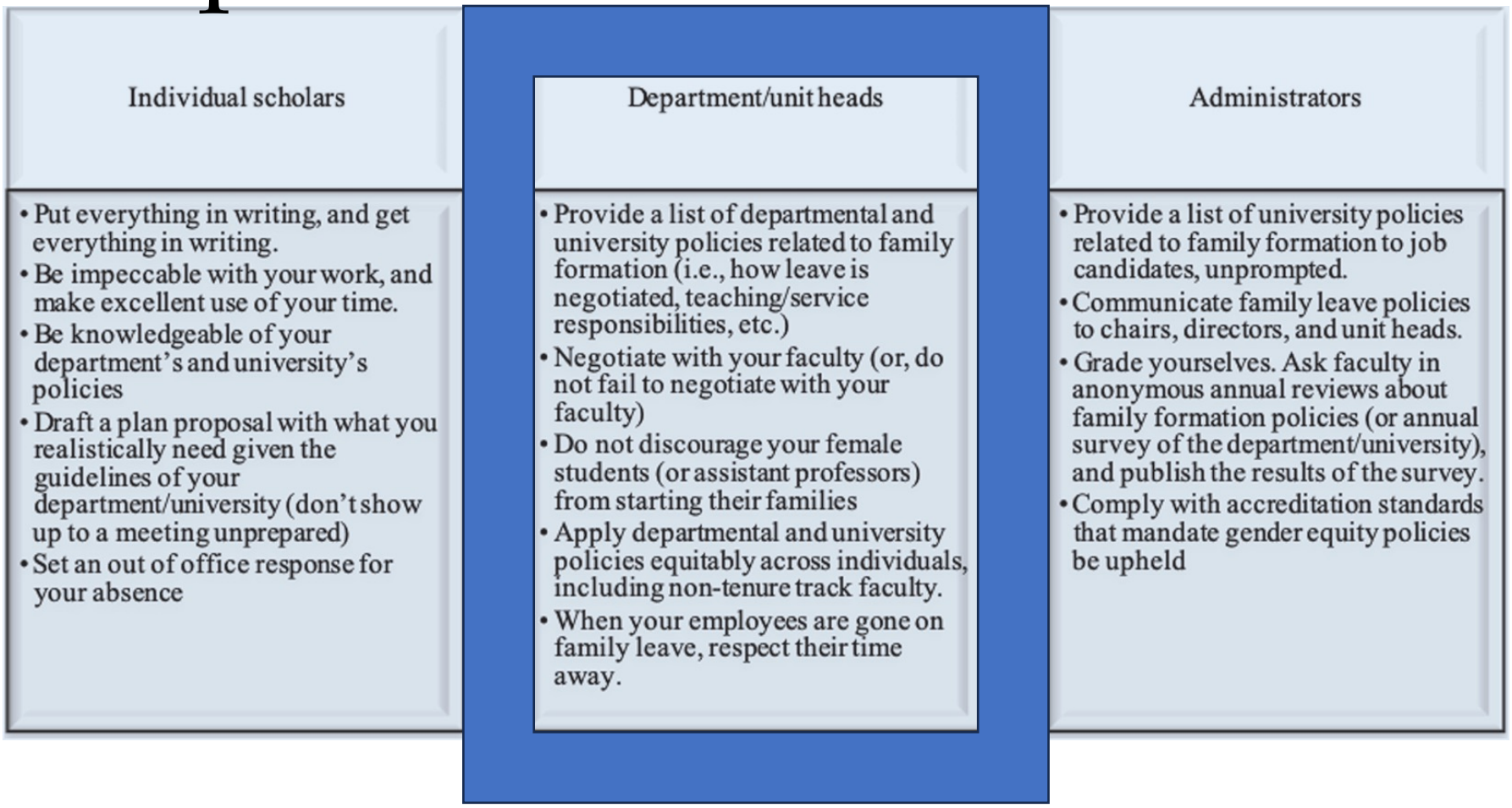
Practical considerations to help faculty manage work-life boundaries:

Starting point: You can't be what you can't see.

General advice from survey respondents: Voices from the trenches

Self-care	Partnership	Multitasking	The Profession	Parenting
• Don't expect to be 100% in all all roles all the time. • You can't do everything well - learn to accept doing some things mediocre. • While your children are young, do what you can just to survive. • Don't work nights or weekends unless you have to. • Focus on what you will think is important to have achieved when you're 90. • Be kind to yourself and forgiving.	• Pick the right partner. • Communicate with partner to make sure both of your needs are being met. • If both people aim to do 80% it might end up fair. Babysitting is cheaper than divorce.	• There is no such thing as a balance; there is life-work management. • Outsource what doesn't matter (cleaning, cooking if possible, running errands) and preserve family time.	• Dedicate non-teaching days to writing or service and hold those closely. • Treat academia like a 9-5 job and don't shortchange your family. • Chip away at projects - whether it's a home or work project. If you have 15 minutes, unload something, put something away, tidy something - or code something, read something, respond to short emails.	• Hang in there. The early years are the toughest and things get better as time goes on. • Be a good enough parent. • The fact that there's no right time and no right way also implies that there's no particularly wrong time or wrong way. • Everyone is desperate. You are not alone. • There's no good time to have a baby. • There is no such thing as work-life balance.

General advice from survey respondents



Advice for Negotiating, from Windsor and Crawford 2019, *PS*

Work-life **boundaries** to model

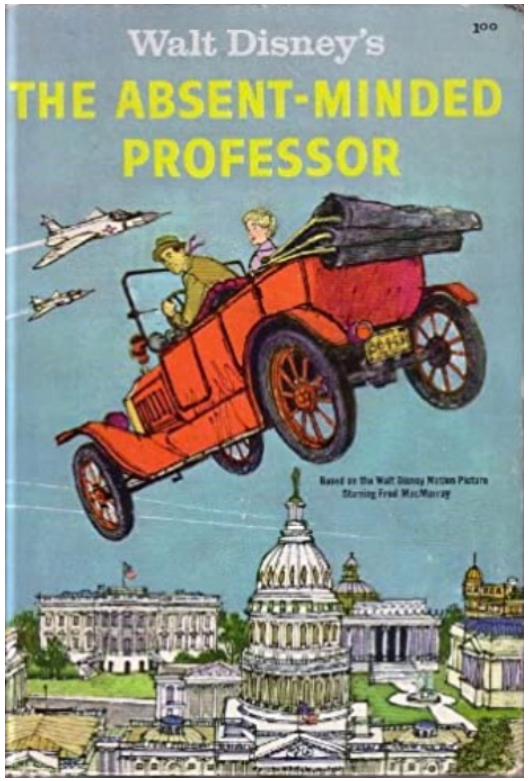
- If you are a parent or caregiver, *cut yourself some slack*.
- It is *professional* to take time to care for your loved ones and yourself.
- Well-functioning systems take this into consideration and accommodate parents and caregivers.
- In the long run, women+ with children outproduce everyone because they have to learn to be productive under stressful conditions.
- We have to rewrite the historical model of "all work all the time."
- You are worth it (and so is your family). Your work will be better.
- *Don't feel guilty about having a life outside of campus!*

If you believe it, model it for and broadcast it to your faculty, staff, and students.

We must change workflow and systemic academic cultural norms

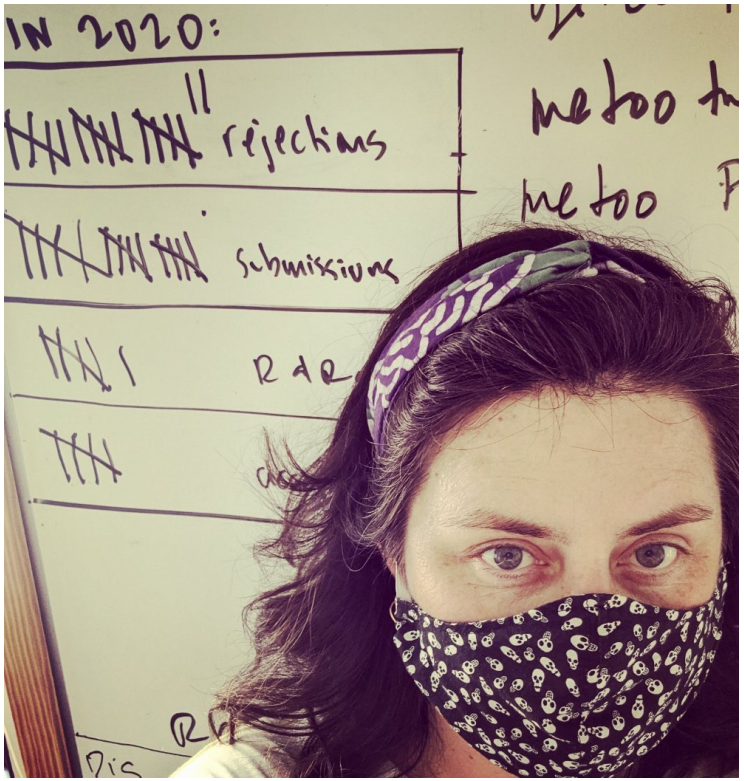
Old Model:

Idiosyncratic, Inefficient



New Model:

Rigorous, Efficient



	A	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1	Paper title	Shorthand	Co-authors	Journal identified	Internal deadline	External deadline	Lebo 8: Idea	Lebo 7: Project mapped	Lebo 6: Outlined, data in hand	Lebo 5: Paper draft	Lebo 4: Conference presentation	For conference	Lebo 3: Under review	Rejected	Lebo 2: R&R	Lebo 1: Revision under review	Lebo 0: PUBLISHED	Other info

Efficient is the new cool

- Don't let your work sit cold.
- Recalibrate your expectations (what can you reasonably do?).
- Define what your progress looks like (goals, steps, rewards).
- Keep imposter syndrome and FOMO in check.
- Make impeccable use of your time.
- **Chip, don't chunk.**

THE PROFESSION

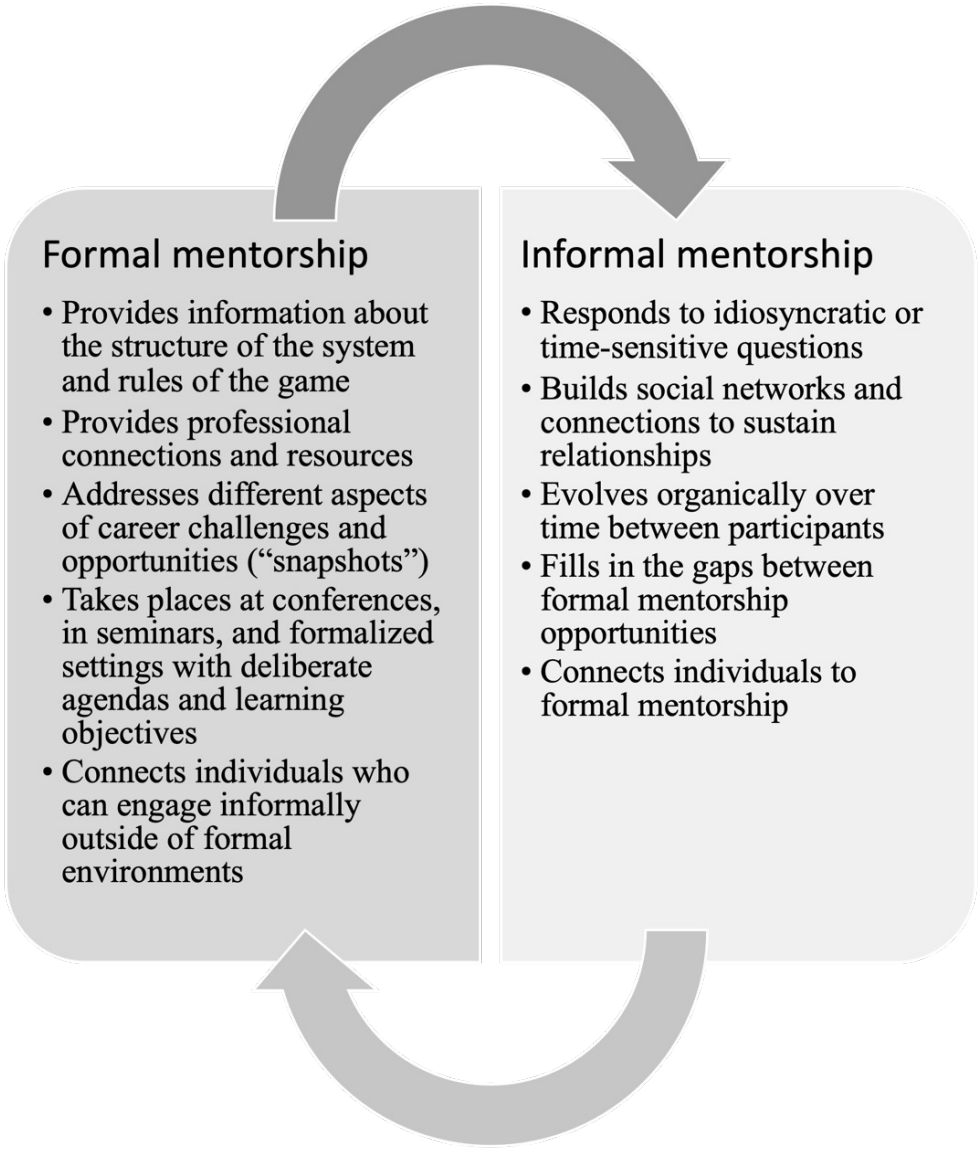
Managing Your Research Pipeline

Matthew J. Lebo, *Stony Brook University*

ABSTRACT A researcher's "pipeline" refers to the progression of papers from the idea stage to the publication stage. Tenure-track faculty and graduate students often are advised that a busy pipeline is the way to tenure. However, beyond the simple encouragement to "work harder," "write more," and "publish more," not much direction is given to junior scholars regarding how they should think about and manage their research pipeline. How does one develop a large number of papers from their first stages to the pages of respected journals? This article discusses the author's system for pipeline management. The system works (1) by separating the difficult exercise of publishing a paper into eight manageable stages; and (2) by organizing a set of papers using these steps according to a practicable timeline.

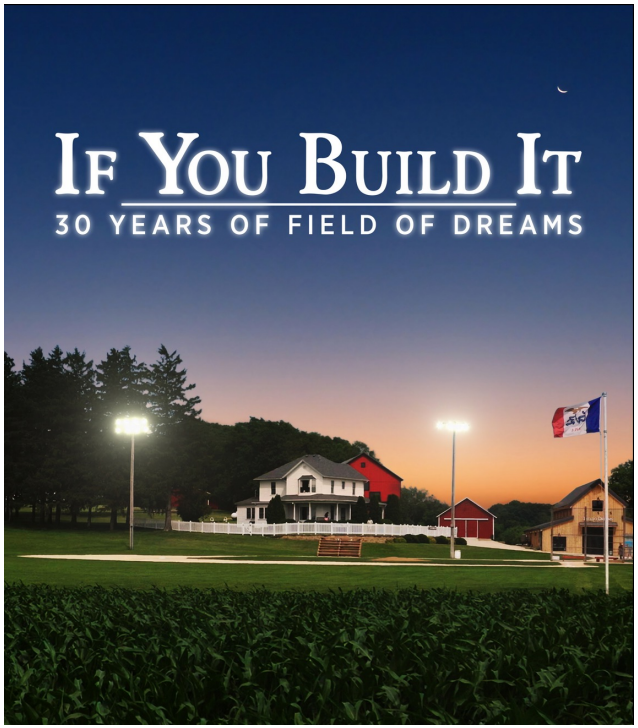
If you believe it, model it for and broadcast it to your faculty, staff, and students.

Mentorship as a lifeline



Starting a mentorship network

- Some groups are initiated by campus administration (i.e., Provost initiative)
- Some groups have grassroots foundations by faculty
- Some groups start in the middle
  - The Women+'s Mentorship Network at The University of Memphis began as a faculty-led initiative that got buy-in from the administration at the earliest stages (including Deans, Provost, and Division of Research and Innovation)

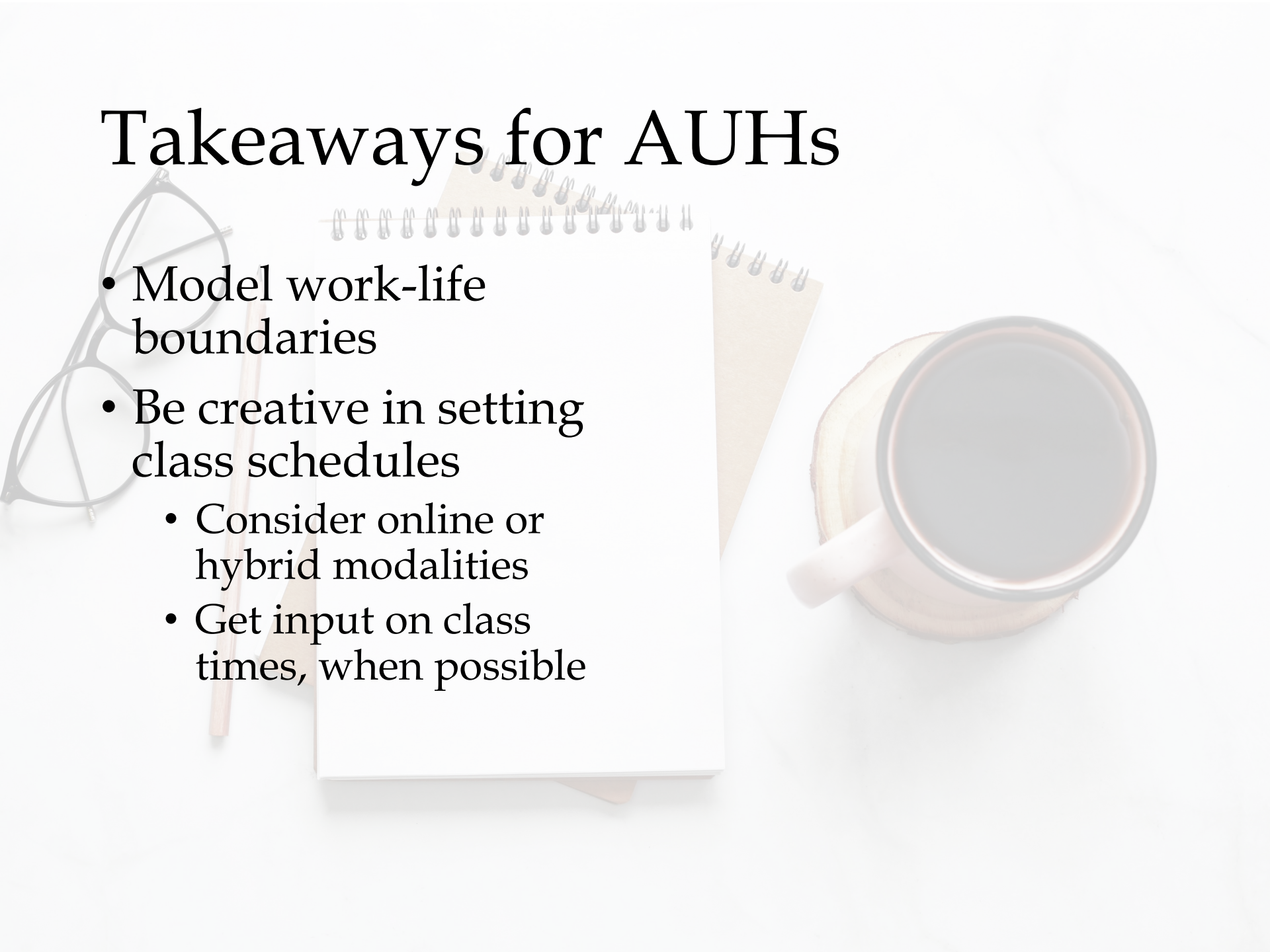


Takeaways for AUHs

- Model work-life boundaries
  - Extend the same care to yourself
  - No after-hours email (unless you schedule send)

Takeaways for AUHs

- Model work-life boundaries
- Be creative in setting class schedules
  - Consider online or hybrid modalities
  - Get input on class times, when possible



Takeaways for AUHs

- Model work-life boundaries
- Be creative in setting class schedules
- Avoid scheduling mandatory meetings or events in the 4-6pm window or on weekends
  - Consider hybrid or virtual options

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- Encourage mentorship networks or events
- Be intentional about equitable service loads (manage the “asks” of historically excluded faculty)

Takeaways for AUHs

And remember:

Urging the importance of "self-care" without the existence of adequate support policies and systems forces micro-level fixes, isolates individuals, and neglects needed changes to the macro-level structure.

Thank you!
Questions?
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What has worked well in your unit?

What unique challenges does your unit facing when seeking to promote work-life boundaries?