Message # 2 QUICK STARTERS

(2/24/98)

Folks:

In response to the previous message containing Professor Alison Bridger’s comments on "establishing your absence," some of you made reference to Professor Robert Boice's, "Quick Starters," those faculty who had excelled at teaching, research, publ ishing, and networking. Boice's full study appears in his book, The New Faculty Member: Supporting and Fostering Professional Development, (Jossey-Bass, 1992). JoAnn Moody, vice president of the New England Board of Higher Education has also written abo ut Boice's quick starters in her "Demystifying the Profession: Helping Junior Faculty Succeed," (New Haven Press, 1997). Below is what Moody says about Boice's quick starters and their aim for balance in personal and professional activities.

What are your views on limited class preparation time?

How do you feel about the emphasis in competency over perfectionism?

I'd be glad to hear your thoughts on these and other matters via Reis@stanford.edu.

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Quick Starters (374 words) [1]

Quick starters aim for balance. New faculty typically have three major tasks to perform: teaching, doing research and writing, and acting "collegial." Most people think collegial means serving with colleagues on departmental and campus communities, a necessary and at times large part of being a "good citizen" and doing campus and departmental service. But collegial, according to Boice, Donald Jarvis, and others, must also mean building positive relationships with colleagues on one's own and other de partments, working up collaborative projects with colleagues next door or continents away, and expanding one's professional support system first begun perhaps in graduate school.

Balancing the functions of collaborative colleague, productive scholar, and effective teacher is extremely difficult, but quick starters work intensely on their coordination and timing. First, they pay close attention to how they organize their workwe ek; they make sure all three functions receive quality investment. No one function, such as research and writing, gets put on the back burner (unless research and writing are not viewed as essential for the professor, department, and / or campus). Quick starters try hard to prevent "negative spillover" of their professional duties into their family and private lives. Protection of their private personal space and commitments is very important. Rather than feeling overwhelmed and desperate, quick start ers try to stay calm and work for balance, much like performing tai chi. Balance is possible when one is striving for competency but probably never possible when one's hidden agenda is perfection. Striving for perfectionism can quickly cause an individ ual to become a frenetic workaholic and lose balance and perspective.

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Quick starters in all disciplines say their real problem is not time management but task management. They learn they must limit the amount of time they spend on class preparation but the ALSO must limit the amount of time they spend on writing. They write in brief, non-fatiguing, daily sessions lasting about an hour, and the hardly ever write in the evenings and on weekends. They also devote about one hour each day to networking - such as phone calls, visits, e-mail - wherein they discuss, with coll eagues near and far, their teaching, their writing and research projects and idea as well as map out plans for future projects with other scholars.

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(1) Moody, Joan, "Visualizing yourself as a successful college teacher, writer, and colleague: pointers for graduate students, and college and university faculty," University of New Haven Press. © JoAnn Moody, 1997. Order by calling (203) 932-712 1 or send e-mail to (mharvey @charger.newhaven.edu).