



SESSION – I

GETTING USED TO YOUR NEW ROLE AS AN ACADEMIC STAFF

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As an Academic Staff:

- You are at a position to introduce Ethiopian students to global perspectives in your discipline!
- College students are still growing; you can influence them.
- Universities are places for your own growth, too:
 - As an academician (allowed to pursue life of the mind)
 - As an entrepreneur (create profitable ideas)
- Your final objective is to be a well-established academician that:
 - Produces knowledge in your field of study (and other related fields)
 - Influences co-workers through academic and administrative leadership positions
 - Influences policies

What is attractive about your job?

- You can share your passion about your favorite topics
- Your colleagues are very interesting people!
- You have flexible hours
- Generally you get paid better and can have additional income

What do you typically do?

- You prepare and conduct **good** lectures
- You design classroom activities, lab activities, and out-door/field experiences
- You prepare tests, assignments, and exams and grade them
- You consult, nurture, and train students to ensure their development in the field
- Attend faculty and committee meetings
- Conduct **relevant** research
- Conduct **worthy** community service
- Develop courses and produce modules and textbooks
- Involve in special task forces to open new departments and faculties
- Get involved in all kinds of projects and decision-making positions
- “Disappear” every once in a while for short trainings or extended periods of study

Who should be your full-time friend?

- The Library – there are unexpectedly interesting resources in the library!
- Your laptop/desktop
- The internet (google scholar, digital libraries, audio-visual resources and documentaries, etc.)
- Program handbooks, departmental publications on academic rules and regulations, university vision and strategic documents, national policy documents in your field of study, annual publications, etc.
- People who are immediately above you (department heads, program coordinators, course chairs, etc.) – **OBEY!**
- YOUR DISCIPLINE and ITS HISTORY– your true friend and potential identity!
- Your parents (immediate care-takers) – Don't get disconnected

Who should be your part-time friend?

- Your friends and neighbors (you are more than your social interactions)
- *Your friend*
- Your inner critic (“conscience” is a different department)
- The media and your favorite entertainments – it is neither cool nor academic to be obsessed about Manchester or Dana Drama!
- Your peers (do not depend on others’ perspectives)

Who should NOT be your friend?

- People who talk negative about their jobs /working environment/
 - Save your battery!
- People who “don’t see” your excellent works, strong sides, and good intentions
- Any addictive behavior or destructive perspective that threatens your mental wellbeing
 - Enemy to the life of the mind

What should you focus on NOW?

- How to teach well
 - First impression is last!
 - Find good resources on the subject matter of your course as well as:
 - methodology resources (general and subject-specific),
 - active learning models that encourage critical thinking (Bloom's taxonomy)
 - Various examples of developed lesson plans, etc.
 - Use mentors if you like – senior staff are more willing to assist you than you think!
- Attending trainings, conferences, workshops, etc. that benefit you (**CBO programs**)

Do's and Don'ts that save your time and energy

- 1) Thoroughly plan your course guidebook before or in the first two weeks
 - Dates
 - Topics
 - Activities
 - Assignments (type, topic area, length)
 - Assessment plans and weights
 - Due dates
 - Reading materials
 - Additional Resources
 - Ask about SIMS plan
- 2) Read program descriptions and departmental rules and regulations

Do's and Don'ts...

- 3) Go beyond your mood swings and loss of motivation. Encourage yourself and go to class!
- 4) Listen to the needs of your students and respond
- 5) Don't lose perspective of what you love about your field
- 6) Don't feel locked up in your discipline forever; things are getting more inter-disciplinary
- 7) Don't get caught up in trying to figure out the good and the bad guys in your department
- 8) Don't commit to too many committees and services

Do's and Don'ts...

- 9) Assign a good block of time completely reserved for reading, instructional planning, grading etc.
- 10) Take one day completely off to take care of AND inspire yourself
 - Visit places, natural landscape, historical places, local cultures, big events, museums, industries, regional bureaus related to your field, etc.... Take pictures, post, don't lose sight of beautiful things!
- 11) Find out about the state of your field in Ethiopia and understand the challenges, dilemmas, conflicts, etc. (Don't 'solve'; just understand)

Thank you!

What questions do you have?