

Saying “No” in order to say “Yes:” Some Practice Scenarios

(1) You are teaching a new course for the first time, and it’s going well, but you are spending a *lot* more time preparing for each class and meeting with students during office hours than you’d originally intended. You are committed to your teaching and supporting students, but if you continue in this way for the rest of the term, you’ll hardly have any time left for other aspects of your work. What could you do?

(2) Your Department Chair asks you to mentor an undergrad on their senior thesis project (not one of your advisees), but you already feel overwhelmed this term teaching and doing your own research. You don’t want to let your colleague - or the student - down, but you don’t think that this is the best use of your time right now. What could you do?

(3) One of your peers just asked you to collaborate on a paper and you would really like to accept, but aren’t clear on the details. You also have quite a few other projects that you’re already involved in; that said, you see this potential paper as something that could lead to a publication, and it’s on a topic that is of primary interest to you. What could you do?

(4) You are co-teaching a course and your collaborating instructor asked you to read and grade all 20 of the students’ lab reports this week. (“Don’t worry - I’ll do all the next ones,” she says.) You’re committed to giving your students feedback in a timely manner, but this is not a task that you expected to do by yourself this week, and you’re concerned about how long it will take. What could you do?

(5) You have been asked to consider developing and offering a First Year Seminar course next year, and you really want to do this but aren’t sure about the time commitment, especially since you’re pre-tenure and still working on balancing your “regular” teaching load and your own scholarship. What could you do?