



College of Pharmacy

Revisiting the Work-Life Journey

As 2020 comes to a close soon, we can reflect with an understanding that 2020 has been a year unlike any other. It has been a journey with unexpected turns and twists, but we know that as one season ends, another begins. About three years ago, we asked many of you 5 key questions:

1. What does work life balance mean to you?
2. What one tip would you give to someone seeking work life balance?
3. Think back 5-10 years ago...knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to your younger self?
4. How do you recharge?
5. What do you do that's just for you?

Your answers were amazing and if you'd like to be reminded, please see the attached deidentified responses. Many of the responses varied, but there was an apparent 'take home message': Everyone has different ways of working effectively and ever-changing life responsibilities. In this way, over time we have truly moved away from the term 'Work Life Balance' and realized that terms such as, 'Work-Life integration' or 'Work-Life Flexibility' are much more descriptive of our ever changing lives. Some have noted that 'Work-Life Effectiveness' is even more representative as it encourages strong performance for both individuals and organizations, with work environments that can respond to changes in workplace needs and give employees the tools they need to work smarter and address their priorities outside of work. A Harvard Business Review article entitled "[Work-Life 'Balance' Isn't the Point](#)" put it best by noting these 3 pointers:

1. Forget "balance"—strive for effectiveness.
2. Take time to define what success means for you, both at work and in your personal life.
3. Maintain control of your career and what works for you.

Is this easier said than done? As you reflect, do you feel that you have work effectiveness now? What about life effectiveness? Does one come at the cost of the other? Work-Life Effectiveness strategies are unique to each person and may change across the life span, but it always involves working smart. There is no one-size-fits-all

solution when it comes to Work-Life Effectiveness. The reflection questions below offer us a chance to identify where we are struggling and to jot down what Work-Life Effectiveness looks like for each of us.

Think of this as a “work in progress.” Answer the questions as fully as you can.

How Effectively Do You Work and Live?

What are your current work and life priorities, both in the short- and long-term?

	Short Term (6 -12 months)	Long Term (1-5 years)
Work		
<i>What are your professional priorities and goals?</i>		
<i>What would success at work look like?</i>		
Life		
<i>What are your personal priorities and goals?</i>		
<i>What would success in your personal life look like?</i>		

Now consider what’s working, what’s not, and reflect on your preferences when it comes to the when, where, and how work gets done.

Reflection Questions

- Thinking about your own work and life, what are you already doing that is successful? At work? In your personal life?
- What time of day are you most engaged with work? Life? When do you feel most productive? (For example, morning, afternoon, evening)
- When you are working, do you prefer to work over long stretches of time, or do you work better in short spurts with regular breaks?
- Where do you work most effectively? (For example, in a quiet space, in a coffee shop, in the office, at home)
- Do you prefer working alone or collaboratively with a team?
- Do you prefer to keep your work and personal lives strictly separate, or more integrated and blurred?

- How satisfied are you with your current level of Work-Life Effectiveness overall?

***Now that you've had the opportunity to reflect, how do you think you might improve your own Work-Life Effectiveness?

As we wrap up this year and begin preparing for 2021, please be reminded to take care of yourselves and your families. We need you to be the best you, to accomplish our college goals. Take inventory of your strengths, we'll revisit these thoughts in the coming year. Let's look forward to applying them in new ways in 2021!

Additional Resources:

1. **Thinking about a post-balance world (Article)**
["Balance is Bunk,"](#) *Fast Company*, October 2004.
2. **Carol Bartz discusses the myth of work-life balance (Video)**
["Bartz Says 'Work/Life' Balance is a Myth,"](#) *Wall Street Journal*, May 1, 2012.
3. **Beyond policies: Office culture must change (Article)**
 Susan Dominus, ["Rethinking the Work-Life Equation,"](#) *New York Times*, February 25, 2016.
4. **The problem may be long hours not work-family conflict (Article)**
 Robin Ely and Irene Padavic, ["Work-Family Conflict is Not the Problem: Overwork Is,"](#) *Huffington Post*, November 6, 2013.
5. **Managing work and life is an increasingly global problem (Report)**
 EY, ["Global Generations: A Global Study on Work-Life Challenges Across Generations"](#) (2015).
6. **We know flexibility works, the challenge is execution (Article)**
 Stew Friedman, ["Having It All' Is Not a Women's Issue,"](#) *Harvard Business Review*, June 26, 2012.
7. **The best way forward (Article)**
 Gigi Liu, ["From Work-Life Balance to Work-Life Integration– The New Way Forward,"](#) *Entrepreneur*, March 31, 2016.
8. **When and where you work is increasingly the norm for many professionals (Article)**
 Laura Vanderkam, ["Work-life Balance is Dead — Here's Why That Might Be a Good Thing,"](#) *Fortune*, March 6, 2015.
9. **Key benefits for work place flexibility for managers (Report)**
 WGEA, ["Briefing Note: About Workplace Flexibility"](#) (May 2015).
10. **How to understand and request flexibility at work (Report)**
 WGEA, ["Employee Flexibility Toolkit"](#) (May 2015).
11. **Michel Martin discusses the work-life challenges faced by women of color (Video)**
["Work-Life Challenges Facing Women of Color,"](#) *MSNBC*, August 3, 2014.

12. **Guide for companies (Report)**
World at Work, [Seven Categories of Work-Life Effectiveness: Successfully Evolving Your Organizations Portfolio](#) (2011).
13. **Provides stories from around the world with insight into the new global workforce and the case for flexibility (Report).**
Emily Cohen, Liz Mulligan-Ferry, and Jan Combopiano, [Flex Works](#) (Catalyst, 2013).
14. **Updates on the most recent research on the economics of flexible workplace practices and policies (report).**
The Council of Economic Advisors, [Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility](#) (June 2014).
15. **A few pointers to manage career success and a positive personal life (article).**
Christine Riordin, "[Work-Life 'Balance' Isn't the Point](#)" *Harvard Business Review* (2013).
16. **Tips for Families and Parents (article).** Stewart D. Friedman "[Keep Your Home Life Sane](#)" *Harvard Business Review* (2015).