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I've been asked to reflect on the following two questions from my perspective as an academic dean in a university-based divinity school. These questions come up often in the life of many, if not most, of our institutions. They are neither strange nor dystopian. They are, simply put, basic to our institutional life. I am only in my second year in this position, and I now approach these questions with the eye, ear, and heart of an administrator who values her faculty colleagues and students and wants to create larger spaces for them to do their work and do so with excellence and care — in healthy ways.

What structures prevent faculty members from living well-balanced lives?

- Unclear faculty handbooks in which the benchmarks for progressing through one's career are constantly moving targets and are more subject to issues of "fit," rather than having "fit" be included among more tangible factors.
- The silo mentality of departments and within departments that fail to stimulate our brains.

- The financial health, or lack of it, of the school and/or department.
- Our own Type A tendencies that were fine-tuned in graduate school education that did not — and still do not — think about the formation of whole scholars and teachers.
- Workloads, workloads, workloads — some imposed, others chosen.
- Pedagogies (and curricula that reflect these pedagogies) that foster monodisciplinary education and scholarship.
- Mentoring or lack of it. At times, mentoring is little more than an item on a checklist rather than an opportunity for engaged collegiality.
- Collegiality not being taken seriously as part of the scholarly life.
- Treating our work as though it is a mental production mill that encourages establishing legacies rather than justice-based pedagogies and scholarship that looks beyond our scholarly belly buttons.

What policies may make academe more livable for more people?

- Before we get policies, I believe we need to question what we mean by education and learning.
- Returning to the title of my 2009 AAR presidential address, “walking across the rim bones of nothingness” means that there is more to it than what we can account for by the precision of our analysis or depth of our intuition.
- Encourage benchmarks that recognize the diverse ways in which we can demonstrate how smart we are. We must recognize that other forms of knowledge production and dissemination — such as web books and articles, blogs, or webpages that address a topic — need to have rigorous scholarly evaluative tools developed for them so that they can join the traditional resources of books, articles, and monographs.
- Discover the meaning of genuine rest and reward folks when they do so. My new watchword: Go to bed.
- In graduate school, help students understand the differing expectations between a research university, teaching college or university, seminary, school of divinity, theological school, etc., and help them seek appointments that match their interests and training whenever possible.
- Encourage collaborative scholarship. Rather than duplicate preexisting reading groups, initiatives, centers, etc., explore ways to partner with those in existence.
- Develop criteria for our various disciplines that recognize we are actually in the twenty-first century. Learn from the various approaches in our disciplines rather than go on the attack to prove we’re correct and everyone else is wrong (or at bare minimum hopelessly confused).
- Value the formation of the scholar and teacher as a whole person.
- Build into our “work” meetings, such as faculty meetings, time for faculty to share snippets of their work — we *don’t* need more meetings. Instead, we need to rethink the way we

structure the meetings we already have so that there are flashes of creative thought that are not about solving a problem, but caressing an idea — unloose the agenda!

- Establish healthy boundaries — this isn't the same thing as compartmentalizing our lives.
- Rethink what the sabbatical should accomplish. At Yale University, we have retitled this “leave of absence” in part to recognize that it is not always restful to spend paid time out the classroom writing and researching in a “publish or perish” atmosphere. Perhaps this means we formally acknowledge that we often accomplish little scholarship in the first month (if not more) of a leave of absence because we are tired and need to recharge before tackling the project. Build into the leave the expectation that the first month is for rest and the rest of the leave is for research and writing.
- Structure the standards for promotion and tenure realistically. Know what your school or department does well and do not try to be something else if it does not have the faculty and student body to do so. If you wish to shift, do this in consultation and reflection — rather than viewing a faculty or school's reputation as a possession.

These are my reflections after a short time as an administrator. I am sure there will be more to come as I continue to learn how to be a better colleague to and with my colleagues as we do the important work of teaching and learning. I consider it a great privilege to earn my living this way, as it is more than work — this is a vocation.