Achieving work-life balance can be a challenge for faculty members who have a varied, multi-faceted roles in academia. It is important for faculty members to identify and utilize skills and tools to not only survive but thrive in the world of higher education. The purpose of this presentation is to explore trends in higher education that impact faculty satisfaction and to provide tools and strategies to enhance work-life balance.

The ever-changing trends in higher education, including technology and online education modalities provide many for factors that can inhibit faculty satisfaction and work-life balance. Results from a 2015 Gallup survey of faculty workplace engagement showed that faculty who reported a negative campus climate and hostile work environment experience lower faculty morale, job dissatisfaction and less faculty engagement; which is a predictor of faculty attrition (Jaschik & Lederman, 2015). Another area of concern is the growth in non-tenure track (NTT) faculty. Based on analysis of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) national dataset, NTT faculty are becoming the majority in higher education (Ott & Cisneros, 2015). This leads to structural inequities within the institution. NTT faculty are less satisfied, and report being treated like second-class citizens (Kezar, 2013). NTT faculty experience heavier workloads, less autonomy or opportunities for advancement, hierarchical inequality and job insecurity (Ott & Cisneros, 2015).

Life balance as a concept has varied definitions in the literature. The concept has been defined as role balance (Marks & MacDermid, 1996); happiness from a balanced lifestyle that provides satisfaction with life as a whole (Veenhoven, 2009), balanced need satisfaction (Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006); satisfactory engagement in activity experiences (Persson & Jonsson, 2009); and satisfying pattern of daily activities for life circumstances (Matuska & Christiansen, 2008). The available literature on life balance supports the view that life balance is an important facet of an individual’s psychological well-being, and that satisfaction with life can be an indicator of successful balance between roles (Clarke, Koch, and Hill, 2004; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Work-life balance as it relates to academic faculty is widely discussed in the literature. Austin (2003) integrated several studies regarding the experience of aspiring and new faculty members and one of the main themes that emerged across the studies was concern about the quality of life for academicians. Both aspiring and new faculty members noted a sense that faculty tasks and responsibilities may make it impossible to live a balanced life, many noting that they do not want to live that life. The sense of competition and isolation inherent in faculty life was one of the perceptions the new and aspiring faculty identified when discussing quality of life concerns, noting that a collegial community did not seem possible in academia.

An understanding of barriers to achieving work-life balance such as cognitive dissonance, emotional dissonance, and burnout are essential to developing strategies to promote work-life balance. Cognitive and emotional dissonances have been used to explain and describe the discord leading to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and may contribute to the belief among academics that life balance is not possible in the role (Festinger, 1957).

Strategies organized around physical health, connecting socially, and cognitive approaches can help to create a balanced lifestyle leading to achieving work-life balance as a whole. Achieving life balance
includes a multi-modal approach to well-being, including the ability to manage roles, stress, cognition and emotion to successfully adapt to life’s challenges is especially important. Tabibnia and Radecki (2018) have broadly defined resilience as the ability to successfully adapt to adversity. This presentation will provide details on the neuroscience behind these strategies and demonstrate the importance of committing to self-care and workplace strategies to strengthen stress resilience and improve faculty satisfaction and the work-life balance.

Title:
Strategies to Attain Faculty Work-Life Balance

Keywords:
faculty satisfaction, resilience and work-life balance

References:


Abstract Summary:
The multifaceted demands and expectations of the faculty role can affect satisfaction and the ability to attain work-life balance. This presentation provides insight into barriers to work-life balance and presents personal and work-based strategies to promote job satisfaction and reduce the risk of burnout.

Content Outline:
Objectives:

1. Describe three barriers to work-life balance in academia.
2. Identify two personal and work-based strategies to promote job satisfaction and reduce the risk of burnout.

Outline:

1. Introduction
2. trends in higher education
3. student demographics
4. faculty demographics

iii. technology explosion

1. work-life balance
2. what is it?
3. why is it important?

iii. barriers (cognitive dissonance, emotional dissonance)

1. Strategies for promoting work-life balance
2. self-care
3. Work-based: faculty development and mentoring

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**Primary Presenting Author**
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