

# Trimming the Hedges:

How do Librarians Set  
Boundaries Without Clear  
Expectations of Labour?

CAPAL23, June 1st, 2023

Amanda Wheatley, McGill University

Helen Power, University of Saskatchewan



# Agenda

- Overwork and quiet quitting
- Tenure and promotion regulations
- Best practices/advice for tenure-track librarians

# Overwork and Quiet Quitting

We girlbossed too close to the sun



# The Glamorization of Busy

- Trend of constant productivity
- Promotion of busy work
- Competing busyness
- Welcome to the Girlboss era circa 2004-2015

# How They Made Us #Girlbosses

- Enterprise Social Networking
  - Skype, Yammer, LinkedIn, Teams
  - Direct messaging
- Gamification
  - Encourage knowledge sharing, learning, and networking opportunities

(Trees, 2015)

# Competitive Productivity and the Meritocracy

- 60% of millennials believe making social connections in the office is beneficial to office culture
- 30% believe those relationships could help advance their careers

As a generational cohort we have become more open to discussing workplace topics such as salary.

(Forbes, 2014)

# The Eras Tour



# What does it mean to quiet quit?

Quiet quitting is:

- Setting boundaries
- Doing less extra work
- Clocking in and out on time

# How do I know if I am in my villain era?

Made famous by TikTok user [@padzdey](#)

The difference between quiet quitting and the villain era is the communication aspect.

Quiet quitters are softly letting things go, villains are communicating their new boundaries, addressing overwork, and standing up for themselves.



# Tenure and Promotion Regulations

What exactly does successful performance mean?



# Tenure, Promotions, and Appointments... Oh My!

- Evaluated schools in the U15
- Combination of tenure track, confirmation track, continuing appointments, and promotion in rank
- 2-3 year probationary or renewal period before major promotions or tenure
- Most institutions require three core areas to be promoted:
  - Academic duties
  - Research and scholarship
  - Service contributions

performance professional

probation handle  
effectively criteria responsibility  
outlined expectations  
growth knowledge supplementary teaching  
promise relate  
given responsibilities appropriate  
activities effectiveness development  
standard contributions job consideration  
position academic  
significant level ability description basis superior  
granted potential  
increased contributing future successful  
accomplishments skills achievement high record  
technical principles apply  
provision based

# Advice for Tenure-Track Colleagues

Best practices for those who are going up for  
tenure and those who have already earned tenure.



# HR Strategies to Correct Quiet Quitting (from the perspective of managers)

- Fair compensation
- EDI improvements
- Authentic engagement and connection within and between teams
- Flexibility
  - hours
  - remote work
  - benefits
  - advancement opportunities

(Bush, 2022)

# What can institutions do?

- Provide librarian-specific guidelines outside of the institution-wide documentation
- Have informational sessions for librarians about the tenure process
- Establish infrastructure within the library to support tenure track librarians
  - Advisory teams
  - Mentorship programs
- Solidify language and unspoken expectations
- Combat toxic “publish or perish” mindset

# What can tenured colleagues do?

- Provide advice, share stories
- Offer examples of their own tenure packages
  - How to frame it? What evidence to include? Other tips and tricks?
- Share “unwritten rules”
- Offer to read drafts and provide feedback

# Advice for tenure-track librarians

- Request a copy of a (successful) tenure application
- Ask for answers to questions/clarifications to be in writing
- Become familiar with the guidelines, union regulations, collective agreement, etc.
  - Ensure regular performance reviews/annual reviews
  - Request actionable feedback from these reviews
- Attend relevant union meetings
  - Ex. "Committee on Women's Issues" at USask
- Set up coffee meetups with tenured librarians, other tenure-track librarians to chat

# Advice for tenure-track librarians Continued

- Ask those who don't know your work to read through your application with an eye for "impact"
- When working from home, have an "end of day" ritual to signify the end of the workday
- Learn to say "no"!

# Advice for Research for Pre-Tenure Librarians

- Is it an official part of your assignment of duties? What is the time allotment?
- Block time in calendar, set out-of-office message
- Use Pomodoro technique
- Join research groups, communities of practice, etc. for external support
- If there's no formal program for support, don't be shy!
  - Find a mentor
  - Create a group

# Reflection

What is one thing you can do right now?

What is one thing you can do later?



# References

- Botros, A. (2022). What is “quiet quitting”? Gen Z is ditching hustle culture to avoid burnout. Fortune.Com, N.PAG-N.PAG.*
- Bush, M. (2022). QUIET QUITTING: Four Strategies to Correct the Course. AMA Quarterly, 8(3), 8–11.*
- Castellini, B. (2023). 7 Ways to Motivate Superstar Employees. Public Relations Strategies & Tactics, 6(4), 16–16.*
- Constantz, J. (2022). TikTok “5 to 9” Trend Shows Quiet Quitting Hasn’t Killed Hustle Culture. Bloomberg.Com, N.PAG-N.PAG.*
- Johnson-Snyder, A. J. (2023). Solutions for Solving Quite Quitting. Pennsylvania CPA Journal, 94(1), 30–33.*
- Study Shows Millennials Place Greater Value On Workplace Friendships, But Will Sacrifice Them To Get Ahead. (2014). Forbes.Com, 1–1.*
- Thier, J. (2023). “Resenteeism” is the latest trend plaguing workers, and it’s even more dangerous than quiet quitting. Fortune.Com, N.PAG-N.PAG.*
- Trees, L. (2015). Encouraging millennials to collaborate and learn on the job. Strategic HR Review, 14(4), 118–123.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-06-2015-0042>*