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# Creating Time for Research at Marshall University

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**Creating Time for Research at Marshall University**  
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Creating time for research is important, yet difficult. Creating large blocks of dedicated research time is nearly impossible. It is critical, therefore, that the institution encourages all levels to work in a coordinated effort to assist faculty in accessing those precious minutes and smaller blocks of time.

At the departmental level the Management and Marketing Division conducts a Research and Teaching (R&T) Forum six to eight times per academic year. The forum allows the division's 28 faculty members to brainstorm, find areas of similar interests, combine research efforts, and present a "test run" before submission to a journal or conference. This team approach saves a great deal of time for research in that two heads, or 28 as the case may be, are always better than one. Strengths and limitations of the presented material are discussed, other branches of potential research streams are noted, and personal "tips" are shared in the supportive atmosphere. Co-authored projects are encouraged among persons in the same discipline and across disciplines and sub-disciplines.

The R&T Forum began approximately 16 years ago in the Management Department and continued after the merger with the Marketing Department. The initial introduction was rocky as was the continuation following the merger. For the most part, faculty members did not see the value and, in all honesty, felt it was a waste of time. Persistence by the division head and a few persuasive faculty members, however, kept the forum going and, in time, it became a positive entity in the division. The R & T Forum is not only a place to share ideas, but also a place to share lunch. Pizza is donated by a local restaurant and faculty members bring their own soft drinks. In recent years, the other divisions within the college have adopted a similar format.

The Management and Marketing Division created additional time for research by eliminating meeting-only division meetings. Rather, the first 10 minutes of the 1 to 1 ½ hour R & T Forum is given to the division head to take care of administrative issues that cannot be handled via email. This approach was met with resistance early on as some senior faculty members wanted to continue doing things as they had always been done. However, the test of time won them over as they found it was a win-win situation. Time was freed up and administrative activities/communications were maintained.

Additional time is created for the Management and Marketing Division's faculty through the use of coordinators. Management, marketing, and management information systems, all with separate sub-areas (e.g. health care management, industrial relations), each have an area coordinator. These three individuals assist the division head with scheduling, discipline-specific administrative responsibilities, and chairing or coordinating search committees when positions are vacated. These positions are strictly voluntary, therefore, research support is provided or summer teaching assigned

whenever the budget allows. Here again, the introduction was rocky. People were unaccustomed to a mid-level slot within the division. However, this, too, has proven to be a positive addition.

At the college level, the Lewis College of Business uses a centralized advising system. This format not only provides research time for the faculty members, but also reduces errors and time delays for the students. Students still seek faculty advice for career questions and class/program of study opinions, but all scheduling, applications for graduation, overloads, and add/drops are handled by the advising staff. Like the examples discussed earlier, this change was not welcomed with open arms. Many faculty members were opposed to the idea for two primary reasons. First, it simply was different. Whoever heard of faculty members not handling the advising? Second, it took the control out of the faculty's hands. Now, however, faculty members cannot imagine going back to the old system.

Other methods used at the college level to assist the faculty in creating time for research include scheduling classes using a two-day or three-day system, providing graduate assistants to each division, and encouraging application for research release time. Each of the above is supported by the university and encouraged.

At the university level, Marshall University offers a number of programs and services to support the faculty. For example, the Service Learning Program offers assistance to faculty members who desire to incorporate a service learning component in their classes. Many times, these projects include a student research element enabling faculty members to dovetail teaching and research time commitments. As another example, The Center for Teaching Excellence provides workshops and resources to assist faculty members in becoming better learning facilitators. The center serves as a clearinghouse and a support group for learning how to juggle research, teaching, and service. As a final example, the university supports a competitive summer research grant program.