

# AADCAP NEW DIVISION DIRECTORS ROUNDTABLE

## From a New Director:

### Surviving the Steepest Part of the Learning Curve

*Meg Benningfield, MD*

Some of the most important pearls from my first 2 years as a division director

#### On managing time:

- ❖ There are 168 hours in a week. Seek balance across the course of a week recognizing that the day to day may be unbalanced.
- ❖ You cannot do everything, but you can do a lot. Choose where you will focus your time/energy. If you don't choose, others will choose for you. (metaphor: cleaning out your closet)
- ❖ Set clear (SMART) goals.
- ❖ Do the most important thing first. You can only ever have ONE top priority.
- ❖ Schedule time to review and clear inboxes; review long term and short-term goals.
- ❖ Have a plan for how to use time confetti (5 to 10 min tasks).
- ❖ Say no to anything that doesn't move you closer to your goal.
- ❖ When your boss is asking you to take on something new and you are already overwhelmed, ask for help "I want to be able to do this new thing well. What should I put on hold to make this new thing a priority?"
- ❖ Remember Hofstadter's law: It always takes longer than you expect, even when you account for Hofstadter's Law.
- ❖ Identify your slowest hiker: what is the constraint that, if removed, would eliminate other obstacles?

#### On managing myself:

- ❖ Be patient (with yourself, with your chair, with the institution).
- ❖ Always do your best and then let it be good enough.
- ❖ Keep striving to do better.
- ❖ Don't waste energy on nonsense.
- ❖ Develop a mindfulness practice.
- ❖ Do the job you are charged to do (keep your eye on the ball).
- ❖ Insist on doing the right thing.
- ❖ Examine the stories you are telling yourself.

#### On managing others:

- ❖ Listen.
- ❖ Be honest and authentic.
- ❖ Communicate the goal. What is the most important thing?
- ❖ Set clear expectations and check-in/follow-up.
- ❖ Seek alignment of others' personal goals with what you want to achieve.
- ❖ Be accountable, especially to the people most important to you.
- ❖ Acknowledge mistakes, make amends, move on.

#### RESOURCES:

- ↳ Laura Vanderkam, *I Know How She Does It*
- ↳ David Allen, *Getting Things Done*
- ↳ Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead*
- ↳ Greg Mckeown, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*
- ↳ Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*
- ↳ James Clear, *Atomic Habits*
- ↳ Daniel Pink, *When*