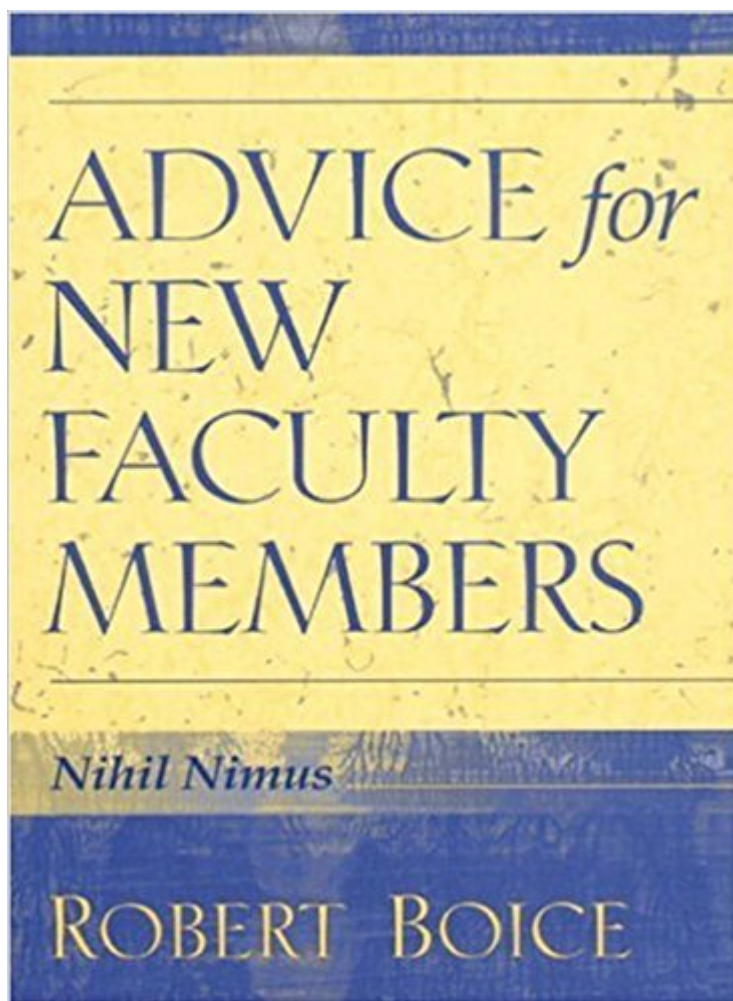


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# Advice For New Faculty Members



## Synopsis

**Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus** is a unique and essential guide to the start of a successful academic career. As its title suggests (nothing in excess), it advocates moderation in ways of working, based on the single-most reliable difference between new faculty who thrive and those who struggle. By following its practical, easy-to-use rules, novice faculty can learn to teach with the highest levels of student approval, involvement, and comprehension, with only modest preparation times and a greater reliance on spontaneity and student participation. Similarly, new faculty can use its rule-based practices to write with ease, increasing productivity, creativity, and publishability through brief, daily sessions of focused and relaxed work. And they can socialize more successfully by learning about often-misunderstood aspects of academic culture, including mentoring. Each rule in **Advice for New Faculty Members** has been tested on hundreds of new faculty and proven effective over the long run -- even in attaining permanent appointment. It is the first guidebook to move beyond anecdotes and surmises for its directives, based on the author's extensive experience and solid research in the areas of staff and faculty development. For new teachers.

## Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Pearson; 1 edition (January 31, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0205281591

ISBN-13: 978-0205281596

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.9 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 28 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #108,975 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #151 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Allied Health Services > Audiology & Speech Pathology #168 in Books > Medical Books > Allied Health Professions > Audiology & Speech Pathology #257 in Books > Textbooks > Education > Administration

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When will someone reprint this book? Every academic I know who has read it has found it very helpful. Too bad used copies are like \$50 at this point. The advice really covers every aspect of an assistant professor's professional life. As such, it will have something for everyone. My writing habits were already strong, but the tips on writing lectures made my presentations more focused and comprehensible to my students... and saved me a ton of time and anxiety. My partner had teaching down but used Boice's advice to develop a writing habit and now manages to get some research done even on teaching days (which he had never even attempted before). My friend C sought out a mentor on the strength of Boice's findings, something that wouldn't otherwise have occurred to him, and which has given him a much deeper understanding of the personalities and politics of our Department than I have. And my friend F had to read it twice but she has finally managed to start declining some of those extra administrative and teaching tasks that she always thought she had to say yes to! The real strength of this book is of course that it's data-driven. A lot of the advice (such as the lecture prep advice that so helped me) is not intuitive. I'm not sure you'd find it anywhere else. And Boice really understands all the psychic problems that can hold new faculty back--from panic to defensiveness to depression to simple cluelessness.

The book has a few basic themes. They include: slow down and be observant, work in brief sessions and don't get caught up in a single task, take advantage of feedback from peers and students. These themes are repeated across three areas of faculty engagement: teaching, scholarship, and networking. Advice and examples are tailored to each area, but the overarching presence of the same themes can be felt throughout the book. Although the repetition of themes

does occasionally become laborious, the value of the advice, examples, and research specific to faculty development are eye-opening and clearly valuable. I would recommend this book to faculty members in most any field, whether on or off the tenure track.

Lots of very useful advice in here for dealing with the more psychological aspects of being a new professor. Trying to follow all of Boice's maxims when you are just starting out is probably impossible, like drinking out of a firehose. If you choose nothing else, his advice on dealing with writing is excellent. In general, it's missing some things that would be relevant to new professors in science/engineering who run labs of graduate students--take a look at *At the Helm* (Kathy Barker, Cold Spring Harbor Press, 2012).

Excellent book. Best advice ever - "stop while on a roll/in the zone" it's scary, but coming back to it again will make it easier to get back into it.

I was looking for advice but I did not expect the advice from this book to be as life changing as it has been. Boice advises the reader to practice moderation in writing, teaching, service, and most importantly -- emotion. the book is well structured, has great exercises and strategies to implement into one's life and is backed by substantial research. The best advice. A great read I'll come back to and suggest to many others.

Some reviewers have criticized this book for being obvious. I found it anything but. The culture of my field says that the way to write a paper is to set aside large, uninterrupted blocks of time. It was an eye-opening experience to see hard data that show it is more effective to write in brief daily sessions. These writers are roughly twice as productive by several measures (pages written, manuscripts published) and also report themselves to be happier. This idea changed my professional life. When I recommend this book, I also warn people that also the book is chock-full of useful information, it is also badly written. Life is ironic. I do find it worth wading through Boice's painful prose to get the nuggets of great information. One more word---the advice in Boice's book can be *\*very\** difficult to follow. I found the book only somewhat helpful with, for example, the difficulties of stopping when one feels ``on a roll." I have nevertheless found this an invaluable book.

I am a third-year tenure-track professor. I found this book to be incredibly helpful. The information on dealing with unruly students was specifically useful to me in another teaching position, as was the

advice on budgeting time, the importance of not putting too much in lectures, and how to balance teaching vs. research. I have given this book to several friends that are professors. All in all, it is most excellent.

This is one of the best books on the market for those emerging from graduate school and seeking tenure. Boice provides numerous examples of prolific and successful writers and teachers who do not adopt hasty and ineffective habits leading to a chaotic and stressful career and life, but rather use a steady yet practical approach that results in excellent productivity on every front. Boice's Nihil Nimus (nothing in excess) approach has revolutionized my writing and work habits.

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