

I'd like to take time out to do a post on what is happening in my personal academic life just now, which involves some good news. First, some background.

As you probably know, the life of the professional academic is highly unusual - bizarre when you think about it. Here I am, a 62-year old, who organizes his entire life around semesters. Really? Shouldn't that have stopped, like, 40 years ago? Yeah, well, for most of us. But not us professorial scholar types.

In my experience lots of people outside the academy have a bit of trouble understanding what it means to be a research scholar-professor, especially at a major research university. You get the entire summer off from teaching? Your semesters are only 15 weeks long? What do you do with the other 22 weeks? And you teach only two courses a semester? What's that take, an hour a day? Wish I had a job like that!

Right, well, I'll admit it's a fantastic job. But it's not because of all the time off. Like many of you ...

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