

# 10-Minute Faculty Microlearning Tune Up: Reactive Yes to Strategic No Over Email

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5/6/26

In 10 minutes, you will learn how to:

- Recognize why saying NO is difficult in academic environments
- Apply a simple framework to evaluate and prioritize commitments
- Use practical scripts to decline or reshape requests while preserving relationships

# “A Week in the Life of JHU Faculty”

- Monday: Committee request
- Tuesday: Mentorship ask
- Wednesday: Manuscript review
- Thursday: Speaking invitation

## **What was your *immediate instinct?***

- Yes  Maybe  Avoid/Delay

# Why Saying No Is Difficult\*

- Reputation
- Relationships
- Culture


# From Reaction to Strategic Choice

- Pause
- Stop real-time replies → batch requests
- Step 1: Batch, don't react
- Step 2: Acknowledge, don't commit, Email easier
- Step 3: Evaluate together
- Social decisions → Strategic decisions

# Email Scripts You Can Use Immediately: Buy Time & Deliberative Yes


 Buy Time (*any request: committee, mentorship, review, speaking*)

- **A.** Thank you for including me—this sounds important.  
Let me review my current commitments and follow up shortly.
- **B.** I appreciate you reaching out regarding this opportunity.  
Let me take a closer look at my schedule and get back to you.


 Deliberate Yes (e.g., speaking invitation, high-impact committee)

- **A.** I'd be glad to take on the [committee/speaking role]—this aligns with my current priorities.
- Let's connect on scope and next steps.
- **B.** After reviewing my commitments, I'm able to say yes to the [speaking/committee opportunity] and would be glad to contribute

# Emails Scripts: Conditional Yes & Positive NO

 Conditional Yes (e.g., mentorship or manuscript review)

- A. I'd be glad to support the mentorship/manuscript in a limited or advisory capacity, though I'm not able to take on a primary role.
- B. I'd be happy to provide input on the manuscript or connect with the trainee at key points, but wouldn't be able to participate fully

 Positive No (e.g., additional committee or lower-priority request)

- A. I appreciate you thinking of me for the committee—this is meaningful work.
- I'm not able to take this on given my current commitments.
- B. Thank you for including me in the review/committee effort—this is important.
- I'm not able to commit at this time due to current priorities.

# WRAP UP-Key Take Aways

## The House of Cards: Why Strategic “No” Matters

Foundation (what matters most)

- Fulfillment
- Funding
- Scholarly contribution
- Career advancement

Without boundaries

- Short-term yes → long-term strain
- Accumulation → misalignment
- Overextension → risk to what matters most

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