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Building Meaningful Bridges: Collaborations between Students, Faculty, Staff and Librarians

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Building Meaningful Bridges

Collaborations Between Students, Faculty, Staff, and Librarians



The Context

About the University of Massachusetts Medical School

The University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) is the only public medical school in Massachusetts. It was founded to provide affordable, high-quality medical education to state residents and to increase the number of primary care physicians practicing in underserved areas of the state.

The medical school has approximately 500 MD students and 30 MD/PhD students at any given time, all of whom participate in the Capstone Scholarship and Discovery Course.

About the Capstone Scholarship and Discovery Course

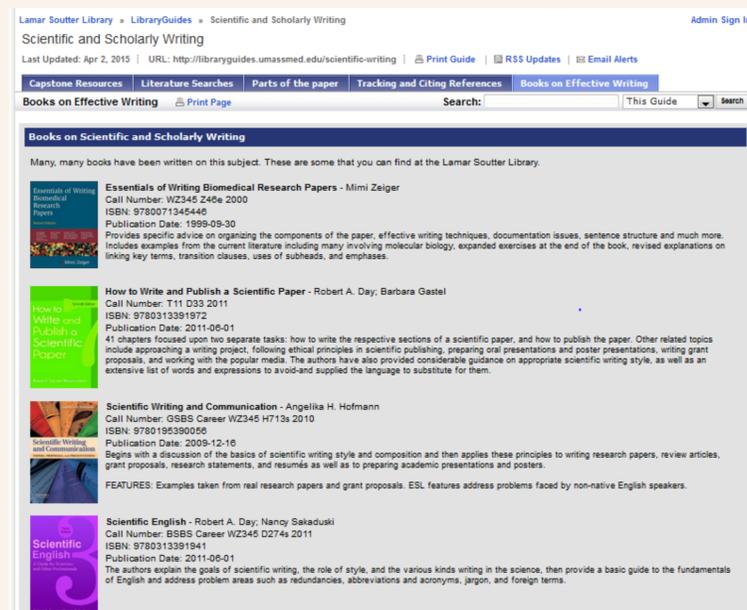
In 2010, UMMS introduced a new, integrative curriculum. It includes a culminating experience called the Capstone Scholarship and Discovery Course (CSD). The CSD ensures that every graduating student completes an individualized, mentored, scholarly project that builds on their personal passion and medical school experience.

In the past few years, the librarians at the Lamar Soutter Library (LSL) have become incorporated into the CSD in several ways that capitalize on our research and information management skills. Much of the coursework and mentoring for the CSD occurs within one of five Learning Communities. These Learning Communities are comprised of students from each of the four class years. The LSL assigns one librarian to each Learning Community so that every student in the CSD has a "personal librarian" to consult, especially as they formulate their question, conduct their literature review, and design their data management plan.

House Librarians



The Project



In 2014, the LSL partnered with medical student student Rebecca Angoff to construct an online guide on effective scientific and scholarly writing for the CSD. The Scientific and Scholarly Writing Guide was part of a larger project meant to create an easily accessible set of resources for students to refer to during the CSD.

The collaboration developed quite organically. Angoff, then a first year student, approached the library as part of her work with the CSD, to ask if there was an existing writing guide. Such a guide did not exist, but Molly Higgins, the librarian that first met with her, offered to create one. During each iteration of the guide development, Higgins consulted with Angoff as well as the librarians assigned to each Learning Community, to ensure that the guide was grounded in the CSD.

The guide includes five sections— a list of on campus research resources; tips for conducting effective literature searches; a description of the parts of a scientific paper; a guide to choosing a citation manager; and a list of books on scientific writing owned by the library.

The librarians also participated in a series of videos in which they gave students advice on when and why to consult with their personal librarians. These videos are embedded in the CSD page in the school's learning management system.

The Outcomes

The outcomes of the project were diverse and reached across campus. Some were expected (students utilizing the guide and videos), but others were very unexpected. Some of the highlights are:

- Most importantly, this collaboration brought the students, faculty, staff, and librarians into closer collaboration for the CSD. By working with a student to develop a guide, librarians heard more clearly what the students needed. By participating in the videos, librarians and faculty communicated their roles in the CSD more clearly to students.
- The Scientific and Scholarly Writing Guide has been viewed over 750 times since it was published in late 2014.
- This collaboration also led to other unexpected collaborations between librarians and UMMS' Center for Health Policy and Research. The guide caught their attention and they worked with several of the librarians to write a series of blog posts on the AEA365 (American Evaluation Association) blog on how to effectively conduct literature searches.

The Products

Visit the Scientific and Scholarly Writing Guide:
<http://libraryguides.umassmed.edu/scientific-writing>

Visit the UMMS IR to read the AEA 365 blog posts:
<http://bit.ly/103pfjX>



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