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Using NLM Exhibits and Events to Engage Library Users and Reach the Community

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Abstract

In an effort to reach out to library users and make the library a more relevant, welcoming place, the University of Florida's Health Science Center Library hosted exhibits from the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) Traveling Exhibition Program. From 2010 through 2012, the library hosted four NLM exhibits and created event series for each. Through reflection and use of a participant survey, lessons were learned concerning creating relevant programs, marketing events, and forming new partnerships. Each successive exhibit added events and activities to address different audiences. A survey of libraries that have hosted NLM exhibits highlights lessons learned at those institutions.

Keywords

Exhibits; event planning; health sciences libraries; NLM Traveling Exhibition Program; outreach; marketing

INTRODUCTION

Exhibits and events hosted by libraries can provide a way to engage with library users and to bring the community, be it the campus community or wider local community, in contact with the library. During the summer of 2010, the University of Florida (UF) Health Science Center Libraries' (HSCL) administration and librarians began a concerted effort to make the library a more welcoming, relevant space. As part of this effort, based on the National Library of Medicine (NLM) Update presentation at the 2010 Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, the HSCL's Biomedical and Health Information Services (BHIS; Reference) department booked several NLM traveling exhibits through 2013.

The main goals of this initiative were:

- To bring people into the library.
- To engage the interest of the HSCL's primary user base and others on campus.
- To incorporate and highlight research interests of the faculty in the health science colleges and the library.
- To be an active and innovative part of the campus community.
- To change or broaden the perception of the library among the HSCL's user base.

In order to enhance the exhibit experience and further these goals, related programming was developed for each of the exhibits, and participant surveys were developed to gain an understanding of participant demographics, preferred future events and methods of learning about them, and impact of events on perceptions of the library. Numerous lessons were learned in regard to program content, marketing, funding, and developing collaborations across campus. Following the fourth exhibit, libraries that had hosted any of the same four exhibits as the HSCL were surveyed about their exhibition process. This paper describes the HSCL exhibit program, as well as the lessons learned through reflection, participant surveys, and the surveys of external libraries. Although the details and capabilities for developing such a program will vary among institutions, it is expected that these lessons may be applicable at other libraries developing NLM or other exhibit and event programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW—LIBRARY EXHIBITS AND EVENTS

Many libraries display items of interest and sponsor or host programs, though there is relatively little research-related literature about such exhibits and events in the academic library setting or the more specific context of academic health science libraries. One notable exception focused on the experience of hosting the traveling exhibit "Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature," created by the NLM and the American Library Association (ALA), at the Coates Library at Trinity University.¹ This library experienced increased gate counts while hosting the exhibit, as well as increased usage of the library in the year following the exhibit. The article also focused on partnerships between the library and other organizations on and off campus, including a co-hosting partnership with a health sciences library. Gomes and colleagues² focused on exhibits and related events organized by the Himmelfarb Library at George Washington University Medical Center, including another traveling exhibit from the NLM, "Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians." The authors described partnerships they developed with other organizations on campus, in particular, the involvement of the local chapter of the American Medical Women's Association.

A common thread between these academic health libraries was the use of traveling exhibits from NLM, which provide both a physical structure and space where information is

presented to the viewer, as well as a theme around which library-sponsored events and activities can be built. NLM's Traveling Exhibition Program began in 2002, with the development of the traveling version of the exhibit "Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature" in conjunction with ALA with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.³ In the words of the Head of the Exhibition Program, Patricia Tuohy:

Our goal was always to bring quality exhibitions to audiences across America and increasingly, around the world. By creating exhibitions and educational resources about the social and cultural history of medicine, we encourage visitors of all ages to learn more about themselves and their communities. We seek to stimulate people's enthusiasm for history and to nurture young professionals in history, education, museum studies, and the health professions. Our traveling exhibitions introduce communities to our online education resources created specifically for each exhibition and to the National Library of Medicine resources.³

In 2012, NLM traveling exhibits circulated widely, with 25 copies of 12 exhibitions going to 156 host venues in 43 states and five international locations.³

A richer literature exists in the area of general library outreach and programming, some of which touches on exhibits or other forms of outreach beyond the scope of traditional library work. This literature suggests many things, including the need for further training. For instance, Dutka and colleagues suggest that librarians would benefit from library school coursework related to exhibit organization, planning, and design.⁴ These authors delineate many potential benefits of hosting exhibits, including bringing new people into the library, publicity for the library on and off campus, partnerships with academic departments on campus, and good relations with donors. Exhibits might also be an example of co-curricular activity, which has been an effective way for academic libraries to market their services, elicit student feedback about library resources and space, and connect the library more closely with academic departments, the curriculum, and student activities. At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, librarians developed a "Student Affairs Connection" program in which they marketed the libraries to students in co-curricular settings, including activity fairs, orientations, and special events run by the library, such as game nights and "collaboratories" ("electronically-enhanced group studies").⁵ Gate counts have increased and student satisfaction scores have improved, suggesting that such activities have a positive impact. Carter and Seaman offer a literature review and research study regarding levels of academic library outreach support models, concentrating on staffing, time commitment, and funding.⁶ They found that libraries were providing outreach in the following ways: having one or more positions at least partially dedicated to outreach, having an outreach committee, having a plan or mission statement for outreach, offering library events, and offering "other" activities such as exhibits and art shows.

There is also a more extensive body of literature in existence about "library as place" and the continuing importance of bringing people into the physical spaces provided by libraries. A literature review in 2003⁷ specifically highlighted the importance of exhibit and gallery space as some of the desirable features of a library.⁷ As with the dedicated positions or staff time devoted to forwarding outreach efforts, it would seem that nontraditional uses of library space intended to display exhibits or showcase important collections are not uncommon.

DARWIN: THE VOYAGE BEGINS

The HSCL's first event series planned around a traveling exhibition from NLM was focused on the exhibit "Rewriting the Book of Nature: Charles Darwin and the Rise of Evolutionary Theory" <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/darwin/travelingexhibit.html>>. This exhibit focused on the life, work, and impact of Charles Darwin; the full version of the exhibit

coincided with the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his groundbreaking work, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Planning at the HSCL began in August of 2010 for an October opening.

At that time, an exhibits team was formed. Initially, this team was composed of just three librarians: two junior librarians who had little to no experience with planning library events, and the head of the BHIS department, who had extensive event planning experience, but limited experience hosting exhibits at the library. Formation of a team was a necessity at the HSCL, because no one librarian had time to be fully committed to exhibit and event planning. Perhaps more importantly, each member of the team had unique ideas, skill sets, and perspectives to contribute. Although the team wanted to plan programming around the exhibit, it was decided to plan relatively few events given the short timeline and a lack of funding.

The library held a small opening reception with refreshments and welcome from the library director. Additional programming was tied to campus interests and expertise, and included:

- An English-style tea and informal presentation by a nationally-renowned Darwin scholar from UF.
- A Galapagos travelogue by a librarian who had recently visited the islands.
- A panel of health care students who recently participated in health outreach trips to Central and South America.

Publicity for the exhibit and corresponding events included the usual means used by the library: development of a LibGuide <<http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/darwin>> including information about the exhibit and the events, e-mails from liaison librarians to their academic units, exhibit and event information posted on the library website, and printed posters displayed around the Health Science Center (HSC). The exhibit was on display on the first floor of the library from October 22 – December 8, 2010, and events occurred throughout the time the exhibit was in the library.

Although the events were well matched to the exhibit and relevant to the science and health professional students who use the HSCL, attendance was a disappointment, with fewer than 20 attending the opening, and fewer than ten participants at each of the other three events. Once the exhibit ended, the exhibits team met to reflect on the experience and lessons learned; these lessons included:

- HSCL users were not used to thinking of the library as a home for events, and strategies to change this mindset would need to be developed if future exhibits were to be successful.
- A three-month lead time for planning was insufficient and made it difficult to book speakers, even speakers based on campus.
- A larger and more skill-diverse team could facilitate the identification of speakers and campus partners, and decrease the planning burden.
- It was likely that having a larger budget could allow more diverse programming including events that could potentially draw more people in, such as external speakers and film screenings; therefore, funding opportunities (grants, partnerships) should be identified.
- The diversity of scientific and medical presentations and programming available to HSCL clients through other campus venues provided significant competition to the

same type of programming offered by the HSCL; a slate of events that represented both science/medicine as well as arts/humanities might be appealing and offer something different.

- The placement of the exhibit itself did not draw people into the library, as it was located in a back corner adjacent to bookshelves and a study area and was not immediately visible from the main entrance of the library.
- Finally, it was evident that going forward, the library needed to develop a robust and diverse marketing communications plan.

FRANKENSTEIN: BUILDING A BETTER EVENT SERIES

It was clear that if the HSCL's foray into hosting NLM exhibits were to continue, the lack of attendance needed to be addressed. Although development of a marketing communications plan is a recommended step for any library engaged in programming and outreach,^{8, 9} the HSCL did not have one prior to hosting the Darwin exhibit. Therefore, before planning started for Frankenstein, the exhibits team created a robust and stratified marketing communications plan. One important aspect of planning for marketing communications is to define target markets or audiences; different target markets may be reached best through different channels and may be segmented according to their characteristics, for example, whether they are the library's primary, secondary, internal, or external audience.⁸ Wakeham, in writing about marketing in health libraries, suggested using advertising (posters and fliers), publicity (items in newsletters and publications), personal contact (meeting department heads or presenting at meetings), incentives (freebies like pens or notepads), atmospherics (design of the library space), and public relations (letterhead, logos, branding).⁹ Other important sources of promotion and communication are personal contacts and word-of-mouth communication; both "external" contacts outside the library¹⁰ and "internal" resources, i.e., library employees,¹¹ are vital to marketing communication and promotion of library resources and services. It is also important to include some component of assessment when planning marketing communications in order to measure how successful marketing activities have been, and make changes in strategy where necessary.^{9, 12}

HSCL librarians developed a three-level plan segmenting marketing targets into the library's primary clients, consisting of faculty, students, and staff affiliated with the UF HSC and its six colleges and various institutes; the wider campus community, consisting of all faculty, students, and staff at UF; and a wider group including members of the local community. This plan includes over 40 methods or venues for promotion of library exhibits, events, and programs, including electronic or hybrid media such as the library website, e-mails from liaison librarians to their academic units, other campus websites, campus and local media outlets, and campus marquees; print media such as posters, flyers, and newsletters; and social media tools including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This plan has been used for all subsequent exhibits and has also been used for other events in which the library partners with academic units.

Planning for the exhibit and event series, "Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature" <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/about/exhibition/frankenstein.html>>, began in December 2010 for a May 2011 opening. Based on the numerous lessons learned from the Darwin experience, the exhibits team began to search for potential on- and off-campus speakers who could address relevant scientific or medical topics as well as those that could provide broader context. The team also drew from the content of the exhibit and decided to add film screenings of some of the classic interpretations of the Frankenstein story to the list of possible events. The final list of activities for the Frankenstein event series included:

- Lectures by three guest speakers from other universities; topics included *Frankenstein's* representation of science and technology, women writing in science fiction magazines, and Mary Shelley's life and influences.
- Screenings of four classic films: *The Body Snatcher*, *Frankenstein* (1931), *Bride of Frankenstein*, and *Young Frankenstein*.
- Lectures by four UF faculty members on use and misuse of cadavers in the history of medicine, medical and technological ethics, background for the film *Bride of Frankenstein*, and current research in regenerative medicine.
- An exhibit on electricity and medicine, created by the HSCL's archivist.

There were numerous potential advantages to expanding the event series to include off-campus speakers and film screenings. For instance, a wider variety of events might attract a larger and more diverse audience; similarly, external speakers might bring in larger audiences because attendees would have few other opportunities to hear from these distinguished colleagues. However, such changes were expensive, and it was necessary to determine how the HSCL would pay for these enhancements. Funding for programming is of interest to libraries of all kinds, as library budgets stagnate and budgeting must often be focused on essentials such as staffing and provision of resources. Dennis' survey documenting outreach initiatives in academic libraries between 2009 and 2011 found that many libraries were covering all or most of the cost of their outreach efforts, with outreach projects generally costing less than \$3,000.¹³ Goodman listed a number of potential partners or funders for public libraries, including state/regional governmental agencies, universities, foundations with an interest in community education and engagement, local businesses, and federal programs.¹⁴ Strategies differ in developing relationships with various types of organizations, but Goodman also identified skills that are generally important in developing new partnerships, including a desire to try new things, tolerance for uncertainty, creativity, and commercial sense (of the library's value and potential partners). Events such as orientations for new students, career fairs, alumni reunions, and "behind the scenes" tours, in addition to providing visibility for an academic library on campus, provide a means to develop and maintain relationships with potential donors to the library.¹⁵

At UF, the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere (CHPS) offers funding to support interdisciplinary workshops and speaker series that include a humanities component. In the case of the *Frankenstein* exhibit, all three of the outside speakers invited by the team were English or literature professors at other institutions who had published about *Frankenstein* or Mary Shelley. The HSCL received \$2,500 from the Center to cover part of the cost of bringing in off-campus speakers as well as the cost of licensing the four films. Aligning planned events not only with the exhibit theme, but also with the mission of a potential funding agency, is essential to successful fundraising. The interdisciplinary nature of the *Frankenstein* event series, and the inclusion of humanities content, was appealing to the CHPS, so much so that the Center was willing to be flexible in terms of funding cycle. Although the advertised funding dates included the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters, CHPS was willing to consider the HSCL's request for funding for Summer 2011 because the proposal met all other requirements and matched the Center's mission and goals.

The library also received funding from the Public Relations and Marketing Committee (PR&M) of the Smathers Libraries (campus library system to which the HSCL reports), which provides monies to purchase refreshments for events and promotional materials for libraries at UF. While the HSCL covered the cost of bringing in the exhibit and some of the expenses related to the events, this funding from outside the library allowed the team to plan and host a much more extensive series of events than was possible for Darwin.

As with Darwin, the exhibits team was able to take advantage of existing liaison librarian partnerships to pull in speakers, in this case from the Departments of Biology and Community Health and Family Medicine. The library also sought partnerships with faculty from main campus to introduce the films. A LibGuide <<http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/frankenstein>> and videos were created to help advertise the events, the new communications plan was used for the first time, and the exhibit was covered in the local newspaper. As a result of these more formalized marketing and communication procedures, attendance at Frankenstein events was higher than that at Darwin events, ranging from 10 to 30 attendees at each event. In fact, the mean (21.2) and median (22) number of attendees at Frankenstein outpaced the highest attended Darwin-related event.

In order to assess both the response to the exhibits and events and the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategy, the exhibits team developed a survey to be distributed at all events (see Appendix 1).

OPENING DOORS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

For the next exhibit hosted by the HSCL, “Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons” <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/aframsurgeons/travel.html>>, planning began later than expected—in July 2011 for an October 2011 exhibit opening. This time, the exhibits team was expanded beyond the three librarians who had planned the previous exhibits and events to include two other librarians, an archivist, and a library IT expert with extensive graphics experience.

Opening Doors presented an opportunity to literally open doors, by working for the first time with a campus student organization. One increasingly common way for libraries to provide new services and to address overall “community well-being” is to form partnerships with other academic units and groups in the community, including other libraries, museums, education services, and diverse units within the university. Different types of libraries have often worked together to make resources and programs available to a wider range of people; one example of this is a partnership between the National Library of Scotland and public libraries to provide support for abused and battered women and children.¹⁶ Museums have also partnered with libraries in order to leverage the strengths of both organizations.¹⁷ These collaborations take many forms and range from collaboration on community heritage programs, sharing access to electronic resources, and establishing joint-use facilities, to full integration of formerly separate institutions.¹⁸ Partners within an institution, such as alumni groups, university bookstores, and student groups, are also valuable allies for libraries seeking to extend their influence within a campus community.¹⁹ In addition to providing supplementary funding and broadening the audience, partnerships take advantage of expertise that the library might not have, helping identify programming of interest and providing additional connections. A recurring theme in discussions about these partnerships is the library becoming or remaining central to the mission of a university or a community. This, of course, aligns very closely with goals of the HSCL’s exhibits and events program.

Applying some of what had been learned from experience, the team sought event planning and funding partnerships with new groups, especially those with some connection to the exhibit content and subject matter. Groups related to surgery, cardiovascular medicine, and minorities in health care were identified as potential partners. One such group was UF’s chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA). SNMA is “the oldest and largest student-run organization focused on the needs and concerns of medical students of color.”²⁰ The collaboration with the SNMA chapter was especially fruitful, as the group ran a suture clinic for university and high school students, and hosted breakfast prior to the keynote speaker’s presentation. Although the library also approached the Department of

Surgery and Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, the team received no response to requests for funding or other support. The exhibits team also sought outside funding to supplement the cost of the exhibit and events and was successful in obtaining funding from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) Southeastern/Atlantic Region to support the community health, education, and diversity aspects of the planned event series, aspects that fit well with the priorities of the NN/LM. Once again the HSCL received funding for refreshments for some events from the PR&M Committee.

A LibGuide <<http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/openingdoors>> was developed to provide information about the exhibit and events, and the marketing communications plan was employed to promote the exhibit and events. This time, promotion efforts were focused on the HSC population, pre-health students, and minority students.

The slate of events for Opening Doors included:

- A suture clinic and health information literacy class targeted to high school and undergraduate students.
- A panel of UF health care students who recently participated in health outreach trips to Central and South America.
- A keynote address by prominent African American surgeon and pioneer of cardiac surgery, Dr. Levi Watkins.
- A panel discussion including four UF clinicians of color from the Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine who related their experiences and offered advice to students.
- A screening of the film *Something the Lord Made*, with an introduction by a cardiologist from the UF Congenital Heart Center.

Attendance at Opening Doors events ranged from seven to 26 attendees (mean 17.0, median 17), with the highest attendance at the keynote address by Dr. Watkins. The keynote address and panel discussion were covered in the news section of the College of Medicine's website, and subsequent events were also posted there along with a link to the LibGuide.

The team learned a great deal from the experience of planning the Opening Doors events. The larger team worked well; all team members had unique contributions to bring to the process. A more fluid exhibits team, with different members involved in planning events depending on their interests and other commitments, allowed more librarians to participate and permitted team members involved with other projects to focus on those endeavors. Also, two exhibits in one year were more than could be handled on a regular basis, even with an expanded team. One major exhibit per year would be planned going forward.

HARRY POTTER: THE MAGIC CONTINUES

In 2012, the HSCL hosted "Harry Potter's World: Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine" <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/about/exhibition/harrypotter-bookinfo.html>>, which focused on the popular series of novels by J. K. Rowling and the influence of Renaissance science and medicine in the books. Planning for the exhibit and related events began early—the exhibits team convened in December 2011 for a September 2012 exhibit opening. The team consisted of the core group (original three librarians, the archivist, the IT expert), and the HSCL's liaison librarian to the College of Pharmacy, who was interested in the subject matter and its relationship to medicinal plants.

Major focuses of the planning process included identifying relevant external speakers; considering partnerships with UF faculty members, departments, and student groups; and determining what sources of funding might be available on or off campus to support a slate of events. Because of the popularity of the book series, a more robust opening event was planned, and collaborations outside the institution were deemed even more critical. A new partnership was developed with a local science museum, the Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention, with representatives from the museum providing “magic” demonstrations along with scientific explanations at the exhibit’s opening. The team partnered with the local public library system to host a similar joint event and to publicize the exhibit and event series to the local community.

On campus and prior to the arrival of the NLM exhibit, the team participated in a “Museum Nights” event at the Harn Museum of Art on campus, displaying materials on medicinal plants presented in the Harry Potter series. Other campus partners included the UF Quidditch Team, which was present at the exhibit opening; the Digital Worlds Institute, which made available its unique projection environment (the Research, Education, and Visualization Environment, REVE) to screen one Harry Potter film; and the Honors College, which provided financial support for use of the REVE. The HSCL archivist also partnered with the Honors College, offering a course in its (Un)Common Read Program. The course explored the book *Harry Potter and Imagination: The Way between Two Worlds* by Travis Prinzi and proved so popular that a second section was opened.

Ultimately, the library sponsored the following events surrounding the Harry Potter exhibit:

- An opening event featuring “magical” science demonstrations, costume and trivia contests, themed refreshments, wand-making, picture-taking with Snape, Hermione, and Harry cardboard cutouts, and a meet and greet with the UF Quidditch Team.
- Screenings of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1*, and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*.
- Three outside speakers who spoke on portrayals of race in Harry Potter, the alchemical structure of the series, and using concepts in the books to teach basic genetics to children.
- Presentations, panels, and film introductions by on-campus speakers from a wide variety of disciplines including ophthalmology, orthopaedics, molecular genetics, and pharmacy, as well as anthropology, classics, history, and law.
- An exhibit on medicinal plants used in Harry Potter and in nineteenth century medical manuals created by the HSCL’s archivist and an exhibit on medicinal plants located at the public library.
- A joint event held at the local public library including “magical” science demonstrations and the physical exhibit on display.
- A display in the library coinciding with Banned Books Week, focused on controversies over the Harry Potter series.

To support this wide array of events, the team sought and received funding from prior supporters (CPHS and the PR&M Committee) as well as new entities. The UF Catalyst Fund, a program through the Provost’s office, supports interdisciplinary activities, and helped fund external speakers and the Cade Museum events. Through the (Un)Common Read class connection, the Honors College provided funding for the films, and the UF Genetics Institute covered the costs of refreshments at the genetics-related researcher panel and presentation.

As in the past, the team developed a LibGuide <<http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/harrypotter>> and used the marketing communications plan, this time focusing on attracting an audience from across the UF campus, and bringing in members of the local community. A 30-second video featuring a dementor (an adversarial character from the Harry Potter universe) hovering in front of the library was displayed on large-screen monitors within and outside the library one week prior to the opening events to stimulate interest in the exhibit. In addition, an approximation of the official Harry Potter font was used on posters and other promotional materials to generate brand recognition. The event at the Harn Museum of Art attracted a crowd of some 300 people and provided advertising for the upcoming Harry Potter exhibit. Advance notice and use of the marketing communications plan also generated significant publicity and interest among local magazines, newspapers, and other news outlets: the local newspaper, the student-run newspaper, and a local magazine all featured articles. In addition, stories appeared in the news section of the UF College of Medicine's website before, during, and after the Harry Potter events.

The events held in conjunction with the Harry Potter exhibit had much higher attendance than events associated with previous exhibits; the exhibit opening and event at the public library each drew over 300 people. Attendance ranged from an estimated 30 to 100 at the other events. This dramatic increase in attendance was likely due in great part to the popularity of the subject matter, since many younger students grew up with the book series and feel a close connection to the novels, but it may also reflect the HSCL's growing effectiveness in developing and promoting relevant programming and fruitful collaborations. Two new partnerships helped drive student attendance. Promoting the genetics-related events to the undergraduate genetics instructor provided a potential audience of 100 additional students. By developing the Harry Potter-themed undergraduate honors course and requiring enrolled students to visit the exhibit and attend a few events, the HSCL's archivist created a ready-made audience of 50 students and tied the HSCL ever closer to the educational mission of the university.

ASSESSING THE TEAM'S EFFORTS AND LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Internal Survey

Assessment and evaluation are important issues in librarianship, as a search of the library literature demonstrates. Academic libraries are attempting to measure, count, describe, and understand the impact of library services, instruction, the library space, and a variety of other aspects of the environment.^{21, 22} However, very little of this literature on assessment and evaluation relates to evaluating outreach or library programming, a noticeable gap in both library practice and scholarship. In order to evaluate the impact of the exhibits and related events on attendees, the exhibits team developed an eight-question survey (Appendix 1), which was exempted by UF's Behavioral/Non-Medical Institutional Review Board (IRB02). The survey was distributed at all events starting with the Frankenstein exhibit and included questions on basic demographics, how attendees learned about the event they attended as well as their preferred mode of notification, if their perceptions of the library were affected by the event, and suggestions for future events. The participant survey was revised slightly prior to the Opening Doors exhibit to be more specific about changes in attitude toward the library; a question that asked whether the exhibit and events changed the respondent's perception of the library was modified to capture whether that change was positive or negative. Two-hundred thirty-six surveys were completed at the events where they were distributed: 90 at Frankenstein events, 27 at Opening Doors events, and 119 at Harry Potter events.

Affiliations of all exhibit attendees (UF Health Science Center, other UF college, the UF libraries, general public, and other) are summarized in Table 1. Differences in attendee

demographics across the three exhibits mirrored, to some extent, the marketing communications focus for each exhibit. Frankenstein events, with their humanities focus, appealed to campus community members from other UF colleges as well as the Health Science Center. Opening Doors events, which were advertised primarily to Health Science Center constituents, had primarily HSC attendees. Harry Potter events were marketed broadly to the campus and local community, and survey responses indicated that many attendees were from the broader UF campus, especially those participating in the honors class. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many members of the general public also attended the opening and public library events; although these two events had the highest attendance, relatively few surveys were completed at them (13 at the opening and 0 at the public library event).

For every exhibit-related event series, the majority of respondents to the survey indicated that they were students, although the percentage of students in the audience varied among exhibits. The largest self-reported percentage of students attended the Harry Potter exhibit events (101 respondents, 86.3%), followed by those at Opening Doors (17 respondents, 63.0%) and Frankenstein (55 respondents, 59.1%). This suggests that the team's efforts to target specific student populations (undergraduate students in genetics and the Harry Potter honors course) were successful for the Harry Potter events.

Attendees who completed the survey were asked both how they found out about the event they attended and how they would like to be notified about future events hosted by the library; their responses are summarized in Figure 1. Based on open-ended comments, "other" ways that attendees learned about events included communication about events from course instructors, communication by staff at a local retirement community, and notices posted on electronic marquees located on the edges of campus.

Attendees were asked if the event they attended changed their perception of the library. Of the 224 respondents who completed the question, 189 (84.4%) answered in the affirmative and 35 (15.6%) answered in the negative. All those who answered the follow-up question of whether their changed perception was positive or negative (63) indicated that the change was positive. Starting with the Opening Doors exhibit, respondents were also asked to comment on how their perceptions changed, with 24 attendees responding. A common response indicated that attendees had previously lacked awareness that the library hosted such exhibitions. There were several comments that described positive impressions of particular exhibitions, most notably Harry Potter.

Attendees were asked what kind of events they would like to see hosted by the HSC Library in the future (see Figure 2). Responses to this question were grouped based on the type of event the participant attended: a speaker event, a film screening, a discussion panel, or another type of event (opening reception or sutre clinic). The same categories of response were used to group the type of future events the respondents wanted the HSCL to host. A number of responses addressed the content of desired future events rather than the format; these responses and those that provided no specific information were grouped together under "Not specified." "Other" types of events described represented a wide range, from career-related events for students and research events to cooking classes and videogame tournaments.

External Survey

In order to determine whether the HSCL's experiences in hosting NLM exhibits were shared by other libraries, the exhibits team developed a 22-question survey addressing demographics, what types of other activities these libraries hosted, funding sources for exhibits and events, partnerships developed, how exhibits and events were advertised and

evaluated, and overall lessons learned (Appendix 2). The survey was exempted by UF's Behavioral/NonMedical Institutional Review Board (IRB02) and distributed via e-mail to contacts at all institutions that had hosted any of the four NLM exhibits also hosted by the HSCL. The survey was open from December 14, 2012 – January 18, 2013, and an e-mail reminder was sent two weeks prior to the close of the survey. One-hundred forty-three survey invitations were sent out, and 40 institutional representatives responded to the survey, for a response rate of 28.0%.

The majority of respondents (26, 72.2%) represented academic medical or health sciences libraries. The next most common categories represented were academic libraries at the university or college level not focused on medicine or the health sciences (3 responses, 8.3%), hospital libraries (2 responses, 5.6%), non-academic medical or health sciences libraries (2 responses, 5.6%), and public libraries (2 responses, 5.6%).

Twenty-six respondents (74.3%) indicated that they had hosted other activities along with NLM exhibit(s). Of these, 69.2% hosted speakers, 50.0% hosted discussion panels and/or other kinds of events, and 26.9% hosted film screenings. Other types of activities mentioned by several respondents included hosting a reception or open house, creating local exhibits on topics related to the NLM exhibit, and developing contests or quizzes related to the exhibit's content.

Respondents were asked how they advertised exhibits and events, and their responses are summarized in Figure 3. "Other" methods of advertising mentioned included newspaper or newsletter articles, distribution via campus listservs, public radio announcement, and use of digital displays around campus. The modes of communication about events preferred by UF respondents were all used by external institutions, although e-mail (the most preferred mode of communication in the internal survey) was mentioned less frequently than posters and flyers or promotion on the library website.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions about funding for the traveling exhibitions and related events. Respondents were asked whether they received funding from their library, and 28 (82.4%) of the 24 respondents did. This funding was often used to pay the costs of shipping the exhibit to or from the library (11 responses) and to offer refreshments at one or more event (11 responses). Other uses of library funding were for speaker honoraria and travel, promotional materials, creation of local exhibits, and film screening rights. Respondents were asked whether they received funding from other units within their institution (outside of the library), and 31.3% of the 32 respondents did. Respondents were asked whether they received funding from outside their institution, and 30.0% of the 10 respondents did, in one case from a local charitable organization and in one case from a local historical society.

Respondents were asked whether or not they partnered with other entities and institutions, both within and external to their organization. Thirty-three respondents answered the question about internal partnerships, with 19 (57.6%) responding in the affirmative. Seventeen respondents provided descriptions of their partnerships, with those most common including other departments, colleges, and libraries on campus. Additional partnerships included public health departments, community outreach organizations, professional organizations, alumni organizations, and another university. Due to faulty skip logic, only respondents who responded affirmatively to the question about internal partnerships were directed to the open-ended question asking them to describe their partnerships.

Since evaluation was important in the planning process for the HSC Library, survey participants were asked if they evaluated the success of their exhibitions and related activities. Thirty-two responses to the question were received, with 22 respondents (68.8%)

indicating that they did not evaluate their programs, while 10 respondents (31.3%) did perform some sort of evaluation. In the subsequent open-ended question, the respondents who reported performing evaluations were asked to describe the process. Two respondents indicated that they asked attendees to complete a survey form; other methods of gathering feedback included attendance counts, comments received from library patrons, recognition by the administration of the institution, and web statistics. Subsequent questions asked respondents if there was any evidence that the exhibit and surrounding events changed clients' perceptions of the library, and if so, to describe that evidence. Seventeen respondents (53.1%) indicated that they had evidence that clients' perceptions of the library had been changed; nine of these respondents also indicated that they had evaluated their efforts. All but one of the "evaluating" institutions indicated that they had evidence that perceptions had changed. In describing that evidence, responses were varied; most indicators related to increased traffic to the library or were anecdotal—comments or feedback from those who attended or heard about the exhibit or events.

The final survey question asked respondents to describe the lessons they learned while hosting an NLM exhibit. Twenty-four descriptions were received in regard to the question on lessons learned. Major response themes included the importance of planning, time requirements, and partnerships developed. Specific recommendations made often mirrored the lessons learned by the HSCL exhibits team. For instance, one respondent suggested that those involved, "start planning early. Assign this to a group, not just one person." Survey respondents also commented on the time required to adequately plan exhibits events, saying, "it takes more time than you think it will." Survey respondents saw the value of partnerships, both in developing innovative content and in getting buy-in from potential attendees. As one respondent stated, "[the] more the university community is involved in the planning/pre-hosting stages the better the attendance and success of exhibit/events." Additional themes included the necessity of marketing to the success of the exhibitions and the positive outreach outcomes of hosting exhibitions.

CONCLUSION

The HSCL exhibits team learned many lessons over the course of two years and four exhibits. Surveying event attendees as well as representatives of other hosting libraries provided useful insights into audience reaction and institutional strategies. The experiences described and the information that was gathered may be useful to librarians at other institutions who are interested in hosting exhibits, planning events, and marketing these offerings to their core user groups and beyond.

Some of the most valuable lessons learned include:

- Exhibits and related events do bring more people into the library.
- Exhibits and related events can change perceptions of the library—the reaction is usually positive.
- When undertaking exhibit and event planning, allow enough time to thoroughly contact any individuals or groups that may be involved and work out the logistics—this can take up to a year. Planning pays off.
- There is much to be gained from forming partnerships with groups outside the library. These partnerships can be with organizations inside or outside the parent institution.
- Developing a robust marketing communications plan can help boost attendance at library events.

- It pays to be creative when considering funding opportunities for library exhibits and events. In particular:
 - Seeking non-traditional funding sources can be worthwhile.
 - Funding does not have to be in the form of one huge grant—little bits from various sources help.
 - To facilitate funding, only one exhibit per academic year should be attempted.
- Some topics, by their nature, will draw in more people. Think about the potential audience and their interests when planning exhibits and events.
- Evaluation is very important—this effort is the best way to learn what is working well and what could be changed for the better.

These lessons will be applied by the HSC Library exhibits team in the spring of 2013 with the arrival of another NLM exhibit focused on the revival of native Hawaiian traditions, “A Voyage to Health” <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/about/exhibition/avoyagetohealth-bookinfo.html>>, and a series of events planned to complement the themes of the exhibit.

Through evaluation, it is possible to describe the impact, internal and external, of hosting NLM exhibits and events. Internally, hosting the exhibits has helped hone library faculty and staff expertise in developing library events, gaining outside funding, and collaborating with units on campus outside of the academic health center. Additionally, the heavily-used marketing plan, although developed initially to support marketing for NLM exhibits, can be utilized for virtually any library event. The impact on users’ perceptions of the library is perhaps one of the greatest benefits of hosting exhibits. It is clear from survey data that the HSCL’s core audience, the wider campus population, and community members, responded positively to the exhibits, with many respondents indicating that their perceptions of the HSCL were changed as a result of attending an event. Hosting NLM traveling exhibits has not only helped the HSCL to creatively support the educational and research mission of the university, but has impacted perceptions of the library as a welcoming and dynamic place.

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APPENDIX 1 – HSC LIBRARY EVENTS SURVEY

1. What is your affiliation?
 - ☐ Member of the general public
 - ☐ UF Health Science Center
 - ☐ Other UF college
 - ☐ UF Libraries
 - ☐ Other _____
2. Are you a student?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

3. Are you more likely to use the HSC Library now that you have attended an event hosted by the HSCL?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please comment:

4. Did this event change your perceptions of what the HSC Library has to offer?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If so, was this a positive or negative change?

Please provide any additional comments:

5. How did you hear about this event? (Check all that apply.)

☐ E-mail announcement

☐ HSC Library web page

☐ HSC Library Facebook page

☐ HSC Library Twitter feed

☐ Other library web page, Facebook or Twitter

☐ Newspaper or newsletter

☐ Poster or flier on campus

☐ Poster or flier off campus

☐ Word of mouth

☐ Other _____

6. What is the best way to inform you about future library events? (Check all that apply.)

☐ E-mail announcement

☐ HSC Library web page

☐ HSC Library Facebook page

☐ HSC Library Twitter feed

☐ Other library web page, Facebook or Twitter

☐ Newspaper or newsletter

☐ Poster or flier on campus

☐ Poster or flier off campus

☐ Word of mouth

☐ Other _____

7. What kind of events would you like to see hosted by the HSC Library?

8. Any additional comments:

APPENDIX 2 – NLM EXHIBITS SURVEY

1. What kind of library do you represent?
Academic library (university or college, non-medical)
Academic medical or health science library
Non-academic medical or health science library
Hospital library
2. Which exhibitions have you hosted? (Please check all that apply)
Against the Odds: Making a Difference in Global Health
And There's the humor of it: "Shakespeare and the four humors"
Binding Wounds, Pushing Boundaries: African Americans in Civil War Medicine
Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating American's Women Physicians
Everyday Miracles: Medical Imagery in Ex-Votos
Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature
Harry Patter's World: Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine
The Henkel Physicians: A Family's Life in Letters
Life and Limb: The Toll of the American Civil War
The Literature of Prescriptions: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Yellow Wall-Paper
Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons
Rewriting the Book of Nature: Charles Darwin and the Rise of Evolutionary Theory
A Voyage to Health
3. Please indicate how you advertised the exhibitions. (Check all that apply).
Library Web Page
University Web Page
Email
Print Flyers or Posters
Facebook
Twitter
Other (please specify)
4. Did you include other activities with the exhibitions?
Yes
No
5. Please indicate what type of activities you included (Check all that apply).
6. Did you receive funding from your library to support the exhibitions or related activities?

7. Please describe the funding including source, amount, and how the funds were used.
8. Did you receive funding OUTSIDE YOUR LIBRARY (but within your institution for the exhibitions or any related activities?)
Yes
No
9. Please describe the funding.
10. Did you receive funding from OUTSIDE YOUR INSTITUTION for the exhibitions or any related activities?
Yes
No
11. Please describe the funding.
12. Did you partner with other libraries, colleges, departments, programs, institutes, centers, etc. on your campus?
Yes
No
13. Please describe your partnership including who you partnered with and how the partnership worked.
14. Did you partner with other libraries, colleges, departments, programs, institutes, centers, etc. OUTSIDE your institution?
Yes
No
15. Please describe your partnership including who you partnered with and how the partnership worked.
16. Did you evaluate the success of your exhibitions and related activities?
Yes
No
17. Please describe how you evaluated the exhibitions and related activities.
18. Please indicate how you feel about attendance at the exhibitions and related events:
Attendance met expectations
Attendance did not meet expectations
Attendance exceeded expectations
19. Is there any evidence that the exhibit and surrounding events influenced your clients' perception of the library?
Yes
No
20. Please describe the evidence.

21. Please tell us about the lessons you learned in deciding to host an NLM exhibitions, planning for the exhibition, and anything else related to the event.

FIGURE 1.
Notification about HSC Library events

FIGURE 2.
Types of events respondents wanted the HSCL to host in the future, by type of event they attended

FIGURE 3.
Ways that other libraries advertised their traveling exhibits and related activities

TABLE 1

Affiliation of Attendees

	General Public	UF HSC	Other UF Colleges	UF Libraries	Other
Frankenstein Events (n=90)	17	26	33	6	8
Opening Doors Events (n=27)	0	14	8	2	3
Harry Potter Events (n=119)	12	8	85	2	12