

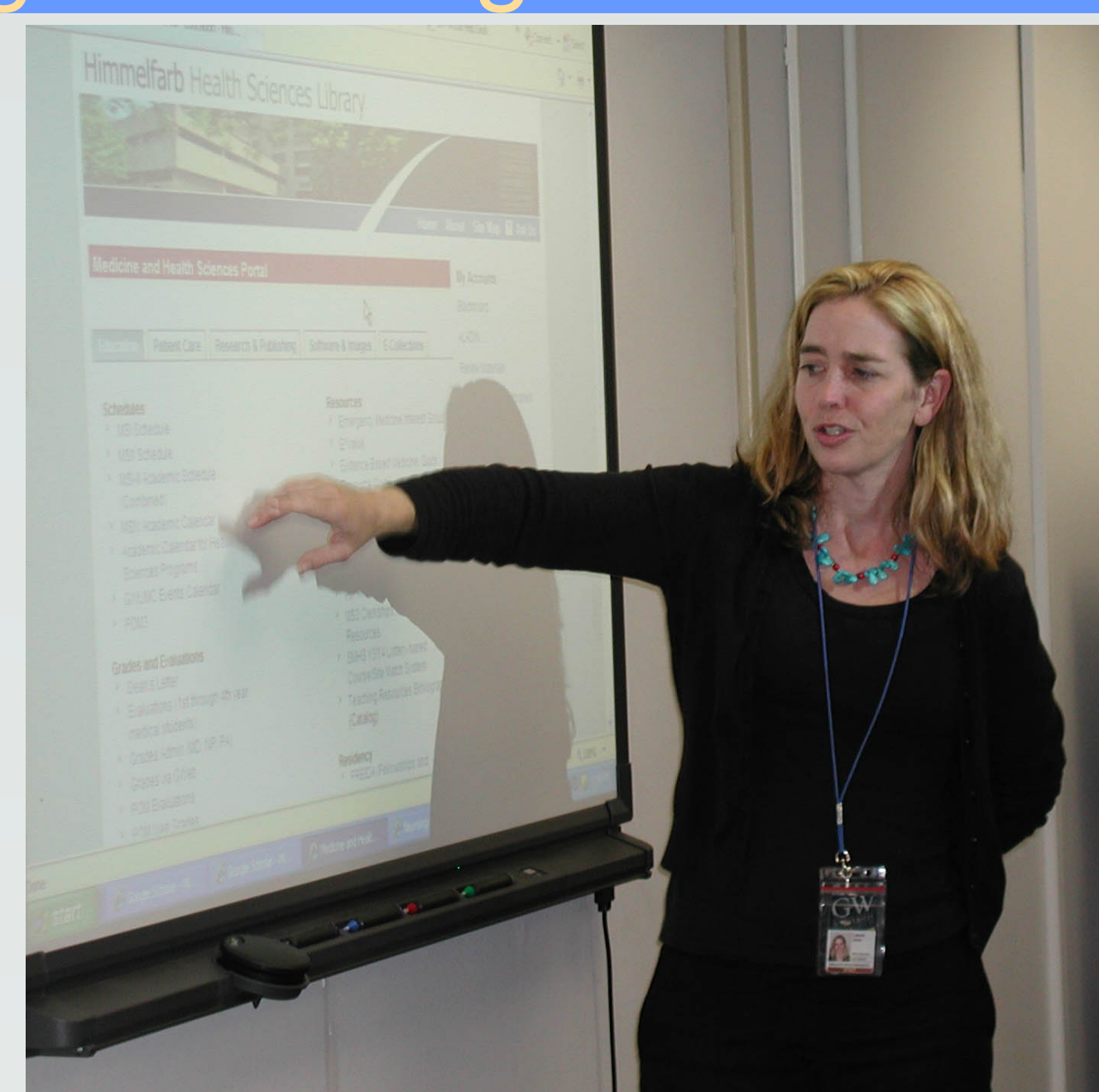
Create and Teach an Elective? Me?

Overcoming fear of new roles

Alexandra Gomes, Laura Abate, Tom Harrod
Himmelfarb Library, The George Washington University



Project Overview: Inquiries about new informatics instructional opportunities in the curriculum led to a suggestion that the librarians submit an elective proposal. Despite knowing nothing about the approval process or the responsibilities of being a course director, several librarians accepted the challenge as a learning experience. Developing the proposal included writing the proposal, formally presenting it to two curriculum committees for approval, and then creating the specific lesson plans, identifying associated readings, creating a grading rubric and syllabus, and teaching the specific elective sessions. Librarians developed the elective Introduction to Systematic Reviews and are in the process of developing a second elective.



New challenges	Coping with challenges	Lessons learned
Approval process: creating and presenting elective proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chose topic with strong connection to library and librarians' knowledge-base Followed template and used information on why other proposals had failed to develop answers for anticipated questions Prequalified with Asst. Dean for Curricular Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your homework Communicate with Office of Medical Education Look at others' proposals
Responsibility for entire course from beginning to end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divided among three instructors Lots of lead time Strong outcome and interim deadlines with meetings Use of Google Docs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative technology helps the process Be willing to shuffle sessions as planning progresses Be open to inviting outside experts as guest speakers Be prepared to learn what you don't know
Learning new material/content before we could teach it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework for librarians! Incorporate active learning Invite selected guest speakers Integrate students' daily homework with course discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't have to be an expert on everything Be prepared to tweak as the course rolls out Meet after each class to review what needs tweaking
Figuring out how to fulfill the out of class time requirements for a three credit course (new stricter standards implemented at time our course was proposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings, videos, activities Identified high-quality, highly relevant ebook Structured daily homework assignments to feed into final project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students wanted more peer and faculty feedback than initially planned Balance time for feedback with time for planned instruction
Helping students frame the clinical part of systematic review questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanted to find subject experts but were unsuccessful Became a teaching point as students learned more and developed increased ownership of questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's ok to start with imperfect questions; can keep honing during the course Fine tuning the question enhanced students' understanding of systematic review steps
Dealing with the end-of-semester administrative and grade-related tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified appropriate contacts in administrative offices Tightened up assessment rubrics to enhance transparency Pass/Fail vs. Honors/High Pass/Pass Added point cutoffs for Honors/HP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of level of student motivation Consider grading system (P/F vs H/HP/P) early in planning process
Time management for both instruction preparation and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start early and break into chunks Set intermediate deadlines Peer pressure from having other instructors Sense of ownership among instructors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's a lot of work and requires a lot of time Be realistic regarding time requirements Instruction is easier with each iteration of the course
Attendance: Would anyone sign up for the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertised course to students via email Added to course catalog Timed the offering to allow enrollment by multiple classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing challenge Focused advertising with students on the Research Track
Participation: Would the students be active participants in class activities, discussions, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated active learning paired activities (less threatening) Transparency regarding class objectives, materials, etc. Allow students to select topics of personal interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared if students feel out of their depth and won't engage as much