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House Librarians as Instructors in a Self-Directed, Capstone-Related 3rd year Flexible Clinical Experience



Lamar Soutter Library
A Leader in Service and Learning

Office of Undergraduate
Medical Education (OUME)

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NEGEA 2016 Annual Retreat
Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
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Student Reflections

In AY 10/12, U Mass Medical School introduced a new, longitudinal curriculum (LInC). One component of LInC was the introduction of Learning Communities or “Houses.” Five houses, named after Worcester neighborhoods, were formed and became the students’ academic and social home. Librarians from the Lamar Soutter Library were assigned as “house librarians” to each house.



Two specific components of LInC that were a natural fit for librarian involvement were a) support of the new Capstone project and b) the self-designed, Capstone-related 3rd year Flexible Clinical Experience (FCE) program. The FCE course is a required component of the third year curriculum for which students participate in four week-long electives of their choice. In the self-designed or “Library FCE,” students can spend one week conducting research relevant to their Capstone with their house librarian serving as instructor. In the Academic Year 2015-2016, **39%** of all FCEs were student designed and **46%** of these were dedicated to Capstone Research.

With the increased number of students seeking library services, FCE Program policy was changed in AY 15/16 such that Lamar Soutter librarians may evaluate student performance.

Librarians’ Reflections of the Program

“Over time I learned it is important to see students at least twice. Follow up is essential to the success of their course experience.”

“By focusing on the student’s specific topic, I found teaching how to search in PubMed was meaningful and successful.”

“I suggested referral with the IRB after discussing the Capstone project.”

“We discovered and explored a government database not commonly used in the library, but critical for his Capstone. It was a learning experience for both of us!”

MMXVI

WHAT IS A CAPSTONE ?

Capstone is a four-year comprehensive, longitudinal experience. Upon completion, medical students will have identified a professionally-related topic of interest or need, will have developed objectives to address the topic and will demonstrate mastery of the material through various presentation methods such as poster presentation, oral presentation or artistic output.



“Mr. Levin has been the Burncoat House librarian since my first year in medical school, so whenever I needed help with academic or research related activities I have always gone straight to him. That made it especially easy for me to coordinate my two weeklong library Flexible Clinical Experiences as he was already aware of some of the research I had been doing. Having access to a knowledgeable preceptor to help navigate was immensely helpful as I worked through data analysis and submission of a manuscript to a peer review journal. Although my FCEs have ended Mr. Levin continues to be an extremely valuable resource that I use early and often.”
Geneva DiGregorio, MS III

“Having an FCE with a library component has been incredibly helpful. The input, availability, and expertise of the library staff has been invaluable in helping to streamline my work and make what is a limited time for research more impactful and meaningful.” *Samuel Goldman, MS III*



“I was able to work with Len during my self-designed Capstone FCE week, and he not only helped me learn about different resources I could use for my project, but he reached out to other librarians in order to see if anyone had knowledge about my project topic. He sent me relevant articles as well, and his assistance greatly facilitated my research.” *Rebecca Angoff, MS III*

Examples of Student Feedback (Responses rated on a 1-4 scale)

Increase your understanding of the topic?	3.83
I would recommend this FCE to other students.	3.6
Supervision and training to complete experience?	3.49
Resources to complete experience?	3.6
Overall, how would you rate this experience?	3.68

Abstract



1. Lamar Soutter Library <http://library.umassmed.edu>
2. Office of Undergraduate Medical Education <http://www.umassmed.edu/oume>