

## Transcript for “Opening Medical Humanities to the World: Reflecting on Library Support for the Medical Humanities Lab”

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[LISA]

Hello! My name is Lisa Palmer and I’m the Institutional Repository Librarian at the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Welcome to our poster “Opening Medical Humanities to the World: Reflecting on Library Support for the Medical Humanities Lab.”

Medical humanities is an interdisciplinary field of medicine that uses methods, concepts, and content from the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts to investigate aspects of healthcare education and practice. Studies have shown that medical humanities projects help medical students and physicians to foster empathy and compassionate behavior for their patients, reduce burnout, and reinforce clinical ethics, among many other benefits.

For years, our library has supported humanities projects on campus. In 2019, my co-presenter Regina Raboin, Associate Director of the Library, took this support to the next level by partnering with two faculty leaders, Drs. David Hatem and Hugh Silk, along with interested medical students, to launch the Medical Humanities Lab initiative.

Its mission is to integrate arts and humanities into medical education and healthcare through student, faculty, and staff collaborations fostering humanism in medicine. The Library has provided logistical support, promotional assistance, leadership and technology expertise. My co-presenter Tess Grynoch, a research data and scholarly communications librarian, designed and maintains the program’s website on the LibGuides platform, which showcases lab projects and helps members of our community identify possible collaborators, advisors, and other resources.

Tess will now discuss two of the lab’s projects in more detail.

[TESS]

Thanks, Lisa. In addition to the website, Library collaboration was critical for some projects. Lisa’s expertise was instrumental in archiving episodes and creating accessible audio transcriptions of a student-created narrative medicine podcast called *Murmurs: Stories of Our Journey in Medicine* in the medical school’s open access institutional repository. Click the “Listen now” button for a recent episode.

Another project involved digitization of a physical *Clinical Anthology* of student writings, typically handed out to rising 3rd-year medical students to act as a reflection tool during their clinical rotations. Students are more likely to carry their phone than a book in their pocket, so an effort was spearheaded to digitize the Anthology. I built a SharePoint website, digitized the physical works, uploaded the content, and consulted on copyright considerations.



The Additional Projects section of our poster includes descriptions and links for other unique Humanities Lab projects that the Library has supported.

Regina will now share our takeaways from this experience.

[REGINA]

Thanks, Tess and Lisa. We believe there are important reasons why the Medical Humanities Lab collaboration at UMass Medical School has had some success. The Library is well-respected on campus and has long-standing connections to the campus' medical humanities and diversity and inclusion efforts. Expertise is available across campus and among off-campus affiliates in skills that are crucial for this work. Another factor is the interdisciplinary nature of librarianship: librarians possess expertise in supporting a holistic, liberal arts approach to medical education.

We also face several challenges, such as:

- Developing clarity of purpose and raising awareness
- Collaborating with and supporting busy faculty-clinicians and students
- And keeping momentum going for an all-volunteer effort

Moving forward, building on the strong framework now in place, we want to focus on: more integration into the curriculum; an intentional focus on diversity, equity and inclusion; attracting more participants; and increasing internal and external support and funding.

We believe this case study illustrates that librarians can lead and support medical humanities initiatives on their campuses. We are grateful for the support of the members of the Humanities Lab and of our library colleagues, especially Kristine Sjostedt, without whose participation the Humanities Lab and various projects would not have been possible.

Thank you for listening! We've uploaded a handout with links to resources and relevant citations. We hope that you will connect with us via the chat and on Twitter. We would love to hear about medical humanities initiatives at your institution, or if you have any suggestions for us. Click on the link at the bottom of the poster to access a form and tell us more. Thank you.

