

Discussing the Past and Envisioning the Future

A History of the Health Sciences Lecture Series

William E. Laupus Health Sciences Library, East Carolina University

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Background

The Medical History Interest Group (MHIG) was established in the fall of 2001 by the Laupus Library History Collections in collaboration with the School of Medicine's Medical Humanities department. The purpose was to sponsor an annual lecture series on the history of health care in order to promote a greater understanding of the historical and philosophical underpinnings of today's health care disciplines.

Objectives

- To encourage interest in the history of the health sciences
- To promote the library's historical collections
- To increase interdisciplinary cooperation (a university goal) through a lecture series

Description

- Eight lectures during the school year with local speakers who donate their time
- Host up to two out-of-town speakers, as funding permits
- Speak for 45 minutes; 15 minutes for questions
- Provide refreshments (most at 4:30 p.m. with water, soft drinks, and cookies)

Development of Lecture Programs

- Develop a consistent look/brand for promotional materials
- Post video of lecture on website with speaker permission
- Promote lectures to departments by liaison librarians
- Increase interdisciplinary speakers and audience
- Promote series to new Friends of the Library group
- Electronic promotion - minimal printing
- Invite graduate students/fellows to speak
- Presentations archived on web are viewed



Online Survey

An online survey was sent to 3 lists: MEDLIB-L, MLA HHS, ALHHS (Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences). Received 10 responses, from academic health center libraries

Suggestions received:

- Even a modest endowment will help launch a successful program
- Establish a library budget line for program
- Promotion! Promotion! Promotion!
- Target mailings to departments based on topic — all but one had some attendees from non—health sciences community

Conclusions

- Can host local speakers as a low or no cost option
- Attendance is variable - scheduled time will never please everyone
- Promotion is very important
- Continually add attendees to e-promotion lists
- Use e-promotion lists to publicize friends group, exhibits, etc.
- More potential speakers volunteer as time passes
- Look for out-of-town speakers close enough to drive rather than fly
- Ask departments to sponsor food (such as pizza lunch for attendees) when hosting out-of-town speakers
- Establish library budget line to fund local speakers (even if only a few dollars); establish another for out-of-town speakers