Background

The School of Health and Human Services is making advancements in faculty research and improving scholarship, communications, and student/staff/faculty engagement throughout the school. SHHS is seeking Planetree designation, and in doing so is changing the culture of the school towards a more student-centered approach towards engagement in academic progress.

Research on high-impact learning practices indicates that students actively involved in their education and engaged in a community of scholarship share a richer and more meaningful student experience.

The National University Library and the School of Health & Human Services began a collaboration to develop a mentoring and fellowship program for graduate students interested in Health Sciences research. The project was made possible via the Federal Work Study Grant.

Collaboration

- The project was based at the National University Spectrum Library.
- Research Fellows worked under the direct supervision of the SHHS liaison librarian, and within a team of librarians attached to other National University Schools.
- The training program consisted of a series of specialized workshops put on by the librarians.
- Fellows met regularly with the Student Engagement & Leadership department to develop professional skills and foster opportunities to connect with other students in a community setting at the University.

Student Research Fellow

“I started the position here in January 2017 and have learned something new almost every time I come in for a shift. It has been so great having regular interaction with the librarians and other staff, developing a kind of community that can be hard as a primarily online student. Being that National University operates at such an accelerated pace it is also very nice to have this consistent position within the Library. This fellowship has given me opportunities to grow and become a better writer, researcher, and communicator that I may not have received had I not been offered this position. I would have never considered research something I was particularly good at or even enjoyed but that has changed because I now understand how to do it well... this could very well be one of the most rewarding experiences I have during my short time at National University.”

Training Highlights

Research training adhered to ACRL Framework for Information Literacy instruction.

Research as Inquiry

- Students will break down complex research questions into simpler questions.

Searching as Strategic Exploration

- Students will determine if original search strategies satisfied needs and revised search based on initial results.

Authority is Constructed & Contextual

- Students will be able to identify formal and informal modes of scholarly communication and explain how each contributes to the field.

Scholarship as Conversation

- Students will use library databases and Google Scholar to conduct cited reference searches, mine references & map citations.

Information Creation as a Process

- Students will research, write, revise, and post an original Wikipedia article or participate in a research and publication opportunity to co-author a publication, present at a professional conference with a faculty member.

Information Has Value

- Students will manage references with Mendeley, a cloud-based bibliographic reference manager.

Outcomes

Research

- First manuscript submitted for publication as co-author in Journal of Military, Veteran, and Family Health—under review
- Second manuscript as co-author forthcoming
- Book chapter as co-author forthcoming
- Poster presentation accepted at NU Faculty Research Conference 2017

Service

- Joined SHHS Planetree Student & Alumni Group—Treasurer Role

Marketing & Communications

- Co-presenter at SHHS Faculty Retreat 2016 on APA Style Central
- Co-contributor to SHHS blog: http://schoolofhealthandhumanservicesblog.blogspot.com/

Assessment

- Research Fellows begin their training by taking a pre-assessment test to gauge their entry computer literacy, digital literacy, and information literacy skills.
- Students write a personal reflection in Slack, a digital workspace powering the project.
- Students maintain a research log where they add photos, share pertinent thoughts and facilitate discussion in a private setting visible only to the research team.
- Upon exit, students complete a post-assessment evaluation of the project.

Looking Forward

One year after inception, the Library and SHHS has successfully established a scalable and sustainable partnership with students to cultivate a culture of inquiry and promote scholarly communication between librarians, faculty, and students. The Library is currently expanding the project to include SOBM and SOEC.

Training workshops developed for the Student Research Fellows can effectively be used to train Faculty Research Assistants at the Library outside of the fellowship program.

Selected References