Taking History and Vital Signs: Characterizing History of Medicine Efforts at Academic Medical Centers
Objectives for Today's Presentation

• Introduce you to the OHSU Library and our communities interested in history of medicine/health sciences (HOM/HS)

• Share findings from our research into historical societies at other academic health centers

• Discuss strategies for expanding library and archives roles in fostering interest in and awareness of historical resources
OHSU Library
Introduction
OHSU Library is your learning, care, and discovery partner.
Library Staff are your Partners!

Collection Management buys and organizes your books and journals.

Technology team supports your online Library and on-site computing.

Access Services helps you at service desk, scans items, and ensures a great library experience!

Historical Collections & Archives preserve OHSU and broader health history for future research.

Library Administration keeps it funded and maintained for you!
History of Health Sciences at OHSU
Collections and Programming are Interdependent

Researchers use historical collections as primary sources

New materials added to our historical collections

Researchers become participants in oral histories, exhibits, and lectures

Programming participants become donors of materials
Library Historical Programming

- Curating exhibits in the Library display spaces
- Coordinating OHSU's Oral History Program
- Facilitating classes and tours using our collections
- Hosting outreach events
- Coordinating historical lectures
- Maintaining Historical Collections & Archives website and social channels such as Twitter and Instagram

Photo: Books from the History of Medicine collection. Credit: OHSU Library
Engaging with Exhibits

Photos: Library exhibit space in use. Credit: OHSU Library
Collaboration on HOM Activities

- OHSU History of Medicine Society
  - Created in 1999
  - Early initiatives included:
    - Adding HOM courses to curriculum
    - Hosting of lecture series
    - Annual essay contest
- The Society has recently been less active
- The Library has continued collaborating on History of Surgery and Neurology lectures with relevant departments

Photo: David Nardone, M.D., speaking at a History of Medicine lecture, 2019. Credit: OHSU Library
Why Explore Library Roles in HOM/HS Communities?

- In meetings with the new University Librarian, faculty and donors emphasized the role of the Library in convening those interested in **HOM**, both on campus and off.
- Library interest in providing educational opportunities for students and broadly engaging the OHSU community in historical topics in all health disciplines.
- To inform a discussion at OHSU about growing the HOM/HS learning community, we wanted to know what peer institutions were doing.

Photo credit: Dawn K. Baker for OHSU Library
Objective for this study:

To characterize noncurricular HOM/HS efforts at selected academic health sciences centers
Methodology and Findings
Identifying Institutions

- Anecdotally, we were aware of events hosted by libraries with HOM/HS groups that engaged faculty, staff and students

- In July 2019, we identified the top thirty medical schools in both primary care and research using U.S. News & World Report’s 2019 Rankings. This resulted in 46 unique institutions
Identifying HOM/HS Communities

• We searched and browsed the websites provided by the institutions and their libraries to collect information pertaining to any presence of an on-campus HOM/HS community

• Keywords searched:
  • Historic
  • Historical
  • History
  • Health
  • Health Sciences
  • Medicine
  • Medical
  • Club
  • Organization

• We identified 18 non-curricular HOM/HS communities representing 39% of institutions
Data Extraction

• Upon identifying a community, we collected information about the group’s:
  • Mission Statement
  • Funding
  • Membership Structure
  • Activities and Initiatives
  • Library Involvement

• For institutions with an HOM/HS community, we browsed course catalogs to identify course offerings related to HOM/HS
Mission Statements

• All 18 groups stated some form of mission statement, or description of their function online, linked from the institution’s webpage

• 16 specifically mention HOM in their name or mission

Example: “The Bullitt History of Medicine Club promotes the understanding and appreciation of the historical foundations upon which current medical knowledge and practice is constructed, by encouraging social and intellectual exchanges between faculty members, medical students, and members of the community.”

- Bullitt History of Medicine Club, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
At least 11 of the groups received institutional funding

Four mentioned receiving donor funds

Five indicated that they conduct fundraising events

Several fund endeavors through dues:
  - Four collect member dues with rates ranging from $25-$65
  - One group listed dues as "voluntary" for students

Funding

$0.00 $25 (2 Groups) $50 (Voluntary) $65 $100.00

Annual Membership Dues

Photo: Medical Science Sophomores, 1973, Attending Lecture.
doi:10.6083/M4RN36CR
Membership Structure

- Four groups reported membership as open to the public
  - Note: many events hosted by private HOM groups are open to the general community

- Leadership positions were identified for 9 (50%); examples below are not mutually exclusive
  - 4 list "President" as an officer position
  - 2 are led by student "Co-Chairs"
  - 4 posted contact information for a "faculty advisor"
  - 2 groups listed a librarian involved with their group, with a significant coordinating role

- Some have constituencies within the university, but outside of the health sciences, e.g. History department or University Advancement
Activities and Initiatives

• Although membership is private for some groups, most events listed on their respective websites are public

• Fifteen (83%) advertised hosting of a lecture, presentation, or discussion
  • Eight of these fifteen indicated that meetings were catered

• Five (11%) sponsored an academic contest

  Example: “The purpose of this contest is to examine the influences of history, ethics, culture, literature, philosophy, sociology, or related frameworks on medicine, the practice of medicine, and the human condition...Two $1,200 awards will be given to the best submissions that examine a significant issue in medicine using ethical, historical, or cultural perspectives.”

  - University of Iowa History of Medicine Society

Library Involvement

• Six (33%) reported that at least some of their events and meetings are hosted in one of the libraries or an on-campus museum

• At 5 of these 6 institutions, the library hosts the group's website
  • Three of these 5 are hosted by the health sciences library

“Regular meetings usually include a seminar style presentation and are held once a month during the academic year (October through May) at the UCSF Library.”

– Bay Area History of Medicine Society, University of California San Francisco
Course Offerings

• We found that at least 7 institutions with identified groups offer courses related to the history of health sciences as part of their medical or health profession school’s curriculum.

• These courses are offered as part of the health sciences curriculum, separate from HOM/HS activities. Examples include:
  
  • History of the Body in Science and Medicine [MHB 440] - U. of Rochester
  • Women, Health, & History [HMED 5055] - U. of Minnesota
  • History of Health Activism [HSHM 745] - Yale
Limitations

• Some organizations have evolved since we gathered the data in July 2019
  • Example: Boston University has added a librarian to their HOM group’s leadership structure

• Our keywords may not have identified the historical groups at some institutions. Our next update, will also search on associations or societies

• We did not access intranets, so there may be more private groups we did not identify

• Some of the groups’ websites were silent on the data that we were trying to extract, or contained broken links or outdated information
Conclusions
Continuing HOHS at OHSU Library

• The Library continues our existing historical programming

• Research into the curriculum by University Archivist* and feedback from our Saturday sketch program inspired us to develop additional hands-on activities:
  • Student enrichment opportunities for hands-on activities with historical materials in their areas of special interest
  • More frequent sketch opportunities advertised broadly

Revitalizing HOM at OHSU

• We will convene engaged faculty, residents and students to discuss this research, and ask which of these findings may be relevant to OHSU

• We hope to then work with those interested in building HOM/HS community to craft a call to an activity/meeting for a broader audience
Come visit the OHSU Library’s current ophthalmology exhibit!

On view now through Dec. 30, 2019

OHSU Library
BICC building, 3rd floor
3280 S.W. Sam Jackson Park Rd.
Portland, OR 97239

For more information, visit: www.ohsu.edu/library

Image: Jaeger, Eduard. Illustration of amaurosis arthritica (glaucoma), circa 1850s.
Thank You

Questions?

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