Hello from the Research Caucus Chair-Elect

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I want to introduce myself as the new Chair-Elect for the Research Caucus and share my background, goals for the Caucus, and thoughts on the future of library research. I'm currently a health sciences librarian and the liaison to the Eshelman School of Pharmacy at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where I collaborate on education, research, and evidence-based practice initiatives. I teach and advise health sciences students on research methods and have co-authored more than 20 publications, including reviews, original research, and commentaries. I was also a fellow of the MLA Research Training Institute for 2021-2022.

Like many other medical librarians, I did not come into the profession with knowledge of or experience in conducting health sciences research. Rather, I have a BA in English and my undergraduate thesis was a work of creative nonfiction. During and after my Master of Library Science degree I gained experience in supporting others' research aims as part of my role as a librarian, but did not start taking a more active collaboration role with research projects and conducting my own research until six years ago.

I started with projects that were already a part of my work, adding pre- and post-assessments and user experience testing to expand existing library services, and pursued continuing education on research methodologies. Then, over time, whenever I could not find studies that answered questions I had or information I needed, I began to consider these as opportunities for my own research. From there, I explored my developing research interests and began to set research goals for myself. My current research interests are broad and include interprofessional education outcomes, medical librarian impact on health sciences education and research, and emerging technologies for literature synthesis efficiency.

Each study I have conducted has challenged me and I have learned from each of them, and am still learning. As well, I had the opportunity to participate as a fellow in the Medical Library Association Research Training Institute (RTI) in 2021-2022. Throughout the past year, I have learned about research from the RTI peer coaches, research mentors, speakers, and the other fellows and worked through the research process from beginning to end.

As I worked on my RTI research project, I realized I wanted to take what my experiences from that community and share them with an even broader group. Over my three-year term on the Research Caucus leadership team, I hope to see the Caucus continue to grow as a collaborative, inclusive community for MLA members. The Research Caucus is already a home for medical information professions who are

engaged in learning about, conducting, and teaching research, and I plan to continue to expand opportunities for continuing education and networking opportunities for researchers at all levels of experience.

My goal is to build on the work of past and current Caucus leaders as we strive to make it the hub for health sciences information professionals interested in or working on research to support, challenge, and learn from and with each other. The Research Caucus already offers a supportive, informal setting to share research ideas and findings through the Reports from the Field forums and I plan to add other times for discussion, mentoring, and collaboration. I would like to encourage early-career librarians and anyone not currently engaged in research collaboration or research leadership to join the Research Caucus, ask questions, explore opportunities, and think about the questions you face in your life and work that you could help answer. You do not need to be an expert in research methods and analyses to join or start a research project. It is never to early or late to grow your research skills, and you can learn from and share any results—successes or failures.