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A Library-Based Approach to Translational Informatics Education

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INTRODUCTION
Bernard Becker Medical Library at Washington University School of Medicine has established itself as a biomedical informatics training facility(1). Becker Library currently has two bioinformatics resource specialists on staff, a medical doctor with a master’s degree in bioinformatics and a research scientist with a PhD in biochemistry. These bioinformatics resource specialists currently provide support through training opportunities and consultation services. The resource specialists offer workshop-style courses for a wide variety of biomedical topics. Consultation services for specific research questions and approaches are also available and widely used. These consultation services cover diverse topics and offer the bioinformatics resource support staff at Becker Library an important link to research efforts on campus.

Advancements in translational medicine have prompted a critical need for educational approaches which support information dissemination and facilitate a fluid exchange of data in a clinical research environment. Medical libraries provide information resources and technology in support of educational, research, and patient care objectives and are therefore particularly well-poised to offer instructional resources which will enhance the flow of information.

Library-based bioinformatics programs offer a novel approach to translational informatics education. The bioinformatics resource specialists have training in biomedical research approaches as well as biomedical informatics education. The bioinformatics resource specialists currently provide support through training opportunities and consultation services. The resource specialists cover diverse topics and offer the bioinformatics resource support staff at Becker Library an important link to research efforts on campus.

In response to the evolving information needs of the clinical and biomedical research communities, especially in the age of translational medicine, advanced web-based communication tools and information dissemination approaches are being incorporated into the library’s traditional bioinformatics support services. This will be accomplished through a collaboration between the library’s Translational Research Support Division and the Digital Initiatives Division. Content will be delivered virtually via podcasts and voice-over PowerPoint presentations. Web conferencing tools will be utilized, too. These content delivery methods complement traditional course strategies and embrace diverse learning styles. Users gain flexibility and an opportunity to interact with rich audio, video, and web-based content in a manner which is meaningful to them. Ultimately, these innovative approaches provide seamless access to a wide variety of information and instruction resources and enable users an opportunity to make meaningful connections with their data and the world around them, anytime and anywhere!

HIGHLIGHTS
Course Development:
- Function Express & caTissue Suite
- Bioinformatics Bootcamp
- Comprehensive special topics course

REFERENCES