

# Win/win/win:

Academia and public libraries working together to help students, faculty, and librarians promote STEM learning and research

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# Background

- The Bryan+College Station Public Library System (BCSPLS) shares a metro area with Texas A&M University (A&M).
- 2017: BCSPLS's Larry J. Ringer Library (Ringer) in College Station is awarded a grant from NOAA to facilitate a program series on climate change and partners us with an A&M scientist. The program is a success.
- 2019 Spring/Summer: Ringer makes contact with A&M's Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and Academy for Future Faculty (AFF). Dr. Ra'Sheedah Richardson agrees to partner with us.
- 2019 Fall: The STEM Graduate Student Speaking Series begins as a monthly engagement hosted by and at the Ringer Library.



## Goals of the program (the “win/win/win” in theory)

- Ringer library staff is able to offer STEM programs to patrons and service learning opportunities to students
- A&M graduate students can practice being effective science communicators
- A&M librarians and faculty recruit and provide guidance to speakers, engaging in activities that may fulfill service requirements in their tenure files
- BCSPLS and A&M strengthen their relationship in service to the community



# Elements of the program

Ringer and A&M CTE/AFF staff met to narrow the scope of the program series and ensure each session had the following elements:

- Discussion of a STEM topic ...
- ... Delivered by a student or students under the advisement of A&M faculty
- ... With the intent of making the topic accessible to a public audience



# Implementation and reception

For Fall 2019, we arranged a monthly speaker engagement, beginning in October. The following sessions were held:

- **October: Department of Chemistry**
  - Solving problems in human health, environment, and energy crisis with chemistry, (panel of 3)
  - Attendance: 21
- **November: School of Public Health**
  - Disaster Preparedness: Are You Ready?
  - Attendance: 28
- **December: Entomology Department**
  - Emerging Technologies for Agriculture in Texas
  - Attendance: 24



## Implementation and reception (cont'd)

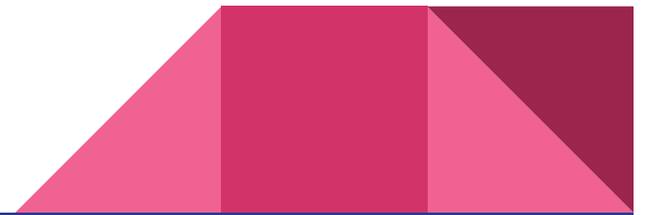
There were 3 sessions scheduled for Spring 2020, but we were only able to hold one before canceling all library programs in early March, and attendance was affected by the looming pandemic.

- February: Department of Biology & Interdisciplinary Program of Genetics
  - Discovering the genetics behind the monarch butterfly migration
  - Attendance: 10



## The “win/win/win” in practice

- We got a great deal of positive feedback from patrons who appreciated new programs that gave them opportunities to learn about STEM topics informally, in an interactive setting, and without having to navigate campus
- Our partners at the Center for Teaching Excellence have enjoyed working with the public library, report positive feedback from speakers and faculty, and are excited about extending the program through 2020
- Speakers all reported that they enjoyed having a chance to interact with people about their research in a new setting



## Moving forward

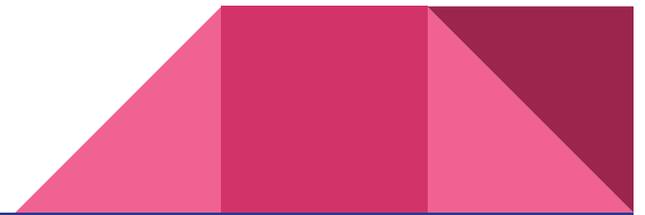
We had February (Biology/Genetics), March (Anthropology), and April (Nutrition) sessions slated for Spring 2020, but we were only able to hold the February session before COVID-19 forced us to cancel all in-person programming.

We are currently working with the Center for Teaching Excellence to find a viable virtual format for Fall 2020.



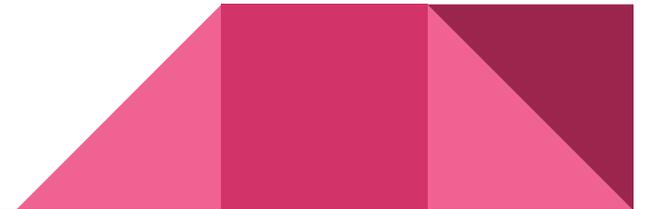
# Transforming or repurposing this program

- As librarians -- both public and academic -- we are facilitating, coordinating, and providing a space (physical or virtual). It is low maintenance and flexible for both libraries.
- This program could easily be a STEAM or STEM-H speaking series, featuring medical and design students, for instance.
- Connections between subject specialist librarians and the respective departments with which they liaise could be useful for developing a program and recruiting for it.



# Selected Sources

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# Thank you for attending!

Questions? Feedback?

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