

STORIES NOT SYMPTOMS: DESIGNING AN INTERACTIVE GRAPHIC MEDICINE EXHIBITION AND EVENT

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BACKGROUND

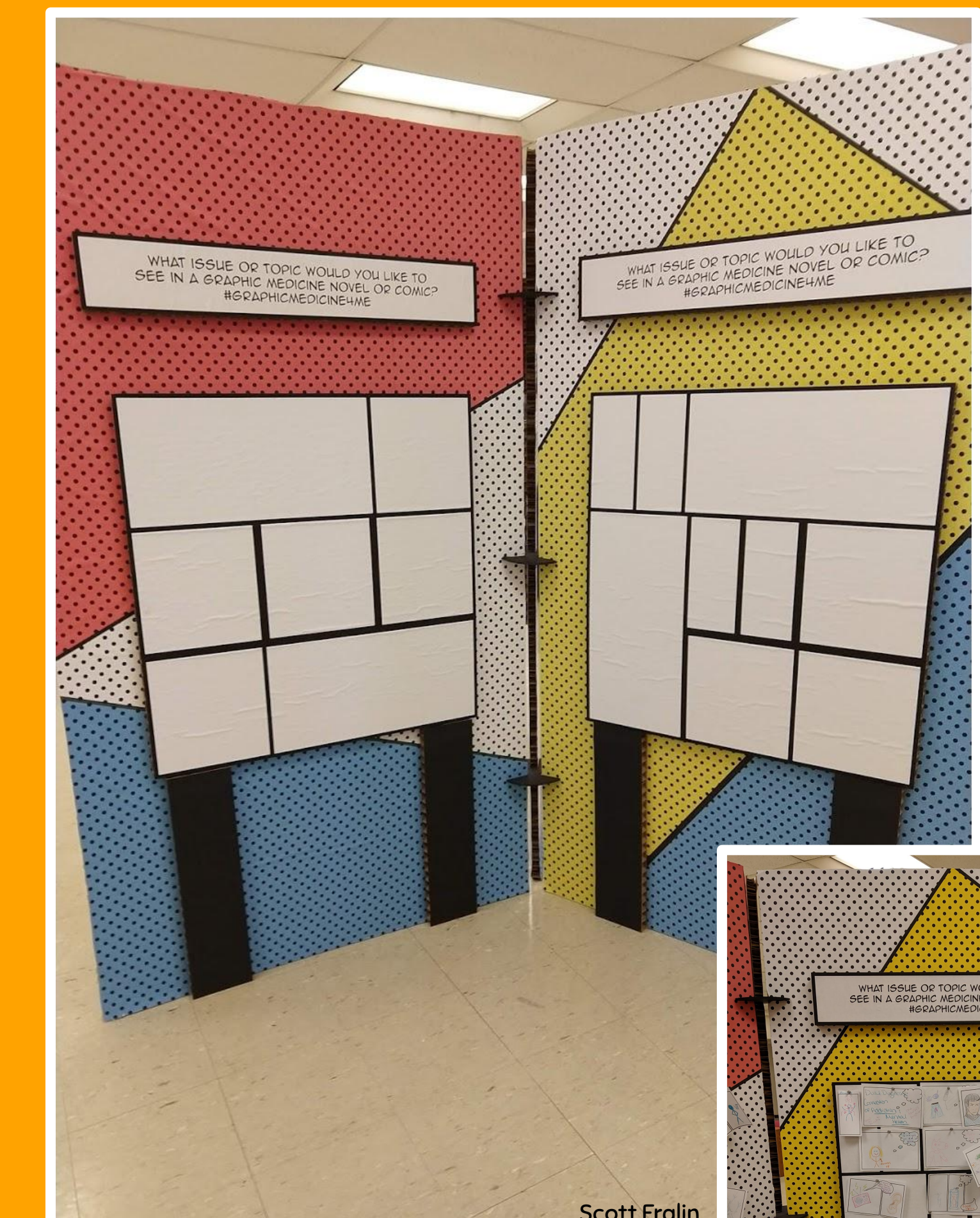
University Libraries at Virginia Tech is the process of launching online modules to improve health information literacy, and to launch our programming that features the use of graphic medicine in health information literacy, we wanted to introduce the greater Virginia Tech community to the importance of graphic medicine in public health through an interactive public exhibit and guest speaker event held in April 2019.

We were inspired by the wistful pop-art styles that have been featured in many comic books, and we intentionally created a light and fun visual design to balance the daunting nature of many of the health themes covered in our sample collection. Visitors could walk through tall cardboard comic pages that featured samples from our graphic medicine collection, and they could also create and post their own comic panels about health issues that concerned them.

EXHIBITION AND EVENT RECEPTION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

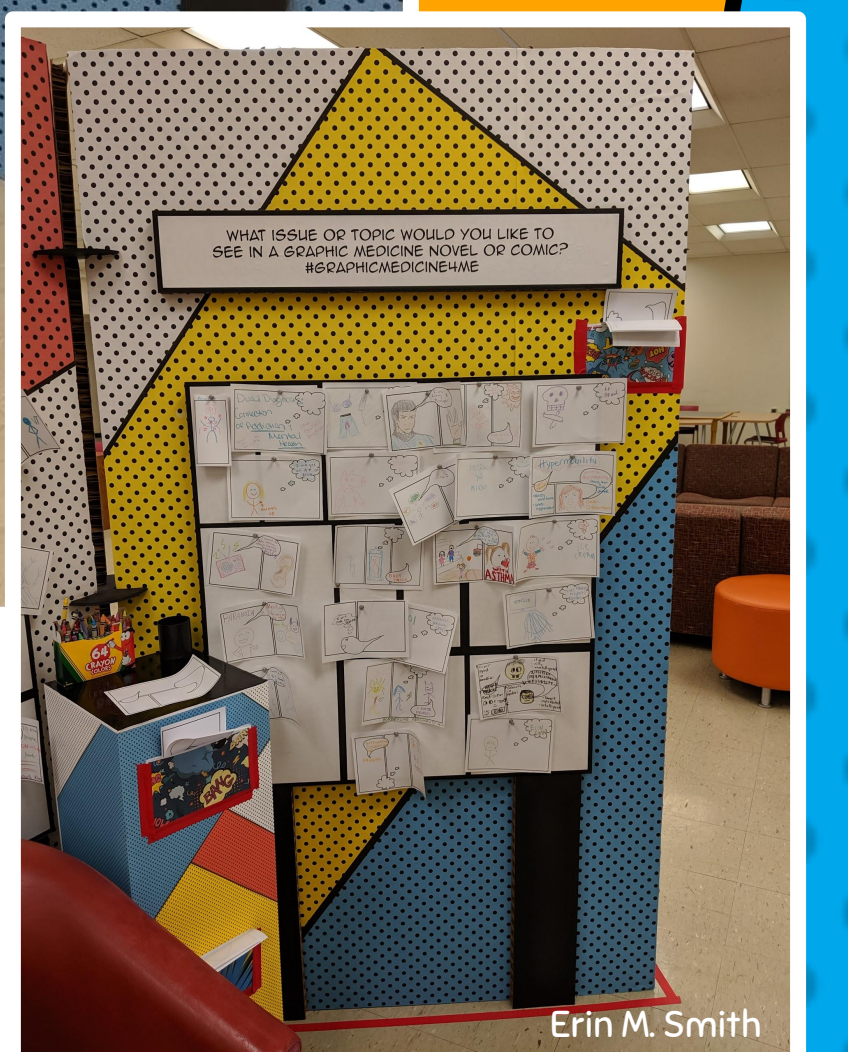
The exhibit was on display for nearly 4 months in a heavily foot-trafficked area of one of our learning commons. Preliminary analysis show the interactive portion was highly used by students. Some sample panels were drawn about concerns related to mental health, sleep hygiene and insomnia, menstrual health, sexual health, asthma and other respiratory concerns, and transgender health. Since the event and exhibition was such a success, we are exploring ideas to create an anthology of graphic medicine materials created by Virginia Tech students.

INTERACTIVE PORTION OF THE EXHIBIT

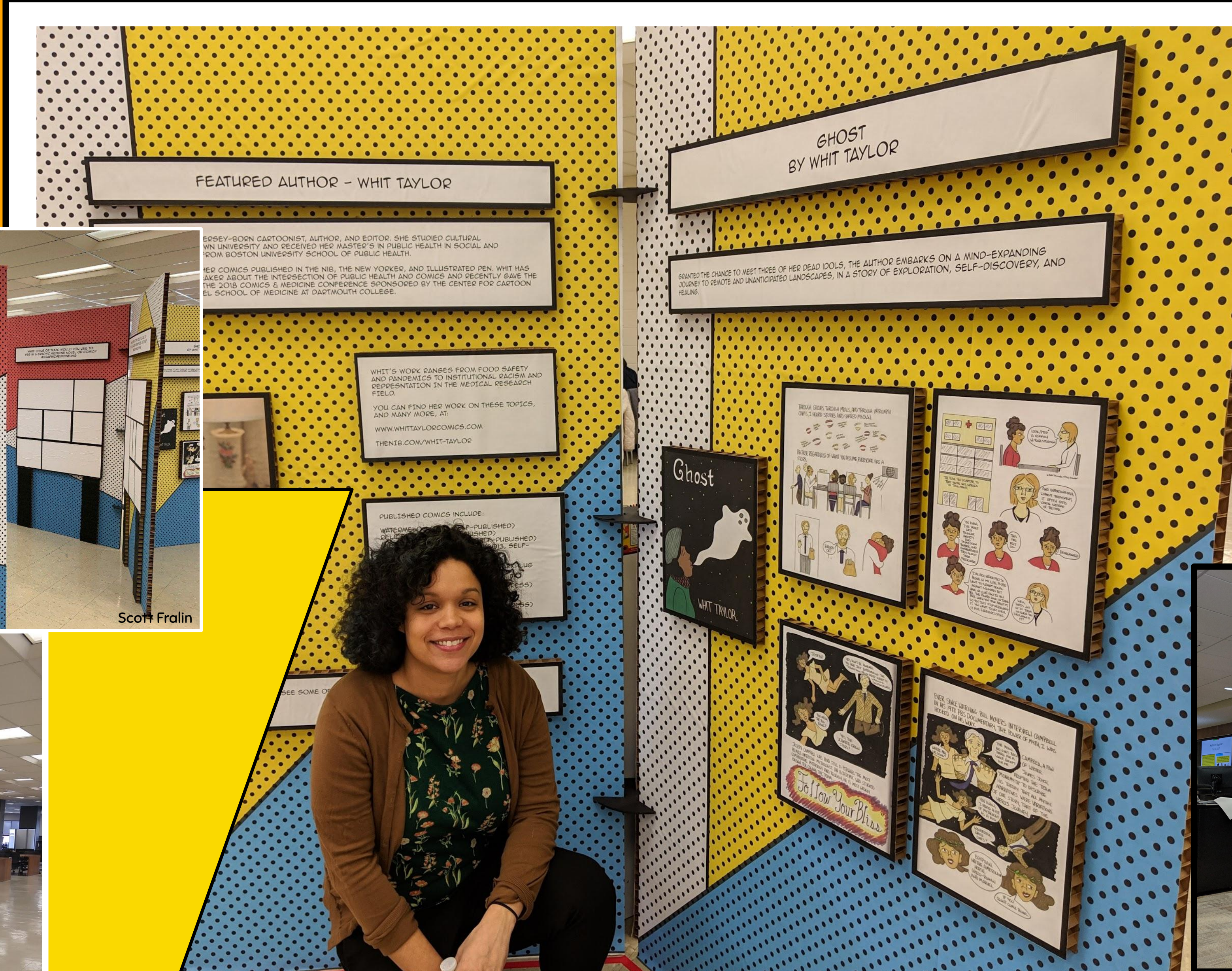
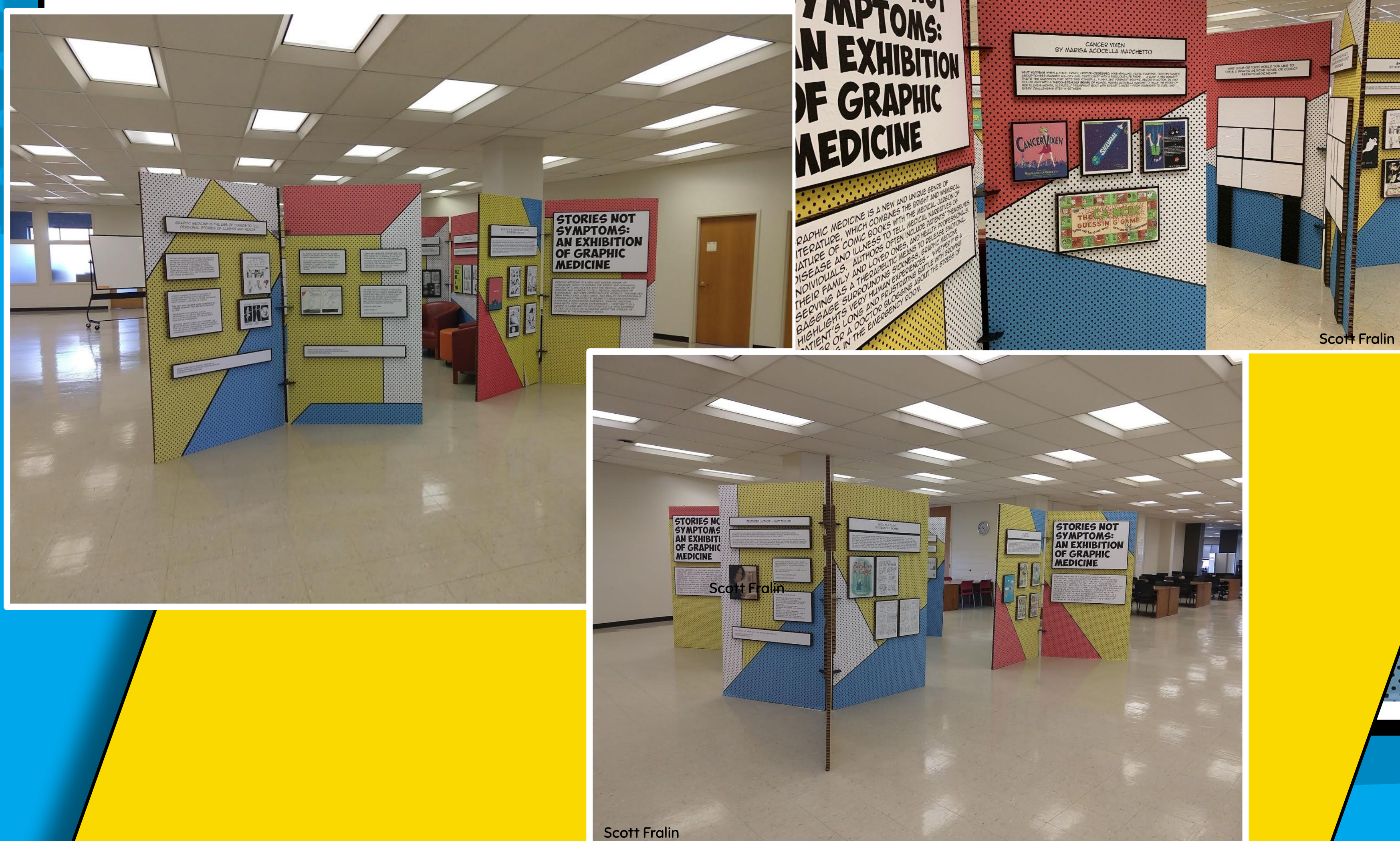


Scott Fralin

This portion of the exhibit featured spaces for visitors to draw a comic panel to respond to the prompt: What issue or topic would you like to see in a graphic medicine novel or comic? More than 50 visitors drew panels.

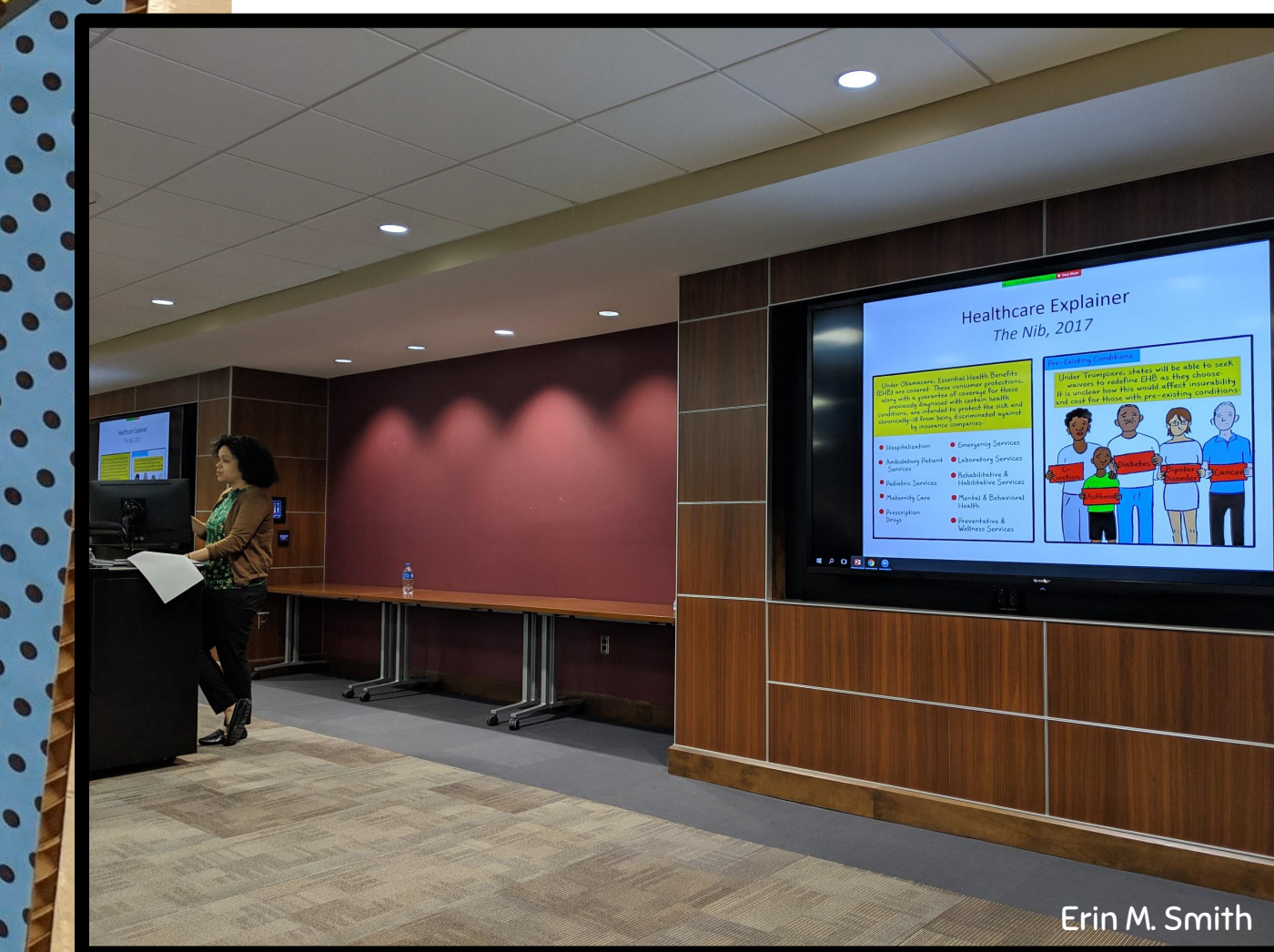


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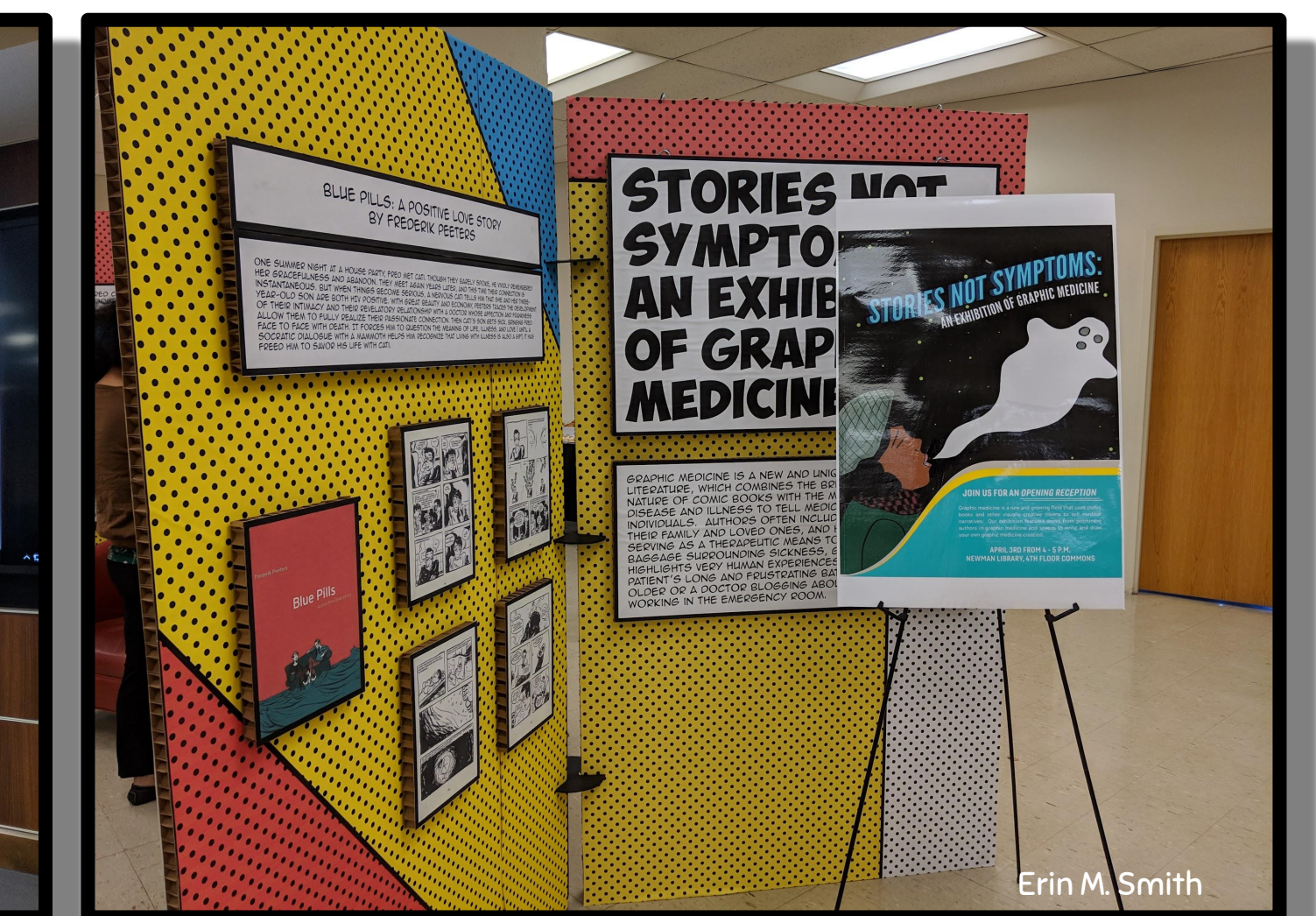


GUEST SPEAKER EVENT: AN EVENING WITH WHIT TAYLOR

In addition to our exhibition, we secured an internal grant to sponsor our guest speaker, artist and health educator, Whit Taylor. Taylor has authored comics that have appeared in The Nib, BuzzFeed, Illustrated PEN and The New Yorker, and we invited her to publicly speak about the importance of graphic medicine in public health and health education.



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