The Shakespeare for Scientists Workshop was a workshop that taught participants how to improve presentation skills by learning techniques for performing the texts of Shakespeare. This was a two-day workshop that took place March 31st and April 1st in room 225 in the Theatre Arts Department based in Hecht Residential College. Participants varied; undergraduates, post-doctoral candidates, medical campus employees, and professors participated in the workshop.

The workshop began on Saturday, March 31st with a speech and presentation by Marietta Cameron, Ph.D from the University of North Carolina Asheville. Dr. Cameron is a computer scientist whose presentation offered an example of strong presentation skills. After Dr. Cameron’s speech the workshop continued as an interactive experience. I lectured on how to perform Shakespeare and taught physical and vocal exercise that all participants actively practiced during the day. At the end of the day on Saturday I checked in with the participants, many expressed how much they were learning and expressed that they were interested in learning more exercises from the theatre to help with presentation skills that may be outside the area of Shakespeare. This feedback led me to incorporate more exercises in Sunday’s workshop that may not have been as directly correlated with Shakespeare but still honed presentation skills.

Sunday's workshop began with a review of the work from Saturday. Then, Rebecca Schneider, Ph.D. from Brown University spoke about the importance of interdisciplinary activities between the arts and sciences. The bulk of the day after was spent speaking Shakespearean text, learning how to move with confidence about the stage and how to speak directly to the audience. The workshop ended with each participant presenting a presentation in their area of expertise and applying the skills they had learned over the past two days.

I felt the workshop was a success. The most important feedback I received was that people in the Sciences want more workshops like this. They expressed a need to learn how to social network more comfortable, how to become more comfortable with their voice and body and a need to find more opportunities to practice public speaking. I hope the future of this work will lie in creating more workshops based in theatrical training to help the Science community on campus have the opportunity to hone these skills.

Over the summer I am making a plan for future workshops, researching grant funding opportunities and will connect with programs on campus in order to make more opportunities like this happen.