

THE ORIGINS OF PLEXUS

In 1998, two first year medical students Grainne McEvoy and Thomas Kang, came to me with the idea of starting a literary and arts journal at the medical school. My recollection is that they showed me UCLA's version of such a journal and said, we can do better than this! Being my usual tactful self, I responded, darn right! – and off we went.

The original Plexus had two goals: The first was to show that medical students (and staff and faculty) were not unidimensional. True, medical students are incredibly smart in the sciences, incredibly driven around the latest technical developments of patient care, but are also creative, insightful, compassionate, and capable of challenging the shortcomings of their education and the healthcare system.

The second goal was to build community by inviting students, faculty, staff, and later patients to participate in the Plexus enterprise. We hoped that the journal would create a level playing field that would provide an alternative to the traditional medical hierarchy, a field where everyone's authentic voice was welcomed and valued.

It is tremendously gratifying to me to see that, after 24 years, these goals have been beautifully realized year after year. Plexus has always been a student-driven initiative and has always reflected students' priorities, values, and aspirations. It was an honor to be connected with Plexus for so many years, and to have seen such outstanding role models as Dr. Nguyen, Dr. McMullin, and Dr. Meyskens continuing to assist students in fulfilling this vision.