The first time I experienced a patient’s death as an EMT, my supervisor put his arm around my shoulder and said, “You just need to shake this off and move on; if you let these things get to you, then you’ll never survive in emergency medicine.” Many times afterwards, I saw healthcare providers sustain an outward stoicism and calculated clinical decision-making in the face of stress, exhaustion, morbidity, and mortality. I asked myself, how do physicians balance their own emotional stability with the professional responsibility to engage and comfort the patient? Where do physicians develop this institutionalized culture of emotional dissonance and ‘shaking off’ surrounding stressors? What do physicians see as their emotional and affective responsibilities to their patients? These curiosities propelled me to develop a research proposal, under Dr. Elaine Ecklund’s guidance, to study how physicians understand and practice “emotion work” within their scope of clinical duties. After many drafts, cups of coffee, and all-nighters, with a successful research paper in hand, I express sincere gratitude to the Fondren Library for providing the facilities, resources, and staff that allowed me to expand my intellectual horizons and realize my scholarly passions.

It all started with a book—Arlie Hochschild’s *The Managed Heart* —from a preliminary ‘OneSearch’. As I leafed through the pages, my heart raced with enthusiasm. Hochschild discussed at length the challenges of service-oriented professions and the pressures to maintain a positive outward visage amidst a stressful, demanding environment. This was exactly the type of scholarly theory that I had been seeking to understand my anecdotal experiences! The next day I returned to the same shelf and opened Pandora’s box; I checked out another few titles on the
sociology of emotion, which inspired me to seek several more follow-up texts on emotional socialization, which in turn further motivated me to return and consult additional books on training for emotional care and empathy (as physicians often do during medical education). The old metaphor that books are passports for exploration may be clichéd but it is no exaggeration. The voluminous offerings of the Fondren stacks are incredibly enriching resources, and they provided me with a foundation of theory and background knowledge to premise my research on.

From there, the next step was to conduct a thorough review of the peer-reviewed literature. To me, this can often be an intimidating process, as there is a large amount of available content to sort through. With assistance from my professor and the staff at Fondren, I was advised to consult the LibGuides that are available on the Fondren website. I found guides that had been curated specifically for sociology, medicine, and the history of science. These web pages served as online hubs for my research; from a single page, I was able to access open-access versions of relevant reference texts, Rice-subscribed journals, and websites with extensive statistics and data sets for medical research.

The value of the Rice education truly became evident in dollar terms, though, when I accessed e-journals and research article indexes. Individual articles are often available, without subscription, for upwards of $25-30. Memberships for research databases, I found, could easily cost well into five-figure sums—an unthinkable amount for a student researcher. Quite fortuitously, I was able to navigate through pay-walls and subscriber-only domains with Fondren’s institutional access to a massive array of digital media. I was able to use research databases like Academic Search Complete, JStor, Pubmed, and Sociological Abstracts, where much of the content was available in full-text form through Fondren Library. In this way, I was able to incorporate works from leading journals like the New England Journal of Medicine.
JAMA, the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, and *Social Science and Medicine*. On the few occasions when I was unable to access an important paper, the Library’s inter-library loan system enabled me to acquire print copies of the resources I needed to accrue the facts and draw impactful conclusions on my research topic. I was able to identify where research had been conducted on emotional engagement in medicine and related professions, and I was subsequently able to determine the gaps in existing research where a niche for my work existed. Academic research is a cumulative, collaborative endeavor where scholars question and extend the work of their predecessors, and it was through Fondren Library’s availability of peer-reviewed resources that I was able to participate in this process.

When it was time to draft a final research proposal, I returned to the LibGuides on Fondren’s website to access the guides on how to organize and present research data. The “Research A-Z” and “Scholarly Communications” guides were instrumental at this stage; they provided instructions on how to assess the quality of a research source, how to write a high-quality paper in the social sciences, and tutorials for navigating online academic resources. I credit these tools for helping me fine-tune the structure, tone, and clarity of arguments in my research, which were aspects that I was initially unsure of as a novice scholar. In the final stages, these tools helped me compile and refine a paper that eventually became my proudest academic achievement to date, simply because of the magnitude of effort and passion that I put towards it.

Though the paper was graded and the class concluded, my research still continues. This semester, I have continued to use the aforementioned library books, reference materials, and academic journal access to carry out my research proposal of conducting physician interviews on emotional management in the workplace. Eventually, I hope to extend this work towards a peer-reviewed publication—a scholarly contribution of my own. It will be a fitting, full-circle
achievement to produce, out of so many library resources and academic texts, a discussion of my work that can then be nested within these extensive catalogs and databases. Research does not stand on its own, and Fondren’s value in helping me place my study in the context of past research—and in fostering a commitment to a career in academia and a life of scholarship inspired by that process—has been immeasurable.

As an additional note, the accompanying paper and citations page are in the ASA format.