

Faculty Development Plan 2016

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Self-Assessment

In the process of assessing myself, I have come to realize that my identity is composed of many facets: child of God, follower of Christ, husband, father, son, archaeologist, teacher, learner, etc. My strengths, skills, interests, and challenges help to define me as a person and give direction as I start my career at Brigham Young University. The self-assessment and resulting goals serves as a marker to measure progress or regression for my personal development as a faculty member in Religious Education.

Strengths, Skills, and Competencies

My strengths, skills, and competencies include a passion for biblical studies, historical and archaeological research related to the Bible. During my years in graduate school, I developed a knack for the organization needed for research projects with experience in publication of archaeological volumes. Editing skills also came during my time as a Teaching Fellow for a writing course at UCLA concentrated on Jerusalem as a holy center for three faith traditions. Overall, I have over two decades of training in historical and archaeological methods and theories and a lifetime of academic, religious, and personal Bible study, nearly all of which was conducted outside of the LDS tradition. I have also acquired skills in theoretical and practical archaeology, computer applications, and languages of the ancient Near East from the development of writing in Mesopotamia and Egypt through late antiquity and the rise of Islam. Through learning these skills, I have developed competencies in ancient Near Eastern languages, modern research languages (French and German), computer applications for archaeological research and publication but also in areas not traditionally considered academic such as personnel management and project direction based on extensive training and experience within sales and marketing environments prior to entering graduate school.

Interests

My scholarly interests are rooted in archaeology and historical geography of the Near East, computer applications and data management in archaeology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyses, and cultural and geographic contexts of Scripture. Recently, I have formed a collaboration with scholars from other universities to discuss and develop for publication a series of conference sessions dedicated to the archaeology of destruction and psychology of resettlement in the ancient Near East. This work seeks to explore the social and psychological aspects of devastation, exile, and re-occupation of sites by refugees, displaced peoples, and colonists.

Opportunities

Professionally, I have the opportunity to advance my research interests through participation in publication of the Ashkelon excavations and conducting excavations at Tel Shimron in Israel and BYU Egypt Excavations at Philadelphia in the Fayum region of Egypt. Collaborations on publications with colleagues from the department and the wider academe have also been established and will continue with several new avenues of research on destruction and

resettlement in the biblical period becoming a new focus of research. I have also been afforded the opportunities to improve my teaching through various departmental discussion groups, faculty luncheons, and seminars designed to improve teacher-student interactions, usage of digital humanities resources, evaluation and syllabi, and designing courses to better align with proposed learning outcomes.

Areas to Develop

I feel that I most need to improve in the area of teaching. This includes developing my teaching techniques, including, but not limited to, knowing which information and amount of detail the students need to best benefit them and fulfill the mission of Religious Education, creating an environment of Spirit-led learning, and sharing my personal experiences and testimony with the students. While I have made great efforts to connect with the students on a personal level and share my testimony, I feel that I can always do this more. Although I have taught both halves of the Book of Mormon, the Gospels, and the first half of the Old Testament, I would also like to expand my course repertoire to include both halves of the Old and New Testament, teachings of Isaiah, and would like to develop other courses on the Old Testament prophets and classes on archaeology and history related to the Ancient Near Eastern Studies major.

Professional Goals

Teaching

Previous efforts to improve my teaching included completing an online seminar entitled “Designing Courses for Significant Learning,” offered through the University of Oklahoma and Dee Fink & Associates. Additionally, I incorporated my personal experiences and elements of my testimony to connect with students and encouraged students to do the same to forge bonds with each other. I also dedicate a portion of class time in which we discuss the application of the day’s lesson and assigned an additional reflection essay in REL A 211.

For my future goals, I would like to improve lessons and assessment following Faculty Center discussions and actively seek student feedback about course objectives, activities, and assessments to improve student experience. I will encourage more student dialogue by streamlining lessons and seeking student input regarding overall message and application. Also, although I wanted to attend the Effective Teaching Retreat organized by the Center for Teaching

and Learning in August to help develop my syllabus and assessments for REL A 250 Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel, I was not able to do so but have used the techniques learned through the Fink significant learning course to develop the learning outcomes and assessments presented in the syllabus (see below). Additionally, I will expand my teaching by guest lecturing in ANES 310 History and Culture of Ancient Israel and developing discussions for those classes.

Scholarship

My previous scholarship has mainly centered on archaeological conference papers and publications. In the previous academic year, I published one article with Daniel Master (Wheaton College) in the final reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon and have another co-authored article on excavations at Jaffa that will be published in January 2017. I have presented a paper on Israelite architecture and family structure at the regional SBL conference. I also submitted an article on the Patriarchs and their cultural context in second millennium BC Canaan for an Old Testament volume aimed at an LDS audience, fulfilling my gospel scholarship goals.

For future goals, I intend to further edit my dissertation with a goal of producing a manuscript for publication. I plan to have at least one academic archaeological article in press and one gospel scholarship article in preparation or in press yearly. I will continue to participate in excavations both in Israel (Tel Shimron) and Egypt (Philadelpheia). Further, I will begin work on a publication effort focused on Ptolemaic and Roman period stamped amphora handles from Egypt with L. Blumell for which we received a MEG Grant. Blumell has also provided an opportunity to publish an article on the real and imagined historical geography of the Holy Land during the time of Christ for a seminal volume on the context of the New Testament under contract with Deseret Book. I have also been approached by other LDS scholars requesting articles on the relationship between archaeology and biblical studies and the impact of both within the classroom, permitting the chance for me to explore the intersection between my teaching and my scholarship.

Scholarship Strategies

To achieve the goals that I have set, I plan on implementing a few key strategies from the Faculty Development Seminar. First, I want to set aside time each week strictly for research and another time strictly for writing. I believe that this will enable me to conduct the complex analyses needed for archaeological and textual data and provide the time needed to document and synthesize the findings in an accessible way. Second, I would like to share early drafts with

my colleagues at BYU and peers elsewhere to receive constructive feedback that I can incorporate into each written piece. Third, I want to approach publishers early with cover letters, abstracts, and sample chapters to secure a contract as quickly as possible and establish deadlines. Finally, I will be prepared with secondary or tertiary venues for publication in case of rejection. These steps should allow me to achieve my scholarship goals and contribute to my success as a scholar.

Citizenship

Goals for citizenship can be divided between those oriented toward service in the department and university and those involving the wider scholarly community outside BYU.

Citizenship at BYU

I have previously served on Faculty Forum committee and Ancient Scripture Publication Reading committee to promote discussion of recent faulty scholarship and its application to pedagogy. My current assignment will be extended for AY 2016–17 as the chair of the latter named committee with an expanded focus on the Citizenship Project detailed below.

Additionally, I authored three chapters for *A Bible Reader's Guide to the Ancient Near East*, the textbook designed for the ANES classes at the Jerusalem Center. While these chapters encapsulate current theories and trends in scholarship, the nature of the invitation to write these chapters prompts me to list those works as citizenship for the university and the Jerusalem Center. I have also functioned as an external reviewer for *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* published by the Maxwell Institute.

Citizenship Project

As part of my current assignment on the Ancient Scripture Publication Reading Committee, I have asked that my task slightly change to a project involving the creation of a physical and digital repository of faculty scholarship to enable cross-pollination of research within the department, promote integration of departmental scholarship and teaching, and archive publications for Rank and Status reviews. Faculty from the Ancient Scripture department will be encouraged, but not required, to submit their publications as PDFs for a digital archive on a shared folder for Religious Education and as hard copies for the Faculty Reading Room. The catalog of faculty articles and books submitted through this process will be integrated into the current digital catalog of the Faculty Reading Room. Since most publications, including books, are prepared and delivered to the author(s) as PDFs, submitting a copy to the Faculty Reading

Room should not present a significant obstacle. Sharing such PDFs is considered academic fair use, but if faculty authors are concerned about copyright issues, necessary steps, including not submitting articles, can be taken. The effort to create such a repository is meant to be a celebration of faculty scholarship and a means to disseminate current research that may inform our teaching.

Citizenship within the Scholarly Community

My citizenship within the scholarly community is focused on my involvement with the American Schools of Oriental Research as the chair for the Archaeology of the Southern Levant at the annual meetings each November, a position that I have held since 2010. As chair, I evaluate submitted abstracts and determine a common theme for the year's session, contact presenters, and organize and conduct the session at the meeting. My tenure in this position concludes in 2016, after which I will shift and become a co-chair of a session on destruction and resettlement. This session will invite papers that treat these subjects from an archaeological, spatial, textual, or psychological viewpoint to better understand the cultural forces at play when a site is destroyed and/or resettled later. This effort will result in a publication of the best presented papers edited into essays in a volume co-edited with colleagues from Harvard University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Relationship between Individual Goals and Departmental and University Needs

In his most recent University Conference address to faculty and staff, Pres. Worthen stated that we should strive to make BYU “a place of inspiring learning, places where students become excited about learning and where that learning leads to revelation.” Similarly, the Religious Education dean's office has published that “it is hoped that students will be stretched and strengthened, both intellectually and spiritually, challenged to discover new truths (and internalize old ones), and at the same time grow in their commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the restored Church.” It is clear from both these statements that the needs of the university, Religious Education, and Ancient Scripture center on the development of the heart and mind of the students that we encounter. This means that my goals should be structured to fit those needs and make contributions towards those ends. We are engaged in so great a work that

all of us must be driven by our goals with the orientation of supporting students and other faculty in their individual situations.

As part of Brigham Young University, Religious Education, and the Department of Ancient Scripture, my primary purpose as a professor is to “assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life” by teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. This emphasis is clear in the range of courses that I teach and the subject matter, i.e., Book of Mormon courses, the New Testament Gospels, and the new cornerstone course, Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel. I also believe that my goals as a developing faculty member help to fulfill the Aims of a BYU Education – spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging and character building, leading to life-long learning and service – whether working directly with students or with and for the benefit of other faculty members who interact with students in and out of the classroom. My goals for teaching center on improving learning in classes that I have already taught (New Testament) and developing the best outcomes and assessments for a new class (Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel) that will promote spiritual growth while giving intellectual depth to the life and ministry of the Savior. That intellectual depth about the historical context, geographic backdrop, and Scriptural parallels will be drawn from my archaeological and textual research carried out using the strategies discussed above. Additionally, the proposed citizenship project focused on collecting, sharing, reading, and discussing the research conducted by the Ancient Scripture faculty will be conducted with the purpose of having faculty not only aware of the research being conducted in the department but also implementing pedagogical techniques of research results within a classroom setting to educate and inspire the students on their spiritual journey at BYU. My ultimate goal, which coincides well with the mission statements of both BYU and Religious Education is to model for the students a confessional scholar: one who can engage questions without doubt, debate and disagree without contention, be conversant with both the academy and the faithful Latter Day Saint community.

Resources Needed to Accomplish Goals

I am well-supplied with the financial and physical resources needed to accomplish these goals through Religious Education and the Department of Ancient Scripture. In addition to those sources of annual funding, I have also been funded through the Religious Studies Center, the

Ancient Near Eastern Studies program, and the discretionary fund of the dean's office in Religious Education. At times I feel an embarrassment of riches in some aspects and am blessed to be in a college and department that values the research that I conduct and is willing to provide the financial means to improve teaching as well.