FDS project reports for Ryan K. Lee:

**Citizenship**

My project related to Citizenship was to meet with faculty at the university that teach courses that relate to my collecting area in L. Tom Perry Special Collections—19th Century Mormonism and Western Americana. To come up with a list of possible faculty, I went to the online BYU catalog and searched for all courses under two departments: Religious Studies and History. I focused on faculty who taught courses during Fall 2015, or were to teach courses during Winter 2015. The result was a list of over 30 faculty members in both disciplines that I could contact.

Prior to contacting the faculty, I came up with a goal for my meeting with them. I related this project to Citizenship because my goal was to get to know people who I will work with as part of my job, but who are not part of my department or my everyday job assignment. Since the library’s main audience is the students and faculty of the university, our department has given the curators the challenge to do more to integrate their collections into the curriculum of the university and serve these two main audiences. In order to do that, I need the faculty to know who I am and what services I can offer, and hopefully this will lead to more collaboration and giving opportunities for their students to use our collections to enhance their courses. In order to meet this goal, I prepared a set of questions and topics to cover in a brief 15-20 minute meeting.

Once this set of questions was prepared, I began going through the list of faculty and contacting them by email with a statement of purpose and a request for permission to set up an appointment to meet them in their offices. Out of the 15 I contacted, 5 replied, and I ended up meeting with two faculty members in their office. While this not exactly the result I had hoped for, my interaction with faculty was not limited to these visits. Partly as a result of my efforts to contact, and partly from just routine visits made by faculty and their classes to Special Collections, I was able to meet
with and interact in a significant way with a number of other faculty members. During the past two semesters, I have helped provide library instruction or otherwise interacted with over a dozen classes taught by 7 different faculty that I did not yet even contact to visit. All the classes wanted to see original manuscript and printed items that we housed in Special Collections. I was asked to provide some historical context for the items and give the students chances to view and even handle these items, as a way interact with pieces of the history they were studying.

So, while I still wish to meet individually with more professors to better understand their needs and desires for services from the library, specifically Special Collections, I think my project was a success because it gave me the confidence to open my mouth and get my name out there to faculty with whom I may collaborate with in the future. My next step will be to work with the subject librarians in my related fields of collecting, and possibly come up with ideas for specific assignments that we can propose to these faculty members to hopefully even provide further involvement and interaction of the students with our collections, and better promote primary source literacy, even to our undergraduates. But, the overall goal of letting faculty members know I am there to assist in their teaching and research still remains.
Scholarship

My project related to scholarship was to produce a research article and submit it to a peer-reviewed venue for possible publication. I co-authored an article with two of my colleagues—Cory Nimer and Gordon Daines—on the topic of data-driven decision making for digitization in Perry Special Collections. The research project was, briefly, an analysis of the use of our collections, with the goal of coming up with a list of the “highest used” collections, which we determined were the best candidates for digitization. The initial research was put together as a professional poster to be presented at the Society of American Archivists Research Forum held at the annual SAA meeting in August. After the meeting we determined that the topic garnered enough interest to turn the research into an article. The venue we chose to attempt to publish our findings in was the SAA Research Forum proceedings, a peer-reviewed online publication.

In order to produce this article, we had to establish a habit of researching and writing regularly. Being a co-authored piece, first we determined how we were going to divide up the work. Each of us took a part of the article to write up, and we set deadlines for each other to submit their part of the article. We had a strict deadline to finish the article by the middle of November, which was only about three months from the time we returned from the presenting the poster. This required setting up a regular schedule of writing each week. I was assigned to write up a general introduction and provide the literature review, so I wrote first. I tried setting up an hour twice a week for writing, along with at least two hours to work with our research assistant in understanding the data that was being gathered and analyzed. We all had about two weeks to provide the part of the paper we were assigned, and we gave each other deadlines for completing the task, and the responsibility for reporting our progress. At each stage we reviewed each others work and provided constructive feedback.
Being the main author of the piece, once everyone completed their part of the paper, I was responsible for reviewing and editing the piece so that it had one consistent voice. This proved to be a bit of a challenge, having to accommodate for three authors with different ways of writing and wording what they had to say. However, I think it was a very beneficial exercise and gave some good experience with editing others work. Once I finished my initial review and edit, the group looked at the paper one more time together before submitting.

I believe by setting deadlines and having others to whom we were accountable made it so that we could complete this paper in a timely manner, and produce a quality piece. We actually finished one week ahead of schedule. Being my first official publication, I was grateful to have colleagues to work with to provide assistance and feedback, and to give me the confidence that I could do this project. It was intimidating at first, knowing that others were going to review and critique this paper, but having had others with whom I worked, both of whom are editors for a scholarly journal and who have published a great deal themselves, review the item prior gave me confidence that what we submitted was a work of high quality worthy of publication. I hope to co-author more papers like this so that I can have a higher rate of confidence in my scholarship, and also to have a greater rate of success in producing more scholarship.
Professional Assignment

Being a professional faculty position, I chose for a project something related closely to my professional assignment. I needed to come up with a strategy for regularly developing the collections under my stewardship. In order to build a set of leads and a potential regular stream of potential donors, my project involved two parts: 1) determine an area or topic within my collecting focus that may be lacking; 2) determine how to go about filling this gap. One of the main foci of our Mormon and Western Americana collections is Utah County. While over the years we have done well at collecting records for northern Utah County, we lack in records related to the history of the southern half of the county. So, my project was to see specifically what aspects of this region we are lacking, focusing on specific communities or historical events, and come up with a plan for finding materials that could fill in this gap.

To accomplish the first step, I did a thorough search of our collections through our library catalog to survey and see how many collections we had related to communities from Springville to Elberta, focusing primarily on records from 1850-1930, being my collecting area. On a spreadsheet I kept track of how many collections we found in this range and with this criteria. This part of the project actually has taken longer than I expected, and I am still at this stage of the project.

To complete this project in the near future, I plan to finish a survey of our collections, and come up with 2-3 communities that I can visit and meet with organizations or individuals that may either potentially have collections that meet this criteria, or whom can put me in contact with people who do. To be a bit more comprehensive, I also plan to include my colleague or 20th Century manuscripts in this project, as we will likely find more materials for his collecting area than I would for 19th Century. We may also get in touch with Scott Eldredge, who was over a project called “History in Your Attic” where they provided scanning services for people in similar communities throughout Utah and collected leads of people who may be potential contacts for donations.