Just six years ago, we launched our Mormon Studies Initiative to encourage vibrant, intellectual exploration of Mormonism on campus and in the wider community. The day dawn may not be breaking yet, but we have come a long way.

Our donors have been generous. In all, we have raised more than $700,000 to support Mormon Studies programming. Through the permanently endowed Graduate Research Fellowship in Mormon Studies, we have welcomed seven young scholars from such schools as Boston University, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania to work on their Ph.D. dissertations. Our Center has become a summer home to students from Claremont Graduate University who conduct research in Utah’s LDS archives. At the beginning of their careers, these men and women will shape the future of Mormon Studies nationally and internationally.

We have brought leading Mormon Studies scholars to campus to lecture, including Richard Bushman, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Greg Prince, David Campbell, and Lester Bush. We have hosted three conferences: “Women and the LDS Church: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,” “Faith and Reason, Conscience and Conflict: The Paths of Lowell Bennion, Sterling McMurrin, and Obert Tanner,” and “Black, White, and Mormon: The Evolving Status of Black Saints within the Mormon Fold.” We have sponsored Mormon Studies classes in Gender Studies, Sociology, Writing and Rhetoric, Film Studies, and World Cultures and Languages.

Now, that’s keeping our shoulder to the wheel!

This is all in our wake. Looking forward, we received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant will fund two teacher workshops this summer on “Manifest Destiny Reconsidered: The Utah Experience.” Our other critical project is the Marlin K. Jensen Scholar and Artist in Residence program. This three-year pilot program has so far raised $145,000 and now hosts Utah Valley University Professor of Philosophy Brian Birch.

Much has been done to further this good cause. Still, there is so much more to do. In fact, there is an urgency regarding the tasks ahead because this will be my last term as director of the Tanner Humanities Center. For the next three years, I pledge to strengthen the foundation of our Mormon Studies Initiative — to expand programming and make our achievements financially secure. I ask your help in making Mormon Studies a lasting legacy at the U. I ask your help in securing this legacy of learning, tolerance, and respect.
The Tanner Humanities Center has received a $160,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities’ Landmarks of American Culture and History teacher workshop program. “Manifest Destiny Reconsidered: The Utah Experience” will be co-directed by University of Utah Professors of History Bob Goldberg and Paul Reeve. The workshop will be held at the University of Utah and at historic sites and landmarks in Utah on June 18-23, 2017 (national) and July 9-14, 2017 (local).

“Manifest Destiny Reconsidered: The Utah Experience” aims to enrich the curriculum of teachers nationwide by helping them develop a more complex understanding of western expansion and Utah’s place in that story. Under the direction of a diverse team of national and local scholars, teachers will investigate the ways religion, race, gender, and class touched Utah migration and settlement and challenged standard interpretations of Manifest Destiny and of what it meant to be “American.”

The workshop also will provide teachers with an historical framework for analyzing how issues at the forefront of settling the Utah Territory — freedom of religion, citizenship, equality, federal vs. state’s rights, economic opportunity, and violence — continue to shape our nation’s political and social debates.

For additional information, including the application process for teachers, see: thc.utah.edu/teacher-workshops/neh/index.php.
Established in 1979, the Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF) is a national scholarly organization devoted to the study of regional building traditions throughout North America. From May 31-June 3, 2017, the VAF’s annual conference will take place in Salt Lake City and focus on how the Mormon settlement of the Great Basin created a rich and distinctive regional architecture. Thomas Carter, Professor Emeritus of the University of Utah’s College of Architecture and Planning, will chair the host committee.

The LDS Church will open a number of its buildings on and around Temple Square to VAF members, and the Tanner Humanities Center will sponsor a day-long visit to an “early Mormon landscape” in the Sanpete Valley in central Utah. This area contains some of the best examples of early Mormon architecture in the West and was featured in Dr. Carter’s recent book, Building Zion: The Material World of Mormon Settlement (Minnesota 2016). Highlights of the Sanpete tour include the Manti Temple, Scandinavian houses in Ephraim, and a Mormon “village” preserved in Spring City’s National Register Historic District.

Mormon Studies Initiative Steering Committee

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The Tanner Humanities Center launched its Marlin K. Jensen Scholar and Artist in Residence program in fall 2016. The goal of this three-year pilot program is to host prominent scholars with expertise in Mormon Studies or renowned artists who explore the relationship between faith and art in their work. The semester-long residency will be tailored to a specific scholar or artist, but each Marlin K. Jensen resident will serve as a mentor for students, offer public lectures or performances, teach workshops or classes for University of Utah students or lifelong learners, and contribute to Mormon Studies curriculum planning and program development.

If you are interested in supporting our Marlin K. Jensen Scholar and Artist in Residence program, please contact Bob Goldberg, Director, at (801) 581-8844 and bob.goldberg@utah.edu or Susan M. Anderson, Development Officer, at (801) 581-8862 and susan.anderson@utah.edu; www.thc.utah.edu.

Marlin K. Jensen Scholar & Artist in Residence Selection Committee

STEVEN PETERSEN | Petersen Advantage, LLC
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FIONA GIVENS | University of Richmond
SALLY GORDON | University of Pennsylvania

About Marlin K. Jensen

Naming this program for Marlin K. Jensen honors his significant and enduring impact on our community. Jensen was a general authority of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving as the official Church Historian and Recorder from 2005 to 2012. During his tenure, he worked to professionalize the Church History Department, give it international range, make its holdings more accessible to researchers, and publish primary materials. He was made an emeritus general authority in 2012. Currently, he practices law in Salt Lake City and is a member of the Utah State Board of Regents.

We are grateful to the many donors who have supported our efforts in developing and launching this program. Major donors include the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, Greg and Julie Cook, Peter and Brynn Huntsman, Steven Petersen, the Bank of Utah, the Boyer Family Foundation, the R. Harold Burton Foundation, and the Child Family Foundation. We currently are seeking additional donations to fund the pilot program fully and to assess its financial viability moving forward.
Inaugural Marlin K. Jensen Resident

Brian Birch served as our inaugural Marlin K. Jensen resident. Birch is a Professor of Philosophy, Director of the Religious Studies Program, and Director of the Center for the Study of Ethics at Utah Valley University. He is the founding editor of *Teaching Ethics and Element: The Journal of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology*. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of the Parliament of World Religions. With Grant Underwood, he is completing a book project, *Mormonism Among Christian Theologies*, which is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

In fall 2016, Birch taught “The Intellectual Life of Mormonism: Reason, Faith, & Science Among the Latter-day Saints” and conducted a companion public panel discussion series featuring prominent Mormon Studies scholars. He also facilitated a Research Interest Group of faculty and graduate students interested in Mormon Studies at the University of Utah and delivered a Work in Progress talk on “The Intellectual Culture of Mormonism.”

On November 11, 2016, Birch spoke at Brigham Young University. His topic was “‘A Portion of God’s Light’: Mormonism and Religious Pluralism.” He discussed how the concept of general revelation resonates within a Mormon context and how Latter-day Saints have understood the presence of truth in a variety of religious traditions. This guest lecture was co-sponsored by the Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and the Charles Redd Center for Western History.
Fall 2016 Public Panel Discussion Series

“The Intellectual Life of Mormonism: Reason, Faith, & Science Among The Latter-Day Saints”

September 29, 2016
Mormonism’s Intellectual Legacy: Nibley, Bennion, McMurrin, & Arrington
MARY LYTHGOE BRADFORD | Author and Poet
L. JACKSON NEWELL | Professor Emeritus, University of Utah
BOYD J. PETERSON | Professor, Utah Valley University
GREGORY A. PRINCE | Author and Historian

October 27, 2016
Writing Women’s History in Mormonism: Old Challenges, New Prospects
COLLEEN McDANNELL | Professor, University of Utah
LINDA KING NEWELL | Author and Historian
KATE HOLBROOK | Specialist in Women’s History, LDS Church History Department

November 17, 2016
Race and Gender: Contemporary Perspectives
MARGERET TOSCANO | Professor, University of Utah
PAUL REEVE | Professor, University of Utah

December 8, 2016
The LDS Church and the Academic Study of Mormonism: Institutional Dynamics
MARLIN K. JENSEN | General Authority Emeritus, LDS Church
SPENCER FLUHMAN | Director, Maxwell Institute of Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University
GRANT UNDERWOOD | Professor, Brigham Young University
A Conversation with 2016-17 Mormon Studies Graduate Research Fellow

Gavin Feller, doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Iowa, is the Tanner Humanities Center’s 2016-17 Mormon Studies Graduate Research Fellow. He will deliver a Work in Progress talk at 12:00 p.m. on March 21, 2017 in the Tanner Humanities Center’s Jewel Box Conference Room. The talk is free and open to the public.

How did you become interested in Mormon Studies?
I have long been interested in Mormon culture, but my route to writing a dissertation with a Mormon Studies emphasis was circuitous. I entered the field of communication in audio and video production. But required graduate courses in critical and cultural studies were thoroughly engaging and inspired me to puzzle through questions of power, race, gender, and class, both personally and professionally. I discovered exciting parallels and insights, in particular, by linking media theory and Mormonism. The work felt fresh and uncharted and became my intellectual passion.

What is your research project?
My project synthesizes two seemingly disparate topics: twentieth-century new media and Mormonism. I’m investigating how the LDS church responded to the opportunities and challenges provided by emerging technologies, including radio, TV, and the Internet. I divide my time among qualitative interviews with LDS Church media leaders, archival research, and intensive writing. So far I’ve discovered that the LDS Church has had a profound ambivalence toward new technologies. I will analyze this further to outline what I’m calling a “Mormon media imagination” and to consider how new media impacts the cultural construction of religious authority, community, and identity.

How has this fellowship benefitted you and your research?
Prior to coming here, I was a graduate student and teaching assistant at the University of Iowa. I love teaching and am always looking for ways to innovate and improve, but I also realized there would be added pressures trying to finish a dissertation while teaching multiple courses. Here I can focus solely on the intellectual challenges generated by my research and writing, and working in an interdisciplinary environment and being surrounded by supportive faculty and ambitious fellows has been an unexpected bonus. On a personal note, after living in Florida and Iowa for several years, the fellowship has given me and my young family the opportunity to be near family and friends. When I first saw the fellowship, I thought, “This is too good to be true.” And it has exceeded my expectations!
What can we expect in your Work In Progress talk?
My talk will grow out of a dissertation chapter I am writing on Mormonism and the Internet and focus on the launch of LDS.org in 1996. I will evaluate how this website was shaped by social and cultural history and reflects the LDS church’s larger institutional goals for new media. I also will conduct a textual analysis of some early LDS.org web pages to consider how LDS church leaders used this media to address both the possibilities and potential dangers of the Internet.

What is next for you in this field and in your career?
I plan to defend my dissertation at the University of Iowa in May, and I currently am applying for faculty jobs in communication departments across the US and abroad in critical media history, new media, or mass communication. I plan to expand my dissertation into a book and have an interest in exploring comparative work in media and religion. I have conducted fieldwork in Brazil, for instance, and would like to return again to study how religious groups in that country navigate and employ available media.
Mormon Studies Courses

Summer 2016 – Mormon Rhetorics
Professors Jonathan W. Stone and Christie Toth, Writing and Rhetoric Studies
During the last decade or so, Mormonism’s generally monolithic public discourse — largely shaped, controlled, and distributed by the LDS Church — has blossomed like Brigham Young’s proverbial rose in the desert: from Mormon rhetoric to Mormon rhetorics. In this course, students traced the Mormon historical narrative and examined sacred texts, doctrines, and policies. They also complicated “official” narratives by studying academic and vernacular historical, sociological, and ethnographic accounts of what it means to be Mormon.

Fall 2016 – The Intellectual Life Of Mormonism: Reason, Faith, And Science Among The Latter-Day Saints
Brian Birch, Marlin K. Jensen Scholar in Residence
This course explored the development and contemporary landscape of Mormon intellectual life. It examined key episodes in Latter-day Saint history that shaped the development of policies, practices, and movements related to the study of Mormonism. The course also addressed distinctive features of the tradition that have served to regulate and constrain forms of academic activity within the ranks of the LDS Church.

Previous Mormon Studies Courses Offered at the University of Utah

The Book Of Mormon As Literature
David Bokovoy
Department of World Languages and Cultures

Mormons And Movies: Searching For Trancendence
Sterling Van Wagenen
Department of Film and Media Arts

Latter-Day Saints Society And Culture
Marcie Goodman, Department of Sociology

Mormon Theology And Christianity
Brian Birch, Department of Philosophy, Utah Valley University

Mormonism And The American Experience
W. Paul Reeve, Department of History
This course offers students an exploration and analysis of the historic and contemporary practices and perceptions surrounding gender and Mormonism. Students will consider how different branches of Mormonism view the social roles and responsibilities of men and women. Students also will analyze both institutional and personal perspectives on gender roles, family structure, and sexual orientation.

Reflections on “Mormonism and Gender”

Jackie Farnsworth has taught diversity courses at the University of Utah for twelve years. So when Tanner Humanities Center Director Bob Goldberg approached her about teaching a Mormon Studies course, she was thrilled to develop and pitch “Mormonism and Gender.” As envisioned by Farnsworth, this course provides a rigorous and supportive environment for students to learn about the diversity within the Mormon faith and to consider its historical evolution on gender roles and gender issues. The course also enables students to engage intellectually with the conflicts that arise when religious freedoms and gender rights collide.

Farnsworth immerses her students in this topic through intensive study of primary and secondary sources, interviews, guest speakers, and research projects. Farnsworth will teach this course for the third time in spring 2016. It fills up quickly and attracts students with varied backgrounds in religion and gender studies.
In Memoriam,
Thomas F. Rugh, 1951-2016

We mourn the passing of Tom Rugh, a close friend and enthusiastic supporter of the Tanner Humanities Center and its Mormon Studies Initiative. Tom earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in Humanities at BYU before pursuing graduate study in art history at the University of Chicago.

He worked for TIAA-CREF, the Museum of Utah Art and History, and Zions Bank and taught students in the Honors Program at the University of Utah and in museum studies at Brigham Young University. He was a member of the Museum of Art Advisory Board at BYU and served on the Fine Arts Advisory Board of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah. “His understanding, admiration, and love for western art and artists was particularly impressive,” said Tanner director Bob Goldberg. He also served from 1984-1990 as branch president and bishop of the Hyde Park Ward in the Chicago Heights Stake (1984-1990), one of the first wards in the church to reach out to people of all races after the 1978 revelation. Tom is survived by his wife Susan, their three sons and their spouses, and ten grandchildren.

With the loss of Tom, a light has gone out of our lives. What we will always remember is Tom’s optimism before adversity, love of all of God’s creatures, and a profound curiosity about the matter of life. A Renaissance man, he was fluent in the language of art and the practicalities of business. His warmth of spirit and generosity of soul built up the kingdom. We have lost one who stood in the highest rank.
Stanley Thayne, the Tanner Humanities Center’s 2015-16 Mormon Studies Graduate Research Fellow, successfully defended his dissertation in May. He now teaches anthropology and religion at Whitman College in Washington.

In partnership with Claremont’s Graduate University, the Tanner Humanities Center welcomed doctoral candidates Chase Kirkham and Alan Clark as our 2016 Mormon Studies Summer Research Fellows.

University of Utah student Matthew McBride won the 2016 Mormon History Association’s “Best Student Paper Award” for “Female Brethren:” Gender Dynamics in an Integrated Mormon Missionary Force, 1898-1915.”
# Mormon Studies Initiative Donors

The Tanner Humanities Center is grateful for the generous donations we have received from the community since 2010 in support of our Mormon Studies Initiative. If we inadvertently made any mistakes or left anyone off of this, please let us know.

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Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel!
We welcome donations at all levels and would be honored to discuss our Mormon Studies Initiative and its funding opportunities with potential donors. Please contact Bob Goldberg, Director, at (801) 581-8844 and bob.goldberg@utah.edu or Susan M. Anderson, Development Officer, at (801) 581-8862 and susan.anderson@utah.edu.
Mission and Overview

Since 1988, the Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner Humanities Center has promoted humanities inquiry and exchange by supporting innovative scholarly projects and creating opportunities for interaction among scholars, students, and lifelong learners. We offer twenty programs in three major areas: research support, public lectures and programs, and faculty outreach. Our activities reflect a vision of the humanities as not only relevant, stimulating, and cutting-edge, but also essential for developing critical thinking, tolerance, and respect at the University of Utah and in our community.

Mormon Studies Initiative at The University of Utah

The Tanner Humanities Center launched a Mormon Studies Initiative in 2010 to encourage vibrant, intellectual exploration of Mormonism on campus and in the wider community. Funds raised for the Mormon Studies Initiative have supported an endowment for a graduate research fellowship, the Marlin K. Jensen Scholar and Artist in Residence program, conferences, courses, public lectures, panels, and other community events.

About the Cover

The Tanner Humanities Center sought a stained glass beehive to grace the cover of this year’s Mormon Studies newsletter. Emily Utt — Historic Sites Curator, Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — came to the rescue! She graciously arranged for staff members to visit the Liberty Ward in Salt Lake City. With the benefit of Emily’s historic guidance, we toured the 1908 building and photographed its historic stained glass panels. Thank you, Emily.