Developing your Reflective Statement of Research Process

Please read this document closely and carefully. It outlines the necessary elements for you to compose a quality Reflective Statement, which is an essential part of the award submission. It needs to be comprehensive and insightful and must focus on your library research process. Your paper should involve a significant amount of library research.

Research is a necessary process that you will repeat throughout your life: for work, for daily decisions, and for social and citizenship responsibilities. The Augustana Campus Library Student Award for Library Research Committee is interested in your ability to perform university-level library research and to reflect on the process by which you search for, access, evaluate, and use the information that goes into the development of a research paper.

In your Reflective Statement, you are encouraged to communicate the growth of your understanding and use of library services, resources, and collections as appropriate to your research paper. The Committee is interested in the breadth and depth of your information-seeking process. Your reference list/works cited/bibliography should reflect a wide range of resources (e.g. books, journal articles, book chapters, webpages, etc), as discovered through active research and critical selection.

Your Reflective Statement of Research Process (500-750 words) must include and address the following headings:

1. Library Services, Resources, and Collections
   - Library services: e.g. borrowing items via the NEOS consortium or through Interlibrary loan as appropriate.
   - Library resources: e.g. consulting librarians, using Subject Guides and citation QuickGuides;
   - Library collections: e.g. using books, periodicals, databases, and the library catalogue

   In this portion of your reflection, consider questions such as: What did you discover about these services, resources, and collections? What are the primary research databases, reference books, websites, etc. in your topic area? Which did you use and which did you choose not to use? Why?

2. Reflective Summary
   As you work on the Reflective Summary, consider the following questions. (You do not need to systematically answer each question. Instead, use them as a guide to develop your statement):

   a) Developing a research topic
      How did you think about and refine your initial research topic? Reflect on the process of adapting your interests into the scope of the paper, considering factors such as the time you had for research and writing, the required length of the paper, and the nature of the information you found.

   b) Research strategies
      What specific strategies did you use and develop for finding relevant information? What databases did you use? What discoveries did you make by chance and which through planned search strategies?
c) Finding and evaluating information
What did you learn about finding and evaluating information on your topic or in your discipline? Did you have trouble finding some kinds of information? If so, how did you address this challenge? What criteria did you use to evaluate information sources?

d) Learning about library research
What was the most important thing you learned during your research process? How would you change your search strategy next time?