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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.UCWOMEN
Title  University of Chicago. Women and Women’s Organizations. Collection
Date  1891-1980, 2015
Size  5 linear feet (6 boxes)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
            University of Chicago Library
            1100 East 57th Street
            Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract  This collection contains a range of material documenting employees and employment at the University of Chicago. Materials date between 1919 and 2000, with the bulk of materials dating between 1952 and 1980.

Information on Use

Access  The collection is open for research.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: University of Chicago. Women and Women’s Organizations. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Scope Note  The collection is organized into three series: Series I: Administrative Perspectives and Policies, Series II: The Women at the University, and Series III: Women’s Activities and Organizations. It includes articles, correspondence, clippings, meeting minutes, reports, directories, rosters, reports, invitations, flyers, pamphlets, booklets, and other documents produced on and by women in university life.

Series I focuses on the University of Chicago’s inner dialogue and official actions regarding its women students. The focus of the series lies primarily in the first few decades of the institution, when Marion Talbot was the Dean of Women. Though Talbot wrote in 1898 that “In no institution in the world is the work of women scholar less hampered by artificial restraints; and nowhere are women freer to pursue their collegiate or university training,” the subsequent years delivered a plethora of challenges as the administration struggled to live up to its set precedent of inclusive and equal education. These challenges include President’s Harper’s proposed plan for separate instruction in 1902, a history of discriminative hiring practices, unequal distribution of
aid and honors, and ongoing treatment of female faculty. This series also details administrative discussion surrounding the establishment of women’s housing, athletics, and recreational facilities, as well as the Department of Home Economics and Nursing as academic departments specifically aimed at women students. This series should be read alongside the Marion Talbot Papers; much of the material can be cross referenced.

Series II is primarily biographical in focus, sketching an unofficial picture of women’s life at the University, as well as highlighting faculty and alumnae’s stories and accomplishments through articles and correspondences. The question of what kind of person the woman at the University of Chicago was and what kind of person she out to be is continuously asked and answered throughout the series. Anecdotal material presents the variety of expectations for and receptions of women at the university, and can be characterized broadly by youthful excitement, conservative suspicion and plenty of good humor. Moreover, reminiscences from early alumnae present reflections on the role of the colligate experience within individual lives and broader communities of women at a time when the character and fate of women in higher education was still in question. The life and work of early faculty and notable alumnae further exemplify the complex ethos of women at the university.

Series III focuses on the official social life and communities of women at the University of Chicago, first by providing a brief history of the creation of official organizations beginning with sororities, then turning to original documents from various clubs, unions, councils, committees, etc. Early in university history, an established network of social activities for women was seen as critical in the university’s contribution to the student’s holistic wellbeing. The organizations subsequently created became platforms for more than mere socialization. They became platforms for women’s voices to be heard in and through arts, academics, and politics on campus.

The “Women’s University Council” material in Series III may be of particular interest in understanding the collection itself, and the history of women’s discourse at the University. These folders contain ten years’ of meeting minutes spanning from 1925 to 1935. They detail discussion by female administration and faculty regarding topics such as housing, social life, and women’s health. They give a clear picture not only of the issues relevant to women at the university, but the manner in which they were addressed.

**Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

Browse finding aids by topic.

Abbott, Edith and Grace. Papers

Archival Biographical Files
Beecher House. Records

Breckinridge, Sophonisba P. Papers

Delta Sigma Women's Club. Records

Department of Buildings and Grounds. Records

Department of Physical Education and Athletics. Records

Harper, William Rainey. Papers

Office of the President. Harper, Judson and Burton Administrations. Records

Office of the President. Hutchins Administration. Records

Office of Student Activities. Records

Quadranglers. Records Alumnae Club. Records

Rickert, Edith. Papers

Service League. Records

Talbot, Marion. Papers

Wallace, Elizabeth. Papers

**Subject Headings**

- Dixon, Marlene
- Talbot, Marion, 1858-1948
- University of Chicago. Department of Household Administration
- University of Chicago - History
- University of Chicago - Students
- 
- Home economics -- Study and teaching
- Women -- Education (Higher) -- Illinois
- Women -- Societies and clubs
- 

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: University Policy and Practices**
Series I: University Policies and Practices, presents a history of the University’s official policy and actions regarding its female students. It also details the subsequent implementation and implications within the faculty and student body. It includes correspondence, articles, speech drafts, meeting notes, and a variety of statistics and reports. Materials date between 1891 and 1977.

The materials found here should be read alongside “Early Faculty Biographical Material” in Series II as well as “Women’s University Council” in Series III. For more on the Marlene Dixon Case, see “Women’s Radical Action Project” in Series III, Subseries 4.

Subseries 1: Early Administrative Perspectives and Policies on Women, 1892-1977

Box 1
Folder 1
  Early Administrative Perspectives and Policies, 1904-1977
Box 1
Folder 2
  Women in Administration and Faculty, 1892-1945
Box 1
Folder 3
  Women in Higher-Ed Inter-University Correspondence, 1904-1939
Box 1
Folder 4
  The Segregation Controversy. I, 1898-1901
Box 1
Folder 5
  The Segregation Controversy. II, 1901-1902
Box 1
Folder 6
  The Segregation Controversy. III, 1902-1919
Box 1
Folder 7
  Administrative Policy - Miscellaneous, 1967-1976

Subseries 2: Early Academics and Accommodations for Women

Box 1
Folder 8
  Home Economics, 1892-1952
Box 1
Folder 9
  Nursing, 1917-1934
Box 1
Folder 10
  Women’s Housing, 1894-1967
Folder 11
Women’s Athletics, 1897-1974

Box 1

Folder 12
Women’s Recreational Facilities, 1900-1955

Subseries 3: Relevant Statistics and Reports on Women in the University, 1891-1975

Box 1
Folder 13
The Student Body -Data, 1892-1924

Box 1
Folder 14
Financial Aid - Data, 1892-1937

Box 1
Folder 15
Honors - Data, 1891-1975

Box 1
Folder 16
Giving - Data, 1892-1971

Box 1
Folder 17

Subseries 4: Oversized Newspaper, 1977

Box 2
“The University’s First and Only Civil War,” marked and unmarked copies, 1977


Box 3
Folder 1
The Marlene Dixon Case, 1969

Box 3
Folder 2
The Barbara Monter Firing, 1970

Series II: The Women at the University

Series II: The Women at the University, details the lives of students, alumnae, and faculty within university history and campus life. This series focusses on particular figures and unofficial narratives to compliment the broader issues and official events in Series I and III. It includes correspondence, articles, personal anecdotes, and a variety of biographical profiles. Materials date between 1896 and 1976.

Subseries 1: Women in University Life - General, 1896-1964, 2015
Box 3
Folder 3
Women and Campus Life - Articles, 1909-1957

Box 3
Folder 4
Women and Campus Life- M. Talbot Correspondence, 1896-1910

Box 3
Folder 5

Box 3
Folder 5A
Women Leaders of the University of Chicago trading cards, produced by College Instruction and Outreach group, University Library, 2015

Subseries 2: Early Faculty Biographical Material, 1892-1966

Box 3
Folder 6
Abbot, Edith and Grace, 1924-1964

Box 3
Folder 7
Breckenridge, Sophonisba, 1917-1942

Box 3
Folder 8
Dudley, Gertrude, 1934-1966

Box 3
Folder 9
Flint, Edith Foster, 1916-1949

Box 3
Folder 10
Palmer, Alice Freeman, undated

Box 3
Folder 11
Phillips, Melba Newell, 1962

Box 3
Folder 12
Mayer, Maria Goeppert, 1964

Box 3
Folder 13
Reynolds, Myra, 1915-1937

Box 3
Folder 14
Rickert, Edith, 1938-1948

Box 3
Folder 15
Slye, Maud, 1935
Subseries 3: Alumnae Biographical Material, 1893-1976

Box 3
Folder 18
Alumnae Profiles, 1921-1976

Box 3
Folder 19
Alumnae Reminiscences. I, 1893-1940

Box 3
Folder 20
Alumnae Reminiscences. II, 1941-1976

Series III: Women's Activities and Organizations

Series III, Women’s Activities and Organizations, presents a picture of the official social life of women at the University of Chicago through the lens of specific organizations. The scope of the material ranges from programs for dramatic productions to calls for political action. It includes articles, clippings, and a vast amount of original materials produced by the organizations themselves. Materials date from 1897 to 1980.

Subseries 1: Social Life and University Activities - General, 1908-1975

Box 3
Folder 21
Social Life and University Activities - Articles, 1908-1975

Box 3
Folder 22
Social Life and University Activities - Clippings, 1922-1930

Box 4
Oversized Newspaper Clippings, 1925-1933

Subseries 2: Early Formation of Women’s Organizations, 1892-1936

Box 5
Folder 1
Sororities - Creation and Reception, 1892-1936

Box 5
Folder 2
Women’s Union and Beyond, 1903-1926

Subseries 3: Community Involvement, 1897-1946

Box 5
Folder 3
University Settlement, 1897-1913
Box 5
Folder 4
Women in the Wars, 1917-1943
Box 5
Folder 5
Philippine Women’s University, 1946

Subseries 4: Original Materials from Activities and Organizations, 1892-1980
Box 5
Folder 6
Achoth. 1926-1927
Box 5
Folder 7
College Equal Suffrage League, 1911
Box 5
Folder 8
Cosmopolitan Club, 1911-1948
Box 5
Folder 9
Dames Club, 1948
Box 5
Folder 10
Esoteric, 1914
Box 5
Folder 11
Eta Sigma Phi, undated
Box 5
Folder 12
Federation of University Women, 1923-1925
Box 5
Folder 13
Graduate Committee on the Study of Women, 1980
Box 5
Folder 14
Interclub Council, 1951
Box 5
Folder 15
Quadranglers, 1912-1915
Box 5
Folder 16
Reynolds Club, undated
Box 5
Folder 17
Sigma Club, 1940-1969
Box 5
Folder 18
  Spelman House History, 1910
Box 5
Folder 19
  Women Fellow’s Club, 1897-1900
Box 5
Folder 20
  Women’s Athletic Association. I, 1904-1971
Box 6
Folder 1
  Women’s Athletic Association. II, 1906-1979
Box 6
Folder 2
  Women’s Club of Chicago, 1892-1929
Box 6
Folder 3
  Women’s Exchange of Chicago, 1910
Box 6
Folder 4
  Women of the College of Literature, 1906
Box 6
Folder 5
  Women’s Liberation, undated
Box 6
Folder 6
  Women’s Radical Action Project (W.R.A.P), 1969
Box 6
Folder 7
  Women of the Science College, 1909
Box 6
Folder 8
  Women’s Peace Party, 1916
Box 6
Folder 9
  The Women’s Union, 1902-1907
Box 6
Folder 10
  Women’s University Council. I, 1925-1926
Box 6
Folder 11
  Women’s University Council. II, 1926-1927
Box 6
Folder 12
  Women’s University Council. III, 1927-1929
Folder 13
  Women’s University Council. IV, 1929-1931
Box 6
Folder 14
  Women’s University Council. V, 1931-1932
Box 6
Folder 15
  Women’s University Council. VI, 1932-1935
Box 6
Folder 16
  Y.W.C.A, 1898-1946
Box 6
Folder 17
  Young Women’s Christian League, 1914-1915
Box 6
Folder 18
  Miscellaneous Materials, undated