Guide to the University of Chicago University Extension Records 1892-1979

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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.UEXTENSION
Title  University of Chicago. University Extension. Records
Date  1892-1979
Size  24 linear feet (43 boxes, 10 volumes)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  One of the five original divisions of the University, the Extension was created "to bring as far as possible its [the University's] many advantages for culture and instruction to people who are prevented by circumstances from going to the University itself." The Records contains correspondence, reports, minutes, student examination grades, syllabi, course descriptions, and scrapbooks of promotional and informational material. Includes minutes of the Board of the University Extension (1901-1911). Also includes administrative and financial files from the Extension's constituent units, including: the Home Study Department (1892-1961), particularly the Navy Correspondence Courses Research Project (1949-1962); the Lecture-Study Department (1892-ca. 1902); and the University College/Downtown Center (1892-1979), especially the Self-Study Project (1933-1962) and the Union Research and Education Projects/Union Leadership Program (1949-1965).

Information on Use

Access  No restrictions.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: University Extension. Records, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Historical Note  One of the five original divisions of the University, the Extension was created, much like its British counterparts, "to bring as far as possible its [the University's] many advantages for culture and instruction to people who are prevented by circumstances from going to the University itself." President William Rainey Harper, veteran of the Chautauqua Movement and professor of Semitic languages, first defined the Extension's purposes and scope; under Harper's direction,
adult education in the early University became a secular embodiment of his personal evangelical vision.

t the beginning the Extension Division was organized into six departments, each administered by a secretary who reported to the division’s Director. Lecture-Study Department speakers went on tours throughout the Midwest to present evening and weekend courses. The Class-Study Department provided off-campus instruction in the city, offering courses similar to those available on campus; in the early years of the twentieth century, Class-Study began giving courses in subject areas requested by specific groups of people. Basic and remedial courses by mail came under the jurisdiction of Correspondence-Study. By 1897 the other three units—Examination, Library, and Training—had been absorbed by the first three; a department devoted to Bible study had been dropped even more quickly. Not until 1905, when the American Institute of Sacred Literature merged with the Extension, was Bible study restored.

In 1900 the Extension faculty lost its separate and statutory existence. The Board of University Extension assumed governing responsibility until 1916, when the Extension’s administration and governance reverted to its Director.

Especially during the first quarter-century of its existence, the Extension served teachers and aspiring teachers. In 1898, aided by a grant from Mrs. Emmons Blaine, the University organized the downtown College of Teachers. Two years later it merged with the Class-Study Department under the name University College. University College was conceived as "an arrangement for selecting and conducting courses of study at a place and time convenient for those who cannot attend ordinary courses at the Quadrangles." By 1911 the Lecture-Study Department had also been incorporated into University College, and its circuit riding program was discontinued. The Correspondence-Study Department remained part of the Extension and in April 1924 was renamed the Home-Study Department.

Beginning in the 1920s, but particularly during the 1930s and 1940s, University College developed educational programs in cooperation with specific professional groups, among them the American Chemical Society and the American Institute of Meat Packers. Other specialized courses included those for mechanical and electrical engineers as well as for members of the printing and lithographic industries. During this same period University College expanded its services by tailoring courses to the needs of businessmen, civic leaders, and government administrators. Innovative offerings in the liberal arts, particularly the Great Books series and the Basic Program in Liberal Education for Adults, proved to be extremely popular. Capitalizing on the success Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler had with the Great Books courses, the Basic Program was a four-year liberal arts training program designed around group discussions and lectures on classical and modern literature. Other programs, such as the Institute of Statistics and the Institute of Public Service, survived only briefly in wartime conditions.

By the 1960s, University Extension enrollment had declined precipitously from the two previous decades. After 1963-64 the Home-Study Department ceased to exist, and the Downtown Center closed in 1974. By 1982 the University Extension had become part of the Center for Continuing Education. Though its programs and course offerings have been reduced from earlier years, this entity continues to offer adult educational services, most of them non-credit,
in the following areas: liberal education, including the Basic Program; business and professional courses, particularly in publishing, communications, and marketing; and higher education, including faculty symposia and seminars.

**Scope Note**

These records unevenly document the Extension’s history. Little is preserved here about some important units, such as the Lecture-Study Department, while shorter-lived programs, such as the Navy Correspondence Courses Research Project, are heavily documented. There are eight series in the collection:

Series I contains minutes of the Board of the University Extension from 1901 to 1911. Curricular, appointment, and financial matters are discussed. Also of interest are the Report of the Sub-Committee on the Present Status and Prospects of University Extension (1909) and the Report to the President and Trustees of the Committee on the Institute for Popular Adult Education (1910).

Series II: Home Study Department is divided into three subseries. The first focuses on the formative decades of the Home-Study Department. Box 1 holds Correspondence-Study Secretary H. F. Mallory’s bound letter book for October 1897 to October 1898, which is the only correspondence preserved from the early years. Thirty volumes of examination results give complete documentation about grades from 1922 through 1961, and ten oversized volumes of Home-Study receipts for tuition, books, and miscellaneous charges provide equally continuous financial information from 1 October 1892 through 30 June 1945. A small amount of correspondence concerns cooperative ventures with particular groups in the 1950s, such as Encyclopedia Britannica and the U. S. Coast Guard. Scattered enrollment reports for the ten years after 1942 are found here as well.

Promotional and informational material, including syllabi, addresses, printed announcements and circulars, comprise the second subseries. As discussed in the final section below, however, more complete collections of syllabi and announcements are located elsewhere in the Archives.

The final subseries is devoted to the Navy Correspondence Courses Research Project. Set up in 1949, this project prepared several hundred general and technical courses for Naval personnel, enlisted men and officers, those on active duty and those in the reserves. There are two principal groups of material in this subseries: correspondence; and summaries, reports, and contracts.

Series III documents the Lecture-Study Department from 1892 to 1902. Virtually all of the material is printed matter, including circulars, syllabi, and lecture announcements.

In Series IV are located general records related to the University College/Downtown Center. The first subseries contains general information dating from roughly 1901 through 1959, including minutes, statistics, survey results, working statements, and annual, general, and quarterly reports. There are folders devoted to the ongoing problems of name and publicity, and several staff manuals dating from 1946 to 1958. Concluding the first subseries are historical overviews of the
Extension, among them "The University Extension Services," published in 1932 as volume eight of the University of Chicago Survey series.


Series V: Institutes and Programs is a chronological arrangement of special institutes and programs organized by the Extension from the 1920s through the 1960s. As in the case of the Institute of Meat Packing and Public Lectures, much that has been preserved here is statistical, including budget, attendance, and enrollment figures. An exception is the assorted material—newspaper clippings, correspondence, tickets, sales reports, announcements, and seating charts—saved from the 1939 public lectures given by Dr. Eduard Beneš, former president of Czechoslovakia. There is also a great deal of descriptive material in the series, such as course announcements and promotional pieces documenting the Great Books Program and the wartime Engineering, Science and Management Defense Training Program. Little correspondence has survived except for the Institute of Statistics and the Institute of Public Service. Other programs are more scantily documented, among them: the Executive Program, 1945-1958; Art Institute courses, 1953-1956; the Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults, 1949-1958; and the Economic Education Program at Republic Steel, ca. 1949-1950. More recently the Extension has turned its attention to urban problems, including the future of the Woodlawn community. These records are primarily committee proposals, reports, agenda, budgets, and papers on urban topics.

Series VI documents the Self-Study Project from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s and underwritten by the Fund for Adult Education. (It should be noted that the 1933 material listed in the inventory is a mimeographed copy of a portion of "The University Extension Services" which was included with self-study files.) The project's goal was to examine, assess, and place within historical context every facet of University College operations: students, faculty, administrative staff, curriculum, and facilities. Series VI houses material about this project, including correspondence, reports, and evaluations. The bulk of the material, specifically the 39 projects undertaken, is filed by project number.

The Union Research and Education Projects/Union Leadership Program, the subject of Series VII, also began in the mid-1950s. Designed for both members and officers of trade unions, the Union Research and Education Projects offered consulting services, advanced education, and research on union problems. This series includes: conference and seminar materials (26:4; 27:6-7, 13-14, 16; 28:3), discussion guides (26:6-27:2), correspondence and other general files. There are also proposals, among them several for the Union Executive Program (28:6-8) and the American Institute for Free Labor Development (25:10-11). Reports constitute a major portion of this series. In addition to the 1960 and 1963 annual reports (28:1-2) and a 1949 progress report for the Carnegie Corporation (26:1), there are reports, correspondence, and memoranda issued by advisory groups, most notably the Faculty Advisory Board, 1957-1963 (27:3) and the Labor Advisory Committee, 1955-1963 (27:9-10). There are as well union membership attitude surveys dating primarily from the mid-1950s (28:9-14).
Series VIII: Promotional and Informational Material comprises 13 boxes of promotional and descriptive material, most of it originally preserved in scrapbooks, while flyers and newspaper clippings constitute the remainder. One of the most complete series of the collection, this material is arranged in rough chronological order.

Subscription lectures were offered under the auspices of the University Open Lectures, Lecture Association, and Public Lectures. Their work from 1899 through 1943 is very well represented in the form of tickets, announcements, programs, newspaper clippings, syllabi, reading lists, and mimeographed letters of solicitation and instruction. Enrollment and attendance figures for many courses are available elsewhere in the Archives.

University College materials from 1908 through 1944 have survived in similar abundance and include printed circulars and announcements, interdepartmental memoranda, promotional mailings, notices, syllabi, reading lists, examinations, and quarterly course schedules.

The University Orchestral Association was formed in 1909 to provide an annual series of orchestral concerts in Mandel Hall. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra was always the season’s feature, but other musicians and performers appeared on campus as well. Though there were special rates for students and faculty, attendance fell so sharply in the mid-1930s that the organization folded. Among the materials preserved here are announcements, notices, seating charts, sales and attendance records, and program booklets from 1909 through 1936.

The short-lived Institute for Public Service offered courses designed for public officials and government employees. One folder of scrapbook items-including small posters, correspondence, course descriptions, and alumni lists-documents its work in 1941-1942.

The rest of this series consists of more general groups of newspaper clippings, 1949-1953, and flyers and promotional materials, 1930s-1950s.

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

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Board of Trustees. Committee on Press and Extension. Minutes (1898-1932)

University Extension. Syllabi

American Institute of Sacred Literature. Records

University Library. Records

Community Service Workshop. Records

Julius Rosenwald. Papers
Albion Small. Papers

Subject Headings

• University of Chicago -- History
• University of Chicago. University Extension Division
• Institute of Meat Packing
• Adult education
• Continuing education

INVENTORY

Series I: Board of the University Extension

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  Folder 1
    Minutes, 1901-1911

Series II: Home-Study Department

Subseries 1: General Correspondence, Grades, Receipts, and Reports

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Volume 1
   Home-Study receipts, 1 October 1892-30 June 1906

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   U. S. Coast Guard, 1959-1960

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Round Table Home Study, 1940s

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Correspondence, miscellaneous, outgoing, January 1961-April 1961

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Correspondence, miscellaneous, outgoing, May 1961-January 1962

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Correspondence, Anderson, Paul J., 1953

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Correspondence, Bureau of Naval Personnel (Pers-C1212), 1960-1961

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Correspondence, Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Medical School, 1955-1961

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Correspondence, Donohue, Maruice F. X., 1953-1959

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Correspondence, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Units, Illinois Institute of Technology and Northwestern University, 1949

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Correspondence, Northwestern Dental School, 1958

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Correspondence, Office of Naval Research, 1958

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Folder 14
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U. S. Naval Correspondence Course Center, 1951-1955, including Evaluation Study, 1951-1954

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Contract NOp-536 (proposed), 1951
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Contract NOp-592, including final report and inventory, 1952-1956
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Contract NOp-592, ledger sheets, May 1956-February 1962
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Contract NOp-700, including amendments, 1957-1960
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Contract NOp-700, dental courses, 1958
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"Chicago Comedy in the American Tradition; A Celebration and Analysis," October 1976
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