

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Kevin Kinser, University at Albany

James J.F. Forest, United States Military Academy

The following list provides a sampling of the important events and milestones which have, to varying degrees, shaped and defined higher education over the last half of the 20th century. The index of this Encyclopedia should be consulted to find further information on these topics.

1940 – 1.5 million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.

1940 – American Association of University Professors establishes a Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

1942 – The Congress of Racial Equality is founded in Chicago. With college students playing significant roles, it initiates a series of actions, including the “Freedom Riders,” of the 1960s, to test new civil rights laws in the South.

1944 – Due to World War II’s impact on male enrollments, women temporarily outnumber men in higher education.

1944 – The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (otherwise known as the GI Bill) is passed, opening the doors of higher education to veterans of World War II. This is the first of a series of “GI Bills” that provide federal financial support for education to veterans.

1945 – Vannevar Bush, the Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, writes *Science The Endless Frontier: A Report to the President*. He argues for strong and sustained federal support of university-based scientific research.

1945 – *General Education in a Free Society*, known as the Harvard Redbook because of its crimson cover, is published by a University faculty committee.

1946 – College enrollment exceeds two million students, nearly half of whom are veterans attending under the provisions of the GI Bill.

1947 – The Truman Commission Report lays the policy groundwork for dramatically increased participation in higher education throughout the U.S. In addition to its call for more universal access to higher education, the most important enduring legacy of the report was the promotion of the community college system across the United States.

1949 – The National Commission on Accrediting is formed by the major college and university national associations to accredit the accrediting agencies.

1949 – Wesley A. Brown becomes the first African American to graduate from the United States Navel Academy at Annapolis, Maryland

1949 – Three professors are fired at the University of Washington for being members of the Communist Party and a loyalty oath is instituted at the University of California.

- 1950 – National Science Foundation established by act of Congress.
- 1951 – The National Collegiate Athletic Association names its first director and establishes its first headquarters.
- 1951 – The Ford Foundation funds the first advanced placement program with the participation of twelve colleges and secondary schools
- 1954 – U.S. Supreme Court rules in the *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* decision that “separate but equal” educational facilities are unconstitutional.
- 1957 – The first artificial satellite, Sputnik, is launched by Soviet Union, focusing American attention on education, research, and science as a Cold War issue.
- 1958 – Congress passes the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), funding a wide variety of programs including loans for institutions, undergraduate and graduate students, primarily in the areas of science, engineering, mathematics, and foreign language and area studies.
- 1960 – Clark Kerr’s Master Plan for the University of California is established, guaranteeing access to higher education for the citizens of California and defining the mission of the university, state university, and community college systems in the state.
- 1960 – Four African American college students begin a sit-in at a “whites-only” lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee is later organized and starts a nationwide network of student sit-ins to protest segregation.
- 1961 – More than four million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.
- 1961 – President John F. Kennedy issues an executive order creating the President’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, which refers to ‘affirmative action’ for the first time.
- 1961 – *Dixon v. Alabama* court ruling establishes the notion that students at public institutions of higher education have constitutional rights and should be given due process in dismissal from the institution
- 1962 – The Port Huron Statement is written by Tom Hayden, a student at the University of Wisconsin. Adopted as the founding document of Students for a Democratic Society, it begins with the quote, “We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.”
- 1962 – James Meredith, after being refused three times, was finally granted admission as the first African American to attend the University of Mississippi. United States Federal Marshals escorted him to classes due to racial tensions.

- 1963 – Governor George Wallace of Alabama makes his “stand in the schoolhouse door” to prevent the admission of two black students who have legally enrolled at the University of Alabama.
- 1963 – Congress passes The Vocational Education Act, reflecting a national commitment to enhancing vocational training.
- 1963 – The first faculty unions are organized.
- 1963 – Higher Education Facilities Act passed, which helped states fund the physical expansion of colleges and universities to accommodate the influx of students from the Baby Boom.
- 1964 – Activism at the University of California, Berkeley, against administrative restrictions signals the start of the Free Speech Movement, under which students across the country protested racial inequality, parietal rules, curricular irrelevance, and later, American military policy in Vietnam, the draft, and military recruiting on campus.
- 1964 – Civil Rights Act passed, which protects people from discrimination based on race, color or national origin.
- 1964 – Because of the need to determine institutional eligibility for new federal grants and assistance, the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education is formed to establish common procedures and policies for accrediting colleges.
- 1965 – Public institutions of higher education enroll twice as many students as private institutions. For the first time, the college attendance rate of high school graduates tops 50 percent.
- 1965 – The Higher Education Act of 1965 is passed, establishing a broad federal policy agenda for higher education.
- 1965 – The Experimental College begins at the University of California-Berkeley. The College, founded by Joseph Tussman and inspired by Alexander Meiklejohn, guided a select group of students through a two-year curriculum on western civilization using readings and group discussions instead of traditional classes.
- 1965 – First "teach-in" on U.S. involvement in Vietnam held at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 1965 – Upward Bound, a program to prepare academically under-privileged students begins as a project of the Carnegie Corporation and the Office of Economic Opportunity.
- 1966 – Congress passes the National Sea Grant College Program, which authorized the establishment and operation of Sea Grant colleges and programs by initiating and supporting programs of education and research in the various fields relating to the development of marine resources, and for other purposes.

- 1967 – Clark Kerr is dismissed as the President of the University of California by Governor Ronald Reagan. He remarks that he left as he came in: “Fired with enthusiasm!”
- 1967 – The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education is established with Clark Kerr at the helm.
- 1967 – Age Discrimination in Employment Act prohibits discrimination based on a person’s age, and the mandatory retirement provisions for faculty were eliminated by Congress in 1993.
- 1967 – Columbia University grants the first official campus charter to a gay student organization, the Student Homophile League.
- 1968 – The Supreme Court rules in *Pickering v. Board of Education* that First Amendment rights are viewed as having been violated if a faculty member is either disciplined or terminated for public pronouncements on matters of public concern.
- 1968 – During a week of protests at Columbia University, activists take over five administration buildings in the largest student action of its kind to date. 700 participants and bystanders are arrested when the police are called onto campus to end the sit-in.
- 1968 – San Francisco State College, a predominantly white institution, establishes a Black studies program.
- 1969 – More than eight million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.
- 1969 – Yale and Princeton accept their first women undergraduates
- 1969 – Charley Kline, an undergraduate student at UCLA, becomes the first user of ARPANET, the precursor to the internet. He types the letter “L” and it is received by a computer at Stanford.
- 1969 – *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* establishes a student’s First Amendment rights to speak out on issues as long as the manner of speech was not disruptive.
- 1969 – Graduate student employees at the University of Wisconsin gain the right to maintain a graduate student union for the purpose of collective bargaining over their wages, workloads, and other terms and conditions of their employment.
- 1969 – More than 100 students – several of them armed with guns – occupy a student union building at Cornell University to protest the treatment of black students by the campus judicial system.

- 1970 – Public institutions of higher education enroll three times as many students as private institutions.
- 1970 – Kent State University protests against the Vietnam War result in four students shot dead by National Guard. Eleven days later, two students are killed at Jackson State University while protesting the War and the killings at Kent State.
- 1970 – Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. becomes president of Michigan State University, the first African American to head a large mainstream American university
- 1970 – Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education is developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. It is formally published in 1973 with revisions published in 1976, 1987, 1994, and 2000
- 1970 – Ending a selective admissions policy, all graduates of New York City high schools are guaranteed admission to the City University of New York.
- 1971 – American Association of University Professors endorses collective bargaining.
- 1971 – Empire State College of the State University of New York is founded. The institution offers an individualized curriculum that gives credit for work and life experiences outside the traditional college classroom.
- 1971 – The Military Selective Service Act is amended to end the policy of student deferment for the draft.
- 1972 – *Perry v. Sindermann* court ruling determines that tenured faculty (holding a contract without term) cannot be removed without first establishing a cause for removal and then providing due process.
- 1972 – Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, in which Title IX prohibits discrimination based on gender, marital, and parental status in the following areas: admissions, financial aid, health and insurance benefits, career guidance and counseling services, housing facilities, courses and other educational activities, and scholastic, intramural, club, or intercollegiate athletics. The Act also includes the Basic Equal Opportunity Grant – renamed the Pell Grant in 1980 – affirming the nation's commitment to providing equal educational opportunity for the disadvantaged.
- 1972 – National Institute for Education is established.
- 1972 – The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) is established.
- 1973 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) establishes protections for persons with disabilities who wish to apply or are enrolled at an institution of higher education.

- 1973 – Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin establishes a curriculum that requires graduating students to demonstrate their competence in communication, analysis, problem solving, valuing, social interaction, taking responsibility for the global environment, effective citizenship, and aesthetic response.
- 1974 – College and university enrollment tops 10 million students.
- 1974 – The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education established
- 1974 – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, commonly referred to as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment, ratified by Congress
- 1974 – The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is established by the merger of the National Commission on Accreditation and the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education to serve as the recognizing body for accrediting agencies.
- 1975 – The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, later modified in 1990 to become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, ensures a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and open doors for more qualified students with disabilities to enter postsecondary education.
- 1976 – Student enrollment declines by 175,000 between 1975 and 1976, the first drop since 1951.
- 1976 – The United States Naval Academy at Annapolis admits women for the first time
- 1978 – Hanna Gray is named president of the University of Chicago and becomes the first woman to lead a major American university.
- 1978 – California voters pass Proposition 13, which lowered property taxes and reduced public revenues for state services, including higher education, by one billion dollars.
- 1978 – *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* court ruling, involving a dual admissions process at a California public medical school, determined that the Fourteenth Amendment protects individual rights, and a separate admission process—based on race—violated the Equal Protection Clause. However, in a significant finding for proponents of affirmative action, the Court ruled that race could be a factor in the admissions decision as long as it was not the sole factor
- 1979 – 11.6 million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States. In a permanent shift, more than half are now women.
- 1979 – The U.S. Department of Education is created.
- 1979 – Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) is established within U.S. Department of Education

- 1980 – U. S. Supreme Court rules that faculty members often hold managerial positions for academic affairs at private institutions such as Yeshiva University.
- 1980 – The Patent and Trademark Amendments of 1980, also known as the Bayh-Dole Act, gives universities property rights for inventions developed from research funded by the federal government.
- 1981 – Barbara W. Newell becomes chancellor of the State University System of Florida. She is the first woman to head a statewide university system.
- 1981 – New era of government regulation of research conduct begins with Congressional hearings on *Fraud in Biomedical Research*.
- 1981 – Tuition, room, and board tops \$10,000 at three private institutions: Harvard and Stanford Universities and Bennington College.
- 1982 – Stevens Institute of Technology requires new students to purchase personal computers.
- 1983 – *U.S. News & World Report* publishes its first rankings of higher education institutions
- 1983 – Proposition 48 is passed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, toughening the academic requirements for freshmen athletes in Division I sports.
- 1983 – Columbia University enrolls women as undergraduates for the first time, becoming the last Ivy League institution to adopt a policy of coeducation.
- 1984 – Congress passes The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, amending the Vocational Education Act of 1963 to provide federal assistance to states, including the use of funds for vocational education opportunities, authorized special programs, sanctioned national programs, and established evaluation criteria.
- 1984 – The National Institute of Education releases “Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education.”
- 1985 – On campuses around the country, students begin protests focusing on South Africa and divestment, recruiting by the Central Intelligence Agency, and minority issues.
- 1985 – Campus Compact, a national coalition of college and university presidents, is founded to promote community service and service-learning.
- 1985 – The National Science Foundation establishes five supercomputing centers at Cornell, Princeton, University of Illinois, University of California-San Diego, and a University of Pittsburgh/Carnegie Mellon/Westinghouse collaboration in Pittsburgh.
- 1986 – Harvard University celebrates its 350th anniversary.

- 1986 – Federal Technology Transfer Act passed
- 1986 – The Vatican threatens the Rev. Charles E. Curran, a professor of moral theology at the Catholic University of America, with the loss of his authorization to teach Roman Catholic doctrine unless he retracts his positions on abortion, birth control, and other issues.
- 1987 – Stanford University announces plans for a \$1.1 billion fundraising campaign.
- 1987 – Average tuition, room, and board for all private institutions tops \$10,000 for the first time.
- 1988 – The American Council on Education releases a report, “One Third of a Nation,” that argues the United States must do more to support the educational advancement of minority groups.
- 1988 – City College in San Francisco establishes the first gay and lesbian studies department.
- 1989 – 13.5 million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.
- 1989 – Temple University becomes the first university in the United States to offer a doctorate in African American studies.
- 1990 – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides further protections for persons with disabilities who wish to apply or are enrolled at an institution of higher education.
- 1990 – Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act passed
- 1990 – National and Community Service Act passed
- 1990 – The influential book, *Scholarship Reconsidered* is published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. It argues for an expanded definition of scholarship to include teaching and the integration and application of knowledge.
- 1991 – In a decision indicative of the political correctness debates of the time, *UWM Post, Inc. v. Board of Regents of University of Wisconsin System* determines that hate speech codes are overly broad and vague, violating a student’s First Amendment rights by inhibiting speech.
- 1991 – Reflecting a steady increase in matriculation rates during the 1980s, for the first time more than 60 percent of all high school graduates enroll in college.
- 1992 – U.S. Supreme Court’s *U. S. v. Fordice* ruling makes headway toward desegregation of statewide systems of higher education

- 1993 – University of Pennsylvania appoints Judith Rodin to become the first woman to head an Ivy League institution.
- 1993 – National Service Trust Act creates the Corporation for National Service to administer AmeriCorps, Learn & Serve America, and National Senior Service Corps.
- 1993 – The Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation is established as a stop-gap measure to recognize voluntary accreditation associations after the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation was dissolved.
- 1994 – The School to Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) calls for the restructuring of secondary and postsecondary educational systems to address economic and workforce development problems of the U.S.
- 1994 – The Land-Grant Status Act incorporates existing tribal colleges.
- 1994 – Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) reauthorized and reorganized, establishing five national research institutes: (1) the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education; (2) the National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum and Assessment; (3) the National Institute on Education of At-Risk Children; (4) the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Education; and (5) the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management.
- 1995 – The University of California ends affirmative action policies based on race.
- 1996 – 14.3 million students enroll in colleges and universities in the United States, marking the end of a three year decline in student enrollments.
- 1996 – *United States v. Virginia* Supreme Court decision determines that by excluding women from its regular programs, the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) deprived them of their right to equal protection under the fourteenth amendment of the US Constitution.
- 1996 – Voters in California pass The California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209), a constitutional amendment that prohibited preferential treatment to “any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin” in public employment, education, or contracting.
- 1996 – 34 research universities agree to build a new network, Internet 2, that would be better suited for the future research and teaching needs of academic institutions.
- 1996 – *Hopwood v. Texas* court ruling strikes down a dual admissions process at a public Texas law school, ruling that the use of race would be a violation of the Equal Protection Clause and thus could not be used in any way in the admissions decision

- 1997 – The Council for Higher Education Accreditation is established as the recognizing body for accrediting organizations, taking over responsibility from the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation
- 1997 – Harvard University’s endowment is valued at \$10 billion.
- 1998 – The Department of Education establishes the Distance Education Demonstration Program to determine how to change the regulatory and legal barriers which discourage distance education programs.
- 1998 – The National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education releases a report which notes the rise in tuition over the last twenty years, and calls on colleges and universities to take steps to reduce their costs and become more affordable.
- 1999 – Average tuition, room, and board at private colleges and universities tops \$20,000.
- 1999 – Jones International University is the first “virtual university” to receive regional accreditation.
- 1999 – The Gates Foundation pledges one billion dollars to help low-income, minority students attend college.
- 2000 – 15 million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.

See also: History of Higher Education; Important Books About Higher Education; Political and Social Contexts

For Further Reading:

Chronicle of Higher Education. 1989. “Higher Education In The 80's: Some Highlights.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. December 13.

Goodchild, Lester F., and Wechsler, Harold S., eds. 1997. *The History of Higher Education*. Association for the Study of Higher Education. 2nd ed. Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster.

Levine, Arthur and Jana Niddifer. 1997. “Key Turning Points in the Evolving Curriculum.” In *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Comprehensive Guide to Purposes, Structures, Practices, and Change*. Edited by Jerry Gaff and James Ratcliff. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

National Center for Education Statistics. 2000. *Digest of Education Statistics*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education.

3426 words