

# I'm Going to College Visitor & Information Centers Cal Poly Pomona

## General Historical Perspective of Colleges in the United States

### There's Always A First

Harvard University is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. Founded 16 years after the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the University started with nine students with a single master (teacher/professor).

Harvard College was established in 1636 by vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and was named for its benefactor, John Harvard of Charlestown, a young minister who, upon his death in 1638, left his library and half his estate to the new institution. Harvard's first scholarship fund was created in 1643 with a gift from Ann Radcliffe, Lady Mowlson.

Harvard has produced seven U.S. Presidents – John Adams, John Quincy, Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Ruthferford B. Hayes, John Fitzgerald Kennedy and George W. Bush.

### Brief Historical Timeline – Men

The first colleges (Colonial)

Year	Original Name	Religious Affiliation	Name Today
1636	Harvard College	Congregational	Same
1693	Coll. of William & Mary (VA)	Anglican	Coll. Of William & Mary
1701	Yale College	Congregational	Same
1746	Coll. Of New Jersey	Presbyterian	Princeton University
1751	Philadelphia Academy <sup>1</sup>	Nonsectarian	Univ. of Pennsylvania
1754	King's College	Nonsectarian	Columbia University
1764	Rhode Island	Baptist	Brown University
1766	Queen's College	Dutch Reformed	Rutgers University
1769	Dartmouth College	Congregational	Same

*1 – Founded in 1740 as the Academie and Charitable School of the Province of Pennsylvania; chartered as a college in 1755.*

*Note: A number of other colleges and universities (including the University of Delaware, Dickinson College, St. John's College, and Washington and Lee) claim a revolutionary date, but they were founded as secondary schools and did not become colleges until a considerable time later. Only those listed above were established as colleges before 1776.*

## **Women in College**

The formal education of girls and women began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was intimately tied to the conception that society had of the appropriate role for women to assume in life.

Republican (not referring to a political party; pre-1776) education prepared girls for their future roles as wives and mothers and taught religion, singing, dancing and literature.

Academic Education prepared girls for their role as community leaders and social benefactors and had some elements of the education offered boys.

Seminaries educated women for the only socially acceptable occupation: teaching. Only unmarried women could be teachers. Many early women's colleges began as female seminaries and were responsible for producing an important corps of educators.

### **Brief Historical Timeline – Women**

The Salem Academy in North Carolina was the first all-girls school in what would become the United States. The Moravians, an early Protestant denomination from central Europe, established the village of Salem. Believing that women deserved an education comparable to that given to men, an exceptional view in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Moravians began a school for girls in 1772. A boarding school for girls and young woman followed (1802, then Salem Female Academy in 1866 and finally Salem College in 1890.

Wesleyan College in the state of Georgia was the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women in 1836. Part of the legacy and pride includes having the first woman to receive a Doctor of Medicine degree.

Moore College of Art founded in Philadelphia in 1848 (then called the Philadelphia School of Design for Women) is the first and only women's visual arts college in the nation and one of two in the world.

Mills College in California is the oldest women's college in the West. It was founded in 1852.

Spelman College founded in Georgia in 1881 was the first black women's college.

## **History of Modern Era of Higher Education in California**

Throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century, states established public colleges and universities, funded enrollment expansion, and launched an experiment in social engineering. The result was a transformation of the scope and purpose of American higher education. California can be seen as leading this transformation. California reflected the struggle of most other states to coordinate their respective public institutions. Issues of governance, autonomy, funding, and accountability gained greater importance in local and statewide politics. As the need of higher education in American society increased, the number of public institutions grew. The cost to taxpayers advanced these developments, but it differed in its early development of a coherent organizational structure for public higher education. In the Progressive Era, California established and funded a groundbreaking, geographically dispersed system of public colleges and a multi-campus state university . California Progressives created a social contract and an organizational structure that coupled the promise of broad access to public higher education with a desire to develop institutions of high academic quality—an influential model that John Douglass, in his book *The California Idea and American Higher Education: 1850 to the 1960 Master Plans*, calls “The California Idea.”

## **1960 Master Plan Transformed Higher Education**

The history of California public higher education from statehood to politics and economic forces eventually resulted in the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education. This plan, formulated by a commission headed by Clark Kerr, then president of the University of California, remains the controversial basis of California Higher Education today. By the end of the decade nearly half the states in the nation had adopted similar plans. The controversial plan created a three-tiered system of higher education and placed new restrictions on admissions to state colleges and universities. The upper 41 percent of graduates could enter other state colleges and universities. The remaining students would be diverted to the state's junior colleges. Many complained that the poorest of students were being relegated to two-year colleges. Others felt that the two-year college provided a nurturing environment where students, eliminated from a state university, succeeded.

## **Clark Kerr’s Legacy by Kathleen Maclay, Media Relations, UC Berkeley**

Like so many things Californian, the state’s 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education produced an influential model for America and the rest of the world.

Clark Kerr was president of the University of California when he became a member of the liaison committee assigned to come up with a plan. He turned into its chief architect, engineer and skillful shepherd in a role that earned this modest scholar national media attention.

The plan, created under the tenure of Gov. Edmund "Pat" Brown, developed new guidelines for the University of California system, what became the California State University system and the state’s community colleges.

Its reorganization resolved much of the competition between schools and led to expanded educational resources in a public higher education system known for excellence, accessibility and relative affordability.

"This postsecondary system – designed for both broad access and excellence in research and teaching – not only transformed educational opportunity in California for several generations, but also transformed public higher education nationally as it was emulated and copied by other states," said David Ward, president of the American Council on Education.

At Stanford University in Palo Alto, President John L. Hennessy called Kerr "instrumental in building an educational system that is the envy of the rest of the world."

Neil Smelser, an emeritus professor of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of the forward to Kerr's memoirs, said the Master Plan ranks "among the two or three most important and influential innovations in higher education in the 20th century."

At UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education, senior research fellow John Douglass said of profound importance "is not what the plan invented, but what it prevented."

California already had an open door admissions policy that developed with the advent of community colleges and dated back to 1907, enrollment agreements going back to 1930, and a three-part system of higher education, Douglass said.

But California in the late 1950s and early '60s faced economic decline, huge projected growth in higher education enrollment, and a new governor weary of educators bickering over academic program turf and resources, he said.

There are similarities between the period leading up to the 1960 Master Plan and today, said Douglass, in terms of significant state budget problems, an inadequate tax system, and large-scale growth in higher education enrollment demand.

There also was a sense of political instability: one related to the Cold War, the other to a general lack of faith in government to solve major social and economic problems, Douglass said.

A big difference, he said, is that in the late 1950s, lawmakers first looked to the higher education community for answers about how to grow the state's higher education system. Now, state government tends to think that only outside pressure and legislative committees can solve higher education problems.

Douglass said that, indeed, the 1960 Master Plan "represented a political compromise at a critical historical moment that sustained a tremendously successful network" of public colleges and universities.

"Kerr's great contribution was his willingness to negotiate a deal and hold the line on mission differentiation between the community colleges, the state university system and the University of California," Douglass said, noting that Kerr's experience as a labor economist and mediator served him well.

In his new book, "Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education," UC Berkeley Professor David Kirp described Kerr as a university leader willing to speak truth to power.

Kerr once said that a key component of the Master Plan was resolving "how much should be controlled by higher education itself and how much by the state."

Although California Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg, D-Los Angeles, butted heads with Kerr in the 1960s when he was UC Berkeley's chancellor and she was a student active in the Free Speech Movement, she now expresses appreciation for his contributions to California higher education and a concern about its future.

"We are currently gutting his legacy," said Goldberg, chair of the Assembly Education Committee, making reference to continuing budget cuts for higher education.

"We need the leadership of someone like Clark Kerr right now to argue from the bully pulpit that higher education is important."

### **History of Community Colleges in California**

California played a pivotal role in the development of community colleges and districts in America. Legislation in California produced some of the earliest community colleges in the country. The district college soon became the model for most public community colleges in the nation and other states moved quickly to pass similar legislation.

Social, political, and economic forces shaped public higher education in California. Its major personalities include David Starr Jordan, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, Hiram Johnson, Earl Warren, and Clark Kerr.

The first two-year colleges in California began with the recognition by local townspeople that many young high school graduates, unable to take up residence at an often distant college or university (usually for financial reasons), might benefit from college level studies. The founders of these institutions tended to be modest about their aspirations. They wanted to make it clear that they were in no sense proposing to compete with four-year universities.

Generally, these colleges were established by an existing high school district as just one more service offered to the community by the democratic school system. It was not long, however, before the "post high school experience" grew into full-fledged junior colleges. Ultimately these institutions became today's "comprehensive" California Community Colleges.

Though some debate the origins of how the junior college came to California, evidence points to William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago. Letters authored by Harper around 1900 noted that he was working with three California Colleges on the junior college idea. However, it was David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford College, who became the most important figure in the junior

college movement in California. Jordan's friendship and exchanges with Harper, as well as his tenacious pursuit of the separation from the university's lower division, made him one of the most important figures in California's two-year college movement.

A California law adopted in 1907 (Upward Extension Law) allowed high schools to offer "postgraduate" classes. Many historians have described this law as the beginning of the California junior college system. The historical record, however, does not support this view. Both extended high schools and two-year colleges appear to have existed before the 1907 law. There is some historical evidence that many California high schools were already offering post diploma courses before the law was passed. William Rainey Harper noted in 1900 that five California colleges were already preparing to convert to junior colleges. These institutions may have converted before 1907.

The first use of the Upward Extension Law in the state was Fresno High School around 1910. With the assistance of universities Stanford and Berkeley, a principal and instructors were chosen for the first junior college in California. The school provided courses primarily to prepare persons for work in agriculture or industry. In 1913, Bakersfield, Fullerton, and Long Beach founded junior colleges. Between 1915-1916, Azusa, Chaffey, Riverside, Sacramento, and Santa Ana followed suit. By the end of the decade, California had created the most extensive junior college system in the nation.

*All history and information provided by the the Houghton Mifflin Company web site, The Reader's Companion to American History - College Division; Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College web site; U.S. Department of Education "Women's Colleges in the United States: History, Issues and Challenges" by Irene Harwarth, Mindi Maline and Elizabeth DeBra; Salem College web site; Wesleyan College web site; 4faculty.org web site; and UC Berkeley web site, "Clark Kerr's Legacy: 1960 Master Plan Transformed Higher Education" by Kathleen Maclay, Media Relations, UC Berkeley.*