

DENISON'S HISTORY

Denison holds a storied place in American higher education. Among the earliest colleges to be established in the original "Northwest Territory" beyond the Allegheny Mountains and north of the Ohio River, it held its first classes during the presidency of Andrew Jackson. The institution was first called the Granville Literary and Theological Institution, then Granville College. In the mid-1850s, in honor of a key benefactor, it took the name Denison University.

Well before it reached its first centennial, Denison had gained a reputation for attracting outstanding professors and college leaders, sending a number on to advance higher education across the country. The growing academic reputation of Denison briefly encouraged the faculty and Trustees to offer graduate degrees, but by the early twentieth century it was clear that the strength of the institution was in high-quality undergraduate instruction, and the title "university" was retained primarily for historical reasons.

Focus upon leadership in undergraduate education and commitment to the residential principle led the college to develop concrete plans for the physical expansion of the campus and measured growth, with the college reaching its present size of about 2,200 students by 1970. In 1916, the famed landscape architectural firm of Frederick Law Olmsted Sons produced an innovative design for Denison. The "Olmsted Plan" has remained the touchstone for the continuing development of the Denison campus. Residentiality is a key component of a Denison education, creating a four-year, on-campus living and learning experience for students.

Today's Denison, a recognized leader among 21st century American liberal arts colleges, builds upon all of these founding traditions. A non-sectarian institution independent of any denominational affiliation since the 1960s, Denison actively seeks outstanding students from across the country and around the world. Denison offers a rich and deep education in the natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and interdisciplinary studies, as well as extraordinary campus leadership opportunities aimed at preparing graduates who will make a difference in their communities, their country, and the world.

Learn more about Denison's history (<https://denison.edu/campus/about/our-history/>).