Finding Aid for
Worcester State University Commencement Materials

Created by Ross Griffiths, May 26, 2017
Updated May 5, 2019

Archives and Special Collections
Worcester State University Library

Worcester State University
486 Chandler Street
Worcester, MA 01602
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COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Call Number WSU.0005

Repository Archives and Special Collections, Worcester State University (Worcester, Massachusetts)

Location Learning Resource Center, L-328A

Title Worcester State University Commencement Materials

Date range 1874-2019

Extent 2.5 linear feet (2 boxes)

Creator(s) Worcester State University

Language(s) English

Abstract Commencement Program materials including graduation ceremonies for undergraduate, graduate, and special groups from Worcester State University from its opening in 1874 to the present. Includes related materials.

ACCESS AND USE INFORMATION

Physical access Materials are available for use only in the Archives Reading room (L-328A). Materials are fragile and must be handled with care. Users must handle materials with clean hands. Gloves are available for handling leather bindings.

Copyright and ownership Materials published before 1923 are in public domain. All other materials are copyright to Worcester State University unless noted otherwise. Researchers are responsible for obtaining appropriate permissions before republishing copyrighted materials.

Citation format [item title, year] Worcester State University Commencement Programs, Archives and Special Collections, Worcester State University.
ACQUISITION AND PROCESSING INFORMATION

Accession number(s)  Pre.2015.0049/0056; ACC.2016.0006; ACC.2019.001

Provenance  Items from ACC.2016.0006 were transferred from WSU Printing and Publishing. Remaining materials were deposited by unknown person(s) prior to 2015. Additional materials are added as they become available.

Processing Information  In 2017 an inventory of unprocessed and related materials completed by Alyssa Niford, archives student worker. The collection was processed by Ross Griffiths, Archivist.

Biographical and historical information  Opened in 1874, the State Normal School at Worcester was the 5th state-funded normal school (teacher training college) in Massachusetts. In 1932, the name was changed to Worcester State Teachers College. Continued development of liberal arts curriculum led to another name change in 1961 to the State College at Worcester, later, Worcester State College. In 2010, the school achieved university status along with all other Massachusetts state colleges and became Worcester State University.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Commencement Materials from Worcester State University consist of program booklets and related materials published annually and containing information about graduation and commencement exercises. Included are names of graduates, venues, class themes, speakers, and special musical or other programs. Some folders contain information about baccalaureate services that occurred on dates near commencement. Materials are generally in the form of small booklets. Program booklets from 1874-1923 are titled “Anniversary” programs. The collection also includes graduation announcements as well as invitations to commencement activities and related events. Some years are absent from the collection.
ARRANGEMENT

This collection is arranged in 3 series.

Series I  Graduation Programs for Worcester State University, 1874-2019.
Includes programs from the University under its previous names: Massachusetts State Normal School at Worcester, Worcester State Teachers College, and Worcester State College. Contents include time, date and venue of program; speakers and titles of speeches, class themes, special awards, music, performances such as choral performances and dramatic readings, institutional information, names of graduates, and some names of faculty and administrators. Some programs contain very limited information and may represent promotional materials rather than full program listings. Includes graduate commencement programs and hooding ceremonies when available.

Series II  Commencement Program Information 1926-2008
Includes promotional information listing dates and venues, graduation program invitations, and other related materials.

Series III  Special Programs, 1934-1966
Includes information about graduation-related events as well as graduation of students enrolled in the Training School Department’s eighth grade class.

ACCESS POINTS
Terms below correspond to Library of Congress subject headings.

Organizations  State Normal School at Worcester (Worcester, Mass
Worcester State Teachers College
Worcester State College
Worcester State University

Places  Worcester (Mass)

General  Commencement ceremonies
Massachusetts State College System
Normal Schools
Teachers Colleges—Massachusetts—History
Worcester (Mass)—History

RELATED MATERIALS

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DESCRIPTIVE INVENTORY

SERIES I. Commencement Programs for Worcester State University, 1874-2019
box/fldr

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2.10 Senior Capping Ceremony, 1966
APPENDIX I*
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT WORCESTER HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

DEFINITION:
“A normal school is a school created to train high school graduates to be teachers. Its purpose is to establish teaching standards or norms, hence its name. Most such schools are now called teachers' colleges.”**

The following excerpts, taken from the 1882 course catalog, provide a historical context for the founding of the Massachusetts State Normal School at Worcester (Worcester, Mass.):***

The following extract from the Thirty-seventh Annual Report (1872-73) of the Board of Education gives in outline a history of the establishment of this school: --

By the terms of a Resolve which went into effect on the twenty-fifth day of June, 1871, the Board of Education were authorized and required to establish a State Normal School in the city of Worcester; and the Trustees of the Worcester Lunatic Hospital were authorized and required to convey to the Board of Education and its successors a tract of land of not more than five acres, to be located by the Governor and Council, within certain limits fixed in the Resolve. An appropriation of sixty thousand dollars was made upon condition that the city of Worcester should pay to the Board of Education for the purposes named in the Resolve the sum of fifteen thousand dollars. This condition was promptly complied with. The tract was located by the Governor and Council Sept. 2, 1871; and on the nineteenth day of September, 1871, the conveyance was made by the Trustees of the Hospital to the Board of Education and its successors in trust as directed.

The tract of land located is upon Hospital Hill in Hospital Grove (formerly so called), within a short distance from the new Union Depot now in process of erection, -- a point at which, when the railroad arrangements now in progress shall be completed, pupils residing on the line of either of the roads leading into the city of Worcester can arrive in season for the commencement of school each day, and take the cars to return after the school exercises are finished.’

The building is of stone, capacious, conveniently arranged in every detail, massive and handsome in external appearance. The eminence upon which it stands commands a view of city, village, and country, for many miles around.

The exercises of dedication took place on Friday, Sept. 11, 1874; and on the following Tuesday (Sept. 15) the school was opened to pupils.”

The Board of Education, by a vote passed May 6, 1880, stated the design of the school, and the course of studies for the State Normal Schools, as follows: --

The design of the Normal School is strictly professional; that is, to prepare in the best possible manner the pupils for the work of organizing, governing, and teaching the public schools of the Commonwealth.
To this end there must be the most thorough knowledge, first, of the branches of learning required to be taught in the schools; second, of the best methods of teaching those branches; and third, of right mental training.

Sources: Material within WSU.0001

*Historical background compiled in 2015 by Bridgette Woodall, Project Archivist.


APPENDIX II
WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY CHRONOLOGY

1871: June 25th, the Massachusetts State Normal School at Worcester is established by legislative resolve. In September, the Governor and Council locate a tract of land for the school on Hospital Hill. The Worcester Lunatic Hospital conveys the tract of land to the Board of Education
1874: In September 11th, dedication of the original campus. September 15th, first students admitted.
1880: Apprenticeship for students in training is adopted by the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee of Worcester
1911: School of Observation is started. Bachelor of Science in Education is introduced
1929: A new site for the school is secured at the junction of May and Chandler Streets, known as Lincoln Farm. Erection of a new building is approved by state legislative resolve
1932: In January, classes begin in the new building, now known as the Shaughnessy Building. In April, the state legislature approved a name change to Worcester State Teachers College. About 150 students are enrolled.
1952: The first graduate degree is offered: a Masters of Science in Education.
1958: The 2nd building on campus opens housing a gymnasium, classrooms, and the library.
1963: The State Legislature approves the new name “Worcester State College”. Enrollment surpasses 1000 students.
1965: The Science building (now Sullivan Hall) opens becoming the campus’ 3rd building.
1971: The Learning Resource Center opens. This building includes the library, classrooms and offices. Worcester State enrollment is nearly 3000 students.
1972: Chandler Village resident halls open. Designed with input from students, these are the first residence halls built on the current campus.
1974: B.S. Degrees in Business and Nursing are introduced. The Graduate School is created.
1978: The Student Center opens.
1980s: M.S in Speech-Language Pathology and a B.S. in Occupational Therapy are introduced.
1990: Dowden Hall Residence Hall opens.
2000: The Ghosh Science Center Opens.
2004: Wasylean Hall opens.
2010: By an act of the State Legislature, all Massachusetts State Colleges, including Worcester State, gain university status.
2013: Sheehan Hall opens.
2016: The Wellness Center opens on the site of the 1957 gymnasium and classroom building.
APPENDIX III
WORCESTER STATE PRINCIPALS/PRESIDENTS

E. Harlow Russell (1874-1909)
Francis Ransom Lane (1909-1912)
William B. Aspinwall (1912-1940)
Clinton Carpenter (1940-1946)
Eugene A. Sullivan (1946-1970)
Robert Leestamper (1970-1975)
    Phillip D. Vario (1982-1991)
    Janelle C. Ashley (2002-2011)
    Barry Maloney (2011-present)