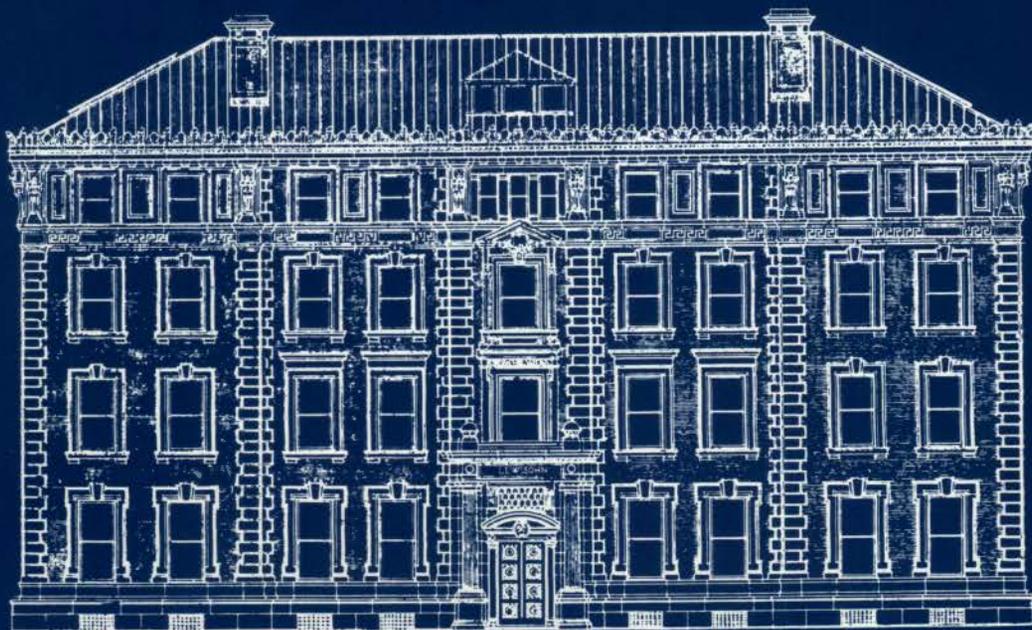


Columbia University—School of General Studies

80 Years of Education for Adults



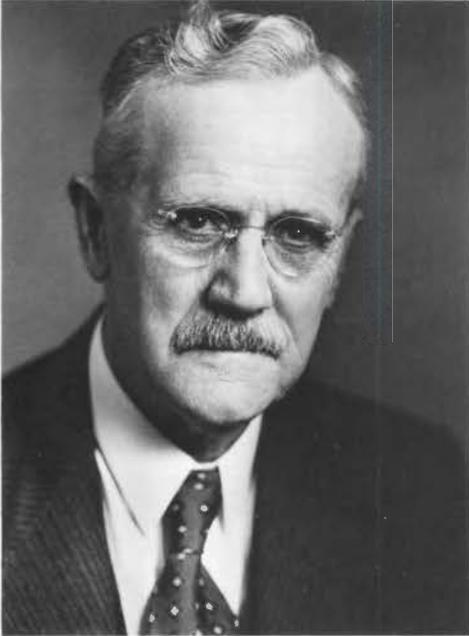
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“To me the most important contribution that General Studies has made over its many years of life is the liberation of untold numbers of trapped spirits. The offering of knowledge with an accompanying guide as to the use of knowledge (judgment) to many, many worthy people fettered by their age, race, sex, work schedules, occupations, lack of confidence, family obligations, inherited ignorance, prejudices and misconceptions—this has been a priceless gift of the School. General Studies demonstrated early on that a college education should not be limited to post adolescents. There is no need to go into a creaky historical dance over the phrase “liberal arts.” A novel by Conrad, a poem by Rilke, a painting by Cézanne, a piece by Ravel or Scarlatti, a problem in physics or mathematics, a diagram of the human lungs, a successful chemistry experiment, an understanding of the reasons for the French Revolution, decent Spanish pronunciation, a reading of the *Iliad*, an oration of Cicero, a well written student essay—any and all of these are liberators.”

Professor John A. B. Faggi



*James Chidester Egbert
Director of University Extension,
1910-1942.*

A *Adult Education at Columbia: The Beginning*
Adult education was a Victorian invention. Previously, universities had served only the elite student, preparing him—never her—for an elite profession: the church, the law, or teaching. But nineteenth-century industrialization demanded highly skilled workers, and universities responded. They devised extramural programs for adults who desired further education; these programs were called “extension teaching.”

Columbia involved itself with extension teaching very early. In a spirit of practicality, at a time of sweeping national educational reforms, the College devised a new curriculum in 1830. Available to students of the College as an alternative to the typical concentration on the Greek and Latin classics, the new curriculum stressed mathematics, the natural sciences, and the modern languages. The intention of the Board of the College was to make it available to qualified young workingmen. For financial reasons, the alternative curriculum did not become an official program, but it was symptomatic: no other University seems to have shown an interest in adult education so early.

Columbia’s first successful extension program was a less formal one. It began in 1891 when the University Council, at President Seth Low’s suggestion, permitted the Graduate Faculties to open classes to the public for a fee. Extension developed slowly at first, but it soon proved to be a steady attraction for students who could not otherwise have attended Columbia. Prompted by the success of open classes, the University Council and the Trustees’ Committee on Education decided to open the University further by offering summer courses on campus for part-time students. The first Summer Session began on July 5, 1900, with Nicholas Murray Butler as Director, and success came quickly. In 1903-1904 part-time registration for the academic year was 1,590, equal to full-time registration, and Summer Session registration was about 30 percent higher than in the previous year.

In April of 1904, Extension Teaching, which would later become the School of General Studies, became a formal program. The Trustees made Dr. Frederick H. Sykes of the English Department the first Director. Extension Teaching served four groups: part-time students, active teachers, other professionals, and, by means of extramural courses and lectures, the general public. The program focused on promoting the skills of active professionals, especially of teachers. In 1910 the University united Extension Teaching with Summer Session. James Chidester Egbert became Director, Dr. Sykes having chosen to return to teaching.



*Nicholas Murray Butler
First Director of the Summer Session.*

The new organization had immediate advantages. Extension Teaching grew stronger, partly through its first formal connection with the Graduate Faculties. Graduate-level courses appeared in the curriculum.

The program expanded; people with jobs wanted educations, as they still do. In 1921 Extension Teaching had 16,000 students, almost as many as the whole University has today. This degree of success, and Dr. Egbert's arguments, convinced the Trustees to give the program the right to grant a B.S. degree in "general studies." To mark the change, the Trustees also gave the adult-education program a new name: University Extension. Its degree candidates were known as University Undergraduates.



*U*niversity Extension: 1921-1946

University Extension exerted considerable influence on the University as a whole, partly by acting as a proving-ground for new programs. In 1911 Extension began offering courses in business. From these grew, in 1916, the School of Business. Columbia's School of Dental and Oral Surgery arose from Extension courses. Courses in optometry, too, first appeared at Extension. Extension courses in "English for Foreigners" developed into the American Language Program, still part of the School of General Studies. Columbia's radio station began in University Extension courses in broadcasting. The School of Dramatic Arts, today part of the School of the Arts, developed from the Extension courses in which George S. Kaufman wrote his first play. The School of the Arts' Division of Painting and Sculpture began in Extension.

Another thing that made Extension influential was its sheer size. For a long time, University Extension's student body was huge and mostly extramural. The correspondence courses called Home Study, authorized in 1919, by 1929 had ten thousand students, with over a hundred instructors and sixty field representatives. Home Study had a strong and varied curriculum, available to students all over the world; for example, the chaplain of University Extension taught New Testament Greek by mail, while a group of American mining engineers, posted in Burma in the early 1920s, struggled to master the techniques of writing the short story. University Extension also offered extramural courses for pre-law and pre-medical students, as well as courses of general interest, with instructors working in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Long Island. In 1926 University Extension registered 19,000 students, counting the extramural students; this figure represents the largest enrollment in the entire history of adult education at Columbia.

By and large, students at University Extension strongly resembled General Studies' present students. Dr. Egbert characterized them in 1923: "[They] attend for the purpose of obtaining an education, and are not drawn aside from this goal by the allurements of athletic sports or social engagements." The difference, however, is that General Studies today imposes admissions standards, while University Extension imposed standards—practically speaking—on its degree candidates only. In effect, anyone could get into University Extension; it was a common observation that not all of the people who entered the program really should have, for their own good as well as the University's. But the accessibility of University Extension was not so much a drawback as a strength: it made education at a great university available to everyone, and made Columbia a powerful influence for good in the City as a whole.

In the Great Depression, University Extension, like every other institution of government, business, and education, suffered some



Harry Morgan Ayres
Director of University Extension,
1942-1948.



losses. Among them, by the end of the 1930s, were the extramural programs. These had seemed overwhelmingly successful, with their colossal student populations and their wide range of courses. But in 1937 the Federal Works Progress Administration began to offer free courses. Extension's extramural courses did not give credit toward a degree and could not compete.

Even worse, the extramural programs, such as Home Study, had seemed to many academics to trivialize college education. There were grumblings within the University, mainly from the College. There were louder comments, including published diatribes, from other educational institutions. Some of these comments were justified; University Extension indeed had offered some lightweight courses. But at the same time, University Extension offered strong and challenging programs in advanced academic disciplines, and it offered them virtually to anybody.

The curriculum at Extension did not always focus on the liberal arts. Courses were introduced—and abandoned—as society's interests and needs changed. *Millinery* and *Advanced millinery* were once given through Teacher's College, as was *Highway engineering*, in the years before World War I. *Poultry* and *Early Latin church literature* were both offered. During the war years (World War I, that is), *Trench warfare*, *Vegetable gardening*, and *Care and mending of children's underwear* could be found. On a more serious note, the country's need for wartime workers was largely met through universities, ours among them.

Postwar courses offered training in many areas ranging from *Practical penal problems* to *Hammered metal*; at the same time, Helen Hull and Joseph Wood Krutch were teaching English. The Thirties continued the introduction of courses to serve the training needs of expanding business. They also saw such names on the faculty roster as Jacques Barzun, John Dewey, Henry Steele Commager, and Margaret Mead.

Professor John H. H. Lyon taught his famous *English 51* course until 1943. Once each week, a guest lecturer was invited to class. Speakers included Robert Frost, Theodore Dreiser, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandberg, Sinclair Lewis, and Somerset Maugham. One famous—or infamous—course taught in 1938-1939 was *The theory and technique of fresh water angling*. Lab work was carried on in the University swimming pool.

In 1942 Professor Harry Morgan Ayres replaced Dr. Egbert as Director. Responding to criticism, he planned major changes, mainly to do with revisions of curriculum: the extramural programs would not be revived. However, Dr. Ayres had barely begun the slow business of curricular revision when the influx of G.I.s in 1946 brought a new challenge.



Louis M. Hacker
Dean of the School of General
Studies, 1951-1958.



A division of the Columbia University Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was established at the School of General Studies in 1952.

*E*xtension Becomes the School of General Studies: 1946-1957

In the overload of G.I. Bill students and the shortage of teachers, Provost Albert Jacobs saw a chance to remodel University Extension into a new college with the admissions standards of Columbia College and Barnard. The idea met opposition. There was no money for an endowment, and Professor Ayres, the Director, thought a new college unnecessary. He wrote to Frank D. Fackenthal, Acting President of the University, "I believe that nothing more drastic than a change of name would remove most, if not all, of the existing dissatisfaction..." Ayres added, "...University Extension... appears to be not a college... but a *school* made up of diverse elements, but with a single objective—the general education of the adult." Ayres therefore advised a simple change of name, to go along with his own program of curricular revision. On December 2, 1946, the Trustees took his advice and officially designated University Extension the School of General Studies. After Professor Ayres's death in 1948, when John A. Krout, Dean of Graduate Faculties, became Acting Director of the School of General Studies, the question of admissions standards arose again. Now, after five years of debate, the Trustees decided to organize the School of General Studies as a college.

On November 5, 1951, the Trustees appointed a Dean of the School of General Studies, the eminent Professor Louis M. Hacker. (Dean John Krout became Provost of the University.) Dean Hacker had attended University Extension as a so-called "subway student" and he had gone on to become a well-known professor of American history and economics. In 1949 Oxford University had called him to accept the Harmsworth Chair in History. Now Columbia called him back from overseas to head its new college. He came back with his own strong vision of the School of General Studies: it must continue the accessibility of University Extension by admitting non-matriculants as well as degree candidates.

The Trustees also formally established a Faculty of the School of General Studies, which organized on February 6, 1952, electing a secretary, a representative to the University Council, and standing Committees on Instruction, Admissions, and Honors. One of the Faculty's first acts was to petition the University Council for the right to grant the B.A. as well as the B.S. degree in "general studies." Permission was not forthcoming, and this petition began a debate that lasted until 1968.

Nevertheless, the School's academic excellence gained some acknowledgment. In March 1952, a division of the Columbia University Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was established at the School of General Studies.



The Pre-Medical Office was created in 1955. It soon had one of the most successful placement records in the country, including these four happy applicants.

In its first years, the School hired adjunct teachers, usually called lecturers, for their special knowledge. In 1952, for example, the Dean appointed Margaret Mead in anthropology and Padraic Colum in writing. In 1954, Pearl Buck became a lecturer in English; Susan Sontag, some years later, lectured on writing. Other instructors in the program included such distinguished writers as Leonie Adams, Babette Deutsch, James T. Farrell, Martha Fooley, Lillian Hellman, Helen Hull, Caroline Gordon, Stanley Kunitz, William Goyen, Harvey Swados, and Grace Paley. Thomas Merton taught English composition at General Studies. His book, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, has a charming and moving account of his experience at the School:

... I liked teaching very much—especially teaching this kind of a class, in which most of the students had to work for their living, and valued their course because they had to pay for it out of their own savings. Teaching people like that is very flattering: the class is always so eager to get anything you have to give them, and the mere fact that they want so much is liable to give you the impression that you are capable of giving them all they want.

More than one teacher at the School has felt both Merton's joy and his humility.

An innovative joint program with the Jewish Theological Seminary began on April 22, 1955. Under this program, as it eventually developed, JTS students became eligible for double bachelor's degrees from General Studies and the Seminary. The program has allowed General Studies to contribute a substantial number of rabbis to American Judaism—almost certainly more than any other liberal arts college.

A third experiment was the Pre-Medical Office, which the Faculty established on April 13, 1955. Dr. Howard Marraro first directed this program. After a few years, the program became a great success, thanks partly to Marraro's "visitations" (as he called them), which introduced the program to medical-school admissions officers around the country. By the 1960s the Pre-Medical Office had one of the highest rates of placement into American medical schools in the nation—a record the Office maintains today.

In these early years of the School, several important groups were formed. The Advisory Council of the School of General Studies was formed in 1952 under the Chairmanship of Albert Baer. The Council has twenty-five members appointed by the Trustees of Columbia University for three-year renewable terms. The President of the



President (of the University) and Mrs. Eisenhower enjoying a General Studies Holiday Tea in the attic of the old Business Building.



Zbigniew Brzezinski speaking at the General Studies Annual Dinner, sponsored by the Friends of General Studies.

University, the Dean of the School, and the President of the Alumni Association are ex-officio members. The Council advises the Dean on policy and assists in matters affecting the welfare and development of the School.

Another major support group, the Alumni Association, was founded in 1948, just after Extension became the School of General Studies. The Board of the Association is elected by the approximately 1,000 dues-paying, life, and honorary members of the Alumni Association. The Board's role is to keep its members and the alumni body at large informed about, in touch with, and interested in the School. The Association sponsors periodic programs of lectures and seminars.

A third, more recently formed, group is the Friends of General Studies: approximately thirty alumni, students, and others interested in the School and its programs. The Friends sponsor events and activities that will attract people, often not previously connected with the School, as students, donors, or volunteers. The Friends organize the General Studies Dinner and an annual fund-raising event, such as a film benefit or auction.

The Trustees, having organized the School as a college, decided that it needed a home. Previously, the administrators had taken any offices they could, often off-campus, and many teachers had worked out of their homes. Beginning in 1904, the administration had used offices in Teachers College; from 1910 to 1912 Low Library was the School's home. Next, Philosophy Hall provided the base for the School, until in 1916 it moved to University Hall, where Uris Hall now stands. In 1924, the main offices moved once again, this time to the Business Building, where they remained until May 2, 1955. On that day General Studies moved to the oldest building on campus, previously "Alumni House," the last surviving structure of the Bloomington Asylum, which had once occupied what became Morningside campus. (As one might expect, the building's previous use gave rise to a lot of jokes among faculty members.) It soon proved to be too small for the School. Teachers worked five to a desk, and Professor John Middendorf remembers administrators holding meetings in hallways, where there was more privacy than in the tiny crowded offices.

But at this point a storm broke that had been gathering since 1955. President Kirk had appointed a committee of faculty members from several branches of the University, with Professor Arthur Macmahon as Executive Director, to study curriculum reform, reorganization, and standards. The University had provided office space and a budget; President Kirk had chaired many of the meetings; clearly the Macmahon Committee's recommendations would have much influence. In 1957 the Committee published its findings.



The oldest building on campus, the only remaining structure of the Bloomingdale Asylum, was the first building General Studies could call its own. Prior to GS's tenancy the building was called Alumni House. Subsequently it has been East Hall, Maison Francaise, and Buell Hall.

The Committee's recommendations for General Studies were drastic: General Studies must conform to the model of the University's other undergraduate liberal arts schools. In the Committee's view, General Studies had the following function:

While extensive programs of "adult education" are obviously necessary, their purposes and standards differ markedly from the carefully organized program, controlled admissions, and sequential work implicit in the phrase "a college education for adults." The proper function of the School of General Studies is to provide the latter: to give to men and women of mature experience, of intellectual promise, and of serious motivation a chance they missed at the normal college age—a full-fledged undergraduate education in the liberal arts.

At General Studies, the work of reaching the public had continued, though the method had changed from extramural teaching to the admission of non-matriculated or special students. If the School's only "proper function" was undergraduate education, the work of outreach was over, and many of the School's features would have to change. The Committee recommended admissions standards for all students, general-education courses like the College's, an age-limit to keep the students of General Studies distinct from those of the College, and the elimination of special students.

Dean Hacker's response was to resign. He spoke of his reasons at the Faculty meeting of February 12, 1958. Professor Middendorf, then Faculty Secretary, summarized Dean Hacker's remarks in the *Minutes of the Faculty*:

He emphasized that he had always seen the interrelationship of the University and New York City, and he looked on the University as a powerful force whose influence on the city should be expanding, not contracting. . . But [his] ideas . . . had been opposed. . .

He gave another reason for his resignation: his belief that special students were absolutely necessary to finance the School's Faculty.

President Grayson Kirk denied that General Studies was in danger, as Dean Hacker believed. He was present when Dean Hacker spoke of his reasons for resigning, and responded as follows, in Middendorf's summary:

[President Kirk] stated that he firmly disagrees with the [Macmahon Committee's] recommendation to drop non-matriculated students; regardless of the financial implications of the recommendation, he believes the University owes it to the community to continue the non-matriculant program.

The University indeed allowed the non-matriculant program to continue, and General Studies is still its home. The number of special students, however, has declined by about three-quarters, from 1957's 5,242 to approximately 1,300 in 1984. The major reason for the decline has been the gradual change in admissions standards and a resulting, almost complete, shift in special students from those without degrees to post-graduate non-matriculants.

The Macmahon Report did cause major changes. The new General Studies, although it still admitted special students, was now primarily a liberal arts college.

The building was first called Lewisohn Hall when the School of Mines moved out and General Studies moved in. The statue of Le Marteleur (the Metal Worker) now stands in front of the Engineering School. ↓





*Clifford Lord
Dean of the School of General
Studies, 1958-1964.*



The present home of General Studies was given to the University by Adolph Lewisohn. This sketch of him was done by George Gershwin and donated to GS by Ira Gershwin, a General Studies student.

Progress: 1958-1968

The years after the Macmahon Report were not easy. General Studies struggled to adjust to its new task and to find new sources of income. One by one, with compromises and debates, the proposals of the Macmahon Committee came into effect. With fewer special students every year, the School's enrollment steadily declined. Tuition had always been most of General Studies' income, so the declining enrollments caused hardship. But the School overcame its difficulties and even thrived on them.

Clifford L. Lord became the new Dean on October 8, 1958. He was an energetic and able administrator, and dealt shrewdly with the School's difficulties. Within two years, the teaching staff was considerably larger, General Studies teachers had course-loads equivalent to those at other schools, and the minimum stipend had nearly doubled. Dean Lord attended meetings of the Alumni Association Board and, as Chairman of the Committee on Instruction, encouraged extensive examination and revision of the curriculum. Lord's hard work had substantially strengthened the School in a very short time.

One of Dean Lord's accomplishments was the acquisition of a new home for the School of General Studies. He reported to the Faculty at the meeting of October 6, 1961, that the old School of Mines Building would soon become Lewisohn Hall, the home of General Studies. Renovation, however, was a painfully slow business, and the offices did not actually move until 1964.

The new home of the School of General Studies was the same age as the School itself. It had been built in 1904, after a design by Arnold Brunner of McKim, Mead, and White. It had earlier housed not only the School of Mines but also, in the early 1940s, part of the Manhattan Project (a somewhat dubious distinction). It had been a gift to the University by Adolph Lewisohn, a financier who had made his fortune in copper, but it first bore his name when renewed contributions made in his memory helped General Studies begin the renovation of 1961-1964.

Dean Lord resigned in 1964 to become Chancellor of Hofstra. Dr. Clarence Walton was the new Dean. He attended his first Faculty meeting in November of 1964. In one year the School had to adjust to a new admissions rule (that students had to be 21 years of age or older), a new building—whose lower floors were still partly choked with rubble—and a new dean. Fortunately, Walton, like Lord, was an able man.

At first Dean Walton concentrated on the School's curriculum. The Faculty, acting on the new Dean's suggestion, established a series

of required mathematics courses on April 23, 1965. Two years later, after intensive study, the Faculty established "Concepts of Science" courses for non-scientists and an Urban Studies program. The Dean also suggested courses in computer science, and, with the elimination of majors in business, personnel management, law, and public relations—which now became graduate-level programs—he concentrated the School's efforts on the liberal arts.

It was under Dean Walton that the School was given the right to grant the Bachelor of Arts degree. There had been opposition from the College and from Barnard; Columbia had a long-standing agreement with Barnard that the University would not grant a B.A. degree to women. Since General Studies is co-educational, Barnard's approval was necessary for a General Studies B.A. degree. Dean Walton began negotiations with the President of Barnard College in March of 1968 and, in a series of meetings with the President of Barnard, the Trustees of Columbia, and the executives of the administration, with heavy student and alumni lobbying, drove his proposal through. On December 13, 1968, General Studies at long last received the right to award the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Lewisohn, like General Studies, is 80 years old. It was originally the School of Mines building.





Clarence Walton
Dean of the School of General
Studies, 1964-1969.



In the early 1960s the Faculty
strengthened the math and science
requirements.

The Student Movement: 1965-1972

No discussion of the 1960s at Columbia can ignore student protests. The national press focused its attention on universities in the Northeast, and Columbia bore more criticism than almost any other American institution.

General Studies rode out the storm with better equilibrium than the other schools. The students of General Studies, showing great maturity at a difficult time, deserve much of the credit. Dean Walton, too, deserves credit for his quick and intelligent response to the crisis. Many members of the faculty, including the Deans, were careful to meet frequently with students and to state their policies clearly. Communications stayed open at General Studies when they failed elsewhere, and the students, faculty members, and administrators of the School stood together more often than against each other.

The ideology and methodology of SDS had little attraction for the majority of the School's students, and, in 1968, as the seizure of buildings began to spread, Lewisohn resisted takeover. Dean Walton spent many hours standing at the front door where he candidly answered student's questions and debated University and School policies. When demonstrators came to occupy the building, Dean Walton called on the students of General Studies to prevent the occupation and to let classes continue. He stood with students and faculty members at the doors, keeping the demonstrators out. Some tried to climb in the windows, but secretaries and administrators blocked their entry with filing cabinets. At Dean Walton's request General Studies students and faculty members, among them the present Dean, Ward H. Dennis, mounted a twenty-four-hour guard at the doors and in the Student Lounge. Lewisohn stayed out of the demonstrations, and the School continued to function, although much hampered by the occupation of other buildings where classes normally met. Dean Walton, at the emergency Faculty meeting of May 2, suggested a resolution "to thank the students, especially for behaving so reasonably when many behaved so emotionally."

It is evidence of the strength of the School and of the respect Dean Walton had earned, that he was soon offered the extremely prestigious post of President of Catholic University. He would be, in fact, its first lay president. He accepted the post, and Dr. Aaron Warner, an authority on labor economics and the holder of the Buttenwieser Chair in Human Relations, became the Dean of General Studies, assuming his duties on September 1, 1969. Dean Warner's first efforts were aimed at keeping communications open by establishing joint student-faculty committees. Since enrollment was dropping—owing to the Vietnam draft, the increasingly rigorous admissions standards, and the press's savage treatment of the University—a recruitment drive was also necessary. Ward Dennis,



Aaron Warner
Dean of the School of General
Studies, 1969-1976.

then Associate Dean of the School, administered the drive. Among other things he publicized the School among the million or more men discharged from Vietnam service. General Studies' enrollments began to rise again.

Changes to the University were far more radical than to General Studies. The organization of the University Senate now provided a balance to the powers of the central administration. The General Studies students who took part in the planning and formation of the Senate much impressed the faculty members they served with; Professor Howard Schless of the English Department remembers that the General Studies students were "brilliant," and that their maturity, when so many others were losing their heads, was remarkable. Several members of the General Studies Faculty, such as Professors Arthur C. Danto and Herman Ausubel, later the first Senators from General Studies, were major figures in the formation of the Senate. General Studies from now on would voice its point of view officially in the Senate through its nine representatives: five senior faculty members, two junior faculty members, and two students.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 18, 1964

The School of General Studies of Columbia University, at the beginning of this century, pioneered in an area vital to our Nation's growth and progress--the liberal arts education of men and women beyond the traditional college age.

Throughout these years you have provided thousands of purposeful, mature men and women with the opportunity to attain their individual goals, and to make their maximum contribution to our society.

It is a pleasure to send my greetings as you observe your sixtieth year of service, and to wish you ever-increasing success in your work to advance our society.

Congratulatory wishes from President
Lyndon Johnson on the sixtieth
anniversary of GS.

A Brief History of the School of General Studies



Recent Years: 1972-1984

The past twelve years of the history of General Studies have been a time of quiet progress. A major area of endeavor for the two Deans who have served the School in these years—Aaron Warner and Ward Dennis—has been enrollment, which has shown a continual slow increase from year to year. The accomplishment is all the greater when one remembers the competition General Studies now faces: less expensive public institutions, the New School for Social Research, and New York University. Although tuition at General Studies is the highest in the City (\$288 a credit in 1984-1985), its excellent program continues to attract many students, primarily because of the Columbia Faculty, who teach virtually all its courses, and because the graduate and professional school placement rate is excellent.

The general picture of the past twelve years appears from a few chosen facts. General Studies now graduates a respectable 230 students each year. There are now over 11,000 men and women who hold degrees from the School. About 70 percent of the School's graduates go on to graduate or professional schools; hardly any other undergraduate school matches this rate. Finally, while the majority of graduates work in service professions, the School by no means limits its students' choices (as some schools do): alumni and alumnae have contributed to a wide variety of fields.

Graduates and former students of the School cover quite a range. Some famous people who studied in University Extension or General Studies include Amelia Earhart, David O. Selznick, Ira Gershwin, Sandy Koufax, Telly Savalas, Bess Myerson—right after she was Miss America—John O'Hara, J. D. Salinger, Mary McFadden, Millicent Fenwick, and Jacob Javits. Some famous graduates include Mike Gravel, the former U.S. Senator from Alaska, Isaac Asimov, Pat Boone, Nobel Laureates Baruj Benacerraf and Simon Kuznets, and actresses Lorraine Gary and Sandra Church. Jacques Pepin, noted food expert, Mikhail Baryshnikov's assistant Charles France, Congressman Peter Kostmayer, yachting expert John Rousmaniere, dance critic Nancy Reynolds, and Vern Green, creator of *Maggie and Jiggs*, are also graduates, as are Fred Feretti and R. W. Apple, Jr., of *The New York Times*, and Kristina Zea, who designed the costumes for *Fame and Terms of Endearment*.



Charles (Pat) Boone, GS'58, being congratulated by Dean Hacker on making the Dean's List.

In 1976 Dean Warner chose to retire. In the announcement that appears in the *Alumni Newsletter* for the winter of 1976, he stated that he hoped for the establishment of "a broader administrative structure to include an evening graduate program, the summer session, an undergraduate college for adults and part-time students, and a continuing education division." In an effort to make progress



Ward H. Dennis
Dean of the School of General
Studies, 1976-present.



Extension courses in "English for
Foreigners" developed into today's
American Language Program.

toward this goal, Dean Warner became Director of Continuing Education, leading the way to the development of new programs.

The Associate Dean, Ward Dennis, succeeded Dr. Warner as Dean of the School. Dean Dennis has encouraged innovation, flexibility, and dedication to the needs of the students—three of the School's traditional strengths. In his years in office he has continued and strengthened many of the older programs that had demonstrated their usefulness. The American Language Program is an example. ALP is a strong program, and one of the oldest in English as a Second Language. In recent years it has enrolled as many as 600 students from all corners of the globe.

Another strong and growing program is creative writing, called simply the Writing Program, founded in 1911. Columbia was only the second American university to offer a course in creative writing; it did so by means of University Extension. Its teaching staff is drawn from the literary and publishing worlds, whose capital is New York. Today the staff includes Walter Abish, Maureen Howard, David Ignatow, Seymour Krim, Gordon Lish, Nora Sayre, and Lawrence Van Gelder, among others.

General Studies alumni and former students will recognize their alma mater in a number of current books. General Studies is the "University College" of *Poetic Justice* by Amanda Cross, a detective novel in which the victim is an English professor obsessed with destroying University College. (Amanda Cross is Carolyn Heilbrun of the English Department.) General Studies bears a certain resemblance to the Metro College of *Subway to Samarkand*, by J. R. Humphreys of the Writing Division. Felicitas, the central character of Mary Gordon's *The Company of Women*, is a General Studies student. Victor Grant, the title character in George Stade's *Confessions of a Lady Killer*, considers himself intelligent enough to carry out a perfect murder. After all, he did go to General Studies.

Preprofessional studies have also continued at General Studies. The Pre-Medical Office, after twenty-nine years, continues to be a great success; over the past five years it has placed 75 to 85 percent of its graduates in American medical schools, an achievement no comparable program can claim.

The Division of Continuing Education and Special Programs, which Dean Warner established in the autumn of 1976, and the Summer Session came under the administration of Dean Dennis in 1981. The courses offered include computer programming and computer applications—probably the most popular courses are in this area—computing for young people and senior citizens, an auditing program, and study tours to Japan, China, India, and Russia. Of all the current programs at General Studies, the Division of Special Pro-



General Studies and ALP students still gather in the Lounge for the traditional afternoon teas.



The Learning Center offers workshops and individual tutoring.

grams is perhaps the one most reminiscent of University Extension. (The title "Continuing Education" is no longer used.)

Other innovations have been developed during Dean Dennis's tenure; an example is the Learning Center, founded in 1972 to help students sharpen basic skills. The Center offers workshops and individual tutoring by qualified graduate students and computer-assisted instruction for self-paced study. Faculty members offering courses in logic, chemistry, German, and writing for foreign students make use of the Center's new microcomputer laboratory to develop instructional software to supplement classroom instruction.

Another major innovation was a career counseling program for women. Womanspace offered counseling, training, internships, and panel discussions on career opportunities and strategies.

In 1983, Womanspace and the other career and preprofessional programs were united to form The Center for Preprofessional and Career Programs. The reorganization gives students access to an increasingly wide range of opportunities.

An example of General Studies' outreach shows that the School still has a long arm: Reid Hall in Paris, administered by General Studies, is the home of Columbia's Paris program. The building began as a hunting lodge and country retreat in the early 1700s, but Paris expanded to surround it; it is now on the rue de Chevreuse in the quartier Montparnasse, near the Luxembourg Gardens, the Latin Quarter, and several branches of the Université de Paris. The late Mrs. Ogden Reid donated the building to the University in 1964; it has been enlarged to hold classrooms, a library, a reading room, lecture halls, a lounge, and administrative offices. At Reid Hall students can study French language, literature, and culture at many levels, and live with a French family for a term or more; qualified students can become part of the French university system. The program is open to all Columbia students and even to students from other colleges in the United States.

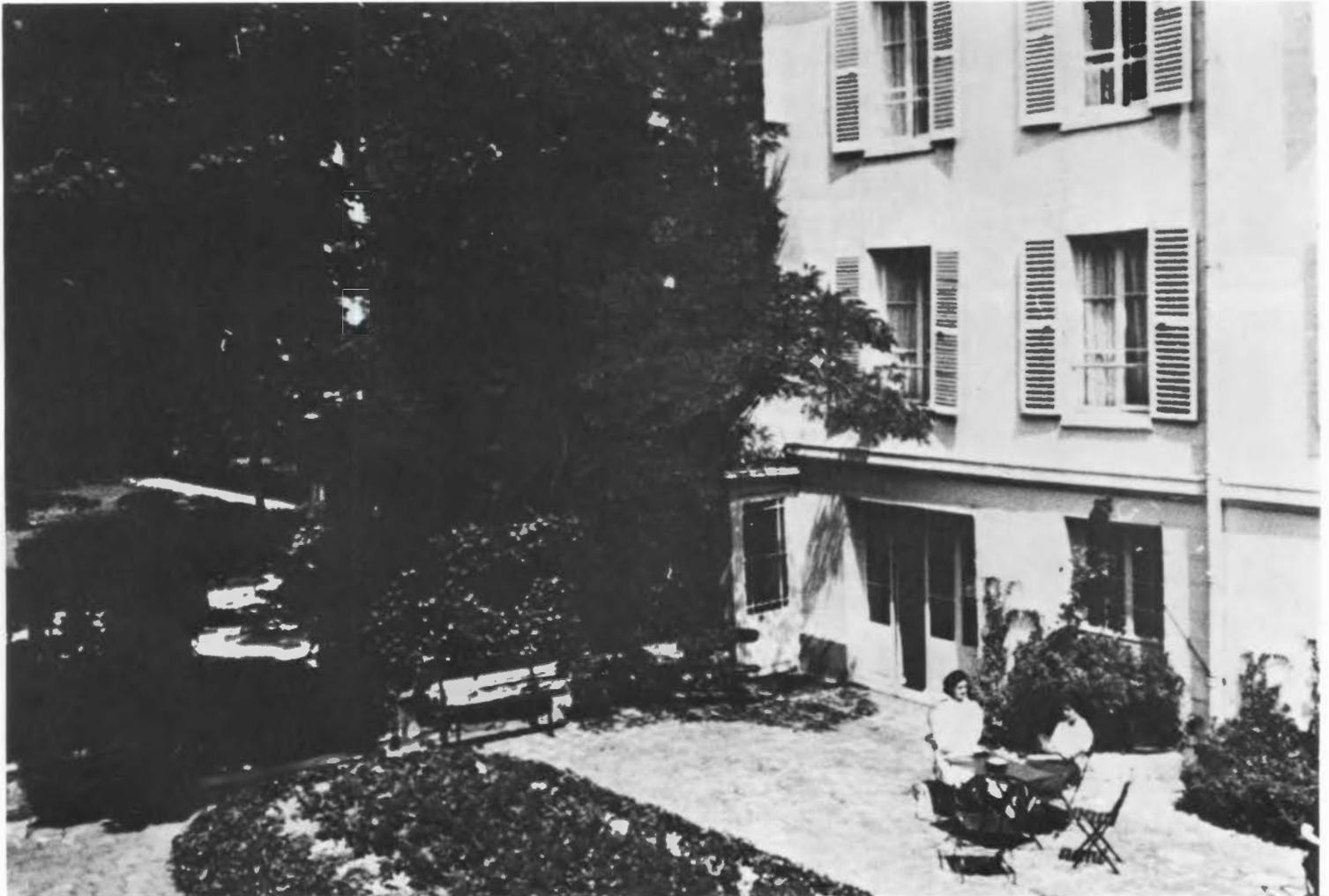
Throughout its long history, the School of General Studies' fundamental goal has been to open Columbia University courses, faculty members, and facilities to the older student. Two programs which continue today serve as particularly good examples. One is the Validation Program, which offers a small group of intensive remedial courses to students who hope for a college education but have never graduated from high school. In 1973 Dean Dennis developed an expanded version of the Validation Program to serve disadvantaged, especially minority, students. Funding was provided by the School and by the Higher Education Opportunity Program of the State of New York.



Through the generosity of alumni and friends, Lewisohn Hall was renovated in 1980–1981. This photo was taken neither before nor after, but during.

The other is the Special Language Students Program, begun in 1950. The offerings in this program range from the most ancient languages—such as Ugaritic, recovered from cuneiform tablets—to the most modern—such as American English—and include all of the major European, Asian, and African languages, such as Swahili. The program serves students who wish to study only a language.

One striking accomplishment of recent years, however, has nothing directly to do with curriculum, enrollment, or innovation: it is the renovation of Lewisohn Hall in 1980–1981. Lewisohn had little serious maintenance in the nearly seventeen years since it became the home of General Studies; it had endured hard use in the meantime and withstood the riots of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Renovation was imperative, and the work that was finally done, through the generosity of alumni and friends, improved Lewisohn's usefulness substantially.





A Sketch of the School Today

This brief history of Columbia's School of General Studies has brought us to the present position of the School. A sketch of that position may show the School's strengths and weaknesses, the magnitude of its achievements, and the tasks of the future.

The students come first, as they should. They are a varied group. In the autumn of 1983 General Studies enrolled 3,054 students. About half were degree candidates; their average age was 28 (a clear indication of the School's success in its avowed goal of adult liberal arts education). A fair proportion (19 percent) were married, and a smaller number (11 percent) had children living with them. The majority (54 percent) were women. Of those who were not candidates for a degree, the great majority (80 percent) already held a bachelor's, if not a higher, degree; they were preparing to enter a graduate or professional school (often at Columbia). Of all the students, more than half worked full-time and nearly all had some job to support themselves.

In the face of rising academic costs, almost all the students of General Studies work. The jobs they take are as varied as the students themselves. One student works summers as a wheat harvester; another, a merchant seaman, takes courses for half the year and ships out for the other half. A surprising number are professional dancers, for dancers must bear in mind that they will have a life after dance. Among General Studies students in recent years have been soap opera and commercial actors, a deck swab on an Alaskan tour boat (during the summer), an acrobat, a phlebotomist, and a one-man band. A good example of the range students and their jobs cover is that of a recent composition class: among others there were a full-time graduate student, a secretary, a professional actor, and a shepherdess—surely the only shepherdess in New York.

There are two other major means of support for students. The first is educational loans: at present, the School's students all together borrow about \$2.3 million a year. The other is financial aid: each year, about 600 degree candidates receive some form of financial aid (non-candidates are not eligible). The financial aid budget comes largely from the contributions of alumnae, alumni, and friends.

The School's curriculum is as scholarly and demanding as the students are varied (and demanding, in their own way). General Studies offers over 1,200 liberal arts courses. Many are in joint programs, of which there are several: combined programs are offered with the Graduate School of International and Public Affairs, with the Law School and the Business School, with the Schools of Engineering, Social Work, Medicine, and Dentistry, and the Program in Public



Originally a hunting lodge, Reid Hall, in the quartier Montparnasse, is the home of Columbia's Paris program.



Administration; the double bachelor's offered with the Jewish Theological Seminary; and shared courses offered with Columbia College, Barnard College, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Of this vast range of courses, while the majority (58 percent) are available in the daytime, a substantial number are offered later—15 percent between 4 and 6 p.m., and 27 percent after 6, going as late as 9 p.m. Evening classes help serve a varied student population; later classes have the added advantage of making teachers highly accessible and keeping numbers in each class, on the average, rather small.

The Faculty of General Studies is a professional body of educators. The majority are professors (assistant, associate, or full); some are advanced graduate students in the last stage of preparation for their professional teaching careers. Both groups are affiliated with the College, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of International and Public Affairs. Many have received awards for their scholarship and their service to the education of their students.

The facts show, it seems, that the School's current position is a strong one. Perhaps our major weakness is that common to all private educational institutions in the 1980s: as costs rise and federal aid dwindles, students suffer greater and greater hardships. The School's enrollment is still growing, but it would be wrong to be too optimistic.

Through its eighty years, General Studies has steadily grown in prestige and significance. It has developed gradually from two courses, open to part-time students, at the turn of the century, to a significant liberal arts college offering over 1,200 courses and a wide variety of unusual and innovative programs. Throughout this period, despite changes of program and personnel, the School has retained its unique, original, and abiding goal: a dedication to making education accessible to those who otherwise might not have had a college education.

Twenty years ago, on the School's sixtieth anniversary, its many friends sent their good wishes. Among them were Barry Goldwater, Hubert H. Humphrey, Jacob Javits, John Lindsay, Eugene McCarthy, Abe Ribicoff, Nelson Rockefeller, Adlai Stevenson, and President Lyndon Johnson. The faculty members, the administration, and the students of the School, past and present, may now take proper pride in joining in that distinguished company's good wishes for a School so open to change and yet so fundamentally itself.

—David Clement

Major sources for this history include Professor John Angus Burrell's A History of Adult Education at Columbia University and the Columbiana collection.

The School wishes to thank Judith D. Lipsey for her assistance with this project.

Distinguished Teacher Award Recipients

1973	Robert G. Davis	1979	Anthony Tudisco
1974	Arthur Danto Joel Sachs		Mildred Daniel Robert Williams
1975	William Appleton Joan Spero	1980	Gita May Ellin Feld Dean Schmitter
1976	Herman Ausubel Norman Feinstein	1981	Deborah Mowshowitz John R. Humphreys Patrick Gallagher
1977	Leigh Cauman Frank Lier Lloyd Motz	1982	Alden Vaughan Kay Shelemay
1978	Inge Halpert Mary Dobbie	1983	David Helfand Richard Sacks
		1984	James Beck

The Phillip and Ruth Hettleman Award for Junior Faculty

1984 Peter Awn

Margaret Bancroft Award for Distinguished Retiring Professors

1960	Margaret Bancroft	1980	Daniel Dodson
1963	Peter Ward	1981	Susana Redondo de Feldman
1964	Howell Ingram Philip Sisson	1983	Andre Racz
1977	Lloyd Motz Frank Lier	1984	Daniel Penham

Owl Award Recipients

1959	George Norman Allen '53 Dr. Hugh H. Darby '25 John R. Menke '43	1963	Mr. Albert M. Baer '45 Mr. Milton Halsey Thomas
1960	Prof. Simon Kuznets '23 Dr. Alex Novikoff '31 Dr. Louis Simpson '49	1964	Mr. Walter W. Frese '27 Dr. Louise W. Ilse '46 Prof. Eric McKittrick '49
1961	Mrs. Albert M. Baer '50 Wesley First '58 Dr. Emil Smith '31	1965	Dr. Beryl Loftman Bailey '52 Dr. Irma B. Jaffee '58
1962	Dr. Isaac Asimov '39 Dr. Norwood Russell Hanson '48	1966	Dr. Louis M. Hacker
		1967	Dr. Wesley J. Hennessy '51 Marshall L. Page '35

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1968	Hon. James J. Comerford '40	1978	Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss '61
1969	Dr. Clarence C. Walton	1979	Dr. Arthur Kantrowitz '34
1973	Murray A. Niedergang, Esq. '48 Bernard B. Schoenberg, M.D. '49	1980	Ms. Madeline Bohman '67
1974	Prof. Ralph J. Holmes '33	1981	Dr. William J. McGill
1975	Dr. James F. Bender '28	1981	Mr. Alfred J. Seaman, Jr. '35
1976	Dean Aaron W. Warner	1982	Mrs. Bruce A. Gimbel '72
1977	Mr. Ran Hettena '64	1983	Dr. Juan J. de Lara '55
		1984	Dr. Betsy B. Kaufman '62

General Studies Alumni Recipients of Alumni Federation Medal

1948	Justin W. Brierly, '29	1973	William W. Blodgett, Jr., '58
1956	Marshall L. Page, '35	1974	Harry D. Fornari, '41
1958	Louise Ilse, '46	1976	Kathryn B. Linden, '53
1959	George Alexander, '27 Frank J. Pokorny, '33	1978	Ralph E. Cox, '54
1966	Murray A. Niedergang, '48	1979	Ruth R. Hettleman, '68
1968	Joseph Pagano, '53	1981	Leonard M. Amsterdam, '35 Edmund W. Pease, '57
1970	Catherine E. Sandy, '53	1982	Judith D. Lipsey, '61
1972	Robert J. Barber, '51		

Chairmen of the Advisory Council

Albert M. Baer	1952-56	Murray Niedergang	1971-74
Walter Frese	1964-70	Barbara P. Gimbel	1975-present

Chairmen of the Friends of General Studies

Helen Evarts	1972-76
Mary Martin Craigmyle	1976-82
Jacqueline W. Vogelstein	1982-present

Presidents of the Alumni Association

Barbara Voorhees Levy	1949-50	Daniel Daly	1966-69
Frank de Hermida	1950-52	Robert J. Barber	1969-71
Marshall L. Page	1952-57	Ralph E. Cox	1971-73
George Alexander	1957-58	Ruth E. Hettleman	1973-76
Dr. Louise Ilse	1958-60	Carl G. Schuster	1976-77
Murray A. Niedergang	1960-61	Roland A. Hence	1977-79
Alvan W. Holeywell	1961-63	M. Whitney Keen	1979-82
Joseph Pagano	1963-65	Kathryn B. Linden	1982-85
William C. Blodgett, Jr.	1965-66		

Gifts to General Studies



Support for General Studies comes from alumni and friends of the School, foundations, corporations, government programs, and fund-raising events.

The first General Studies scholarship was created in 1948. The Merle M. Hoover Scholarship Fund was established by an anonymous donor who wished to honor Professor Hoover and assist General Studies students. Funds that have since been created include:

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|--|---|
| Academy of American Poets Prize | George W. Hibbitt Award for Excellence in Public Speaking |
| Dante Alighieri Scholarship Fund | Helen Hull Scholarship in Writing |
| Alumni Key Award | Olga H. Knoepke Scholarship |
| Herman Ausubel Memorial Prize | The Harold F. Linder Fund |
| Bertha Baer Scholarship Fund | The Lipsey Quality of Life Fund for the School of General Studies |
| Margaret Bancroft Fund for Distinguished Retiring Teachers | Linsey Scholarship in Honor of William N. and Harry E. Doniger |
| George B. Bernheim Fund | The Merrill and Judith D. Lipsey Scholarship Fund |
| Peter Bloch Scholarship Endowment Fund | Dr. Nicholas R. Locascio Scholarship |
| Professor John Angus Burrell Memorial Fund Prize | Loyal Legion Foundation Prize |
| Dr. John Claflin Scholarship Fund | Lyon Student Scholarship Fund for the School of General Studies |
| Clark Foundation Scholarships | Benedetto Marraro Scholarship in Italian Studies |
| Jess Cloud Memorial Prize in Poetry | Helen and Howard R. Marraro Fund in Italian Studies |
| Tobe Collier Davis Scholarship Fund | Jose Marti Prize |
| The Crawford-Bothwell Prize | Medaglia D'Oro Prize in Italian Studies |
| Taraknath Das Prize for Excellence in Oriental Studies | Dr. Antonio G. Mier Prize in Spanish |
| Florence B. Doniger Scholarship for Fine Arts | The New York Times Company Foundation Scholarship |
| Doubleday-Columbia Fellowship | Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation Scholarship |
| Matthew M. Fryde Scholarship Prize | Marjorie H. Nicolson Scholarship |
| The General Scholarship Fund of the School of General Studies | John Northcott Scholarships |
| General Studies Alumni Association Scholarships | Jennifer A. Pack Prize |
| Beatrice W. Gilbert Fund | The Marshall L. Page Memorial Fund |
| Joseph E. Gilbert Loan Fund | Harold Pagliaro Scholarship for English Majors |
| Lilian I. Hacker Prize | Lily M. Parker Prize |
| Hebrew Scholarship Fund | |
| Hettena Scholarship Fund | |
| The Phillip and Ruth Hettleman Awards for Junior Faculty Development | |

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Phi Beta Kappa Award of the General Studies Section of Delta of New York	Tiro A Segno of New York Scholarship Fund in Italian Studies
Generoso Pope Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in Italian	Beatriz and Philip Sisson Prize
Barbara Seward Price Scholarship	Surdna Foundation Scholarship Fund
Renaissance of Italian Youth Foundation	John C. Walter Memorial Scholarship Fund
Mabel Louise Robinson Scholarship in Writing	Claire Woolrich Memorial Scholarship Fund
Arthur Ross Foundation Scholarship Award for Excellence	Maxwell Zabelle Memorial Scholarship Fund
Helena Rubinstein Foundation Scholarships	Herman Zeigner Fellowship
School of General Studies Faculty Development Fund	

