The University of Missouri-Columbia

Welcome to...

Tomorrow, today, and yesterday are merged in the history and development of the University of Missouri, established in Columbia in 1839, only 18 years after Missouri was admitted to statehood.

The much-loved Columns—symbol of the past—stand majestically today with new space-age Research Park, where major facilities include a 10-megawatt nuclear reactor, one of the largest university-owned in the United States.

The Columbia campus (oldest and largest of the University’s four campuses) is unique in having 16 divisions.

Francis Quadrangle

The University of Missouri was established 132 years ago by an act modeled after a Virginia statute, drafted and sponsored by Thomas Jefferson, which 20 years earlier had created the University of Virginia.

Today, the Jefferson Monument, original marker from the grave of the third President, stands west of the north entrance to Jesse Hall—the administration building. Made from Jefferson’s own design and cut from granite on his estate at Monticello, the headstone was presented by his heirs to the University of Missouri in 1839.

This was the first state university founded west of the Mississippi River; From a class of two students graduated in 1843, the University of Missouri-Columbia has expanded to an enrollment of over 21,686 in 1971.

History of the Founding

Silent sentinels over all tradition on campus are six Ionic columns, all that remain from the original Academic Hall, erected in 1840 and destroyed by fire in 1892. They are in the center of Francis Quadrangle on the west “red” campus, which derives its name from its many red brick buildings.

A section of the Chancellor’s Residence is the oldest building, constructed in 1867. Switzler Hall, oldest classroom building, contains the bell which marked the change of classes from 1882 to 1936. Now it tolls during Commencement processions and for funerals of faculty members.

East of the main gateway to the red campus are Jay H. Neff Hall and Walter Williams Hall, home of the world’s first regularly organized school of journalism, founded in 1908 by Walter Williams. An addition houses the plant and business offices of the Columbia Missourian, daily newspaper of the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Newest structure on the red campus is the Geology Memorial Stadium, opened in 1962, to make the Library one of the largest in the nation.

The Business and Public Administration building at South Ninth Street and University Avenue, and a Fine Arts Center for art, music, and the dramatic arts, located on Hitt Street across from the Memorial Union are also in the central campus area.

The “White” Campus

The main entrance to the east campus, more commonly known as the “white” campus, is through Memorial Tower, dedicated in 1926 as a memorial to University students who gave their lives in World War I. The north wing of the Memorial Union honoring students who died in World War II was completed in 1952, and the south wing was finished in 1963.

Brady Commons—supplementing the Memorial Union facilities and housing the University Book Store—and the Arts and Science building are located on the east side of the Mall. The General Classroom Building, across the Mall, is phase one of a long-range classroom plan.

The east “white” campus, so-named because the buildings are made of native white limestone, began with the construction in 1902 of Whitten Hall, immediately north of Memorial Union.

The Agriculture building, which also houses the School of Forestry, is located at the south edge of the white campus. This and the Physics building, though of modern design, blend into the scene of white stone buildings. The School of Home Economics is located on this quadrangle in Stanley and Gwynn halls. Other buildings include Lefevre Hall for botany and zoology; Stephens Hall, wildlife conservation; and Curtis Hall, genetics.

Along Hitt Street, south of Memorial Tower, are Gentry Hall, residence hall for women students; Read Hall, used for administrative offices, and the Wooster Gymnasium. Tucker Hall, with an attached teaching greenhouse, provides office, laboratory, and classroom space for the Botany Department.

Major structures at the far east edge of the Columbia campus include Conaway Hall, a Veterinary Hospital-Clinic, and the Veterinary Sciences building. Sanborn Field, oldest agriculture experiment field west of the Mississippi River and in continuous operation since 1888, also is in this area.

An Animal Science Research Center is under construction south of the Veterinary Clinic.

South of the main campus along Rollins Street are Rothwell Gymnasium, Brewer Field House, and indoor and outdoor swimming pools. The recently completed four-story Mathematical Sciences building, west of Brewer Fieldhouse, provides space for classrooms and offices, and houses the Computer Science, Mathematics, and Statistics departments.

University Housing

University-owned residence halls total 23 in addition to one privately-owned, university-supervised residence hall adjacent to the campus.

Central Campus Area

In a block-wide area between the east and west campuses, the central portion of the General Library was constructed in 1914. A substantial west wing was added in 1934 and a large addition to the east was completed in 1962, to make the Library one of the largest in the nation.

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