

A HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

1888-1988

by

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The Utah State University College of Business is among the oldest business schools in the United States. Its origins date back to March 8, 1888, when the governor of Utah signed the Lund Act. The act clearly set forth the organization, purposes, and courses of study for the Agricultural College and Experiment Station, the institution that would become Utah State University.

Between 1889 and 1918 the business program went through several organizational revisions. Originally called the Commercial Department, that name was changed in 1902 to the Department of Commerce. In 1903 it became the School of Commerce, and in 1918 it became the School of Commerce and Business Administration (Evaluation Report, 1971). The name changes reflect the growth that occurred during those first thirty years and the emerging identity of the College of Business.

Humble Beginnings, 1888-1918

Excavation for the structure that would house the Agricultural College and Experimental Station was started on July 27, 1889. Architect C. L. Thompson won the contract for building the college's main building. The original plans called for the

building to be constructed in thirds and to hold everything from a large auditorium to a five-room living space for the A.C.'s first president, Jeremiah Wilson Sanborn. The building was constructed between June and September of 1890 (Utah Statesman, March 31, 1987).

When the A.C. opened on September 3, 1890, 22 students registered, some of whom pursued the following planned courses of study set forth by the Board of Trustees:

The college work will cover four distinctive lines of instruction and three special courses.

1. Course in Agriculture
2. Course in Domestic Arts
3. Course in Mechanic Arts
4. Course in Civil Engineering

The special courses will be as follows:

1. Three years' course in Agriculture
2. Course in Mining Engineering
3. Irrigation Engineering

The state of development of our public schools seems to require, for a few years, a preparatory department of one year for the fitting of those students who are unable to pass an examination for entrance to the college courses. This, it is hoped, will be a temporary necessity. (Ricks, 1938, p. 27)

Several of those first students completed the two-year curriculum in commerce and business. When the first commencement was held in 1894, eight students graduated from commercial courses of study. In 1894 the only four-year business school in existence was the Wharton School of Commerce and Finance at the University of Pennsylvania, established in 1881. The first four-year business program west of the Mississippi would be established in 1898 at the University of California. So, although the four-year business curriculum of the "A.C." was

first organized in 1893, it was not until 1903 when a School of Commerce was established that the college could claim an independent four-year curriculum in business culminating in a bachelor's degree (Chase, 1965, pp.1-2).

In 1890 the entrance fee for students was \$5 per year and daily chapel exercises were an integral part of student life. The substantial sum of \$1,500 was voted by the Board of Trustees to purchase books, and a maximum salary of \$2,000 was established for professors (Ricks, 1938, pp. 26-27). Entering students could look forward to the following regimen of rigorous course work for their first two years:

FRESHMAN YEAR

<u>First Term</u>	<u>Second Term</u>	<u>Third Term</u>
Eng. Grammar	Composition and	English Literature
Higher Arithmetic	Rhetoric	Algebra 2
German or French	Algebra	Geometry 5
Shop Work	German or French	Shop Work
Military Science	Shop Work	German or French
		Military Science

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Horticulture	Chemistry	Trigonometry 3
Physics	Bookkeeping	Agricultural
Chemistry	Laboratory	Chemistry
Horticultural	in Chemistry	Botany 4
Work	Horticulture,	Industrial
Physics	Forestry and	Shop Practice
	Bee Keeping	

(Ricks, 1938, p. 30)

Commercial Club is Established

By 1903 several academic clubs had been organized and the commerce students, not to be left behind, apparently decided that one was needed for their discipline also. In January 1903

Student Life reported:

Preliminary measures have been taken to organize a 'Commercial Club' and soon a permanent organization will have been effected. When established it will bear the same relation to the commercial department that the Agricultural Club and the Engineering Society do to their respective departments, and it is hoped will materially aid in the work of the students of commerce.

Officers were elected the following April, but the club was loosely organized. All commercial students could be members with no restrictions such as academic standing on the requirements for membership. For several years the club had no particular place to meet, a situation that was eventually remedied when a meeting room was acquired in 1910. At that time stricter requirements for membership in the commercial club were instituted also.

. . . having secured a room and wishing to better the conditions of the club and place it on a firmer basis, a select group of college grade men met . . . and appointed a committee to draw up a new constitution and a new set of bylaws. The new constitution as framed and adopted provides that 'all candidates for membership must be acted upon and chosen by a committee appointed for that purpose, and that they must be of college standing.' (Student Life, May 16, 1913)

A picture of the Commercial Club appeared in the May 16, 1913, issue of Student Life along with a listing of the 37 commerce graduates up to that date. No women were shown in the picture, but one woman's name appeared on the list and two other names that could be women were listed. Women were taking commercial courses but probably did not complete the program.

Commerce and Engineering Rivalry

In these early years, Student Life provided detailed accounts of student activities, often identifying students by name and describing their accomplishments and mishaps. The

following excerpt entitled "The Commercial and the Mirror" from the March 1903 issue of Student Life vividly describes the rivalry between the Commercial and Engineering Departments.

The Engineers, following the doctrine that 'possession is nine points,' claimed it as theirs; the Commercial maintained their title on the grounds of prior ownership. The property in dispute was an ordinary mirror, fourteen by twenty inches.

When the Commercial Department moved into their present quarters, this relic was left in their old rooms, subsequently occupied by the Engineers. The claims of the latter were not disputed until the former recalled that the mirror was their property. The professor of Law had propounded the principle that you can take your own no matter where it is. Proceeding according to this idea, a detachment of Commercial betook themselves to the rooms on the second floor and secured the mirror. The trophy was accordingly placed in a conspicuous place in the Commercial room, easily accessible to the ladies. There it remained undisturbed until lunch period, before the Engineers became aware of the loss. When the room was nearly deserted by the possessors of the property, the assailing body of Engineers appeared—formidable despoilers! . . .

In the melee the mirror was shattered and the pane in the glass door met a like fate. When it seemed that the besiegers had carried the day, one last frantic effort on the part of one of the besieged regained for the Commercial a part of the frame. This fragment remained and is dearly cherished by them as a relic of one of the notable clashes between the two fractions. (Student Life, March 1903)

This rivalry apparently continued for quite some time and was intensified by the division of the Agricultural College in 1903 into various schools, one of which was the School of Commerce. The following announcement that appeared in the student newspaper reflected obvious student pride in their new school:

To all whom it may concern. In order to avoid being lost amid the splendor and magnificence of our newly equipped School of Commerce, purchase a guide book at the door. (Student Life, March 1903)

School of Commerce is Established (1903)

J. A. Bexell accepted the position as director of the new School of Commerce in the spring of 1903. The school included the following divisions: Political Economy—courses in economics, banking, finance, industry, and commerce; Political science—courses in business law; Accounting—courses in commercial calculation, business forms and correspondence, bookkeeping, and office practice; Stenography and Typewriting—courses in shorthand and typewriting; and Telegraphy—one course was listed in the 1903-04 catalog: Theory and Practice in Telegraphy.

Also, at this time a commerce library was created which held "Technical material for all the departments in the School of Commerce . . . periodicals . . . reference materials . . . wide selection of business magazines . . . The library is administered from the Main Library." (Student Life, April 17, 1950)

The School of Commerce filled a valuable role for the students and the community by training students for jobs and providing role models for younger students. The following excerpts from Student Life illustrate the school's success in those roles:

Mr. Irving Sampson, one of our former students, is holding as \$85 position with the O. S. L. at Pocatello and will not return to school this year. We are glad to know of his success. (October 1905)

Mr. Willard Gardner, a 'crack' stenographer of last year, is with the Cache Valley Banking Company; salary \$900.00 a year. Former acquaintances of Mr. Gardner will also be interested in knowing that he has taken unto himself a wife. (October 1905)

Henry Gleed has accepted a position in Lima, Montana, at a salary of \$1,200 per year. He has charge of a department store owned by G. J. Thomas. (December, 1905)

Last Friday the Ogden High School Commercial Department sent a delegation of ten pupils to visit the Commercial Department of the Agricultural College at Logan. . . . The visitors expressed great admiration for the spacious and elegantly furnished apartments occupied by the commercial department. They praised the excellent penmanship and the neatness of individual work, and in many directions were inspired to make improvements in their own methods for the future. (December, 1905)

The disciplines in the School of Commerce received recognition at various times. The following newspaper stories highlight the Economics Department, Accounting Department, and the Stenography and Typewriting area. Concerning the Economics Department (1911):

. . . when so eminent an authority as Professor L. C. Marshall of the University of Chicago reports that the work in the department of economics of our school is comparable to that given in the best institutions in the country, we feel that we are paid one of the highest tributes ever. And this conclusion of Professor Marshall's was not reached after any superficial investigation. Months were spent in collecting material from the various degree conferring institutions . . . In the number of hours instruction given, the number of students in the courses, and the general standard of the courses, we are surpassed by only a very few of the large universities. . . . (Student Life December 8, 1911)

Concerning the Accounting Department (1913):

Some twenty years ago, bookkeeping was taught in almost every high school in the country. To know how to keep books was thought a necessary part of a young man's education. Subsequently, it was crowded out by the sciences. These were supposed to be of greater importance than bookkeeping. Fortunately the tide is being turned and accounting is coming back into its own. Accountancy has developed tremendously during the last five or six years. From a collection of more or less arbitrary rules, it has developed into a science. The "Art of Bookkeeping" has been displaced by the "Science of Accounts".

The Agricultural College was the first institution in the state to introduce into its college courses instruction in Accounting. During the present year three college courses have been given in the Institution. Two for the Commerce

students and one for the students in Agriculture
 (Student Life May 16, 1913)

Concerning Stenography and Typewriting (1915):

Stenography is one of the most common modes of entrance into the business field, the others being accounting and economics. . . . These subjects are thoroughly taught in our Commercial Department here. What grounds have we for thinking that a well-grounded training in stenography will repay the ambitious young man or woman. There are many reasons for so thinking. There is always a good position awaiting the well equipped stenographer, especially the young man.

Every great business man has need to dictate important business letters, and not only must the stenographer be capable of understanding the dictation, but he must be morally responsible for the safe keeping of the confidence reposed in him or her. . . . The government is paying excellent salaries for careful and accurate male stenographers for its important official business.
 (Emphasis added) (Student Life, February 5, 1915)

The student newspaper even reported the progress of student on typewriting tests. The speeds by today's standards are not very good, but the students were using manual typewriters.

Miss Erma Adams wrote 39 net words a minute in a 10 minute tests about the first of October. . . . We have in the Typewriting department other students who are doing excellent work. Mr. Vernon Norr wrote 55 net words per minute. . . . Mr. Leon Garrett ran up to 51, while Miss VaLois Egbert scored 42. . . . (Student Life, December 15, 1916)

By 1913, 10 percent of the total college (USU) enrollment was in the Commercial Department (Student Life, May 16, 1913). A commercial or commerce area continued to exist within the School of Commerce. Therefore, the names "School of Commerce" and "Commercial Department" were often used interchangeably, making references to the Commercial Department and the School of Commerce difficult to interpret. For example, the student newspaper gave two slightly different versions of the evolution

of the commercial program. The following historical column appeared in Student Life on April 12, 1912:

The U. A. C. was begun in the year 1889. Strange as it may seem to us now, the commercial course was not then included. The experience of the first year was sufficient, however, to demonstrate to the administration the necessity of establishing the School of Commerce, and consequently this department was added in 1890. This division was founded by J. E. Shepard [sic], the present cashier of the Cache Valley Banking Company. His successors were J. W. Farris, D. E. Burchill, J. A. Bexell, and Dr. Thomas who is at present the dean of the department. . . .

In looking over the old books on the shelf in the commercial room, one is impressed with the peculiarities of them. Their first noticeable characteristic is their enormous size, some of them being about the size of an ordinary table top, with columns and lines from two to three feet in length. All accounts seem to have been kept in such books as these. On looking around through the offices we do not see such huge volumes nor so many of them as there seems once to have been. They are replaced by smaller, more specialized books or the looseleaf system. . . .

In a later account, J. E. Shepherd, the first principal of the commercial program, described the emergence of the School of Commerce:

'The beginning of the present School of Commerce,' Mr. Shepherd said, 'was the introduction of an experimental course in bookkeeping as provided in the statute. This under the friendly attitude of President Sanborn was soon extended to a Business course which became quite popular and attracted many strong students, and at the beginning of the year of 1892-4 [sic] the course was extended to a junior and senior year. The following year was introduced the first regularly organizes and equipped school of commerce leading to a degree, established in the United States. The school was put on a equal basis with those of Agriculture, Mechanic Arts and Domestic Arts.' (Student Life, May 12, 1918)

The War Years 1918-1945

By 1918 the student enrollment in the college (USU) included 200 females. In 1918 the School of Commerce became the School of

Commerce and Business Administration under the direction of George B. Hendricks. The school then included five departments: Markets, Business Administration (a newly formed department headed by William L. Wanlass), Accounting, Political Science, and History.

Evidence that the school was attaining some prestige nationally was provided when the assistant dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration visited the college (USU) "to study the organization and methods of instruction in use in the U.A.C. School of Commerce and Business Administration and to work out plans for close cooperation between the Harvard Graduate School and the college" (Student Life, December 9, 1921).

The former head of the Business Administration Department, Dr. William L. Wanlass, became dean of the school about 1922, and the school continued to receive accolades.

The Commerce Department of the U.S.A.C. is relatively advanced in its methods and the quality of teaching writes Floyd Davis from Stanford. Mr. Davis, who went from this institution [U.S.A.C.] to Stanford says that many unsolicited compliments on the school have been given to him since his arrival there. Once criticism is commercial subjects; they should obtain a wider background of general education. (Student Life, December 18, 1930)

In spite of the criticism of too much commercial emphasis, all areas of the school continued to thrive, and new courses were added as the need for them became apparent:

A new course on the methods of teaching typewriting [will be offered] by the Business Administration department. . . . The course will be conducted by L. Mark Neuberger . . . typewriting has been playing an increasingly important role in the commercial curriculum [said Neuberger] for the past

ten years. Today the enrollment in typewriting (taking the nation as a whole) is greater than that for any other business subject . . . (Student Life, February 18, 1937)

In 1937 students in the School of Commerce and Business Administration could major in accounting, business administration, merchandising, secretarial science, agricultural economics and marketing, economics, political science, or sociology. However, the inclusion of the social sciences and agricultural economics in the business school waxed and waned through the years.

Relationship Between Social Sciences and Business

Economics has been taught in the business school since its beginning, but political science and sociology courses that were a part of the business curriculum early in the history of the college have moved out of the curriculum. Such courses as economics, sociology, comparative study of governments, and civil government were offered in the School of Commerce in 1903 and 1904. By 1919 courses in sociology and political science also included American diplomacy and rural sociology. The close relationship of the social sciences and business was described in some detail in an article appearing in the Student Life in September 1940:

A more adequate and descriptive name for this school would be 'The School of Social Science and Business,' for in addition to those departments whose primary purposes is [sic] the training of men and women for vocations in the business world, the departments of economics, sociology, political science, and (jointly with the school of agriculture) agricultural economics are included within the organization of the school of commerce. . . . The departments of economics and political science, although not

primarily concerned with specific training for vocations, do offer many courses that are basic to the work of other departments of the school. . . . Many graduates of these two departments find employment as teacher, others enter the civil service, and still others find this broad training an excellent foundation for graduate study in law and other fields. . . . (Student Life, September 7, 1940)

The School of Commerce would, in fact, become the College of Business and Social Sciences, but enrollment in the social sciences grew to such an extent that eventually a separate College of Social Sciences was established.

Relationship Between Agriculture and Economics

Another affiliation that began early in USU's history was between agriculture and economics. In 1918 students enrolled in both economics and agricultural economics in the Economics Department of the School of Commerce. In 1938 students could major in economics or in agricultural economics and marketing. However, by 1942, a School of Agriculture had been established and agricultural economics was moved to that location. Students in the School of Commerce continued to take courses in both economics and agriculture, and eventually in 1970 the departments were again merged under the joint administration of the Colleges of Business and Agriculture.

Recent History 1945-1970

At the end of World War II, USU had grown from 1 building to 37; the college faculty had multiplied from 9 in 1890 to approximately 283; and the student body had expanded to over 3,400. Students could enroll in seven schools: agriculture,

forestry, home economics, arts and sciences, commerce, engineering and mechanic arts, and education (General Catalog, 1942-43).

In 1952 under the direction of Professor C. D. McBride, the Management Institute came into existence. Utah's economy was rapidly shifting from agriculture to business and Utah State University, as the land grant institution in Utah, had an obligation to provide educational services to people in business and industry throughout Utah comparable to those being offered to people in agriculture and rural life through the Cooperative Extension Service. The Management Institute was charged to provide these serves.

By 1957 the School of Commerce and Business Administration had become the College of Business and Social Sciences with M. R. Merrill (formerly the head of the Political Science Department) as dean. The social science emphasis in the College of Business was reflected in the fact that of the four departments, three were social science departments: Business Administration, History and Political Science, Economics, and Sociology. In 1959 Robert P. Collier became acting dean; the college included the departments of Business Administration and Secretarial Science, History and Political Science, Sociology and Social Work, and Economics.

College of Business Moves to High Rise

By 1966 business courses were being taught in more than a dozen buildings all over campus. Accounting, which had enjoyed

department status early in the college's history but had been under business administration for many years, became again in 1966 a separate department. In addition to the Accounting Department, the College of Business in 1966 included the following departments:

Department of Business Administration - finance, marketing, personnel and industrial relations, production management;

Department of Business Education and Office Administration - business education, distributive education, office administration, office administration and family life;

Department of Economics - economics

Department of History - history

Department of Political Science - political science, pre-law, foreign services

Department of Sociology - sociology, social work

The Division of Military Science and Aerospace Studies offered an ROTC commission.

The time had come for the college to have its own building. The Utah Building Board approved a \$600,000 federal grant for a business building, and on January 11, 1967, the schematic plans for the building were approved by the USU Board of Trustees. The ground breaking ceremony was held on December 10, 1968, with a projected cost for the structure of \$1,591,700. Before the building was completed, the College of Business and Social Sciences was split to form two separate colleges with Robert Collier as dean of the College of Business.

On May 8, 1970, the building was dedicated as the George S. Eccles Business Building.

The newest and tallest building on campus will bear the name of George S. Eccles, one of Utah's prominent business leader. . . . The Eccles building reaches nine stories high

and is the tallest building in northern Utah. There is a three-story classroom base, and six additional stories of faculty offices, seminar rooms and other facilities. Space is provided for 74 faculty members and 1,000 students. It was designed by Carpenter and Stringham of Salt Lake City and built by Skyline Construction Company, also of Salt Lake. . . .

Eccles spent his early years in Cache Valley, attended Utah State and University of California and received his degrees from Columbia School of Business. He serves on the board of several of the largest corporations in the United States. . . . For many years he has been prominent in international banking. . . . Eccles has also been a recipient of several awards in the education and humanitarian fields, including an honorary doctor's degree from the University of Utah and the Personal Achievement award of the National Deafness Foundation of which he is a director. (Student Life, April 6, 1970)

Also in 1970 the Department of Agricultural Economics was again merged with the Department of Economics under the joint administration of the College of Business and the College of Agriculture. Some years later, Reed Durtschi, professor of Economics, speaking on the history of the College of Business, made some humorous observations about the administration of the Economics Department:

'In a masterful organizational move, [Durtschi said] aimed at pinpointing administrative responsibility, which is essential to good administration, Ag Econ and Econ were merged and made the simultaneous administrative responsibility of two deans. . . . The greatest advantage of this arrangement is that neither dean seems to know what in the world is going on.'

Durtschi said, as viewed through the eyes of the people in the front office, the arrangement was intended so Ag Econ could be divided up in both colleges so that neither dean could mess things up. . . . 'They're on some kind of cycle,' Durtschi said, speaking of the Ag-Econ Department, 'but you know all of this movement by agricultural economists can be traced to the fact that they're farm boys at heart, and anyone who knows or has worked on a farm, realizes that if you are ever caught just standing and thinking—or worse, sitting—it's an indication that you're unproductive or lazy. . . . (Student Life, March 11, 1977)

Accreditation and Progress (1971-1988)

The undergraduate program of the College of Business was accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in 1971, and in 1981 the graduate (masters) program was accredited by AACSB. In 1975 Robert P. Collier resigned as dean and Richard L. Smith was chosen to replace him. Since Dean Smith was not to assume his duties until spring of 1977, Vern Buehler was acting dean in the interim.

In February 1983 the Department of Accounting became the School of Accountancy with Larzette G. Hale as head. By 1986 the College of Business had a full-time enrollment of approximately 1,398 students in its undergraduate and graduate programs (Self-Study Report, 1986). Thirty-nine full-time faculty and 32 part-time faculty were employed in three departments: Business Administration, Administrative Systems and Business Education, and Accounting. The Department of Economics remained under the joint administration of the Colleges of Business and Agriculture. Also, in 1986 Richard Smith retired as dean, and David B. Stephens was chosen to succeed him.

In this centennial year of 1988, the College of Business of Utah State University enjoys a prestigious position among the colleges of the university. Bachelor's degrees are offered in accounting, business education, marketing education, administrative systems, business administration, finance, marketing, personnel and industrial relations, production management, agribusiness, agricultural economics, and economics. Master's degrees are offered in accounting, administrative

systems and business education, agricultural economics, economics, and agricultural industries, and the master of business administration is also offered with areas of specialization tailored to the students' needs. Doctoral degrees are offered in business education and vocational education (Ed.D.) and economics (Ph.D.).

The college continues to grow and to excel in its faculty, course offerings, and commitment to the mission of Utah State University.

Edited by Mary Price, August 2005.

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