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## Academic eminence records5802656

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Columbia University. University Development Plan Committee. Subcommittee on Academic Eminence
<b>Title:</b>	Academic eminence records
<b>ID:</b>	5802656
<b>ID:</b>	UA#0038
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1952-1956
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3.34 linear feet 8 document boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Academic eminence records; Box and Folder numbers; University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.

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## Historical Note

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Inspired by Columbia's then-upcoming Bicentennial year (1954), the University Development Plan Committee charged the Subcommittee on Academic Eminence to conduct a study "to ascertain the relative standing of Columbia's academic eminence in as objective a manner as possible." According to the report, the committee was "concerned with several danger signs which have appeared in recent years: (1) the recent loss of eminent people to other institutions; (2) the growing competition from state-supported institutions, government and industry; (3) the few eminent men who have in recent years refused invitations to join Columbia's staff; (4) the younger staff members of promise who are tempted to leave; (5) the many vacancies which will occur in the next few years due to retirements of eminent scholars; and (6) the urgent need for new and improved physical facilities which might overshadow the importance of staff."

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## Biographical / Historical

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To discover Columbia's academic eminence in comparison with other leading institutions, the Subcommittee set out to find the most distinguished scholars and where they were located. Columbia's Department Chairs (or Executive Officers, as they were known then) were asked to supply a list of "fields of learning" within their discipline as well as a list of professors specializing in each field. Survey forms were sent out to these scholars or a "panel of experts" to judge their colleagues and identify those who were the most eminent in a given field. The Subcommittee tabulated the results to see how Columbia ranked.

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## Biographical / Historical

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In the report, the Subcommittee found that Columbia ranked second only to Harvard in academic eminence. In order to improve its ranking, they recommended that Columbia hire an additional 27 eminent professors, create a favorable academic climate with attractive facilities, improve living conditions, award merit promotions, offer publication assistance, support participation in professional affairs, and demonstrate more administrative interest. The members of the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence were Paul F. Kerr, Chair; Charles R. Dawson, William A. Demorest, Edward H. Green and Christopher Mady, Secretary.

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## Summary

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This collection consists of the materials used to compile the report, Columbia's Academic Eminence: A Report by the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence, 1954-1955. There are surveys for each academic department (Philosophy) and "field of learning" (Ethics, Logic, Metaphysics). There are also some subcommittee records: minutes, correspondence, outlines, and drafts of the final report.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Revision Description

Finding aid published (JR) Added box 8. (JR) 2023-06-09 2023-06-13

### Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

### Restrictions on Access

All administrative records of the University are restricted for 25 years from the date of creation.

### Accruals

No additions are expected.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

2002.012.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed by Joanna Rios in June 2023.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

Please consult the online version of the report, [Columbia's Academic Eminence: A Report by the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence, October 1954](#). Additional materials, under "Academic Eminence Study," can be found in [Central Files \(UA#0001\)](#).

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Columbia University -- : Curricula
- Columbia University -- Administration

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## Collection Inventory

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### Series I: Academic eminence records, 1952-1956

#### Scope and Contents

The records of the Academic Eminence Study contain the data used to identify eminent faculty members and the records of the Subcommittee which compiled the data used in the final report. The October 1954 version, [Columbia's Academic Eminence: A Report by the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence](#), is available online.

Title/Description	Instances
Academic Information Forms	

**Scope and Contents**

The Academic Information forms asked scholars outside of the University to produce a list, or a personal selection, of the "10 active persons of greatest academic ability in the United States in their field (not including those at your present location) together with their University or other connection." Some lists include a few names (fewer than the 10 blanks on the form) and some include many more. Others ignored the form altogether and wrote about their selections in a letter. The lists were not ranked: the order of the names did not matter. The authors of the lists (or members of "the panel of experts") usually sign at the bottom of the page; and their home institutions were later been penciled in. The forms are organized by department or discipline (Philosophy) and then by the field of specialized interest (Ethics, Logic, Metaphysics). The faculty areas include the humanities, pure sciences, social sciences and engineering.

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#### Subcommittee Records

##### Scope and Contents

The members of the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence were Paul F. Kerr, Chair; Charles R. Dawson, William A. Demorest, Edward H. Green and Christopher Mady, Secretary. These records include their minutes, correspondence, outlines, and drafts that led to the production of the report, [Columbia's Academic Eminence: A Report by the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence, 1954](#).

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**Scope and Contents**

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<b>Scope and Contents</b>		
This is the summary of the data collected in the Academic Information forms. The front page states "Whne Deans or Professors want to know the top people in their areas, this is the reference for it."		
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Reports, 1954		
Report Minutes, 1953-1954	box 7	folder 4
Report, 1954 October	box 8	folder 2
<b>Scope and Contents</b>		
The October 1954 version, <a href="#">Columbia's Academic Eminence: A Report by the University Development Plan Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Eminence</a> , is available online.		
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**Scope and Contents**

Executive Officers was the term used for Department Chairs. These individuals were asked to identify the

areas of specialization in their disciplines as well as a list of experts in said areas.

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