



History In The Making

Poised to become a leading institution of learning for the 21st century, UA has come a long way since its humble start as a one-building campus.

SNAPSHOT-1872

Buildings: 1
Acreage: 6.5
Faculty: 7
Students: 46
(171 in Prep School)
President: Rev.
Sullivan McColleston

The University of Akron's Master Plan for the new millennium can't be fully appreciated until you understand how the University has grown since its birth in 1870. What was once a six-and-a-half-acre campus with only one building housing most academic functions, now stands as a major

state university with international impact, with 72 buildings sprawling across more than 170 acres in Akron, plus 2 buildings and 158 acres on the Wayne campus.

A CURIOUS BEGINNING

In 1867, the Universalist church voted to found a college

based on its religious principles. Three years later, the Universalists announced that they would establish a school in whatever city could put up \$60,000 to fund it and locate an appropriate site upon which to build.

John R. Buchtel, a Universalist and one of Akron's most prominent citizens, wanted to

build the college in his city. By personally contributing \$6,000 to the building fund and \$25,000 toward an endowment for a college, by example he led other Akronites toward achieving the goal. Buchtel also scouted out a suitable site for the college, and urged the Universalists to choose Akron as the

city in which to found their school.

The religious group was more than pleased with Buchtel's efforts and, in 1870, gave Akron its full support. The college was to be built upon the grounds of Spicer Hill Cemetery—named after Miner Spicer, the first settler of Akron. The cemetery was located on Middlebury Street, later renamed Buchtel Avenue. Because the soil on the hill had not proved suitable for use as a cemetery, Miner's descendant Avery Spicer offered the two acres to the Universalists for \$1.

The cemetery was moved, and Buchtel enlarged the campus to six-and-a-half acres by purchasing parcels to the East and West, and lots along Carroll

Street. The extra real estate included a house near the west end of where Crouse Hall stands today—the home of the first presidents of the college.

The school's board of directors voted to name the school Buchtel College in honor of the man who had worked so hard to found it. When officially opened for classes in September 1872, Buchtel College was housed in one large, monolithic building—Old Buchtel Hall. All academic and most social events took place under one roof.

At the time, Buchtel College offered three courses of study: the classical (bachelor of arts), bachelor of philosophy and bachelor of science. In that first year, there were seven faculty members,

with 46 students enrolled in the college and 171 in the Buchtel preparatory school. Tuition was \$30 a year.

The first addition was a small observatory built southeast of Buchtel College in 1886. The long awaited Crouse Auditorium was constructed to the west of the College in 1888.

Tragedy struck on Dec. 20, 1899, when fire destroyed Old Buchtel Hall. Only a fraction of the insurance money on the building could be collected, so through fund raising efforts, four smaller buildings were erected to house the college—a new Buchtel Hall, which still stands at the center of campus, a Preparatory Academy on the west end, a heating plant and a

women's dormitory and center for student life called Curtis Cottage.

CITY COLLEGE

In 1909, Buchtel College severed its ties with the Universalists and became a private, non-denominational school. This allowed the college to obtain funding from the Carnegie Foundation, which would not support schools with religious affiliations.

The decade that followed was an extremely good one for both the city of Akron and for Buchtel College.

A massive endowment drive was started, and then President Parke Kolbe appealed to the citizenry of a booming city—Akron's population nearly tripled to more than

SNAPSHOT-1913

Buildings: 6

Acreage: 6.5

Faculty: 15

Students: 198

President:

Dr. Parke Kolbe



1872: The University opened for classes as Buchtel College in one simple building, (Old) Buchtel Hall, with only 46 students.



1899: After 29 years of service, (Old) Buchtel Hall burned down to the ground. It was rebuilt in 1901.

208,000 between 1910 and 1920—for support. In 1913, Kolbe offered the college to the Akron to operate as a municipal university. Buchtel College then became the Municipal University of Akron. A half-mill city tax was levied to support the school.

Before the levy, the University consisted of six buildings: Buchtel Hall, Knight Chemical Lab on the east end, Curtis Cottage, Crouse Gymnasium, the presidential residence, and the Academy for prep students. In total, there were 15 faculty members and 198 students.

Soon the prep school was discontinued and became a facility for engineering studies.

In 1915, a new building was erected behind Buchtel Hall,

on the southeast corner of campus. Known as Carl Kolbe Hall, the building housed the University's library, named for General Lucius Bierce, a former Akron mayor.

Two years later, a new engineering lab was built at the corner of Carroll and Sumner Streets. An addition to it was made in 1920. The physics and biology departments moved into the old academy/engineering building, which was renamed Olin Hall.

With the population of Akron growing steadily, enrollment skyrocketed to 2,000 by 1923. The campus was crowded and a call for expansion was made. In 1924, Akron businessman J. Edward Good donated his 180-acre West Akron farm, located on South

Hawkins Avenue, to the University. At that time, the campus consisted of only six-and-a-half acres. In 1928, then President George Zook urged the board of directors to move the University to the site of the Good farm. To do so, Akron voters would have to pass a University bond issue in the November 1929 election. But before the vote could take place, the stock market crashed in October, and the idea of moving the campus was abandoned.

The University turned to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to enlarge a crowded engineering lab and, once finished in 1937, named it after Dr. Hezzleton Simmons, president of the University at that time.

The Public Works

Administration (PWA) provided the means to build a center for student life in 1939.

(PWA rules wouldn't allow it to be named for a living person, so it wasn't until 1966 that a renovated student center would be named after Donfred H. Gardner, longtime dean of students who had urged its creation.)

Following World War II, enrollment again exploded. President Simmons pursued federal funding to enlarge the campus to accommodate the student body of 5,000.

In 1946, a tax levy was passed. Added were a new heating plant, an addition to the Kolbe library, and a new engineering building. The latter, named Ayer Hall, opened in 1949 in the

SNAPSHOT-1939

Buildings: 11

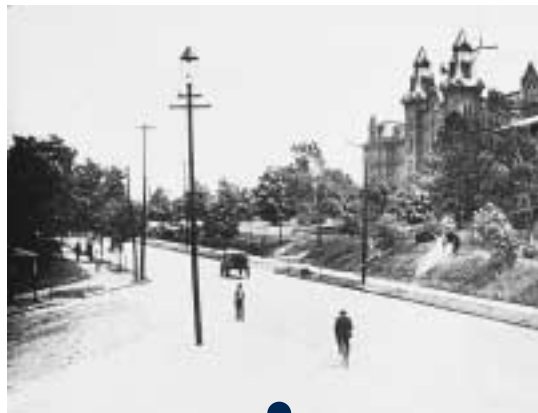
Acreage: 6.5

Faculty: 123

Students: 3,101

President: Dr.

Hezzleton Simmons



1913: Buchtel College becomes a municipal university, with an enrollment of nearly 200 students.



1945: The first attempt to produce a campus development guide proposed adding seven buildings to the six that existed.

northwest corner of campus where the President's House had formerly stood.

The old Knight Lab was converted to an education building, and a new lab, now called Crouse Hall, was built next to Ayer.

GIANT LEAPS

Dr. Norman P. Auburn became president in 1951. Parke Kolbe Hall and Memorial Hall were built on new campus land to the east of the original rectangle. The University bought 23 acres across Carroll Street, moving south through urban renewal loans provided by the Federal Housing Act of 1959.

In 1963, Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes approved the Municipal University of Akron as a state-

assisted university. Four years later, University leaders petitioned for full-state status and it became The University of Akron.

The University developed Lee Jackson Field, named for the former Firestone Tire and Rubber president and chairman of the University's board of directors. Carl Kolbe Hall—the University library—was razed, and a larger library was built as well as dorm space for both men and women.

Old Crouse Gym was torn down to make way for a student center addition, and the old Olin Hall was razed to provide access to a new facility across Sumner Street. This large complex, named the Norman Paul Auburn Science and Engineering Center,

was finally completed in 1967.

By this time, the University had expanded in all four directions as part of an ambitious land acquisition and building program—the school's first comprehensive campus master plan. Enrollment in 1964 had reached 10,000 students and continued to grow under the guidance of President Auburn.

Even more facilities would be built in the coming years to meet this demand, including Spanton Hall—the first tower dorm—in 1967.

Two years later, the University acquired the old Cotter Warehouse at the corner of Hill and Center Street, which would become the site for the E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall. It was seen

as a prime opportunity to link the campus with downtown Akron.

Once completed in 1973, E.J. Thomas Hall would be internationally renowned for its extraordinary architecture and world-class status as a concert hall.

Disaster again struck the center of campus in 1971 when Buchtell Hall caught fire. Gutted by flames, Buchtell Hall was renovated and reopened a year later.

In 1972, the University opened a branch campus in Orrville, expanding its physical resources beyond Akron into Wayne County.

The following year, a new Bierce Library was built along the north side of E. Buchtell Avenue near the center of campus, as was the C.Blake

SNAPSHOT-1967

Buildings: 41

Acreage: 71.6

Faculty: 485 (FT)

Students: 13,616

President: Dr.

Norman Auburn



1956: The campus occupied about 46 acres and was assigned its own district for zoning purposes.



1965: With more than 10,000 students enrolled, the first campus development guide plan addressed the need for growth.

SNAPSHOT-1999

Buildings: 72

Acreage: 170+

Faculty: 840 (FT)

Students: 23,000+

President:

Dr. Luis M. Proenza

McDowell Law Center along the south side of E. Buchtel Avenue across from E.J. Thomas Hall. Also in 1973, the Hower House, built in 1871, was donated to the University by the Hower family.

Expansion continued in the 1970s with the completion of Guzzetta Hall, a new home for the College of Fine & Applied Arts. The Union Depot on Wolf Ledges was acquired to become the Buckingham Center for Continuing Education. In 1979, the College of Nursing's Mary Gladwin Hall and the new Knight Chemical Lab were opened, both down the hill from Auburn Science Center. The former Holiday Inn on Exchange Street was

transformed into Gallucci Hall, a dormitory which now houses the Honors College.

When Dr. Dominic Guzzetta retired and William V. Muse became president in 1984, the University kept growing a little at a time.

The 1965 campus guide plan had recommended greening up campus by closing Buchtel Avenue, and it was closed in 1987 to create a winding brick walkway with extensive landscaping and commons areas. Added on top of the steps leading toward Buchtel Hall was a six-foot, seven-inch statue of John R. Buchtel, as well as the Dorothy Garrett Martin Fountain at the center of Buchtel Common.

Around the same time, the James A.

Rhodes arena—UA's indoor athletics complex—was completed on the site of the former fire station located at the corner of Buchtel and Brown. Also, The Prudential Insurance Co. donated the 400,000-sq.-ft. Polsky's department store on Main Street downtown. The building had been empty since 1978, but after more than \$30 million in renovations, it reopened in 1994 and became home to the Community and Technical College, the University Archives and Urban Studies.

In 1991, the campus skyline was dramatically changed when the new Polymer Science building was dedicated at the triangle of Buchtel Avenue and Center Street.

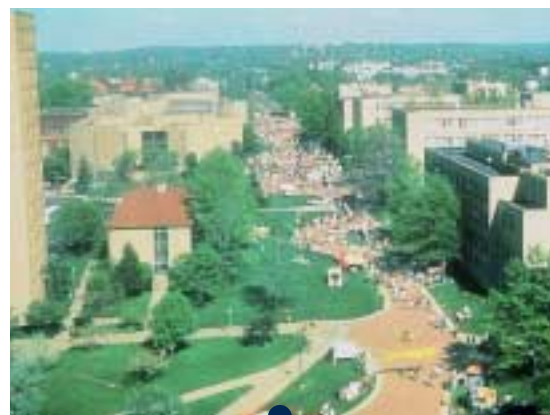
The \$17 million building was funded by the state and several polymer-related companies worldwide. That same year, the connection between the central and west campuses was cemented upon the opening of a new College of Business Administration facility, located on the former site of the Greyhound Bus terminal on Broadway St.

Today, UA stands on the brink of a new millennium—and a new era of change. Though the campus has, indeed, come a long way since its founding in 1870, its future has never looked brighter.

This history was condensed from Becky Tompkins' three-part history of the University, which appeared in Akron magazine in 1996.



1991: The new College of Business Administration building connected the central and west campuses.



1999: The University of Akron's main campus today stands ready for another transformation, soon to be underway.