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Dwight William Allen Papers

1963-2001 (*Bulk:* 1968-1974)
7 boxes (8.5 linear ft.)
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Read collection overview

A influential and flamboyant educational reformer, Dwight W. Allen served as Director of Teacher Education at his alma mater Stanford from 1959 until accepting a position as Dean of the School of Education at UMass Amherst in 1967. A proponent of integrating technology into teaching and co-developer of the technique of microteaching, Allen cemented his reputation as an innovator during his time at UMass (1968-1975), a time that coincided with the rapid expansion of the university. Allen helped recruit students of color to the graduate program in significant numbers, opened admissions to students with unconventional credentials, allowed students a voice in directing and governing the program, and abolished grading, among other initiatives, but while supporters lauded the creativity and excitement of the period, his radical ideas elicited considerable opposition as well. He resigned in 1975, in part due to the increasing demands his international consulting, later accepting a position at Old Dominion University, where he remained until his retirement in 2008. Allen is author of nine books, including *American Schools: The \$100 Billion Challenge*, written with his former graduate student Bill Cosby.

The Allen papers contain a wealth of materials pertaining to the tumultuous years at UMass, including Allen's curricular and teaching reforms, special projects, and his efforts to recruit African American students and address institutional racism. The correspondence, memos, and private reports that Allen maintained are particularly valuable for understanding the period as are the various surveys, studies, and reports on the state of the School of Education. The collection also includes material relating to some of Allen's academic interests in education, including microteaching, alternative schools, and certification.

See similar SCUA collections:

[African American Antiracism Education Massachusetts \(West\) UMass \(1947- \) UMass faculty](#)

Background on Dwight William Allen

Background on Dwight William Allen

Dwight W. Allen in hot air balloon, ca. 1973

Dwight William Allen was born in Stockton, California in 1931, a son of John and Valera Allen. While his parents were not professional educators (his father ran a car business in San Francisco), they were committed proponents of the Baha'i Faith, a spiritual philosophy that would critically inform their son's approach to his work in education. The Baha'i Faith, founded in Persia in the nineteenth century, centers on a belief in the fundamental unity and inherent value of all human beings, and a consequent embrace of cultural and racial diversity.

As a young man, Allen enrolled at Stanford University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in History with Honors in Humanities in 1953, and master and doctoral degrees in Education in 1957 and 1959, respectively. While at Stanford Allen married classmate Carole Swall, with whom he raised a family of three sons and two daughters. After earning his doctorate, Allen transitioned from the role of student to that of instructor at his triple alma mater, serving as Assistant Professor of Education at Stanford from 1962 to 1965, and as Associate Professor from 1965 to 1967.

From the earliest days of his work in the field of education Allen was committed to a socially progressive perspective on teaching and learning. While at Stanford, he spoke and wrote of the need to view education as a vehicle for students' holistic development as human beings, and as a resource grounded in mindful learning outcomes tailored to the needs and strengths of individual pupils. Allen's opposition to a one-size-fits-all approach to education was critically linked to his commitment to combating institutional racism and the marginalization of socioeconomically underprivileged students. Allen asserted that many K-12 teachers throughout the United States were not attuned to the specific challenges facing racial minority and impoverished students, and did not understand how to revise their approaches to help these children meet their potential.

Another integral component of Allen's educational philosophy was his belief that learning should, quite simply, be a source of enjoyment, creativity, and discovery, rather than an uninspiring chore that stripped young people of their natural curiosity. To realize this vision, Allen committed himself to helping teachers develop curriculum that could truly resonate with students and connect to their lives outside the classroom. While at Stanford, he pursued his overarching philosophical goals in his own research and teaching, and through his innovative work as the developer of Microteaching Clinics. Microteaching is a program concept which encourages educators to critically reflect on their approaches to instruction by viewing video footage of their own classroom teaching.

After several years at Stanford, Allen decided that he needed a new challenge, as he believed his educational philosophy had the potential to make a more significant impact elsewhere. This conviction led Allen to accept the position of Dean of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Amherst in 1968. For the next seven years, Allen pursued a vision that placed UMass on the map as a premier institution for the training of innovative, socially progressive educators. Allen mounted an energetic campaign to recruit faculty and graduate students who shared his commitment to promoting a "humanistic" approach to education and to combating institutional racism and barriers to the success of low-income students. Allen also sought to cultivate a culturally and ethnically diverse student body, hoping it would begin to compensate for the overall lack of diversity at UMass Amherst. In his first year the size of the faculty at the School of Education more than doubled, the school catalog and constitution were revised, a "planning year" in partnership with doctoral students was declared, and the school moved to a non-departmental structure of clusters and centers around common interests.

Under Allen's leadership, the UMass School of Education implemented several specific programs and policies in an effort to achieve its overarching goals. For example, the School promoted "reality-based education" experiences such as internships and fieldwork for their undergraduate and graduate students in order to encourage these prospective instructors to meaningfully connect educational theory and practice. Allen encouraged doctoral students to make hands-on work a key component of their studies, and to facilitate this goal and promote his overall support of open curriculum, he terminated course requirements for doctoral students, requiring only that these scholars produce a dissertation.

Allen also oversaw the development of several specific institutions within the School of Education, including a Human Relations Center (to train future educators in providing humanistic counseling support to students), a Center for International Education (to promote thinking about teaching in a global perspective), and a Center for Urban Education (to prompt thinking about the unique challenges and opportunities of instruction in urban settings). Under Allen's leadership, the School of Education also became known for hosting biannual, week-long "Marathon" sessions in which educators, graduate students, and others from within and outside of UMass were invited to deliver lectures and presentations on any aspect of their philosophy of education. During Marathon Weeks, all classes were cancelled in the School of Education to provide faculty and students with the opportunity to attend the sessions, an administrative decision that highlighted Allen's belief in the value of learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom.

In reflecting on the intellectual and psychological landscape of the UMass School of Education during Allen's tenure, Juan Caban, a School of Education faculty member under Allen, drew a connection between the School's emphasis on humanistic education and the spirit of progressive activism that shaped many social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Caban noted that he saw a clear parallel between the principles and idealism found in Allen's School of Education and those which motivated many social activists during that same period. In Caban's view, in the years following Allen's departure in 1975 the spirit of daring and of unlimited possibility at the School of Education began to diminish, partly as a result of Allen's absence and also partly because of society's move away from the ideals found in the activism of the previous decades.

Caban was one member of a substantial group of individuals within the School of Education who viewed Allen's leadership and philosophy with great admiration and respect. Allen's bold innovations inspired the fierce loyalty and passionate approval of many faculty and students. At the same time, his innovations also served to alienate him from some in the educational community, who believed that he had gone too far or that his vision for enlightened education did not leave room for those who did not concur with his ideas. For example, while many applauded Allen's championship of the idea that education in its purest form could not be quantified, some opposed his decision to dismantle the existing School of Education grading system in favor of a Pass/Fail method of evaluation. Allen also received criticism for requiring only a dissertation and no set coursework from his doctoral students, as his detractors contended that this lack of fixed requirements diminished the degree.

In 1975, after eight years in the position of Dean at the UMass School of Education, Allen resigned during a financial scandal at the School of Education. He would go on to work as a UNESCO Policy Advisor in Africa, and in 1978 as University Professor for Urban Education and Eminent Scholar for Education Reform at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Allen served in this position until 2008, and then held the post of Eminent Scholar Emeritus at Old Dominion, where he remained committed to innovative education. He is the author of nine books about educational theory and practice, has participated in a number of initiatives in the areas of International Education Reform, and also focused on the power of technology to transform the educational landscape. Allen died October 16, 2021 at the age of 90.

Scope of collection

The Dwight William Allen Papers consist of four boxes of print materials, with the vast majority of these items pertaining to Allen's work as Dean of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst from 1968 to 1975. The collection contains a substantial quantity of official memorandums and other administrative documents generated by the School of Education. Also well represented are copies and drafts of some of Allen's writings, which highlight his philosophy of education; newspaper and magazine articles discussing Allen's views and the innovations he pursued at UMass; correspondence which Allen sent and received in his capacity as Dean; and a variety of documents that offer insight into the range of public opinions about Allen's approach to educational leadership. The collection only briefly documents Allen's educational background and previous work as a Stanford professor, as well as his later pursuit of educational reform as an innovative instructor at Old Dominion University.

Some materials with personal information about students and faculty are restricted.

The collection has been divided into two series:

- [Series 1: School of Education, 1963-2001 \(bulk 1968-1974\)](#)
- [Series 2: Personal and Professional, 1967-1977](#)

Series descriptions

[Series 1: School of Education](#)

1963-2001 (*bulk*1968-1974)

6 boxes (7.75 linear feet)

This series consists of documents, mostly correspondence, memorandums, meeting minutes, and reports, generated by the UMass Amherst School of Education and the UMass Graduate School during Allen's time as Dean of the School of Education. Subjects addressed in these documents include admissions and program policies for School of Education graduate programs, planning and review documents, financial planning related to specific School of Education initiatives, and a variety of issues related to School of Education and university-wide students and faculty. These materials help provide context for Allen's activities by illuminating the administrative climate in which he operated and also offer insight into some of the specific policies that Allen spearheaded in his role as Dean of Education. The series also contains a variety of documents, particularly newspaper clippings and correspondence, which illuminate different and sometimes contrasting views of Allen's work and the status of the UMass School of Education.

Some records are organized into structural groups including administration and governance; the various clusters and centers which replaced departments during Allen's tenure as Dean (clusters are listed according

to the organizational structure in the [University of Massachusetts School of Education Records](#) during this time period); and documents from the university at large. One subject organization of note is the theme of racism, which co-locates documentation about the conversations, controversies, and protests at the School of Education from 1971-1972 following the March 1971 "Nantucket Manifesto" declaring racism the priority of the School. The response included several failed committees, the creation of the Minority and then Third World Caucus, a problematic poll of minority students, splintered support for Allen and the administration, protests resulting in the cancellation of the 1972 spring Marathon, and later controversies over admissions and faculty recruitment.

[Series 2: Personal and Professional](#)

1967-1997

1 box (.75 linear feet)

This series includes correspondence, writings, photographs, and research material of Allen's which reflect his personal and professional life. The correspondence ranges from very brief notes to more extensive letters, and the writings include both article and book manuscripts, covering many of the educational theories and practices of importance to Allen during this time period.

Inventory

Series 1: School of Education

1963-2001 (*bulk*1968-1974)

2.5 boxes (3.75 linear feet)

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1969-1974

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Grant Programs - assorted

1969-1974

Box 5: 1

Grant Programs - Charles F. Kettering Foundation, CFK Ltd.

1968-1974

Box 1: 2

Grant Programs - Charles F. Kettering Foundation, CFK Ltd.

1968-1974

Box 5: 2

Grant Programs - The Ford Foundation

1968-1973

Box 1: 3

Grant Programs - The Ford Foundation

1968-1973

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Grant Programs - The New World Foundation

1969

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Grant Programs - The Spencer Foundation

1974

Box 1: 4

Grant Programs - U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

1971-1973

Box 1: 5

Grant Programs - U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

1971-1973

Box 5: 5-6

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1969-1974

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Personnel - Personnel Committee

1968-1974

Box 1: 7

Personnel - Personnel Committee, Payroll

1971-1974

Box 4: 1

This folder is restricted.

Personnel - Tenure and Grievance Committee
1969, 1974
Box 4: 2

This folder is restricted.

Personnel - Tenure and Grievance Committee, tenure, contracts, and recruitment policy
1968-1974

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Adult Education, Continuing Education

1973-1974

Box 1: 9

Adult Education, Continuing Education

1973-1974

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American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)

1967-1969

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American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)

1967-1969

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American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) - correspondence

1967-1971

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Clinic to Improve University Teaching

1974

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Clinic to Improve University Teaching - International Conference

1974

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Clinic to Improve University Teaching - International Conference

1974

Box 5: 12

Clinic to Improve University Teaching - Summer Institute

1972-1973

Box 1: 13

Clusters

ca.1968-1974

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During Allen's tenure as School of Education Dean faculty and students were organized into numerous thematic clusters and centers instead of traditional departments.

Designs for Effective Learning Cluster

1974 Dec

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Center for Integrated Day - graduates list

ca.1970

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Center for Urban Education (CUE)

1970-1974

Box 1: 17

Center for Urban Education (CUE)

1970-1974

Box 5: 13

Center for Urban Education - Career Opportunities Program (COP); Urban Elementary Teacher Education Project (UETEP)

1969-1974

Box 1: 18

Includes Brooklyn, Springfield, and Worcester COP, and UETEP at Malcolm X College in Chicago, IL.

Center for Urban Education - Career Opportunities Research Memoranda Series - Evaluation of the UMass/Brooklyn Career Opportunities Program 1970-1975

1975

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Center for Urban Education - Career Opportunities Research Memoranda Series - Evaluation of the UMass/Brooklyn Career Opportunities Program 1970-1975

1975

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Educational Planning and Management Cluster
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Box 5: 15
Educational Planning and Management Cluster
1973-1974

Box 1: 20
Center for Educational Research
1970-1973

Box 1: 21

Includes materials from when the Center for Educational Research was known as SMERD (Statistics, Measurement, Evaluation, Research, and Data).

Center for Educational Research
1970-1973
Box 5: 16

Includes materials from when the Center for Educational Research was known as SMERD (Statistics, Measurement, Evaluation, Research, and Data).

Center for Educational Research - Technical Reports
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Center for Occupational Education
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Center for Occupational Education
1972

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Center for Leadership and Administration
1972

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Center for Leadership and Administration - student lists
1972

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Center for Study of Educational Innovations (CSEI)
ca.1970

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Center for Study of Educational Innovations (CSEI)
ca.1970

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Educational Policy Studies Cluster
ca.c1970

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Center for Higher Education - Center for Community College Affairs
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Center for International Education
1970, 1973-1974

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Center for International Education
1970, 1973-1974

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Center for International Education - Academy for Educational Development
ca.1970

Box 5: 22
Humanistic Applications of Social and Behavioral Sciences Cluster
1973

Box 5: 23
Humanistic Applications of Social and Behavioral Sciences Cluster
1973

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Applied Behavioral Science Alliance
1974 Jan

Box 1: 29
Human Relations - graduate admissions
1973

Box 1: 30

Transdisciplinary Education Cluster

Alternative Schools Project - Marion Alternative School (a.k.a. "Bent Twig")

1971-1972

Box 1: 31

Alternative Schools Project - Pasadena Alternative School

1972-1973

Box 1: 32

Alternative Schools Project - Pasadena Alternative School

1972-1973

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Alternative Schools Project - Student file: Ansley, M. R.

1971-1973

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Alternative Schools Project - Student file: Ansley, M. R.

1971-1972

Box 4: 3

This folder is restricted.

Media Center

1971-1973

Box 5: 25

Media Center - directorship problem

1972 Feb

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Model Teacher Education Program

1968

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Model Teacher Education Program

1968

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Project CAM

1968

Box 5: 27-31

Project CAM - Report

1968

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Teacher Education - Teacher Education Committee, Teacher Education Policy Committee (TEPC)

1970

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Teacher Education - Teacher Preparation Program Council (TPPC)

1971-1974

Box 1: 37

Includes a report on the 1973 graduates of the Teacher Preparation Programs, and an annotated bibliography of dissertations on teacher education.

Teacher Education - Teacher Preparation Program Council (TPPC)

1971-1974

Box 5: 33-34

University Without Walls

1971-1972

Box 1: 38

University Without Walls

1971-1972

Box 6: 1-2

Conference materials

ca.1970

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Conference materials

ca.1970

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Contemporary University - newsletter, correspondence

1970, 1973

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Crosspath Conference

1973

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Box 1: 41

Includes correspondence and memorandums concerning faculty appointments, visiting scholars, and appointments and positions in centers and clusters.

Evaluations
ca.1973
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Individualized Faculty Statements, Humanistic Applications cluster summary
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Ad Hoc Committee for Review of School of Education, and Visiting Committee reports - response - Report of the Special Committee on the Future School of Education

1976 Apr

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An Assessment of Doctoral Graduates' Impressions of their Experience as a Student in the School of Education

1972

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The Development of an Institute for the Diffusion of Innovations in Post-Secondary Education

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Educational Innovations: A Glossary of Recent Innovations

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Final Report of the School of Education Review Committee

1970 Feb

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Graduate Program Review

1973 Sep

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Review of all of the graduate programs by Mortimer Herbert Appley, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Program Review - response from School of Education

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Learning in the Family Environment

ca.1970

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Miscellaneous reports

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Includes reflections on School of Ed by Allen, a report on the School's administration, and documentation of discrimination against women at the University.

Miscellaneous reports

1970

Box 6: 17

Includes reflections on School of Ed by Allen, a report on the School's administration, and documentation of discrimination against women at the University.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) - Visiting Team report

1972

Box 1: 61-62

Placement Report: School of Education Doctoral Alumni 1969-1973

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Practicum at the School of Education: A Report on Three Institutional Surveys

1974 Jul

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Preliminary Analysis of a Teacher Education

ca.1970

Box 6: 18

A Proposal to Establish a Ph.D. Degree in Education

1970 May

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A Proposal to Establish a Ph.D. Degree in Education - responses

1971

Box 2: 3
Radical Change in a School of Education, September 1967 - November 1969: A Study of Leader-Dominated Change in a University Subcomponent [dissertation portion]
1973 May
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Report on the Pass/Fail Grading System
1972 Mar
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School of Education Admissions Policies & Procedures: 1971-1975
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The School of Education, January 1968-January 1973: A Report to the Trustees' Committee on Faculty and Educational Policy
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The School of Education in Perspective: A Response to the Report of the Faculty Senate's School of Education Review Committee
1971 May
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A Summary of the Development and Activities of the Ford Leadership Planning Groups
1970
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Teacher Accountability and Increasing Local Control of Schools
1969
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Graduate Programs

Admissions
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This folder is restricted.

Admissions - correspondence, lists, memorandums
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Box 2: 9-12

Topics include Allen's "wild card" admissions slots as Dean, foreign students, the special student designation, and the qualification of various experiences for graduate credit.

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Admissions - policy, procedures, quotas
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Dissertation titles and abstracts list covering 1968-1975
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Special Doctoral program - admissions
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Student file: Abbas, A.
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Concerns admission of Iraqi student who travelled to Africa to pioneer for the Baha'i faith.

Student file: Beery, B.
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This folder is restricted.

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Modular credit, modular curriculum

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Office of Special Programs: Survey of Special and Off-Campus Programs
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Includes articles focusing on Allen and various changes, successes, and risks at the School of Education. The 1975 folder has extensive coverage of the probe and financial controversy at end of Allen's tenure and his retirement.

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Includes articles focusing on Allen and various changes, successes, and risks at the School of Education.

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Box 7: 1-6

Includes articles focusing on Allen and various changes, successes, and risks at the School of Education.

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Third World Caucus report
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Report titled: Summary of "Data Collected to Help Facilitate a Factual Discussion of the School of Education" During the Convening of the Third World Caucus.

Minority Caucus, Third World Caucus

1972 May

Box 3: 1-2

Third World Caucus, Third World Alliance

1972 Jun-Oct

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Paul Chandler case, Third World Alliance

1972 Dec

Box 3: 4

Affirmative Action, correspondence

1973

Box 3: 5

Sanborn Western Camps

1968-1970

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Sanborn Western Camps, located in Colorado, were the site of an infamous School of Education 1968 retreat.

Sanborn Western Camps - correspondence

1968-1970

Box 3: 6

Sanborn Western Camps, located in Colorado, were the site of an infamous School of Education 1968 retreat.

Sanborn Western Camps, Colorado Outdoor Education Center - promotional materials

1965, 1974

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School of Education JournalSomething Else

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School Personnel Utilization Leadership Training Institute (SPU-LTI) -newsletter

1970-1971

Box 3: 8

SPU-LTI was a Bureau of Educational Personnel Development (BEPD) supported program focused on differentiated staffing.

Temple City Unified School District

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Temple City Unified School District - Differentiated Staffing Project

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Temple City Unified School District - Differentiated Staffing Project

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Undergraduate education - admissions, programs, requirements, transfer students

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United States Office of Education

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United States Office of Education - Putting Research into Educational Practice (PREP) - Microteaching brief ca.1969

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Allen Academic Advisor to the President appointment and controversy

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"Alternative Futures for Education"
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ca.1970
Box 3: 39
"A Proposal to Establish a Center for the Study of Educational Innovation at the University of Massachusetts"
ca.1970
Box 3: 40
"Reponse Repertoire"
ca.1970
Box 3: 40
"The Teaching Skill of Questioning"
ca.1967
Box 3: 40
"The \$100,000 Teacher"
ca.1970
Box 7: 28

Administrative information

Access

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Search terms

Subjects

- Alternative education--United States.
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- Racism in education--United States.
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Contributors

- Allen, Dwight William, 1931-. [main entry]
- Allen, Dwight William, 1931-.

Genres and formats

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