Nebraska Wesleyan University

History

Catalog

2025-2026
On December 15, 1886, a commission of Methodist leaders met to discuss the unification of the state's three Methodist colleges.

January 20, 1887, was the official founding date of Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, Nebraska, the state capital. Originally a university by charter, Nebraska Wesleyan developed several colleges and schools, and, for a time, awarded both undergraduate and graduate degrees. In 1940, the trustees approved the concept of the University serving as an undergraduate, coeducational liberal arts college. In 2000, the University again began to offer graduate degrees.

The first students enrolled on September 25, 1888, and the University's first building, the "Main Building," was completed the following December. The University formally opened on October 24 of that year with a first-year enrollment of 96 students.

From 2003 to 2018, the University was again divided into separate colleges - the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, housing traditional liberal arts programs; and University College, housing programs for adults and other extended programs. A site in Omaha, Nebraska, was added as part of University College.

The University consolidated the individual colleges in fall 2018 and is now one college with a Dean of Undergraduate Programs and a Dean of Graduate and Adult Programs to oversee the various academic programs at each level.

In May 2022, NWU closed the Omaha instructional site. New student admissions into the evening adult undergraduate programs were ended in spring 2023 and the current enrolled students will be taught out with the official closure of the programs by May 2025.