Humanistic Studies, Institute for; Records ua444

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Summary Information

Repository: M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
Creator: State University of New York at Albany. Institute For Humanistic Studies
Title: Institute For Humanistic Studies Records
ID: ua444
Date [inclusive]: 1977-1980
Physical Description: 3.33 cubic ft.
Physical Location: The materials are located onsite in the department.
Language of the Material: English
Abstract: Faced with major cutbacks in support for the Humanities in the mid-1970s, the Institute for Humanistic Studies was created to stimulate research and critical thinking in the Humanities on the State University of New York at Albany campus.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Institute For Humanistic Studies Records, 1977-1980. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Institute For Humanistic Studies Records).

Biographical History

The Institute for Humanistic Studies was founded in 1977 by Professors M.E. Grenander (Director, 1977-80), and Hugh Maclean (Deputy Director, 1977-?), "to serve as an organizational umbrella under which both mature and promising scholar-teachers can conduct humanistic research and scholarship at relatively advanced levels...." and also "to provide leadership for humanistic disciplines, and to serve as
a platform for cooperation with other departments and schools at SUNYA that may an interface with the humanities."[1] The Institute consisted of a group of thirty State University at Albany faculty Fellows, experienced research scholars who achieved eminence in such fields as literature, philosophy, history, sociology, political science, economics, urban affairs, criminal justice, and anthropology. They were selected each year by a nation-wide Distinguished Advisory Council of ten members, who collaborated with Grenander and Maclean, "in developing plans for establishing the Institute at SUNYA"[2].

In the adverse fiscal climate of the middle and late 1970's, the Institute was created to encourage mutually supportive humanistic research and to make it available in many forms to a broad audience. This concept was facilitated by the Institute through sponsorship of events, such as, monthly luncheons at which faculty fellows presented papers and discussed their research interests, and conferences (local and international) on such topics as the humanities and solar energy, the humanities and computers, libertarian humanism and the philosophical idea of "representation". The Institute also participated in a college lecture series, "The Idea of a University--Revisited", fall 1977, and in the planning of a lecture series of 14 dates titled, "Thanatos: Perspectives on Dying", to be held at the Empire State Plaza in the fall of 1979 and the winter of 1980. The lecture series was cancelled due to administrative difficulties, and it is unclear whether the series was ever presented. The Institute also published a newsletter, The Conjugator, three times annually from 1978-1980, and proceeding of the three conferences it sponsored.

The centerpiece of Institute activities was its sponsorship of a series of conferences in the late 1970's. The Institute's first conference "HELIOS: From Myth to Solar Energy" was held March 16-18, 1978, investigated "man's age long interest in and dependence on the sun, examined from a humanistic perspective and culminating today in his adaptation of solar energy."[3] The second conference, "APOLLO AGONISTES: The Humanities in a Computerized World," held April 19-21, 1979, attempted to demonstrate "that the computer can not only help the humanist to solve those of his problems which depend on vast, accurate memory and extraordinarily rapid calculations, it also demonstrates that whatever answers it gives the humanist, they are never final."[4] The third conference, "ASCLEPIUS AT SYRACUSE; Thomas Szasz, Libertarian Humanist," held April 17-19, 1980, brought together speakers from United States, Canada, and England to analyze Szasz's writings. The speakers used history and literature to "examine his perspective on culturally determined institutions for oppression," giving particular emphasis to Szasz's "role in the development of changing attitudes toward social and legal controls vs. civil rights.[5]

After the resignation of M.E. Granander in 1980 the Institute appeared to play a less active role, but continued to be listed in the University phone directory as a unit of College of Humanities and Fine Arts until the fall of 1985. Members of the Institute were consulted in the development of the Doctor of Arts in Humanities Program in 1982.[6] Martin Kane was listed as Director of the Institute from 1980-82. Berel Lang, the head of the Doctor of Arts Program in the Humanities was listed as the prospective leader of the institute in 1983.[7]

Scope and Contents

The records of the Institute were kept by Dr. M.E. Grenander, first director of the Institute for Humanistic Studies from its founding in 1977 until her resignation in 1980. They document the conferences and meetings held by the Institute. Specifically, these files contain administrative records related to the creation, funding, and programs of the Institute; M.E. Grenander's correspondence with conference participants regarding proposal for presentations; draft program proposals and accepted papers for each conference; published conference verbatim conference proceedings including: HELIOS: From Myth to Solar Energy, 1978; APOLLO AGONISTES: The Humanities in a Computerized World, 1979; and AESCLEPIUS AT SYRACUSE: Thomas Szasz, Libertarian Humanist, 1980; and The Conjugator, 1978-80, a periodic newsletter of the Institute. Also included in the files are copies of newspaper articles about the conferences, photographs taken at each conference, and scrapbooks of the three conferences as kept by M.E. Grenander.

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection has four series, arranged alphabetically.

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description

Converted to EAD Encoded in EAD by Gregory Wiedeman 2015 December 2015
Processing Information

Processed in 2015 by Erin Dolan and Nicole Nadeau.

Access

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Acquisition Information

These records were donated to the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives, University Libraries by M.E. Grenander, Director of the Institute for Humanistic Studies.

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Controlled Access Headings

- UAlbany Centers & Institutes
- State University of New York at Albany. Institute For Humanistic Studies
Collection Inventory

Director's Administrative Correspondence, 1975-1981

Date [inclusive]: 1975-1981

Physical Description: 0.5 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

Contains correspondence, publicity, grant requests relating to the founding, financing, and running of the Institute, and each individual conference organized by the Institute. Includes correspondence with the national Board of Overseers, and lists of Institute faculty fellows.

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Director's Conference Correspondence, 1977-1980

Date [inclusive]: 1977-1980

Physical Description: 1.5 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by conference date and alphabetically thereunder.

Scope and Contents

Contains correspondence with potential speakers, funding and annual financial reports, brochures, newspaper and journal clippings relating to three international conferences: "Helios: From Myth to Solar Energy," 16-18 March, 1978; "Apollo Agonistes: The Humanities in a Computerized World," 19-21 April, 1979; "Asclepius at Syracuse: Thomas Szasz, Libertarian Humanist," 17-19 April, 1980. Also includes correspondence and program related material for a planned local lecture series of 14 dates titled, "Thanatos: Perspectives on Death," which was to be held from the fall of 1979 through the winter of 1980. The Conference was never held.

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Institute Publications, 1977-1980

Date [inclusive]: 1977-1980

Physical Description: 0.5 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged by series publication.
### Scope and Contents


### Scrapbooks, 1978-1980

**Date [inclusive]:** 1978-1980  
**Physical Description:** 0.5 cubic ft.

**Arrangement**

Arranged by conference.

**Scope and Contents**