Aura E. Severinghaus Papers

SEVERINGHAUS, AURA E. (Aura Edward), 1894-1979. Papers, 1910-1979. 3.5 cubic feet (7 boxes; 2 oversized folders; 2 bound volumes; 1 framed item.)

Biographical Note: Aura E. Severinghaus, anatomist and medical educator, was born May 5, 1894 in Jeffersonville, Indiana, the son of Charles E. Severinghaus, a Methodist minister, and his wife, Henrietta Mock Severinghaus, a musician. He attended the University of Wisconsin before transferring to Columbia College where he received his B.S. in 1916. He remained at Columbia to earn his Ph.D. in Anatomy in 1927, studying with Edmund B. Wilson.

From 1920-26 he was assistant professor of biology at the Peking Union Medical College in China where he also served as dean of the premedical school, 1923-1925. He returned to the U.S. in 1926 and joined the faculty of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (P&S) as an instructor in the Anatomy Department. There he did important research with Philip E. Smith on the pituitary and thyroid glands and was one of five scientists chosen to represent the United States at the First International Congress on the Endocrine Glands held in Paris in 1939.

Severinghaus became assistant dean in medicine in 1942 and associate dean in 1945. About the same time he was named chairman of the Committee on Instruction and of the Committee on Admissions. He retained all these positions until his retirement in 1963. During those years Severinghaus came to know virtually every P&S student and he was instrumental in developing the College’s student activities group, the P&S Club, into an extensive student-oriented program under a full-time director. He was named emeritus associate dean upon his retirement in 1963 and received the college’s highest tribute, the Distinguished Service Award in 1974. He died April 7, 1979.

Scope and Content: The papers consist of speeches (mostly on medical education), lecture notes, correspondence, publications, class notes, yearbooks, diplomas, and photographs. Almost all of the material relates to Severinghaus’s professional life.

There is much relating to his work on a three-year national survey of pre-professional medical education sponsored by the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation. It resulted in the publication of Preparation for Medical Education in the Liberal Arts College (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953) co-authored with Harry J. Carman, the dean of Columbia College, and William E. Cadbury, Jr., of Haverford College. Many of the speeches and articles in this collection relate to this study and there is correspondence documenting its publication (Box 3:8) and reception (Box 3:10).

Another significant body of records documents Severinghaus’s time at the Peking Union Medical College. Included are correspondence, lecture notes and other educational records, printed material, and financial records (Box 2).
ACCESS: The medical records in Box 3, folder 11 include Protected Health Information (PHI) as defined by the US Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Access is allowed only under the terms of Archives and Special Collections’ Access Policy to Records Containing Protected Health Information.

SUBJECTS

Medical Education – United States – 20th century.
Columbia University. College of Physicians and Surgeons.
Peking Union Medical College.
### Box Folder

**Series I: Addresses and Speeches, 1951-1962**

**Columbia University**

1. **1** Alumni Association Banquet, n.d. [late 1950s?]
2. **2** “Our Bicentennial,” 1954
3. **3** Men’s Faculty Club Banquet, n.d.
4. **4** College of Physicians and Surgeons: Opening Exercises, Sept. 1957
5. **5** School of Nursing Commencement, 1953
6. **6** School of Nursing Commencement, 1962

**Survey of Pre-Professional Education**

8. **8** Survey at Columbia: includes “Selection of Students for the Study of Medicine in the United States,” c. 1951
10. **10** Untitled, undated speech addressed to “Dr. Bachmeyer…”
11. **11** “Pre-Professional Education in Medicine,” Conference of Higher Education, University of Michigan, November 17, 1954

**Other**

13. **13** “So You Want to be a Doctor?” Alpha Epsilon Delta, 10th National Convention, March 26, 1954
15. **15** “Integration of a Liberal Arts and Medical Education,” Atlantic City, n.d.
16. **16** “Reflections on Our Education,” Howard University, Alpha Omega Alpha Installation, May 14, 1955
17. **17** “We Do It Now,” Opening of Fundraising Campaign, Jefferson Medical College, May 1, 1952
18. **18** Jewish General Hospital (Montreal), First Commencement, Nursing School, May 19, 1954
19. **19** “Expanding Horizons in Medical Education,” Lankenau Hospital, Philadelphia, Dec. 9, 1953
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Box Folder

21 “For the Balance of Our Lives,” Medical College of Georgia, Commencement, June 4, 1955
22 Milbank Memorial Fund: Excerpt from Round Tables on Family Health Maintenance Demonstration, 1953
23 Ohio Valley General Hospital, School of Nursing, Commencement, Sept. 2, 1954
24 “The Importance of Liberal Arts in Medicine,” Conference on the Liberal Arts, University of Georgia, undated, but c.1954
26 “The Medical Student,” University of Wisconsin, Madison, n.d.
27 “Some Reflections on Communication,” Wyoming Valley Hospital, April 7, 1959

Non-Medical

30 Severinghaus reprints
31 Miscellaneous speeches

Series II: Medical Lecture Notes

2 1 “The Digestive System,” 1930
2 “Whole Urine Centrifugation,” c.1940
3 “Pregnancy Urine - Ultracentrifuge Concentration,” 1940-41
4 “Hypophysis-Thyroid Relationships” - with data, n.d.

Series III: Peking University/Peking Union Medical College

5 Peking University Bulletin, 1924-1925
6 Lecture notes, c. 1924-1925
7 Saturday Evening News, 1924-1925
8 Course materials, publications, etc., 1920, 1924-1925
9 Summer Institute for Science Teachers: correspondence, course outlines, printed material, 1924
10 Summer Institute for Science Teachers: correspondence regarding expenses, etc., 1924
Aura E. Severinghaus.

**Box Folder**

2  11-12  Accounts and bills, general, 1923-1925  
13  Correspondence, personal, 1922-1925

**Series IV: Correspondence and Subject Files**

3  1  Alpha Epsilon Delta: correspondence, lecture notes, 1949  
2  Buck Hills Conference (survey of medical education), 1950  
3  First National Conference of Premedical Education, 1950  
4-5 Association of American Medical Colleges, 61st Annual Meeting, 1950  
6  Mississippi State Medical Education Board, 1950-1951  
7  Miscellaneous lectures and articles (non-Severinghaus), 1930s-1960s  
8  *Preparation for Medical Education in the Liberal Arts College*: correspondence regarding publication, 1953-1954  
9  Correspondence regarding curriculum, 1930s  
10  Miscellaneous correspondence, 1918-1963: many letters of congratulations to Severinghaus and Harry J. Carman, Dean, Columbia College, on the publication of *Preparation for Medical Education in the Liberal Arts College* (1953)  
11  Medical records of Mrs. Severinghaus, 1940s-1950s - **RESTRICTED**  
12  Columbia University appointments, 1920s-1960s  
13  Columbia University publications  
14  Memorial and biographical material, 1954-1979

**Series V: Student Notes**

**University of Wisconsin, 1912-1916**

4  1-2  Class notes, papers, examinations, 1912-1916

Loose in box: 6 notebooks (various subjects); 2 “Varsity Handbooks” (pocket diaries), 1912/13-1913/14

**Columbia University, 1916-1927**

5  1-3  Class notes, syllabi, papers and other educational material

Loose in box: 1 volume of Severinghaus notes for histology course at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, 1929; 1 volume, miscellaneous notes (1930s?)
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Other Notes and Educational Records

Box    Folder

6    1    High School recommendations and yearbook, 1912
2    Botany notebook (with pressed leaves), 1912
3    Geometry notebook, 1910-11; record of expenses, 1912/13-1914/15
4    History and geography notebooks, c. 1912
5    1917 draft card
6    Drafts of medical papers (Severinghaus and others), 1930s

Series VI: Awards and Photographs

7    1    Awards & certificates
2    Severinghaus portraits
3    High School - group portrait
4    Columbia University commencements - group portraits
5    Lectures and other events - group portraits
7    Laboratory photos (anatomy?)
8    Scenic postcards
9    Photo story: photographs illustrating the life of a 4th year P&S student; student featured is Dwight Robinson (P&S, 1957) and faculty members include Dana Atchley, Franklin Hanger, Robert Loeb, and Severinghaus, 1956-1957
10   Photos and drawings for lecture or article (probably non-Severinghaus)
11   Glass color plates for lecture (non-Severinghaus?)
12   Certificate of Emeritus status from Columbia [in leather case]

Series VII: Oversize Material (housed in Map Case)

1    Photos of Severinghaus's colleagues, including Edmund B. Wilson and Willard Rappleye; portrait photographs of Severinghaus, and a 1969 (?) issue of the Bard College Bard Papers containing article “on the teaching of science in liberal arts colleges.”
2    Group photographs of scientific meetings
3    Diplomas and certificates

Framed “application for admission, 1962” to Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, signed by many of Severinghaus’s colleagues, probably to commemorate Severinghaus’s emeritus status.
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Housed separately:

On The Occasion of the Retirement of Dean Aura E. Severinghaus 1963 [congratulatory letters, 2 boxed volumes;]