The Presidents of Princeton University

1746 TO THE PRESENT
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INTRODUCTION

“Tradition is like a river, it must constantly be renewed, or it grows stagnant.” Frederic E. Fox ’39, one of the original coauthors of this booklet, often expressed this sentiment about his beloved alma mater’s practices. Most assuredly, he would be pleased with the reissue of this history of Princeton’s presidents, which has been revised and expanded to include the presidential tenures into the 21st century. Fox’s original intent was not to write the definitive history of each president’s term at the University’s helm, but to remember the challenges they faced and highlight their defining moments. As their service now spans four centuries, this booklet reminds us that Princeton’s virtue is the accumulation of many individual efforts.

Dan Linke
University Archivist
Jonathan Dickinson was the leader of the little group that, in his words, “first concocted the plan and foundation of the College.” After graduating from the Collegiate School of Connecticut (later known as Yale University), Dickinson studied theology and became minister of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He served this church all his life, ministering to his flock as pastor, lawyer, physician, and, in later years, instructor of young men preparing for professional careers.

In 1739, Dickinson became one of the leaders of a movement to found a “seminary of learning” for the middle colonies. He was disappointed by Harvard’s and Yale’s opposition to the “New Lights” of the church and by Yale’s harsh treatment of his young friend, David Brainerd, a student who was dismissed because he gave outspoken opposition to the faculty’s conservative religious views. He considered the only other college in the colonies, William and Mary of Virginia, too Anglican and too far away. So, with the help of three fellow pastors (Ebenezer Pemberton, Aaron Burr Sr., and John Pierson) and three laymen from New York City (William Smith, Peter Van Brugh Livingston, and William Peartree Smith), he secured a royal charter for the College of New Jersey dated October 22, 1746. The first trustees announced Dickinson’s appointment as president in April 1747.

Classes began the fourth week in May in Dickinson’s parsonage in Elizabeth, with approximately 10 students. The only decent library in town was Dickinson’s; his parlor was probably the classroom, and his dining room was probably the refectory. Dickinson died suddenly in October 1747 having served only five months as the College’s first president.
Upon Jonathan Dickinson’s death, the College moved to the Newark parsonage of his friend, Aaron Burr Sr., who was formally elected president a year later in 1748. During the period Burr was Princeton’s president, a curriculum was devised, the student body increased tenfold, and the College’s permanent Princeton home was established. Burr presided over the first Commencement exercises in his Newark Church (November 9, 1748). According to the New York Gazette, the president spoke to the graduating class in Latin, reminding them of “manifold Advantages of the liberal Arts and Sciences … rendering them useful Members of Church and State.” Five members of the class became Presbyterian ministers; the sixth, Richard Stockton, became a lawyer and signed the Declaration of Independence. Burr served for three years without salary. He filled the offices of both pastor and president until finally, at the request of the church, he was relieved of his pastoral duties to devote himself full time to the College. He drew up the first entrance requirements, the first course of study, and the first set of rules and regulations; in 1756, he led the move to Princeton, into the College’s first building, Nassau Hall, then the largest stone building in the colonies. President Burr occupied Room 1; his successors still do. Sadly, Aaron Burr Sr. had little opportunity to enjoy the fruits of his endeavors. He died at the age of 41, a year after moving into Nassau Hall. His son, Aaron Burr Jr., graduated from Princeton in 1772 and became the third vice president of the United States.
Jonathan Edwards, elected president five days after the death of his son-in-law, Aaron Burr Sr., was a popular choice. A friend of the College since its inception, he was the most eminent American philosopher-theologian of his time. Initially, Edwards refused to take on “such a new and great business in the decline of life,” explaining that he considered himself deficient in health, temperament, and some branches of learning. He was finally persuaded by a group of ministers that it was his duty to accept. He arrived in Princeton in late January 1758, where he preached in the College chapel and gave out questions in divinity to the senior class to study before coming together to discuss them—an 18th-century seminar. As author of the celebrated work *The Freedom of the Will*, he was respectfully received by the undergraduates, who spoke of the “light and instruction” he communicated. He died only two months after taking office of a fever following a smallpox inoculation and was buried in a special corner of the Princeton cemetery called “the President’s Lot.”
Samuel Davies’ association with the College of New Jersey began at age 28 when he embarked on a trip to Great Britain and Ireland to raise money to build Nassau Hall and a house for the president, as well as a charitable fund “for the education of pious and indigent youth.” In 1758, Davies was elected to succeed Jonathan Edwards, but declined, reluctant to quit his pastoral work in Virginia and believing that Samuel Finley was better qualified for the office. He was eventually persuaded to accept and he took up his duties on July 26, 1759. Davies’ election to the presidency was greeted with joy. “I believe there was never a College happier in a president,” said one trustee. “You can hardly conceive what prodigious, uncommon gifts the God of Heaven had bestowed on that man.” But the joy was short-lived. Eighteen months later, Davies died of pneumonia after being bled for “a bad cold.” During his brief tenure, Davies drew up the first catalog of the College library, then housed on the second floor of Nassau Hall — 1,281 books in all. He was an ardent promoter of the library. “A large and well-sorted collection of books is the most ornamental and useful furniture of a college,” he said. He urged students to go beyond the “narrow limits” of their assigned reading and encouraged them to read widely after graduation so they would continue to “investigate Truth; and guard against the stratagems and assaults of Error.” He believed that reading good books by authors with differing points of view would keep them modest.

*Jacob Green served as acting president from 1758 to 1759.
Samuel Finley, a Scots-Irishman who came to the United States with his parents when he was 19, attended the “Log College” in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, a school for ministers (1726–45) and a precursor of Princeton. His early career as an evangelical preacher was marked by an energetic, contentious, and sometimes acrimonious spirit that was not uncommon in the 18th-century religious revival known as “The Great Awakening.” As one of his students said, his sermons “were calculated to inform the ignorant, to alarm the careless and secure, and to edify and comfort the faithful.” During his pastorate in Nottingham, Maryland, he headed an academy renowned for its standards of scholarship. In recognition of his work, he was given an honorary degree by the University of Glasgow, making him the second American divine to receive an honorary degree abroad. His interest in higher education led him to become one of the original trustees of the College of New Jersey; when he was elected its president in 1761, he was regarded as “a very accurate scholar, and a very great and good man.” Finley’s presidency was marked by steady growth in student enrollment. During his presidency, Finley planted two sycamore trees in front of the president’s house (now called Maclean House). According to Princeton legend, they were ordered by the trustees in 1765 and planted in 1766 to commemorate repeal of the Stamp Act. They still stand today.
John Witherspoon was the only clergyman and the only college president to sign the Declaration of Independence. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, he gained a reputation in the Church of Scotland as a leader of the left-wing “Popular Party,” and his works made him well-known in the American colonies. The trustees of the College first elected him president in 1766. He declined the call to serve but eventually arrived in Princeton in August 1768 with his wife, five children, and 300 books for the College library. The students welcomed him by “illuminating” Nassau Hall with a lighted tallow dip in each window. Despite the warmth of his reception, Witherspoon soon found a number of disturbing conditions in the College. Many students were inadequately prepared; the enrollment from the southern colonies had declined; and, most worrisome of all, the College’s finances were in a sorry state. Witherspoon began a series of highly successful trips throughout the colonies to preach, recruit students, and gather funds. While traveling through Virginia, he encouraged the Madisons of Montpelier to enroll their son James, who later graduated with the Class of 1771; later, he persuaded his friend George Washington to give 50 gold guineas to the College. (Washington was a longtime advocate of the place. “No college has turned out better scholars or more estimable characters than Nassau,” he said in a letter to his adopted son, a member of the Class of 1799.) Witherspoon called the College’s pastoral setting a campus, thereby introducing that word into the American vocabulary. In addition to managing the College’s affairs and preaching twice on
Sundays, Witherspoon had a heavy teaching load. To the College’s faculty of five (three tutors and two professors), he added a professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, leaving him responsible for providing instruction in moral philosophy, divinity, rhetoric, history, and French. He introduced English grammar and composition and added to the teaching equipment of the College, especially books for the library and laboratory apparatus for science instruction. Witherspoon saw no conflict between faith and reason; he encouraged students to test their faith by experiment and experience. He applied the test of common sense to any proposition, reducing it to its simplest terms. His name is identified with certain attitudes and assumptions known as the “Common Sense Philosophy,” which was important in the development of our national character. Witherspoon was careful not to protect students from exposure to ideas that were in conflict with his own strong convictions. The many books he added to the library gave them access to a wide range of contemporary literature, including works by authors with whom he had engaged in public dispute. Witherspoon’s administration was a turning point in the life of the College. He put fresh emphasis on the need for a broadly educated clergy. He did not hesitate to teach both politics and religion, and he gave wholehearted support to the national cause of liberty and became a leading member of the Continental Congress; as a result many of his students entered government service. In addition to a president and vice president of the United States, he taught nine cabinet officers, 21 senators, 39 congressmen, three justices of the Supreme Court, and 12 state governors. Largely because of him, Princeton became known as the “seedbed” of revolution. Six months after he signed the Declaration of Independence, the College became the site of a strategic victory as Washington surprised the British in the Battle of Princeton. Six years later Washington was again in Princeton, at the invitation of Congress assembled in Nassau Hall, to accept the official thanks of the nation for the successful conclusion of the war. During that visit he also attended Commencement exercises for the Class of 1783.

* John Blair served as acting president from 1767 to 1768.
Samuel Stanhope Smith, salutatorian of the Class of 1769, was the first alumnus of the College to become its president. After graduation, Smith became a teacher and preacher in Virginia and took a leading part in the founding of the two academies that became Hampden-Sydney College and Washington and Lee University. Through sermons and writings, he helped pave the way for the “separation of church and state,” a radical doctrine then being advanced by his fellow Princetonian, James Madison, Class of 1771. Smith returned to Princeton as professor of moral philosophy and as President Witherspoon’s son-in-law. Fifteen years later, when Witherspoon died, he succeeded him. During his presidency, Smith increased his reputation as a scholar. Elected to the American Philosophical Society, he delivered “An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species,” in which he argued that all mankind belongs to the same family, and that diversity within the species should be attributed to environmental influences. He firmly believed in the compatibility of science and religion. Smith promoted the study of science and modern languages, without challenging the place of classical languages and literature, as disciplines important to training for the ministry. His early appointments to the faculty included John Maclean, the first professor of chemistry to teach on a college campus in the United States.
Ashbel Green was the second alumnus to serve as president of Princeton. Green was a prominent clergyman, serving as minister of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and chaplain to the United States Congress. As a trustee of the College, he represented the conservative “Old Side” and took a leading role in opposing the liberal drift in the faculty and curriculum. He became president in 1812 after helping engineer the removal of his predecessor. That same year, believing that Princeton was no longer serving the church as it should, he helped establish a theological seminary next door.

Green approached his presidential duties as a stern but kindly pastor. He introduced vigorous disciplinary rules and imposed a heavy religious tone on the College. From his raised dais, he took a lordly view, often saying, “I consider every member of the faculty a younger brother, and every pupil a child.” “My first address to the students,” he later wrote, “produced a considerable impression, insomuch that some of them shed tears. This greatly encouraged me; but the appearance was delusive or fugitive. Notwithstanding all the arrangements I had made, and all the pains I had taken to convince them that their own good and the best interests of the institution were my only aim, I had the mortification to find that the majority of them seemed bent on mischief.”
James Carnahan, a member of the Class of 1800, served Princeton longer than any other president. After graduation, he served as a tutor in the College, studied theology with President Samuel Smith, and then preached for six years. He left the pulpit because of a throat ailment that troubled him all his life and established a classical seminary in Georgetown in Washington, D.C. He had been there 11 years when he was elected president. Carnahan was unprepared for his new task. A courtly schoolmaster, he didn’t know what to make of the near anarchy that had resulted from the conflicting views of students, faculty, and trustees. He watched sadly as enrollment dropped from 148 to 66. He became so discouraged that he considered closing the institution; John Maclean, then a professor and soon to become vice president, saved the day by proposing a plan for strengthening the faculty with the help of alumni. Under this plan, the venerable James Madison, Class of 1771, was invited to become the first president of the alumni association. Many years later, remembering that Madison had stayed on for a year of graduate work, the Alumni Council gave his name to a medal awarded annually to an outstanding alumnus of the Graduate School. With funds raised by the alumni, Carnahan strengthened the faculty. Modern languages became permanent features of the curriculum. Student enrollment doubled, and the faculty tripled. The College prospered again.

*Philip Lindsly served as acting president from 1822 to 1823.
John Maclean Jr., the son of America’s first professor of chemistry, was born in Princeton and served the College all his life. Princeton’s only bachelor president, he gave the time and energy a father ordinarily expends on his children to the students of the College, for whom he stood, quite literally, in loco parentis. He outlawed Greek fraternities that, in his opinion, had begun to have an injurious effect on campus life. Maclean added more distinguished scholars to the faculty, including Swiss geologist Arnold Guyot. As a general policy, he sought a balanced curriculum, believing there was a fundamental body of cultural studies that every educated person should be required to pursue before preparing for a profession. Just before the Civil War began, after Nassau Hall had been gutted by fire a second time, Maclean rallied alumni and friends to contribute funds toward rebuilding it. He augmented these funds by operating the College on an austerity budget during the war years, and helped liquidate the debt that remained by giving up part of his own salary. When the Civil War began, Maclean was anguished by the sight of students leaving the campus to join the armies of the North and the South. The toll of 70 Princetonians lost in battle weighed heavily on Maclean, who knew and loved each one. In this bitter time, Princeton offered the degree of Doctor of Law to Abraham Lincoln. In accepting the degree, Lincoln wrote Maclean: “The assurance conveyed by this high compliment that the course of the government which I represent has received the approval of a body of gentlemen of such character and intelligence in this time of public trial is most grateful to me.” Although his
main concern was the College, Maclean is credited with a major role in founding New Jersey’s public school system. The state legislature adopted his plan for a state normal school, local boards of education, and a nonsectarian common school system supported by public taxation. He also took an active interest in the state’s penal system. As a member of the New Jersey Prison Association, he sometimes walked 10 miles to Trenton on Sundays to conduct services in the State Prison. When he retired, Maclean wrote a two-volume history of the College. (Typically, he assigned the royalties to a fund “for the aid of indigent and worthy students engaged in seeking a liberal education.”)

Since that history does not cover the years of his own administration, it does not mention the fact that he saw the beginning of baseball at Princeton; heard the first singing of the alma mater, “Old Nassau”; and voted to adopt orange as the official color of the College — soon to be joined with black. He never could have imagined that these colors would be carried to the moon a century later by Charles F. (“Pete”) Conrad ’53, commander of Apollo XII.
James McCosh
1868—88

James McCosh took office exactly 100 years after his fellow Scot, John Witherspoon. He came to Princeton from Queens College, Belfast, and was already well-known throughout the English-speaking world as an author, philosopher, and Free Churchman. One alumnus, who had been a freshman in 1870, compared the new president’s influence to “an electric shock, instantaneous, paralyzing to the opposition, and stimulating to all that were not paralyzed.” McCosh gathered a distinguished faculty; revised and modernized the plan of study; developed elective course options; and instituted graduate work. He founded schools of science, philosophy, and art, and he began an ambitious program of building and planting that greatly enhanced the formerly bare campus. A strong proponent of the Greek idea of “sound body, sound mind,” he included a gymnasium and a library in his building program. He was a teaching president, holding regular classes in the history of philosophy and in psychology and conducting seminars in “Prospect,” the new presidential mansion. When Darwin’s *Origin of Species* threatened to overturn age-old beliefs in God’s creation and government of the world, McCosh stood out almost alone among American clergymen in defending evolutionary doctrine, insisting that the Darwinian hypothesis, far from denying the existence of God, served “to increase the wonder and mystery of the process of creation.” Like John Witherspoon before him, McCosh took a commonsense approach to the curriculum of the College, one that was liberal yet firm. Students were encouraged to choose a wide range of electives that were to be taken side by side with obligatory
and disciplinary courses, mathematics “to solidify the reasoning powers,” and classics “to refine the taste.” McCosh enriched the extracurricular life of the campus, making the “four long years” more enjoyable. During his time, many undergraduate activities began to assume their present form. The Glee Club, the Dramatic Association (later known as the Triangle Club), and the first intercollegiate football team were formed under his benevolent gaze. And, although he disapproved mightily of secret Greek fraternities, he allowed a group of upperclassmen to form the first permanent eating club.

Throughout his life, McCosh shared credit with his wife, Isabella. “She advised and assisted me in all my work,” he said. Daughter of an eminent physician, Isabella McCosh was Princeton’s unofficial nurse, the one and only medical presence on the campus. Later, when the trustees built an infirmary, they named it for her.

In his parting words to the College, McCosh said, “I am reminded keenly that my days of active work are over. But I take the step firmly and decidedly. The shadows are lengthening, the day is declining. My age, seven years above the threescore and ten, compels it, Providence points to it, conscience enjoins it, the good of the College demands it. . . . I leave it with the prayer, that the blessing of Heaven and the good will of men may rest upon it, and with the prospect of its having greater usefulness in the future than even that which it has had in the past.”
Francis Landey Patton, a native of Bermuda, began his teaching career at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He was called to the seminary in Princeton, where his reputation as a teacher and theologian — and his popularity as an after-dinner speaker — grew rapidly. Even those who disagreed with his rigid, conservative Presbyterian views admired his intellect and wit.

His election as McCosh’s successor did not meet with unanimous enthusiasm. Many had hoped not only for a devout educator, but also for an experienced administrator who would bring efficiency to the expanding College. Faculty accounts indicate that Patton lacked initiative in important policy matters, resisted meaningful curriculum reform, and was lax in matters of discipline and scholarly standards — in short, as one colleague said kindly, he was “a wonderfully poor administrator.” But students of the 1890s were unanimous in their affection for him.

In the fall of 1896, Patton proclaimed a three-day holiday to celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the College and to confirm its new official name, Princeton University. In the process, he changed the wording of the seal from *Collegii Neo-Caesariensis* to *Universitatis Princetoniensis*, retaining the open Bible at the center and returning to the ancient motto: *Dei sub numine viget* (Under God’s power she flourishes).
Woodrow Wilson entered Princeton as a member of the Class of 1879. “Tommy,” as his classmates called him, was an eager student and an acknowledged leader. Not satisfied with the courses offered by the College, he supplemented the formal curriculum with an ambitious program of independent reading. Still feeling less than fully occupied, he became managing editor of the Daily Princetonian and organized a student club for discussion of public affairs. His classmates elected him speaker of the American Whig Society, one of two principal campus groups. Pursuing athletic interests, he became secretary of the Football Association and president of the Baseball Association.

After graduation, he went to law school at the University of Virginia and practiced in Atlanta. Disillusioned by the tedium and materialism of legal damage suits, he enrolled in Johns Hopkins for graduate work in political science and history. His doctoral dissertation, “Congressional Government,” led to teaching positions at Bryn Mawr, Wesleyan, and finally Princeton. As professor of jurisprudence, Wilson built up a strong prelaw curriculum. He was soon voted most popular teacher and became friend and counselor to countless students who were attracted by his warmth and high-mindedness. During the sesquicentennial celebration of 1896, he delivered the keynote address: “Princeton in the Nation’s Service.” When the trustees elected him president, Wilson proposed a $12.5 million program to transform Princeton into a full-scale university. At the time this was a staggering sum, almost 25 times greater than the annual budget, but the trustees approved it immediately. He began by creating
an administrative structure — departments of instruction with heads
that reported directly to him. In place of the aimless elective system,
he substituted a unified curriculum of general studies during the
freshman and sophomore years, capped by concentrated study in one
discipline (the academic “major”) during the junior and senior years.
He also added an honors program for able and ambitious students.
Wilson tightened academic standards so severely that enrollment
decayed sharply until 1907. Supported by the first all-out alumni
fundraising campaign in Princeton’s history, he doubled the faculty
overnight through the appointment of almost 50 young assistant
professors, called “preceptors,” charged with guiding students through
assigned reading and small group discussion. With a remarkable eye
for quality, he assembled a youthful faculty with unusual talent and
zest for teaching. In strengthening the science program, Wilson
called for basic, unfettered, “pure” research. In the field of religion,
he made biblical instruction a scholarly subject. He broke the hold of
conservative Presbyterians over the board of trustees, and appointed
the first Jew and the first Roman Catholic to the faculty. Before
the end of his term, he authorized fellow members of the Class of
1879 to cast two heroic bronze tigers for the front steps of Nassau
Hall. (Tigers appeared as mascots during McCosh’s tenure.) After
modernizing the administration, the curriculum, and teaching
methods, Wilson proposed the creation of quadrangles, or “colleges,”
in which undergraduates of all four classes would live with their own
recreational facilities and resident faculty masters. Membership would
be by assignment or lot. Twenty-five years after his death, the
trustees named the School of Public and International Affairs for him.
Sixty years after the defeat of his “quad plan,” they carved out an area
of the campus — six dormitories and a dining and social center — as a
distinct residential complex known as Woodrow Wilson College. The
trustees also created the Woodrow Wilson Award — the highest honor
the University bestows upon an alumnus in recognition of his or her
distinguished public service.
John G. Hibben
1912—32*

John Grier Hibben, from Peoria, Illinois, was valedictorian and president of the Class of 1882. He continued his studies in Berlin and at the Princeton Theological Seminary and, after four years as a parish minister, returned to the University as a graduate student in philosophy. Later, he became professor of logic and also taught psychology and the Bible. The search for a successor to Woodrow Wilson was a long and painful one. Hibben’s election came at the hands of trustees who had most resisted Wilson’s reforms. “My administration must make for peace,” he said. “I represent no group or set of men, no party, no faction, no past allegiance or affiliation—but one united Princeton!” Hibben practiced what he preached. One of his first acts was to befriend faculty members who belonged to the Wilson faction. Soon after taking office, he presided over the opening of the new Graduate College, the peaceful compound for scholars set on a hill beyond the golf course. At the dedication ceremony, he made special reference to the high-soaring Gothic tower built by popular subscription as the nation’s memorial to Grover Cleveland—who, after leaving the White House, retired to Princeton and became a trustee of the University.

*John Aikman Stewart served as acting president from 1910 to 1912.
Harold Willis Dodds, son of a professor of Bible studies at Grove City College in Pennsylvania, grew up in the company of teachers and students. After receiving his bachelor’s degree at Grove City and teaching public school for two years, he did graduate work in politics at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania. During World War I he served in the U.S. Food Administration, afterwards becoming secretary of the National Municipal League. An expert in the problems of local government, with experience as a troubleshooter in Latin America, Dodds joined the Princeton faculty in 1925 as a professor of politics and was later appointed the first chair of the School of Public and International Affairs (now the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs). He had been a leader in the establishment of the school, a cooperative enterprise of the history, politics, economics, and, later, sociology departments. Dodds became president during the depths of the Great Depression and served through the Second World War and the Korean conflict. During the war years, Princeton adopted an accelerated program to give students an opportunity to graduate before entering the armed forces. At the same time, the Army and the Navy sent hundreds of young men to campus for general or specialized training. The number fluctuated widely from month to month. A faculty depleted by enlistments or calls to government service had to teach unfamiliar subjects at top speed. When peace came, the University absorbed the flood of students returning under the G.I. Bill. The 200th anniversary of the founding of Princeton was celebrated over a two-year period (1946–47) with an almost continuous
series of scholarly conferences and three major convocations. More than a thousand scholars and leaders from all over the world attended, including three presidents of the United States (present, past, and future): Truman, Hoover, and Eisenhower. As a continuing memorial of the anniversary, bicentennial preceptorships were established to enable promising young members of the faculty to spend a year in uninterrupted research. Despite wars and the Depression, Dodds doubled the size of the faculty, adding 30 endowed professorships. This permitted an increase in the size of the student body (graduate and undergraduate) by more than a thousand while maintaining the University’s distinctively high ratio of faculty to students. Music and the creative arts were introduced into the curriculum as well. The Office of Population Research was established, too. Three new departments were added: religion, aeronautical engineering, and Near Eastern studies. A new intellectual center for the University, Firestone Library, was opened in 1948 as a “laboratory for the humanities and social sciences.” In Princeton’s open stack tradition, it brought books and readers together with particular grace and efficiency. Not forgetting the constraints and uncertainties of the Depression years, Dodds felt the need for an additional, ongoing source of funds. Beginning in 1940, with his encouragement, Princeton alumni began to go out to their classmates each year seeking “unrestricted” funds for the University. Their first appeal netted $80,000 in cash. Their 16th appeal — the year Dodds retired — netted 16 times as much. Since then, annual giving has steadily increased.

*Edward Dickinson Duffield served as acting president from 1932 to 1933.*
Robert Francis Goheen came to Princeton from India, where his father was a medical missionary. He graduated with the Class of 1940, Phi Beta Kappa, with highest honors in the humanities. Scholar, athlete, and campus leader, he was co-winner of the Pyne Prize, the highest general distinction conferred on an undergraduate. After completing a year of graduate study in the Department of Classics, Goheen entered the army. He served in the Pacific with the First Cavalry Division, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel. When the war was over, Goheen returned to Princeton to continue his studies in classics. After additional work at the American Academy in Rome, he became a member of the Princeton faculty and, at the same time, director of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Program, a nationwide effort to encourage young men and women to pursue careers in higher education.

In 1956, while an assistant professor of classics, he was elected to the presidency by unanimous vote of the trustees. When he assumed office at the age of 37, he was the third-youngest president in the history of the University (after Aaron Burr Sr. and Samuel Davies). Although he repeatedly disclaimed any ambition to be known as a “building president,” Goheen saw more additions to the physical plant during his administration than any of his predecessors. During his first years in office, backed by a spirited campaign for capital funds, all the pent-up energies of Princeton — long constrained by the Depression and war — were released in a massive program of expansion. All told, Goheen nearly doubled the square footage under the campus’s roof.
additions were the Princeton University Art Museum, the Woolworth Center of Musical Studies, the School of Architecture, Robertson Hall, the Engineering Quadrangle, the Jadwin Gymnasium, the Computing Center, and the complex of Fine, Jadwin, and Peyton halls constructed for the mathematical, physical, and astrophysical sciences. With these came a parallel growth in student housing. Physical expansion was accompanied by a proportionate increase in the financial resources of the University. The annual budget quadrupled, from approximately $20 million to $80 million. More than 20 endowed chairs were added. The faculty grew from just under 500 to more than 700. There were more than two and a half times as many applicants for admission to the University in Goheen’s last year than there were during his first. Undergraduate enrollment increased by a third, from nearly 3,000 to almost 4,000; the number of graduate students more than doubled. The undergraduate program of study responded to what the president described as “an exploding, booming, shifting world of knowledge and ideas.” Provision was made for sophomore concentration, a reading period at the end of each term, a University Scholar Program that offered exceptional flexibility to carefully selected undergraduates, and student-initiated seminars. In the area of student life, a number of social facilities were established to complement existing options. One of the new facilities combined two former club buildings into one University-managed hall named for Adlai Stevenson of the Class of 1922. (It became the home of the first kosher kitchen on the campus.) Two major residential colleges, Princeton Inn and Woodrow Wilson, offered dormitory, dining, and social facilities for 400 to 500 students each. Among the most momentous changes to be made during Goheen’s tenure was Princeton’s transition to coeducation. During the 1960s, the University began to actively encourage minority students to attend. Princeton’s long-range commitment to ethnic and racial diversity was symbolized in the creation of the Third World Center, dedicated by Goheen in 1971. It is now called the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding.
William Gordon Bowen came to Princeton’s Graduate School from Denison University, where he was Phi Beta Kappa, cochairman of the student government, and Ohio Conference tennis champion. After taking his Ph.D., he joined the faculty as a member of the Department of Economics. In addition to teaching several courses, he continued his research. He prepared a definitive report on the effects of Princeton’s involvement with the government, “The Federal Government and Princeton University.” Following a research trip to England, he published *Economic Aspects of Education*, an analysis of university financing in the United States and Great Britain. With Professor William J. Baumol, he began a study of the economic foundations of American theater, opera, orchestra, and dance. Their book, *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma*, is a landmark study of the economics of culture. Finally, while on leave of absence before taking over the recently established office of provost, he joined T. A. Finegan of Vanderbilt University in writing *The Economics of Labor Force Participation*. As provost, Bowen was general deputy to Goheen. During his five-year term he played a leading role in planning and overseeing the move to coeducation, efforts to reach out to minority students, and the defense of open inquiry and free speech. Under his guidance and as part of the Council of the Princeton University Community (CPUC), a broadly representative Priorities Committee was formed to study the manifold needs and capabilities of the University in an age of financial restraint. The budget was brought back into balance, thanks in part to increased financial support from
Princeton’s approach became a model for other educational institutions in the private sector. The American Council on Education circulated Bowen’s reports throughout the nation. He was widely respected for his commitment to quality as well as economy, and for his strong devotion to the special characteristics of Princeton. He was a natural successor to Goheen. During Bowen’s 15 years as president, he was noted for his seemingly endless energy and capacity for work. One hallmark of his administration was his attention to detail—Bowen was directly involved in every major decision made during his tenure and stayed abreast of all issues confronting the University. He took particular satisfaction from the many excellent faculty members who came to Princeton during his presidency and the University’s increasing diversity. Bowen presided over many changes on campus. The residential college system was created during his tenure. Under this system, freshmen and sophomores lived together in one of five residential colleges.* During the Bowen years, five new buildings went up, a dozen others were expanded, and numerous facilities, including dormitories, were renovated. He was also a superb money manager and fundraiser. Princeton’s endowment grew from $625 million in 1972 to more than $2 billion at the time of Bowen’s departure. During his tenure, a major fundraising drive known as “A Campaign for Princeton” met its original goal of $275 million halfway through its five-year schedule and easily passed its revised goal of $330 million. By the time the campaign ended in July 1986, $410.5 million had been raised. After leaving Princeton, Bowen became president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

*A sixth, Whitman College, opened in 2007, and expanded the residential college system to include upperclassmen and a number of graduate students.
Harold Tafler Shapiro, an alumnus of Princeton’s Graduate School, came to Princeton from the University of Michigan, where he had been president for eight years. A native of Montreal, with dual American and Canadian citizenship, Shapiro received his bachelor’s degree from McGill University in 1956. As a student of McGill’s Faculty of Commerce, he won its highest academic honor, the Lieutenant Governor’s Medal. He spent five years in business before enrolling in Princeton’s Graduate School in 1961. He received a doctorate in economics from Princeton in 1964. Shapiro then joined the faculty of the University of Michigan. He was named vice president for academic affairs in 1977 and elected president in 1980. Shapiro returned to Princeton as its president in 1988. Under his leadership, Princeton celebrated its 250th anniversary, expanded its motto (at his initiative) from “Princeton in the Nation’s Service” to “Princeton in the Nation’s Service and in the Service of All Nations,” and completed the most successful fundraising campaign in its history, raising $1.14 billion. During his tenure, the University’s endowment quadrupled from approximately $2 billion to more than $8 billion. Shapiro oversaw successful efforts to increase both the overall quality and the diversity of Princeton’s undergraduate and graduate student bodies, including substantial improvements in the University’s undergraduate student aid programs to more effectively meet the needs of both lower- and middle-income families. During Shapiro’s presidency, the percentage of international students in the undergraduate student body nearly doubled (to 10 percent), and
there also were significant increases in graduate fellowship support. Shapiro implemented several undergraduate teaching initiatives, including creating a special fund to support innovation, developing a program to bring exceptional teachers to Princeton as visiting faculty, providing awards for teaching excellence that are presented each year at Commencement, and establishing a Center for Teaching and Learning. He oversaw a significant expansion of Princeton’s freshman seminar program and of opportunities for students to study abroad. Shapiro presided over a period of steady growth in the size and distinction of the faculty, and the development of new academic programs such as an Institute in Integrative Genomics; an interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Religion; the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts (anchored by the Cotsen Fellows in the Humanities); the University Center for Human Values; new master’s programs in finance, engineering, and public policy; and new initiatives in alumni education. Shapiro initiated the most substantial program of building renovation (especially dormitory renovation) in Princeton’s history, while overseeing the construction of important new buildings such as the Frist Campus Center and planning for a sixth residential college to accommodate a 10 percent increase in the size of the undergraduate student body. As a national leader, Shapiro served two U.S. presidents: George H.W. Bush (as a member and vice chair of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology) and Bill Clinton (as chair of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission). While he was president, Shapiro continued to teach courses in the history of American higher education and in bioethics. After retiring from the presidency, he returned to full-time teaching and research in the Department of Economics and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.
Shirley M. Tilghman was elected Princeton University’s 19th president on May 5, 2001, and assumed office on June 15, 2001. An exceptional teacher and a world-renowned scholar and leader in the field of molecular biology, she served on the Princeton faculty for 15 years before being named president. She stepped down as president at the end of the 2012–13 academic year and returned to the faculty. During her time as Princeton’s leader, Tilghman oversaw significant developments, including: expanding the undergraduate student body and launching the four-year residential college system; greatly increasing the number of students on financial aid and more than doubling the average aid they receive; creating a master plan for the future development of the campus, including a major project for the arts; creating new academic facilities for neuroscience and psychology and establishing centers for African American studies and energy and the environment; and expanding international opportunities for students, as well as partnerships with research institutions around the world. Her tenure also included the successful completion of the five-year Aspire campaign, which raised a record $1.88 billion for the University. Tilghman, a native of Canada, received her Honors B.Sc. in chemistry from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, in 1968. After two years of secondary school teaching in Sierra Leone, West Africa, she obtained her Ph.D. in biochemistry from Temple University in Philadelphia. During postdoctoral studies at the National Institutes of Health, she made a number of groundbreaking discoveries while participating in cloning the first mammalian gene,
and then continued to make scientific breakthroughs as an independent investigator at the Institute for Cancer Research in Philadelphia and an adjunct associate professor of human genetics and biochemistry and biophysics at the University of Pennsylvania. Tilghman came to Princeton in 1986 as the Howard A. Prior Professor of the Life Sciences. Two years later, she also joined the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as an investigator. In 1998, she took on additional responsibilities as the founding director of Princeton’s multidisciplinary Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics. A member of the National Research Council’s committee that set the blueprint for the U.S. effort in the Human Genome Project, Tilghman also was one of the founding members of the National Advisory Council of the Human Genome Project for the National Institutes of Health. She is renowned not only for her pioneering research, but for her national leadership on behalf of women in science and for promoting efforts to make the early careers of young scientists as meaningful and productive as possible. From 1993 to 2000, Tilghman chaired Princeton’s Council on Science and Technology, which encourages the teaching of science and technology to students outside the sciences, and in 1996 she received Princeton’s President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching. She initiated the Princeton Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship, a program across all science and engineering disciplines that brings postdoctoral students to Princeton each year to gain experience in both research and teaching. In 2002, Tilghman was one of five winners of the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science. In the following year, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Developmental Biology, and in 2007, she was awarded the Genetics Society of America Medal for outstanding contributions to her field. Tilghman is a member of the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine and the Royal Society of London. She serves as a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America, and the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, and as a director of Google Inc.
Christopher Ludwig Eisgruber was elected Princeton University’s 20th president on April 21, 2013, and assumed office on July 1, 2013. A renowned constitutional scholar, he served as a member of the Princeton faculty for 12 years and as Princeton’s provost for nine years before being named president. Eisgruber, who grew up in Indiana and Oregon, received his A.B. in physics from Princeton in 1983, graduating magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. He then earned an M.Litt in politics at the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and a J.D. cum laude at the University of Chicago Law School, where he served as editor-in-chief of the law review. After clerking for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Patrick Higginbotham and U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, he taught at New York University’s School of Law for 11 years. In 2001, Eisgruber joined the Princeton faculty as the director of the Program in Law and Public Affairs and the Laurance S. Rockefeller Professor of Public Affairs in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and the University Center for Human Values. He directed Princeton’s Program in Law and Public Affairs from 2001 to 2004, and he served for a year as acting director of the Program in Ethics and Public Affairs in 2002–03. In addition to writing and editing several books and publishing numerous articles on constitutional issues, Eisgruber has testified multiple times before legislative bodies on the issue of religious freedom. His books include Constitutional Self-Government (2001); Global Justice and the Bulwarks of Localism: Human Rights in Context (edited with Andras Sajo, 2005); Religious Freedom and
the Constitution (with Lawrence Sager, 2007); and The Next Justice: Repairing the Supreme Court Appointments Process (2007).

Eisgruber was named Princeton’s 11th provost in 2004 and in that capacity was the University’s second-ranking official and its chief academic and budgetary officer. As provost, Eisgruber was the general deputy to the president and chaired the Academic Planning Group (which oversees long-range academic planning), the Priorities Committee (which makes recommendations regarding the University’s operating budget), and the executive committee of the Council of the Princeton University Community. During his tenure, he played a central role in many key University initiatives, including broadening Princeton’s international initiatives for students and faculty; increasing the diversity of the campus; guiding Princeton’s entry into the online learning movement; and leading the University’s efforts to cut costs during the recession in 2008 and 2009. He is also a gifted teacher; among the courses he taught as provost was a freshman seminar titled “The Supreme Court and Constitutional Democracy.” Before his appointment as provost, he served as a faculty representative on the Alumni Council Executive Committee and taught in the Alumni Studies program, and as provost he met frequently with alumni groups on campus and around the world.