

David F. Pearson Papers

Collection Summary

Identifier:	UA 3.1
Title:	David F. Pearson Papers
Dates:	1953-1982
Extent:	4.21 linear feet (4 record boxes, 1 document case, legal/half)
Creator:	Pearson, David F., -1990
Language:	English

Repository: South Dakota State University Archives & Special Collections, University Station, Box 2115, 1300 North Campus Drive, Brookings, South Dakota, 57007

Access Note: Open. Materials must be used in-house and do not circulate.

Preferred Citation: Title or description of item, date, UA 3.1, box number, folder number, David F. Pearson Papers, South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Brookings, South Dakota.

Abstract

The David F. Pearson Papers document his career and administrative contributions to South Dakota State University from 1957 to 1980, as well as his broader involvement in higher education policy and institutional development in South Dakota. Pearson served as Assistant Professor of Economics, Special Assistant to the President, and later Vice President for Administration, playing a key role in university planning and governance. The collection consists primarily of correspondence (1976–1982) and subject files related to major initiatives and issues during his tenure. Notably, it includes extensive materials on the “Engineering Controversy,” which addressed the organization and funding of engineering education in South Dakota, as well as records documenting SDSU’s participation in the United States Bicentennial celebration (1973–1977). These materials provide insight into university

administration, statewide higher education planning, and institutional engagement during a period of significant growth and change.

Biography

David F. Pearson received his law degree from the University of South Dakota and joined South Dakota State University in 1957 as an Assistant Professor of Economics. In 1959, President Briggs appointed him Special Assistant to the President, a role he held concurrently with his faculty appointment. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1961 and to Professor in 1965. Throughout this period, Pearson assumed significant administrative responsibilities that were later formalized when he was named Vice President for Administration in 1973, a newly created position. In July 1973, he resigned his role as Special Assistant to the President but continued as Vice President while retaining his professorship. In addition to his administrative duties, Pearson directed the Greater State Fund, which later developed into the South Dakota State University Foundation. He served in these capacities until his retirement in August 1980, at which time he was granted emeritus status. Pearson died on July 10, 1990.

Scope and Content

This collection documents the professional and administrative activities of David Pearson at South Dakota State University from the late 1960s through the early 1980s. The bulk of the materials consists of chronological correspondence files dating from 1976 to 1982, reflecting Pearson's role in university administration and his involvement in institutional planning, policy discussions, and external relations.

A significant portion of the collection relates to the "Engineering Controversy," a major issue in South Dakota higher education concerning the organization, funding, and location of engineering programs within the state. These materials include correspondence, reports, cost analyses, enrollment data, legislative documents, and records associated with the development of a statewide academic master plan. Also included are meeting records, departmental actions, news clippings, and Pearson's notes, which document the political, educational, and economic dimensions of the controversy from the 1960s through the mid-1970s.

The collection also contains records related to South Dakota State University's participation in the United States Bicentennial celebration (1973–1977). These materials include

correspondence, committee records, proposals, financial documents, outreach planning, and publicity materials, illustrating the planning and coordination of commemorative events and institutional involvement at the state and national levels.

Additional materials include oversize correspondence and subject files. Together, the collection provides insight into university governance, statewide higher education planning, and institutional initiatives during a period of administrative growth and public engagement.

Access Points

Subjects

- Anniversaries—United States
- College administrators
- Engineering—Study and teaching (Higher)
- United States—History—Bicentennial, 1976
- Universities and colleges--Administration

Names

- Pearson, David F., -1990

Places

- South Dakota

Genre

- Records and correspondence
-

Conditions Governing Access

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Please contact us in advance so we can prepare for your visit.

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Container List

Box	Folder	Description	Dates
1	1	Correspondence	1976 November
1	2	Correspondence	1976 December
1	3	Correspondence	1977 January
1	4	Correspondence	1977 February
1	5	Correspondence	1977 March
1	6	Correspondence	1977 April
1	7	Correspondence	1977 May
1	8	Correspondence	1977 June
1	9	Correspondence	1977 July
1	10	Correspondence	1977 August
1	11	Correspondence	1977 September
1	12	Correspondence	1977 October
1	13	Correspondence	1977 November
1	14	Correspondence	1977 December
1	15	Correspondence	1978 January
1	16	Correspondence	1978 February
1	17	Correspondence	1978 March
1	18	Correspondence	1978 April
1	19	Correspondence	1978 May
1	20	Correspondence	1978 June
1	21	Correspondence	1978 July
1	22	Correspondence	1978 August
1	23	Correspondence	1978 September
1	24	Correspondence	1978 October
1	25	Correspondence	1978 November
1	26	Correspondence	1978 December
1	27	Correspondence	1979 January
1	28	Correspondence	1979 February
1	29	Correspondence	1979 March 1-15
1	30	Correspondence	1979 March 16-31
1	31	Correspondence	1979 April 1-13
1	32	Correspondence	1979 April 16-30
1	33	Correspondence	1979 May 1-10
2	1	Correspondence	1979 May 11-31
2	2	Correspondence	1979 June
2	3	Correspondence	1979 July 1-17
2	4	Correspondence	1979 July 18-30
2	5	Correspondence	1979 August 1-20
2	6	Correspondence	1979 August 21-31
2	7	Correspondence	1979 September 1-17
2	8	Correspondence	1979 September 18-30
2	9	Correspondence	1979 October 1-9
2	10	Correspondence	1979 October 10-22
2	11	Correspondence	1979 October 23-31

Box	Folder	Description	Dates
2	12	Correspondence	1979 November 1-14
2	13	Correspondence	1979 November 15-30
2	14	Correspondence	1979 December 1-12
2	15	Correspondence	1979 December 13-31
2	16	Correspondence	1980 January 2-14
2	17	Correspondence	1980 January 15-31
2	18	Correspondence	1980 February 1-14
2	19	Correspondence	1980 February 15-28
2	20	Correspondence	1980 March 1-18
2	21	Correspondence	1980 March 11-31
2	22	Correspondence	1980 April 1-14
2	23	Correspondence	1980 April 15-30
2	24	Correspondence	1980 May
2	25	Correspondence	1980 June 1-9
2	26	Correspondence	1980 June 10-30
3	1	Correspondence	1980 July
3	2	Correspondence	1980 August
3	3	Correspondence	1980 September
3	4	Correspondence	1980 October
3	5	Correspondence	1980 November
3	6	Correspondence	1980 December
3	7	Correspondence	1981 January
3	8	Correspondence	1981 February
3	9	Correspondence	1981 March
3	10	Correspondence	1981 April
3	11	Correspondence	1981 May
3	12	Correspondence	1981 June
3	13	Correspondence	1981 July
3	14	Correspondence	1981 August
3	15	Correspondence	1981 September
3	16	Correspondence	1981 October
3	17	Correspondence	1981 November
3	18	Correspondence	1981 December
3	19	Correspondence	1982 January
3	20	Engineering Controversy: Articles	1971-1972
3	21	Engineering Controversy: Academic programs and roles for each institution	1970 November 5
3	22	Engineering Controversy: Alumni publications	1971
3	23	Engineering Controversy: Correspondence	1969
3	24	Engineering Controversy: Correspondence	1970
3	25	Engineering Controversy: Correspondence	1971
3	26	Engineering Controversy: Correspondence	1972
3	27	Engineering Controversy: Cost analyses	1968-1972
3	28	Engineering Controversy: Departmental action	1971
3	29	Engineering Controversy: Enrollment	1960-1972
3	30	Engineering Controversy: Graduates	1961-1966
3	31	Engineering Controversy: Legislative activity	1971-1976
3	32	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Board of Regents special meeting	1971 March 5

Box	Folder	Description	Dates
3	33	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-College of Engineering House journal	1971 February 15 - March 19
3	34	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-College of Engineering Senate journal	1971 March 11-19
3	35	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Costs/enrollment	1969-1971
3	36	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Editorials & credibility/historical	1969-1971
3	37	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Effects on other areas/EROS/Agriculture	1970-1971
3	38	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-General information	1969-1970
3	39	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Industrial Development/previous studies	1953-1969
3	40	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Legal	1886-1891, undated
3	41	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Miscellaneous	1966-1978
3	42	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	1969
3	43	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	1970
3	44	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	1971 January-February
3	45	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	1971 March-December
3	46	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	1972
3	47	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	1973
3	48	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-News clippings	undated
4	1	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Pearson's notes	1971
4	2	Engineering Controversy: Master Plan-Pugsley compilation of the land grant colleges	undated
4	3	Engineering Controversy: Meeting the post-secondary education needs of SD	1974
4	4	Engineering Controversy: Prospectus in bioengineering	1964-1968
4	5	Engineering Controversy: Report on Committee D of the Academic Master Plan for the State of South Dakota	1970
4	6	Engineering Controversy: Research	1970
4	7	Engineering Controversy: Scholarships and financial aid	1970-1972
4	8	Engineering Controversy: SDSU Engineering Alumnus look at his college and finds . . .	undated
4	9	Engineering Controversy: Student Association handouts	undated
4	10	Engineering Controversy: TV news script	1971
4	11	Engineering Controversy: USD-Springfield curriculum	1971
4	12	Bicentennial Celebration: Budget proposal	1973-1974
4	13	Bicentennial Celebration: Calendar outreach speakers-tips	1975-1977
4	14	Bicentennial Celebration: Commemoration book	1976
4	15	Bicentennial Celebration: Committee meeting	1973-1974
4	16	Bicentennial Celebration: Committee meeting	1974-1975
4	17	Bicentennial Celebration: Committee meeting minutes	1973-1976
4	18	Bicentennial Celebration: Copies of Bicentennial proposal lists	1974
4	19	Bicentennial Celebration: Correspondence	1974-1976
4	20	Bicentennial Celebration: Correspondence	1975
4	21	Bicentennial Celebration: Daniel Boorstin	1974-1975

Box	Folder	Description	Dates
4	22	Bicentennial Celebration: Finances, including grant proposals	1973-1975
4	23	Bicentennial Celebration: Financial	1975-1976
4	24	Bicentennial Celebration: General correspondence	1974
4	25	Bicentennial Celebration: Logo and ideas for use and slogans	1973-1974
4	26	Bicentennial Celebration: Outreach proposal grant application	1976-1977
4	27	Bicentennial Celebration: Projects	1974-1976
4	28	Bicentennial Celebration: Projects for which funding not been requested	1973-1974
4	29	Bicentennial Celebration: Projects requiring funding	1973-1974
4	30	Bicentennial Celebration: Proposal	1973
4	31	Bicentennial Celebration: Proposal	1973-1974
4	32	Bicentennial Celebration: Proposal	1973-1975
4	33	Bicentennial Celebration: Proposal	undated
4	34	Bicentennial Celebration: Sculpture contest	1974
4	35	Bicentennial Celebration: SDSU College of Nursing	undated
4	36	Bicentennial Celebration: State Bicentennial Commission-correspondence	1973-1975
4	37	Bicentennial Celebration: Suggested events	1976
4	38	Bicentennial Celebration: Tips, Fife, and Drummer, news releases	1976
5	1	Correspondence [oversize]	1979 April
5	2	Correspondence [oversize]	1979 June
5	3	Correspondence [oversize]	1979 September
5	4	Correspondence [oversize]	1979 November
5	5	Correspondence [oversize]	1979 December
5	6	Correspondence [oversize]	1980 January
5	7	Correspondence [oversize]	1980 February
5	8	Correspondence [oversize]	1980 March
5	9	Correspondence [oversize]	1980 April
5	10	Correspondence [oversize]	1981 January
5	11	Correspondence [oversize]	1981 April
6	12	Engineering Controversy: Legislative activity [oversize]	undated
6	13	Bicentennial Celebration: Correspondence [oversize]	1975
6	14	Bicentennial Celebration: Tips, Fife, and Drummer, news releases [oversize]	1975