Diversity at the University of Michigan

1853 - Samuel Codes Watson, medical student, is the first known African American student admitted to the university.  
1858 - The first women, Sarah Burger, Harriet Ada, and Augusta Chapin, request admission to UM and are denied.  
1866 - Alice Boise Wood is the first woman to attend classes as an unregistered student at UM.  
1870 - Madelon Louisa Stockwell, lit. 1872, is the first woman admitted to the university. She was also the first graduate to marry a classmate in 1872.  
1871 - James Burrell Angell inaugurated as third president of the university and for the next 38 years he and his wife, Sara Caswell Angell, served as staunch supporters for co-education.  
1871 - Amanda Sanford becomes first alumna of UM by graduating from the medical school. Sarah Killgore of Crawfordsville, Indiana graduated with a law degree later on the same day.  
1872 - First Asian student (Japanese) admitted to UM - Saiske Tagai, literature.  
1876 - Mary Henrietta Graham, lit. 1880, is the first known African American woman admitted to the university.  
1877 - First Puerto Rican student enrolls at UM in the Department of Medicine and Surgery ‘80, José Celso Barbosa.  
1878 - First African American to receive MD (Homeopathy), Grace Roberts.  
1879 - First sorority, Eta chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta, established at Michigan.  
1882 - First African American to play baseball at UM, Moses "Fleetwood" Walker.  
1882 - First woman to study engineering was Mary Hegeler who graduated in 1882 with a Bachelor of Science degree.  
1885 - June Rose Colby is the first woman to receive a Ph.D. upon examination.  
1890 - George Jewett becomes the first African American to play football at UM.  
1890 - Women's League established for women students, alumnae, and faculty. The Michigan League building is dedicated in 1929.  
1890 - Ida Gray becomes the first African American woman to graduate in dentistry.  
1892 - First Chinese students admitted to UM, Mary Stone and Ida Wood
1895 - Marian Sarah Parker becomes the first woman to graduate with a B.S. in Civil Engineering.

1896 - Eliza Mosher appointed first dean of women, and becomes first woman faculty member.

1897 - First woman instructor in the sciences, Fanny Elizabeth Langdon.

1902 - Barbour Gymnasium, a facility specifically for women, is completed.

1902 - Association for Mutual Aid of Colored Students is established.

1905 - Women's Athletic Association is formed.

1908 - A women's athletic field (Palmer Field) is purchased and equipped.

1909 - First Jewish sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi, is established.

1909 - Alpha Phi Alpha established on April 10 and is the earliest known UM African American fraternity.

1911 - First Jewish faculty member, Louis A. Strauss.

1915 - University's first two all women's residence halls, Martha Cook and Helen Newberry, open.

1917 - A central corresponding committee of alumnae, which in 1920 changes its name to the Alumnae Council of the Alumni Association, is established. Claire Sanders is the first dean.

1917 - Regent Levi Lewis Barbour establishes the Barbour Scholarships for Oriental women.

1921 - Delta Sigma Theta is founded on April 7, becoming the earliest known UM African American sorority.

1926 - Negro-Caucasian Club founded.

1928 - Women's Athletic building completed.

1929 - The Michigan League is opened as a meeting place for women students, faculty, and staff.

1929 - First woman Regent, Esther Marsh Cram.

1929 - First alumnae secretary, Mary Barton Henderson, and the first alumnae scholarship (1930).

1936 - International Center established with J. Raleigh Nelson as director.

1947 - Center for Japanese Studies formed.

1956 - Women permitted to enter the front door of the Michigan Union.

1962 - The practice of "In Loco Parentis" as it regards overseeing female students is abolished in the spring.

1963 - Coeducational dormitories are approved beginning with the fall term, and a single director of residence halls is appointed to administer both men's and women's housing.

1964 - The Opportunity Award Program begins in the fall.

1964 - Center for Continuing Education of Women founded. (now called the Center for the Education of Women)

1965 - Regents approve a merger of the Michigan League and Michigan Union, thus establishing a University Activities Center (UAC). Both buildings become open to all students.

1968 - First male undergraduate nursing students graduate. The first male completed the nursing graduate program in 1964.

1968 - Requirements for mandatory residence hall hours for women are eliminated by the Regents.

1968 - On April 9, minority students under the Black Student Union take possession of the LS&A building demanding increases in minority
enrollment and support services for minority students.  

1968 - Barbara Newell is appointed the acting vice president of Student Affairs. She is the first woman to serve as an executive officer.

1970 - In March, the Black Action Movement (BAM) boycotts classes for two weeks.

1970 - Michigan celebrates the centennial of women at the University.

1970 - IM building first opens to women.

1970 - Center for Afro-American and Africa Studies begins.

1971 - Commission for Women established.

1971 - William Monroe Trotter House opens.

1972 - Women are allowed to join the marching band.

1972 - Henry Johnson as VP for Student Services becomes first African American administrator.

1972 - Federal grant enables UM to renovate for wheelchair accessibility.

1973 - Intercollegiate varsity athletic program for Michigan women established with the introduction of six varsity sports.

1973 - The executive committee of the Literary college approves the proposal for a women's studies program and the next fall five courses are offered.

1974 - First UM female cheerleaders.

1975 - All athletic facilities opened to both men and women.

1981 - Women's athletic programs officially admitted into the Big Ten Conference.

1993 - The Board of Regents outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation.

ADDITIONAL SITES OF INTEREST:

History of Diversity at UM - Some key events in the history of diversity at the University of Michigan

Women's Voices: Early Years at UM - A Bentley publication with thoughts from women who attended the University of Michigan from 1870 to 1924

Women's Athletics Exhibit - An exhibit on the history of women's athletics at the University of Michigan

Coeducation at UM - A historical account from The University of Michigan, an Encyclopedic Survey

How Michigan was Opened to Women - A personal narrative from the first woman to attend classes at the University of Michigan

Rules from the Handbook for University of Michigan Women 1921-1922 - A reflection on the daily life of women at the University of Michigan

DISCLAIMER

The sources most frequently consulted for the timeline include The University of Michigan, an Encyclopedic Survey and The Proceedings of the Board of Regents. If any of the listed events on this page seem to be incorrect, or if you think an event should be added, please send the new information to the Bentley Reference Staff and provide citations for the sources where the new information was found.

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