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Purdue University is one of 68 land-grant colleges and universities which owe their origin to the Land-Grant Act of 1862, otherwise known as the Morrill Act. Three years after its passage, the General Assembly of Indiana voted to avail itself of the provisions of this act and began preliminary plans for a school devoted primarily to the agricultural and mechanical arts.

In 1869 the Assembly voted to accept a gift of land and money from John Purdue and other generous Lafayette citizens and, in appreciation declared the name of the new institution to be Purdue University. The University is supported mainly by state appropriations, supplemented by federal grants.

Actual instruction began in 1874 with 39 students and a faculty of six. Today Purdue conducts classes and research in more than 70 principal buildings and controls over 7,000 acres of land. Serving on its various staffs are more than 5,000 persons.

Undergraduate and graduate instruction is offered in agriculture (including agricultural engineering); aeronautical and engineering sciences, chemical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, industrial engineering, mechanical engineering, metallurgical engineering, nuclear engineering; industrial management; home economics; pharmacy; science; humanities, social science, and education; and veterinary science and medicine.

Extensive experiment stations in both engineering and agriculture are maintained by the University. The agricultural extension division through the county agents services the entire state. Courses with credit toward a college degree and a two-year Diploma in Applied Technology are offered at University Centers and Campuses throughout Indiana. The principal ones are in Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Michigan City, and Hammond. A variety of courses is also offered through the adult education programs sponsored by the University.