

History of the Swarthmore College Department of Peace and Conflict Studies



A report from a committee of Friends working to establish the College envisions the institution to preserve “the practice of peace”

Swarthmore College is established and President Edward Parrish declares at the laying of the cornerstone of Parrish Hall (the College’s first building) that the devastation of war “shall be made a matter of careful and conscientious examination, to the end that the promised day may be hastened when nation shall not lift up a sword against nation”

Friends Historical Library is established

Prof. William Penn Holcomb teaches the world’s first peace studies course in modern higher education

Swarthmore College Peace Collection is established (as a result of Jane Addams donating her books and papers, and her Nobel Peace Prize, to Swarthmore College)

Prof. Jerry Frost arrives (and goes on to curate the Friends Historical Library and Peace Collection)

Interdisciplinary Program is established with the support of a dedicated group of faculty and students

Prof. Jerry Frost retires

1862

1864

1871

1888

1930

1973

1991

2002

2003

Prof. Lee Smithey arrives

2006

Prof. George Lakey arrives as the Eugene M. Lang Professor for Issues of Social Change (located in the PCS Program)

2007

Prof. Jennifer Magee arrives (and goes on to help lead the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility)

2010

Prof. George Lakey awarded Peace Educator of the Year by the Peace and Justice Studies Association

2011

Global Nonviolent Action Database is launched

2014

Prof. George Lakey departs

2015

Prof. Denise Crossan arrives as the Eugene M. Lang Professor for Issues of Social Change (located in the PCS Program)

Prof. Ellen Ross named the Howard M. and Charles F. Jenkins Professor of Quakerism and Peace Studies

2017

Prof. Sa’ed Atshan becomes the first tenure-stream faculty member fully appointed in the PCS Program

Regular major is approved

2018

Prof. Lee Smithey’s tenured faculty line shifts fully to the PCS Program

2022

Departmental status is approved

2023

Department becomes housed in Parrish Hall

Israa Al-Helli arrives as the department’s first full-time Administrative Assistant

