

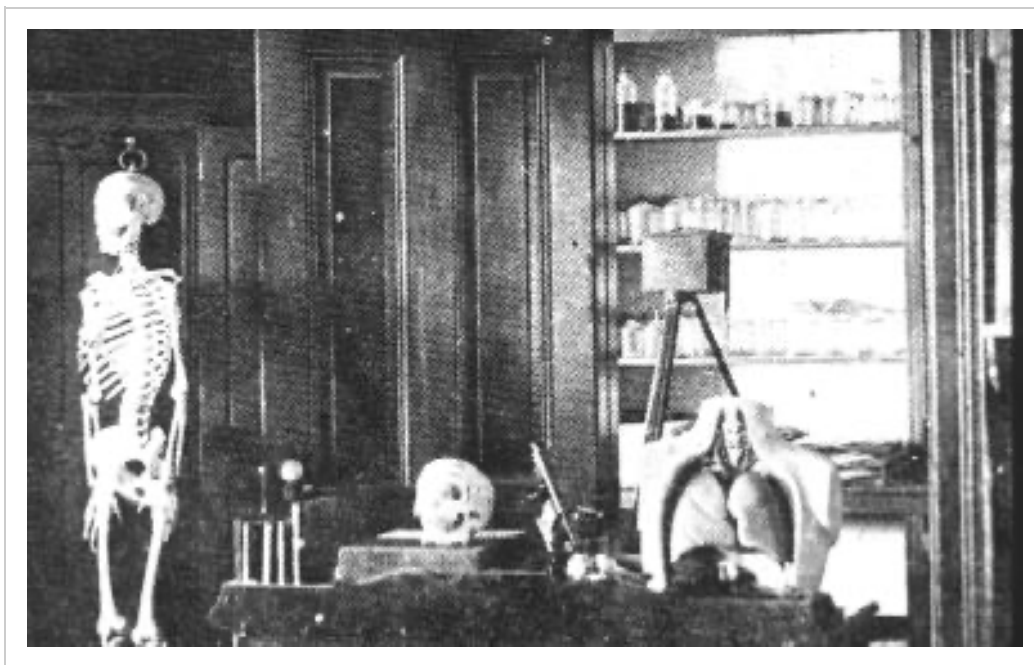
Physiology's Beginnings at the University of Arizona (1892-1901)

The townspeople in Tucson were greatly disappointed when, in 1885, their representatives brought home from the territorial legislature the state university rather than the state prison or asylum. The university took form here only through the generosity of 2 gamblers and a saloon keeper who donated the land.

Regarding the origins of physiology on this campus, physiology as a discipline has existed here for a long time. In fact, in perusing the catalog, published in the fall of 1892, I was interested to learn that physiology was among the courses listed by the Department of Zoology and Entomology, the courses being Anatomy, General Zoology, and Entomology. In addition, in the School of Agriculture, a course in Physiological Botany was listed. The course in physiology consisted of 5 hours of lecture per week plus a 2-hour laboratory. According to the catalog, physiology was, and I quote,

“A course of lectures upon human physiology, some attention being directed to the physiology of domestic animals. Some time is spent in the dissection of animals in order that the student may become familiar with the position and appearance of the various organs and the minute structure of tissues.”

So it is apparent that, despite the course title, there was a heavy emphasis on anatomy. The instructor for the physiology course was not listed but was most likely **James W. Tuomy**, Professor of Botany and Entomology, inasmuch as he was the sole faculty member in the Department of Zoology. Tuomy received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University).



Biological Classroom and Lab

The biological classroom and laboratory were in the southwest half of the second story of the main building. The rooms were supplied with gas and water, and cases and cabinets were provided for specimens of plants, insects, human skeletons, and casts. Microscopes, section cutters, and other accessories comprised part of the equipment. As physiology was an upper-division course, it is not clear when the course was first taught. The total enrollment for the University in 1893 was 4 sophomores, 18 freshmen, 3 special, and 14 preparatory students.

It is likely that physiology (which subsequently became Anatomy and Physiology in the catalog) was first taught in the school year 1894-95 inasmuch as the student list at that time included 3 seniors, 6 juniors, 4 sophomores, and 11 freshmen. Incidentally, at that time, total expenses for the economic student for the academic year were estimated to be \$150-\$160. In 1898-99, the course now designated as Anatomy and Physiology was required in the literary and scientific curriculum as well as for students in Agriculture. There were only 25 college-level students in the University, half of these at the freshman level. There were, however, over 100 preparatory students, which seemed to be the major activity of the faculty, and courses at the preparatory level also included Anatomy and Physiology.

The catalog description of the preparatory school includes a familiar lament of college faculties which might be heard even today, I quote:

"It is not the desire of the faculty to engage any work which can as well be done in the public schools of the territory, but we have found it impracticable to dispense with classes to prepare students for the routine of the University. There is needed a better foundation than the majority of applicants have hitherto possessed. The power of independent thought is essential to progress in University classes, and this is too commonly lacking in those who present themselves at the entrance examinations."

Considering what public education must have been like in the early days of the territory, that is probably a classic understatement.

In 1899, Tuomy was joined by **Ansel Augustus Tyler**, Associate Professor of Biology, who had a Ph.D. from Columbia and was an instructor at Syracuse before coming to Arizona. Unfortunately, the Tuomy-Tyler team lasted only for a year at Arizona.

In 1900, when this first photograph of the University of Arizona faculty was taken, their names disappeared from the catalog along with the course in Anatomy and Physiology. A new faculty member, **Professor Griffiths**, Ph.D., was listed under biology. Professor Griffiths was not present when this photo was taken. Griffiths was also a Biologist with the Agricultural Experiment Station.



First photograph of the University of Arizona faculty – 1900

In 1901, Griffiths and **Gordon True**, B.S., Professor of Animal Husbandry and also with the Agricultural Experiment Station, constituted the faculty in the areas relevant to physiology. The biological laboratories occupied three rooms on the second floor of the south wing of the Old Main building. Attracting students to the University of Arizona was very much on the minds of the faculty and administration in those days, even as now, and the following statement regarding the Tucson climate appears in the 1901 catalog.

“Owing to the extreme dryness of the air, the highest temperatures known are less oppressive to the senses and less dangerous to the health than the summer heat of the upper Mississippi Valley states.”



*University of Arizona
Tucson, A. S. 1891.*

University of Arizona Old Main building

On the subject of student discipline, the catalog states,

“It is the policy of the University to allow as much liberty as will not be abused. Frequenting saloons or billiard rooms or any conduct harmful to the moral standing of the school will render the student liable to punishment.”

In 1901, tuition was free, although there was a matriculation fee of \$5.00. Board was \$18.00 a month, and students were eligible for half-fare tickets from railroads of the territory. The Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Philosophy degrees were offered along with the M.S. and M.A. degrees.