

Elida Yakeley was born in Trenton, Michigan. She studied business at Ferris Institute, now Ferris State University. Yakeley was one of the earliest female administrators at Michigan State. In 1903, she started out as the university president's secretary before becoming the first registrar in 1908. In charge of all student records, she personally talked to every student at the school throughout her 30 years in that role. She also updated and published the annual directory of faculty, students, and alumni, keeping an interest in students' successes far beyond their years at MSU. Students were fond of her, often asking for advice, and calling her a "thoroughly just, broad-hearted friend."