

Maude Gilchrist grew up in Iowa. In 1876, she was admitted as the first female student at Iowa State Normal School. Following graduation, she became an instructor there in math and science. While in that position, she organized and led a gymnastics club, considered one of the early attempts of organized women's sports at the collegiate level. After leaving Iowa, she would go on to teach at several other places as well as obtain additional degrees at the University of Michigan and Harvard. She became the Dean of Women at Michigan Agricultural College in 1901 and remained there until 1913. She taught courses in ethics and most notably taught the first courses offered in education. Occasionally, she would fill in as a botany instructor. During her tenure, enrollment in the Women's Course increased by 125% and the curriculum offered became more challenging. Gilchrist also helped form an honors society for Home Economics students, which became the foundation for the national organization Omicron Nu. She ended her career with a position at Iowa State College. She died on February 28, 1952.