The first Engineering courses appeared in the 1894 University of Washington catalog, with classes to be held in Denny Hall. The campus was thickly wooded, as were all the surrounding areas, now called the University District. The drawing room was located in the attic, and the hydraulics laboratory in the basement of Denny Hall, the only building of the time that is still standing. Also located in the basement were the Electrical and Physics laboratories. The Mechanical Engineers used the old powerhouse for their steam experiments.

As time went on, new buildings were erected and Engineering expanded into any spare room to be found. The laboratories were moved to Science Hall, now known as Parrington Hall.

On the 200th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin, Saturday, March 24, 1906, the departments of Physics and Electrical engineering of the University of Washington combined their talents to display before a curious public examples of the latest scientific phenomena. A publication of the day stated that hundreds of people crowded Denny Hall to witness demonstrations of the use of electricity in cooking, ironing, and hair curling; experiments in sending and receiving wireless messages over a distance of five miles; displays showing the evolution of lighting, radium experiments, and the like; while hundreds more had to be turned away because they could not get a view of the proceedings. That day was born the idea from which the now traditional Engineers' Open House has sprung.

By the time of the Alaska-Yukon Exposition of 1909, the campus had undergone vast changes. Buildings, both permanent and temporary, had sprung up for the exposition and were made available for engineering classes. Bagley Hall housed the Chemical Engineers, while the Mechanical Engineers took over the shops. Engineering Hall was shared by Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Soon the Civil Engineers were moved to the Good Roads Building, later to be used by AFROTC, with the Mining Engineers occupying the old powerhouse.

The first Open House held in the pattern by which we now know them was presented during a 2-hour period on a spring evening in 1914 with exhibits in the halls of Bagley, Engineering, and Mines. The purpose was to acquaint the general public with the work that engineering students were doing. Laboratories were kept open, exhibits were displayed, and some apparatus was placed in operation. About 400 people attended the event.

In 1929 the Engineering College offices were moved from Engineering Hall to quarters in the fine, newly erected Guggenheim Hall. The building of this hall was made possible by a grant to the University by the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for promotion of Aeronautics. The University of Washington was one of several schools to receive such a fund for outstanding achievement in the field of aeronautics.

The Aeronautical, Mechanical and Civil Engineers held classes in Guggenheim Hall, with the Electrical Engineers in Engineering Hall where the Mechanical Engineers had a steam laboratory and the Civil Engineers had a cement laboratory. Other Civil Engineering laboratories were scattered in temporary quarters throughout the campus.

In 1947 the Charles C. More Hall was completed, and became the home of the Civil Engineers. All offices, classrooms, and laboratories, except hydraulics, are now located there. Also housed in the building are the Experiment Station offices. Modern equipment in the structure includes a 2,400,000 pound universal testing machine and an electron microscope. The Electrical Engineering building was open for classes and laboratories in 1949. This is a very modern structure with a complete laboratory section, which, it is interesting to note, was designed by faculty members. Only in that way could they obtain what they specifically wanted and needed. Outstanding are the A.C. and D.C. machinery laboratories, which are among the finest in the country.

In the 40 years since 1914, 18 Open Houses have been held, each adding in some way to the spirit of the affair, until today the Engineers' Open House is a well-established tradition in the College of Engineering. Basically the Open House is not meant to be an industrial exposition. Rather it is for the purpose of demonstrating to other students and to the public, just what the engineering students do and what they are taught in college to prepare them to assume responsible employment upon graduation.

The spark that has maintained the steady improvement of Open House displays has been the traditional competition of the Colleges of Engineering, as represented by their student societies. The goal of each group is possession of the Engineers' Open House Trophy and the winning of the permanent banner recording the name and occasion of each victory. The trophy and banner are awarded to the winning department through the Engineering Student's Council, which is the sponsoring organization.

Through practice and precedent the policies of Open House have now achieved some stability and a system of rules has been drawn up under which the departments compete on an equal basis and their exhibits can be judged fairly. Judging is by prominent local professional men of both technical and non-technical backgrounds.