Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Office of the Director (Institute of Geophysics)

SIO Office of the Director (Institute of Geophysics) Records, 1943-1955

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1 mss

DESCRIPTION: Records of the SIO Directors Office generated by Harald Ulrik Sverdrup, Carl Eckart, and Roger Revelle, consisting of correspondence, memoranda, minutes, budgetary material, grant applications, and notes filed under the heading Institute of Geophysics in the Central Files of the SIO Office of the Director during the period May 1943 to June 1955, documenting the founding of the Institute of Geophysics at UCLA in 1946. Correspondents include Bjerknes, Bullard, Fox, Holmboe, Loeb, Munk and Sproul.

Provenance: This collection was located in the basement of the University of California, San Diego Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics (IGPP) building and was transferred to SIO Archives on December 21, 1982.

Administrative History: Norwegian oceanographer and polar explorer Harald Ulrik Sverdrup became the third director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography on September 1, 1936. Sverdrup intended to turn the remote marine station into an oceanographic institution, a vision endorsed by his predecessor, Thomas Wayland Vaughan and University of California President Robert Gordon Sproul. While Sverdrup found the faculty and staff talented, he considered the budget and campus facilities inadequate. He wanted to replace the institution's vessel with a modern ship. He found the curriculum weak, and he was distressed by the lack of an institution-wide research program. Sverdrup built a strong relationship with UCLA. He and the Scripps faculty attended faculty meetings at UCLA and maintained contacts with the UCLA faculty. Sverdrup worked closely with Vern O. Knudsen, Dean of the UCLA Graduate Division, 1932-1936 and later chancellor. Sverdrup was closely associated with the Department of Physics. Its chair, Joseph Kaplan, was interested in geophysics and wished to establish a Department of Meteorology. President Sproul appointed Kaplan and Sverdrup to an advisory committee to organize the UCLA Department of Meteorology in 1940, when Sverdrup's Norwegian colleagues Jorgen Holmboe and Jacob Bjerknes were recruited as faculty. In 1943, Bjerknes, Holmboe, Kaplan and Sverdrup all felt strongly that an Institute of Geophysics should be established at UCLA. In 1944, they drafted a plan for the Institute which was submitted to President Sproul, and the institute was established in 1946. The Institute of Geophysics at UCLA continued to have strong connections to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography under Sverdrup's successors, Carl Henry Eckart and Roger Revelle. In 1963, the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics, a branch of the UCLA institute, was established on the campus of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Arrangement: The original chronological arrangement of this collection has been retained.

Scope and Content: This collection consists of five linear inches of correspondence, memoranda, minutes, budgetary material, grant applications, and notes filed under the heading Institute of Geophysics in the Central Files of the S.I.O. Office of the Director during the period May 1943 to June 1955.

Material dated 1943 to 1948 was generated and received by SIO Director Harald Ulrik Sverdrup and documents the move to established an Institute of Geophysics at the University of California. Material dated 1943 to 1948 includes an early prospectus and policy statement for the institute. There are several letters concerning staff appointments, and especially who should be director and who should not be director. One of these was written
by Jacob Bjerknes to Harald Sverdrup in Norwegian so that only Sverdrup could read it. The offering of the
directorship to Sverdrup, his declining because of obligations to Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the
appointment of Vern O. Knudsen and then Joseph Kaplan as acting directors and Louis B. Slichter as director
are documented by correspondence in this collection. The collection includes agendas and minutes of Advisory
Board meetings and records concerning the selection of Advisory Board members. There is also budgetary
material and correspondence concerning the visits of Hans Ahlmann and Marcel Riecz, including one letter
from Ahlmann to Sverdrup in Swedish concerning his forthcoming visit and planned lectures. The file contains
copies of applications for research grants-in-aid from several researchers including Jacob Bjerknes and Walter
H. Munk. Principal correspondents include Harald Ulrik Sverdrup, Vern O. Knudsen, Joseph Kaplan, Jorgen
References in correspondence to letters not in this file indicate the collection is much more complete in regard
to letters received by Sverdrup than letters generated by him, the latter being mostly restricted to letters typed
by his secretary. The bulk of the material in this collection dates from the years of Sverdrup's directorship
(1936-1948).

Material dated April 1948 to February 1950 was generated and received by S.I.O. Director Carl Eckart and
Associate Director Roger Revelle. It includes correspondence and other papers documenting the first, second
and third Annual Conferences of the Institute of Geophysics, minutes of meetings of the Advisory Board,
materials documenting institute budgets and research programs and applications for research grants, including
one from Claude E. ZoBell and one from Denis L. Fox, members of the Scripps faculty. Principal
 correspondents include Roger Revelle, Louis B. Slichter, Carl Eckart, Walter H. Munk, and Denis L. Fox. A
document entitled, "Recommendation for the Appointment of Walter H. Munk as Associate Professor at the
Institute of Geophysics" is dated January 1947. There is also one letter from geophysicist Sir Edward Crisp
Bullard dated May 26, 1948.

Material dated March 1950 to June 1955 was generated and received by S.I.O. Director Roger Revelle and
includes material documenting institute research grants-in-aid, minutes of Advisory Board meetings, budget
materials, lists of graduate students, theses completed, and a list of visiting scientists, 1948-1954. There is also
correspondence concerning the placing of researchers on board U.S. Navy submarines for research during
routine navy submarine runs. Several items document the unsuccessful 1952 attempt to move the institute to the
La Jolla campus. Principal correspondents include Roger Revelle, Louis B. Slichter, Walter H. Munk, and
Denis L. Fox.

The file also includes a copy of a letter from Warren G. Thompson, a master of science student at Scripps,
applying for a summer job with Humble Oil Company as an oceanographer-meteorologist, dated April 8, 1947.

Related Collections: This collection was once a part of the Central Files of the SIO Office of the Director. It is
consequently related to the records of the SIO Office of the Director under Harald Sverdrup (Archival
Collection 34) and Roger Revelle (Archival Collection 16).
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