Chapter 8. The Oceanography Independence Movement: 1980



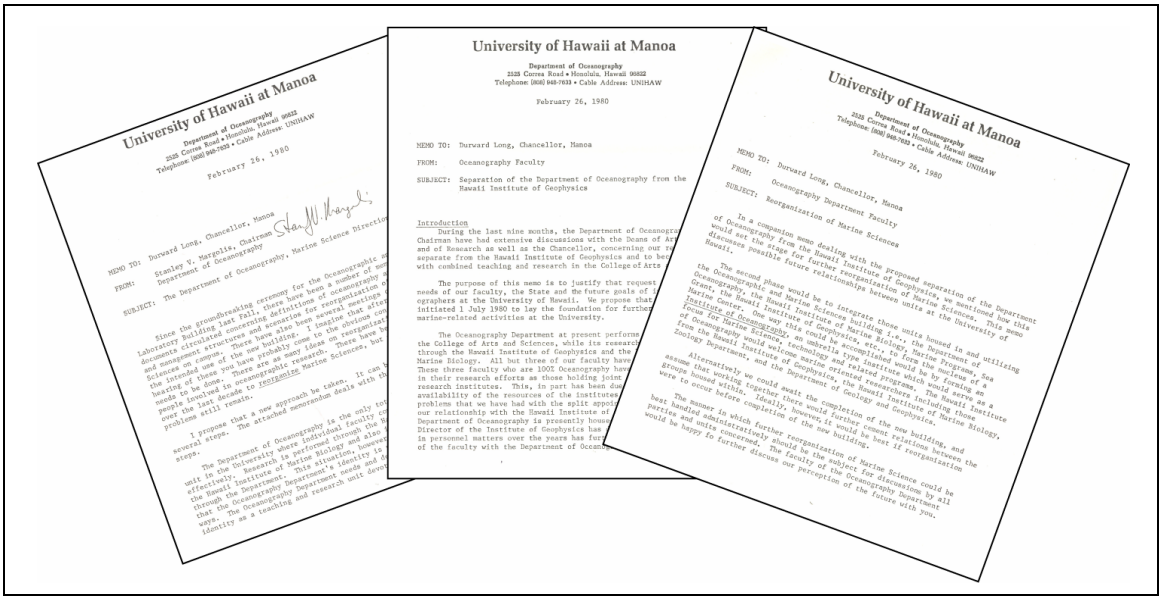
"One man with courage makes a majority"
Andrew Jackson
(1767-1845)

On 26 February 1980, Department of Oceanography Chairman Stan Margolis transmitted three separate memos to then UH at Manoa Chancellor Durward Long on behalf of the department faculty (Figure 8.1). The first was entitled "The Department of Oceanography, Marine Science Directions," the second concerned "Separation of the Department of Oceanography from the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics," and the third discussed "Reorganization of Marine Sciences." The latter two memos contained substanive and far-reaching proposals for action and, for emphasis, the 7-page "Oceanography independence" proposal was countersigned by the entire faculty of the department, including: J. Andrews, K. Chave, T. Clarke, B. Gallagher, J. Hirota, D. Karl, P. Kroopnick, E. Laws, L. Magaard, S. Margolis (chairman), E. Stroup, N. Withers, K. Wyrtki, and R. Young.

Since the groundbreaking ceremony for the new MSB in Fall 1979 (see section 7), there had been a series of discussions and new proposals for consolidation of UH marine science programs. The February 1980 "Margolis memo collection" emphasized that despite these recent and numerous past efforts to reorganize marine sciences, many of the old problems still remained. Margolis reasoned that since the Department of Oceanography was the only totally marine-oriented unit in the university where individual faculty combine research and teaching, it should be the centerpiece and the core of any new organizational structure.

This bold assertion was supported by the facts and figures presented in the "Oceanography independence" proposal which called for a 1 July 1980 start date for this action; effectively phase I of the much awaited marine sciences reorganization at UH. The memo also chronicled problems resulting from the extant oceanography-HIG and oceanography-HIMB research affiliations. All but three oceanography faculty members had split appointments with organized research units, and there appeared to be no functional advantage to these ties. On the contrary, these split department-institute affiliations had only served to lessen the impact or at least the awareness of oceanographic research at UH. There is much in a name, and many (most) of the oceanography faculty considered themselves to be oceanographers, not geophysicists or marine biologists. Over the years, first the astronomy then the meteorology units of HIG

sought and received independence largely for identical reasons. Oceanography now wanted to develop their own identity and build the unique world-class reputation they so justly deserved.


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February 26, 1980

MEMO TO: Durward Long, Chancellor, Manoa

FROM: Stanley V. Margolis, Chairman
Department of Oceanography

SUBJECT: The Department of Oceanography, Marine Science Directio

Since the Groundbreaking ceremony for the Oceanographic
Laboratory building last fall, there have been a number of
documents circulated concerning definition of organization
and management structure and definition of oceanography
sciences on campus. There have also been several meetings
the intended use of the new building. I imagine that
hearing we have as many ideas on reorganization
needs to be done. There probably come to several conclusi
people involved. I propose that we reorganize Marine Sciences, but
over the last decade to
problems still remain.

I propose that a new approach be taken. It can
several steps. The attached memorandum deals with th

1. The Department of Oceanography is the only
unit in the University where individual faculty co
effectively. Research is performed through the
the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and the
through the Department of Marine Biology and the
that the Department of Marine Biology and the
ways. The Oceanography Department's identity is
identity as a teaching and research unit devo

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February 26, 1980

MEMO TO: Durward Long, Chancellor, Manoa

FROM: Oceanography Faculty

SUBJECT: Separation of the Department of Oceanography from the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics

Introduction

During the last nine months, the Department of Oceanogra
Chairman have had extensive discussions with the Deans of Ar
and of Research as well as the Chancellor, concerning our
separate from the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and to be
with combined teaching and research in the College of Arts

The purpose of this memo is to justify that request
needs of our faculty, the State and the future goals of
ographers at the University of Hawaii. We propose that
initiated 1 July 1980 to lay the foundation for further
marine-related activities at the University.

The Oceanography Department at present performs
the College of Arts and Sciences, while its research
through the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and the
Marine Biology. All but three of our faculty have
These three faculty who are 100% Oceanography hav
in their research efforts as those holding joint
research institutes. This, in part has been du
availability of the resources of the Institutes
problems that we have had with the split appoi
our relationship with the Hawaii Institute of
Department of Oceanography is presently housed
Director of the Institute of Geophysics has
in personnel matters over the years has for
of the faculty with the Department of Ocean

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February 26, 1980

MEMO TO: Durward Long, Chancellor, Manoa

FROM: Oceanography Department Faculty

SUBJECT: Reorganization of Marine Sciences

In a companion memo dealing with the proposed separation of the Department of Oceanography from the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics, we mentioned how this would set the stage for further reorganization of Marine Sciences. This memo discusses possible future relationships between units at the University of Hawaii.

The second phase would be to integrate these units housed in and utilizing the Oceanographic and Marine Sciences building (i.e., the Department of Oceanography, and Hawaii Institute of Geophysics, etc.), to form the nucleus of a Marine Center. Hawaii Institute of Geophysics could be by forming an Institute of Oceanography, an umbrella type institute which would serve as a focus for Marine Oceanography and related programs. The Hawaii Institute of Oceanography could welcome marine researchers including those from the Geography Department, zoology and geophysics.

Alternatively we could await the completion of the new building, and assume that working together there would further cement relations between the groups housed within. Ideally however it would be best if reorganization were to occur before completion of the new building.

The manner in which further reorganization of Marine Sciences could be best handled administratively should be the subject for discussion by all parties and units concerned. The faculty of the Oceanography Department would be happy to further discuss our perception of the future with you.

Figure 8.1: The 26 February 1980 "Margolis memo collection." These three memos to then UH at Manoa Chancellor Durward Long, outlined a bold, new vision of ocean sciences at UH. Margolis' demands were not immediately met, but they eventually led to the creation of SOEST. Unfortunately, Margolis had left the University – out of frustration over lack of progress on reorganization – and never enjoyed the rewards of his efforts.

The independence prospectus requested a transfer of 5.36 positions (along with an equitable share of support positions, and B and C general funds) from HIG to the Department of Oceanography; these would remain as research positions in the Division of Natural Sciences. Major support facilities and laboratories would remain as they were, at least until the new MSB was completed (see section 7). Ship operations would remain with HIG, but a Department of Oceanography representative would be added to the oversight/management committee. These relatively simple actions would reduce duplication in hiring, promotion, research, and teaching activities, add visibility for oceanography at UH and in the state (a stated recommendation of the 1977 Byrne Report; see section 6.4), and ultimately promote and facilitate future reorganization and growth of UH marine programs.

The final Margolis memo of this 26 February 1980 3-memo packet, presented thoughts on phase II of the reorganization once the Department of Oceanography was independent of HIG and HIMB. Margolis, on behalf of his department faculty, proposed the creation of an Institute of Oceanography, an umbrella-like organization centered in the new 6-story MSB that would serve as a focus for marine science, technology, and related programs. The Hawaii Institute of Oceanography would welcome marine researchers from HIG and HIMB, as well as from the departments of zoology, geology and geophysics, and any other academic unit at UH. The timing was crucial; it would be

much more efficient if the reorganization was in effect prior to the completion of the new building, at that time scheduled for 1982 (see section 7).

Chancellor Long was dissatisfied with the slow progress in marine sciences reorganization so the Margolis memos were taken under serious consideration along with the Byrne Report recommendations. The extent to which these matters contributed to Chancellor Long's decision to dismiss Dean Craven (see section 6.5) are not known to the author, but suffice it to say that the "status quo" was rapidly becoming untenable for many members of the oceanography faculty.

Unfortunately, the well-conceived Margolis plan was never implemented and on 15 September 1983 Stan Margolis resigned from the faculty, in part, out of his frustration with the lack of progress in reorganization of UH marine programs. He moved to a new senior faculty position at the University of California at Davis, where he continued his research in marine geology and sedimentology until his untimely death a few years later (see section 4.7).