News and Comment

Stony Brook: Young and Ambitious New York Institution Is Beginning To Stir Notice in Academic World

Starting around the mid-point of each academic year, there begins a deluge of announcements from university public relations offices, detailing the wins and losses in the manhunting activity known as faculty and administrative recruiting. This year, veteran perusers of this literature were puzzled to note that some of the most sought-after talent was going to a virtual unknown of the academic scene, an institution called the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Preliminary inquiry did not dispel the puzzlement.

Stony Brook, located on the north shore of Long Island, about 60 miles from New York City, had a total enrollment of 1789, had been without a president for over 3 years, and had only a limited number of graduate programs. It had a fair sprinkling of academic luminaries throughout its 209-member science, engineering, and humanities faculty, but it was doubtful that this handful was the magnetic force for Stony Brook's impressive faculty acquisitions. Still, the announcements continued.

Last February, for example, it was announced that John S. Toll, the object of recruiting expeditions throughout the country, had at last been pried away from the University of Maryland, where he had headed the physics department since 1953. While there, Toll had turned out an impressive array of papers in theoretical physics. He had put Maryland physics in the major leagues by building the department from a staff of seven to 80 physicists who produced a good deal of much-admired research. And he had shown abundant skill in attracting the support of federal granting agencies, a matter of interest to the various boards of trustees that sought his services. Now, at the age of 41, Toll was to become president of Stony Brook.

Not long after the announcement of the Toll appointment it was reported that H. Bentley Glass, professor of biology at Johns Hopkins University, a distinguished geneticist, former president of the AAAS, and one of the most industrious and peripatetic committeemen of the scientific community, was to leave Hopkins after having been there since 1947. Glass, too, was bound for Stony Brook, where he was to take the number two position, academic vice president.

As the year grew older, the mimeograph machines of Stony Brook continued to report successful recruiting, including the triumphant announcement that C. N. Yang, a Nobel laureate in physics at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, was to come to Stony Brook for 3 months as a visiting professor in the spring of 1966. Experienced analysts of such announcements detected faint suggestions that Yang might not be returning to Princeton. The speculation has not yet been confirmed, but it was given further substance earlier this month when Stony Brook announced that it had been awarded by the state, but had not yet filled, an Einstein professorship—a chair which carries $100,000 a year and very few restrictions on how the sum is to be allocated between salary and other items. The chair will be in theoretical particle physics, which happens to be Yang's field.

At about the same time, it was also announced that Robert Lekachman, a highly respected economist, would leave Barnard College to become head of Stony Brook's economics department. There were other appointments: G. A. Dirac would be coming from Ireland as visiting professor of mathematics; Harold Friedman was leaving IBM to become professor of chemistry; Guillermo Céstedes would temporarily leave his chair in the History of the Americas at the University of Seville to come to Stony Brook for 2 years.

Stony Brook, the word went out, might be adding as many as 100 faculty members a year for the next 4 or 5 years—with about half the appointments at the tenurial level. And, it was noted, Stony Brook was capable of competing with many of the best when financial considerations could swing a man's decision. According to the latest report of the American Association of University Professors, the newcomer institution on Long Island was in the *AA* salary category, a distinction that was shared by only 12 other institutions in the country.* (However, as things go in the academic world, Toll and Glass will not be receiving extraordinary remuneration. Stony Brook's president receives $30,000 plus a residence—still to be constructed. As academic vice president and distinguished professor of biology Glass will receive $27,000.) Inevitably, it soon began to be asked, on campuses and at professional meetings, what is Stony Brook?

At the simplest level, the answer is that the State University of New York at Stony Brook is part of the vast assemblage of higher educational institutions founded or taken over by New York since 1948, when the state lost the distinction of being the only one in the union without a state-supported system of higher education. At present, the system consists of some 60 units, including 18 4-year state colleges, six 2-year colleges, 28 locally sponsored community colleges, and four university centers—three of them absorbed into the state system from existing institutions: Buffalo, Albany, and Harpur, which, in 1960, moved from Endicott to a new campus near Binghamton. The fourth is Stony Brook, which, at least in the eyes of many Stony Brook people, is to be the crowning jewel of the system.

The contention can easily stir an argument at the other New York state university centers. But there is no doubt that New York, with its relatively new and apparently enthusiastic commitment to public support of higher education, has enormous ambitions for all the university centers. In the case of Stony Brook these ambitions coincide with a set of circumstances that offer an impressive potential for the institution to evolve into one of the great centers of higher education and research. At present, however, perhaps the most notable thing about Stony Brook is this potential, combined with an unquestioning

* Amherst, Brooklyn, Caltech, Columbia, Duke, Harvard, Hunter, M.I.T., Princeton, Rochester, Wesleyan, and Yale.

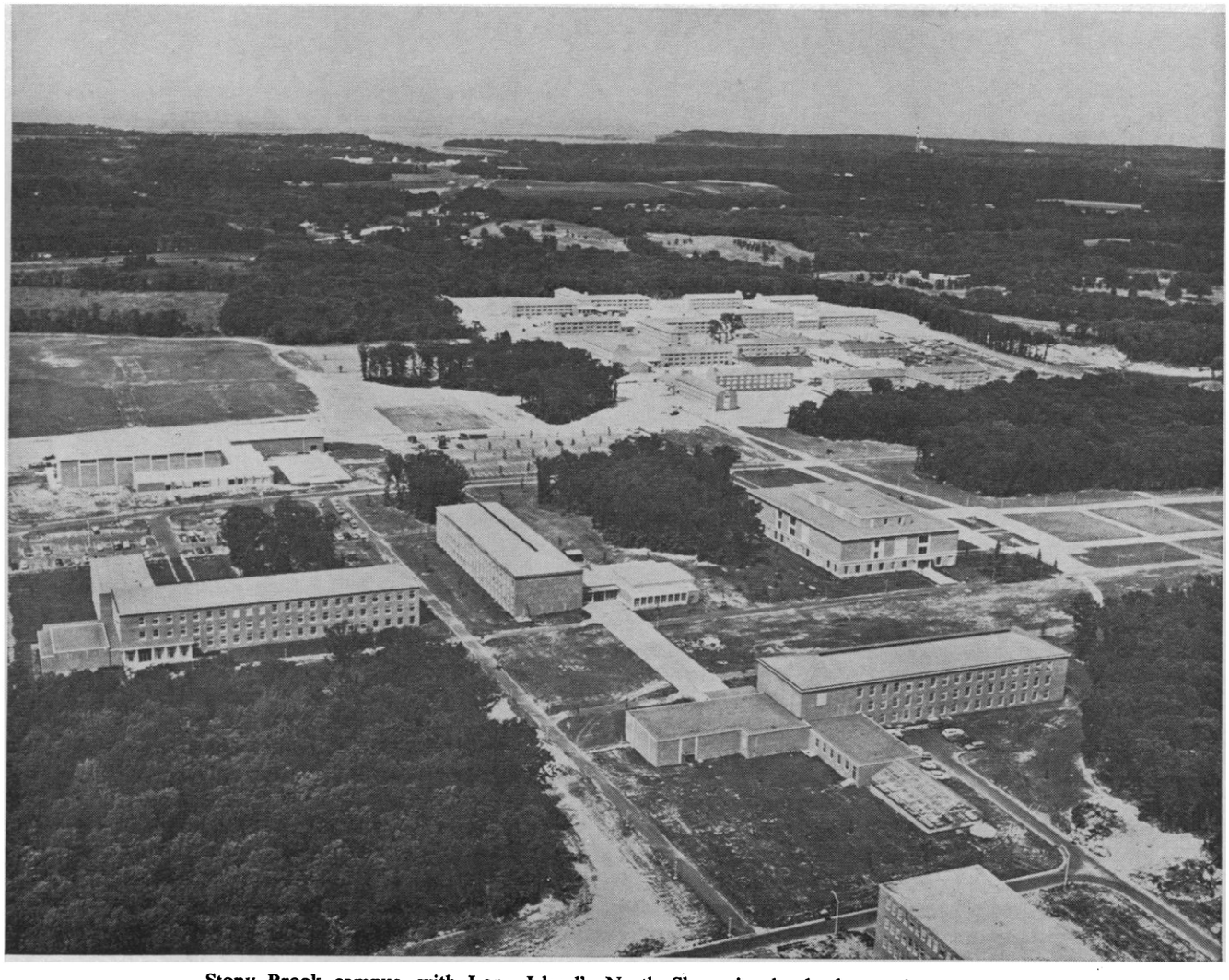
conviction, seemingly throughout the entire faculty and administration, that *this time* Stony Brook can't miss.

The *last time* began in 1957, when what eventually evolved into the present university center opened at Oyster Bay, L.I., as a college for training science and mathematics teachers. Meanwhile, plans were proceeding to build a campus at the present Stony Brook site, where Ward Melville, heir to the Thom McAn shoe fortune, had donated 480 acres to the state.

Soon, however, the principal figures in the aspiring institution were engaged in some of the bloodiest academic infighting ever recorded. The issues are obscured by the passage of time and the departure of many of those present during the strife. But, in a period of 2 years, the head of the Oyster Bay operation departed, to be followed by the newly appointed first president of Stony Brook, who was in turn followed by the head of the entire state system. Thus, by 1962, when the first buildings were being occupied at Stony Brook, the campus was without a president, and no likely candidate wanted the job until he knew who was to head the statewide system. In the meantime the institution was headed by an administrative staff which skillfully held things together, but lacked the prestige and authority for major policy initiatives at the young institution.

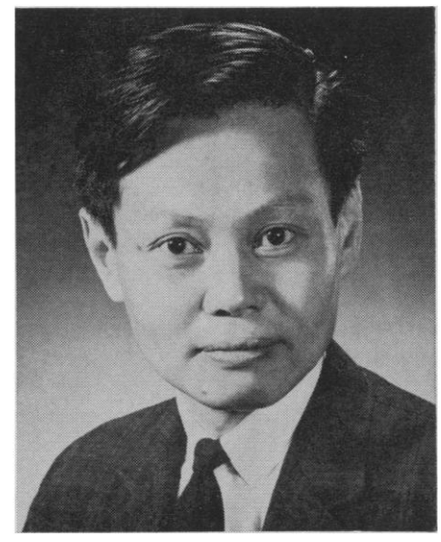
Recruiting at the academic summit being the laborious process that it is, the statewide post was vacant until September 1964, when it was filled by Samuel B. Gould. Gould had been president of Antioch College from 1954 to 1959 and chancellor of the University of California at Santa Barbara from 1959 to 1962, and he was an educational TV executive in New York City at the time of his appointment. Once Gould was in office, the Stony Brook campus intensified what had been some early feelers for Toll, and 6 months later it was announced that he had accepted the presidency, effective this coming September. When he arrived to meet the faculty members, they rose and applauded. "We were happy it was Toll," one explained. "But we were also happy that at last it was someone."

The optimism that pervades Stony Brook is based on a number of impressive realities, some of which apply to the entire state system, while others are peculiar to Stony Brook's situation. First of all, having gotten off to a late start in supporting higher education, New York is willing to spend generously to put itself in the forefront. According to a master plan, devised in 1960 and generally followed since then, New York plans to spend $726 million during this decade for capital plant in the statewide system. As for the four university centers, Albany and Buffalo, which are constructing new campuses, are budgeted for $70.5 million and $92.7 million, respectively, in construc-



Stony Brook campus, with Long Island's North Shore in the background. [Newsday]

H. Bentley Glass



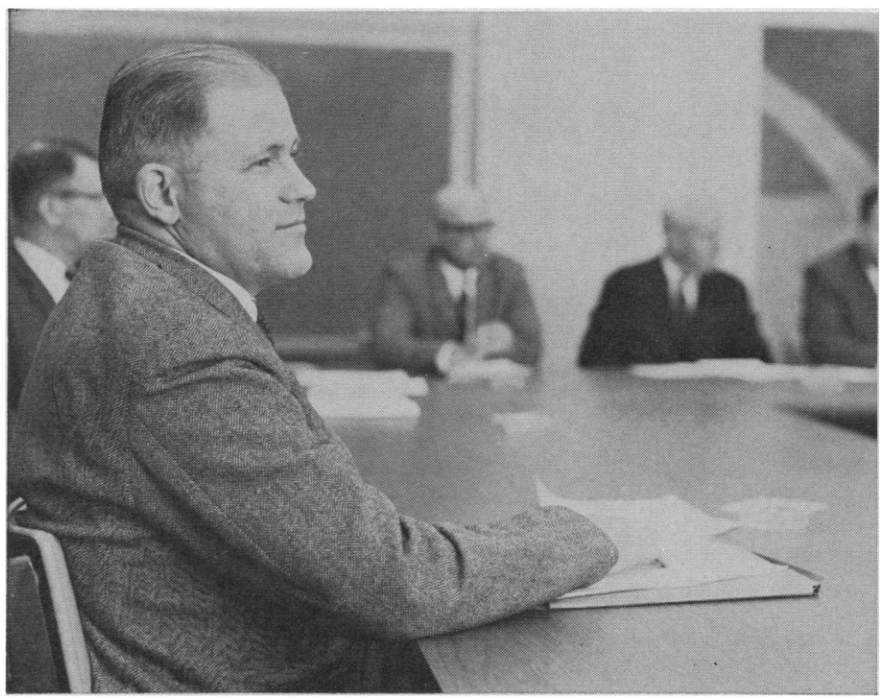
C. N. Yang

tion; Harpur will add $47.5 million, and Stony Brook, $82.7 million, plus at least another $75 million for a medical school and associated hospital. Operating budgets also reflect the state's belated commitment. In fiscal 1963–64, state support amounted to $101 million; in the current fiscal year it is close to $180 million. Stony Brook's operating budget was $3.57 million in 1963–64; it is now about $7.1 million.

In addition, the state has recognized that talent attracts talent, and it has appropriated funds to establish five chairs in the sciences and five in the humanities, annually supported at $100,000 each, to attract distinguished scholars. The guidelines for the use of these funds state, "A Chair is defined in such a way as to include not only the world famous scholar around whom the proposal is built but also the ancillary staff and supporting materials necessary for him to carry out his work within the limits of the annual appropriation of $100,000." A two-step selection process governs the assignment of these chairs, which are referred to as the "Alberts"—Einstein for science and Schweitzer for the humanities. First, an institution—it may be public or private —must convince the regents that the chair is "conceived in such a way as to make possible a further growth in excellence or a breakthrough for an existing commitment." Then, once the university has the chair, it must receive approval for the man that it would like to have occupy it. So far, Einsteins have been assigned to Rochester, Cornell, and Stony Brook, and Schweitzers, to New York University, City University of New York, and Fordham. It isn't clear what the problems are at this lofty financial level, but so far none of the chairs is occupied, possibly because, as one person put it, "the people New York would like to get are working with $100,000 someplace else." The state also has established distinguished professorships, at least in part, as a device to get around civil service pay scales. These are apparently financially open-ended and are now in the vicinity of $25,000 a year. (Alfred Kazin, the literary critic, holds a distinguished professorship in Stony Brook's English department.)

Thus, Stony Brook, as well as the entire state system, is benefiting from New York's belated decision to support higher education. But, in addition, Stony Brook finds itself the beneficiary of a number of other highly favorable circumstances. First of all, it is within 30 miles of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, and while the fledgling university doesn't want to appear too eager for a close relationship with its prestigious neighbor, it is clearly planning its own physical research program to complement the work at Brookhaven. Toward this goal, Stony Brook last week announced plans for a $2.7-million nuclear structure laboratory "to complement existing and planned nuclear laboratories at neighboring Brookhaven National Laboratory." The new facility will include a two-stage Van de Graff particle accelerator designed to produce 15-million-electron-volt protons and 22.5-million-electron-volt alpha particles.

The occasion was also used to announce some more faculty acquisitions: the new lab will be directed by Linwood L. Lee, Jr., from the Argonne National Laboratory, and the associate director will be Karl Eklund, assistant director of Yale's nuclear structure laboratory. Also in the works at Stony Brook is an earth and space sciences department which will occupy a $4.8-million building; in addition to the vast medical complex scheduled for the



John S. Toll

campus, plans are going ahead for a marine biology program and an extremely ambitious and costly fine arts program.

Clearly, the money is there to support the material requirements for these ambitions. But what about the other ingredients—leadership, able students, an attractive environment for the faculty Stony Brook hopes to build? Neither Toll nor Glass has ever before run a university, but if the views of those well acquainted with them are significant, the physicist and the biologist make an incredibly well qualified team for fulfilling Stony Brook's potential. Both have sterling scholarly credentials and hold the respect of their academic colleagues. Both are seasoned veterans of the committee room and well acquainted with the institutional peculiarities of the academic world. And both know Washington, which, despite New York's commitment to paying for excellence, will inevitably figure large in Stony Brook's building plans.

As for the student body, which will probably number around 10,000 by the end of the decade, the burgeoning population of Long Island provides an ample pool of high-quality undergraduates and, as the state system operates, Stony Brook will be the sole judge of its admission requirements. On the basis of experience elsewhere, it may be assumed that if an excellent faculty comes to Stony Brook, excellent graduate students will follow. New York City, which is perhaps just a bit too far for a comfortable evening visit, is still close enough to be an attraction for many prospective faculty members. Others have been pleased to note that the faculty club is located on a lengthy private strip of North Shore beach which was donated to Stony Brook along with the campus site. Few, it must be said, find any satisfaction in the campus architecture, which has marred the lovely setting with some unimaginative drab brick structures. But the next construction phase has aimed for higher esthetics, and the campus administrators who inherited the current plant hope that some cosmetic work can be done on the work of their predecessors.

Is Stony Brook, with two scientists at the helm, embarked on the course of research emphasis and bigness that has contributed to tensions and crises at other universities? Among the humanists on campus there seems to be little fear. "I already detect a tendency to bend over backwards to make certain that the humanities are not shortchanged," said one administrator. And, in Toll's view, the intellectual care and feeding of undergraduates is to be a prime concern of the university. "The university," he said in a recent interview, "should be oriented toward undergraduates. This is good for the undergraduates and it is good for the graduate programs and research. Undergraduate programs help pull the departments together. Otherwise, they go off into their own specialities and lose sight of each other."

Toll added that he hopes to employ methods that will prevent students "from feeling lost in the university. I would like to see activities outside of class that will give the student a sense of a relationship with the university. I'd like to see faculty members residing in the dormitories, and I'd like to have lectures in the dorms. Above all, I want the students to feel that they are somebody at the university and not just part of a great mass that moves through the campus without anyone taking notice of them."

Toll doesn't hold any doctrinaire views about teaching versus research. "I see nothing wrong with making research appointments, if it can be shown that the research has some kind of beneficial feedback effect on the teaching process. But I don't think research at an academic institution should be permitted to exist just for its own sake."

Why, when he had numerous attractive offers, did he take one from a relatively unknown institution? Toll's answer was virtually identical to what one hears from many of the people who are accepting offers to the institution: "We're practically starting from scratch there," he said, "and it's pretty exciting to be in on the beginning of a university that has every reason to believe that it can be one of this country's great institutions in a decade."

—D. S. GREENBERG

Indirect Costs: House Legislation Embodies New Cost-Sharing Formula for Federal Research Grants

Institutions of higher education seem to have felt it infra dig to protest too much in public about financial arrangements with federal agencies on research grants, but the formula for payment of indirect costs of research has been a persistent bone of contention. Congress this year appears to be making changes which should go some way toward quieting complaints of inequities under the present system. These changes, however, would not fulfill the desires of those who would like to see the federal government pay the full costs of federally sponsored research.

The House of Representatives has passed the three major appropriations bills containing research funds, and in each case the old requirement that indirect cost payments (designed to cover costs of institutional overhead and administration) be limited to a flat percentage of the amount of the grant has been replaced with a general proviso that the federal government shall not pay the entire cost of a project.

Affected are the bills carrying appropriations for the Defense Department, for the Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare departments, and for Independence Offices (which include the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation).

The percentage formula which would be supplanted itself took several years to evolve. A few years ago limits on indirect-cost percentages varied from agency to agency. HEW grants bore a 15-percent limit; for Defense, the figure was 20 percent, and for Independent Offices, 25 percent. These variations were abolished, and the standard grant language currently states, "None of the funds provided herein shall be used to pay any recipient of a grant for the conduct of a research project an amount for indirect expenses in connection with such project in excess of 20 per centum of the direct costs."

A key congressional figure in the development of both the percentage formula and the new provision has been Representative John E. Fogarty (D–R.I.), who, as chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on Labor–Health, Education, and Welfare, has presided over the rapid expansion of federal support of medical research. Fogarty has held firmly to the belief that a university that wished to do research under a federal grant should help pay the costs of that research. And it was Fogarty's subcommittee which engineered the percentage formula and has now put forward the new cost-sharing scheme.

Fogarty appears to have sought the change because he became convinced by the argument that the applying of a flat percentage, as had become the practice, on projects which differed