

2009

San José State University Office of the President, Robert D. Clark Records

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Guide to the San José State University Office of the President, Robert D. Clark Records

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Descriptive Summary

Title: San José State University Office of the President, Robert D. Clark Records

Dates: 1953-1969

Bulk Dates: 1964-1969

Collection number: MSS-2009-08-03

Creator: San José State University

Collection Size: 53 boxes(66.25 linear feet)

Repository: San José State University. Library.

San José, California 95192-0028

Abstract: The Office of the President is the highest administrative office for the campus, reporting to the California State University (CSU) Chancellor and Board of Trustees, respectively. As such, the Office of the President records document the overall policies, practices and procedures of the daily operation of the campus, as well as the interaction with other CSU campuses and with the CSU administration. The Office of the President, Robert D. Clark Records, 1953-1969 (bulk 1964-1969), document Clark's tenure as university president. The records consist of administrative files, correspondence, newspaper clippings, meeting minutes, and reports. This collection is arranged into five series: Series I. Administrative Records, 1957-1970 (1967-1969); Series II. Budget Files, 1956-1968 (bulk 1965-1968); Series III. Correspondence, 1964-1969 (bulk 1966-1968); Series IV. CSU Trustees Records, 1964-1969 (bulk 1966-1969); and Series V. Meeting Minutes, 1953-1969 (bulk 1966-1968).

Physical location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

San José State University Office of the President, Robert D. Clark Records, MSS-2009-08-03, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Elizabeth Lopez. Finding aid EAD encoded by Mary Ellen Petrich. Reviewed by Danelle Moon and Erin Louthen.

Project Information

This finding aid was created as part of the Survey and Cataloging Project, a two-year San José State University Library grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project began in 2008. The Project Director is Danelle Moon. The Project Archivist is Erin Louthen.

Organizational History

In 1857 the San Francisco Board of Education established Minns' Evening Normal School for current and prospective teachers in the city. Named after its principal, George W. Minns, the institution was formally established as the first California State Normal School by the State Legislature in 1862. A decade later, the Legislature voted to move the Normal School to San José, and the school relocated to its new home on Washington Square prior to the fall term of 1872. After a fire destroyed the Normal School building in 1880, the Legislature authorized \$200,000 to construct a new building on the same site. Completed in 1881, the building was commonly referred to as the Second State Normal School. After several names and curriculum changes, Minns' Normal School is now San José State University, offering more than 134 bachelor's and master's degrees with 110 concentrations, and is recognized as one of the top public universities granting such degrees in the West.

The Office of the President is the highest administrative office for the campus, reporting to the California State University (CSU) Chancellor and Board of Trustees, respectively. As such, the Office of the President records document the overall policies, practices, and procedures of the daily operation of the campus, as well as the interaction with other CSU campuses and with the CSU administration.

Robert D. Clark was the first president screened and nominated by a representative faculty group at San José State University. Clark was born in Nebraska in 1910, and graduated from Pasadena College in 1931 with a B.A. in English. He taught at Pasadena College while attending the University of Southern California where he earned his M.A. in 1935 and his Ph.D. in 1946.

Clark served as president of San José State University from 1964-1969, a period characterized by student unrest, racial tension, and state budget cuts in higher education. During his tenure, Clark emphasized academic excellence, aesthetic beauty, and the institutional improvement of the campus. Clark's vision was reflected through campus projects such as the creation of the experimental interdisciplinary school New College (1968-1980), the renovation of Tower Hall, and the acquisition of the Marine Laboratory facility at Moss Landing.

Despite the unrest and violence of the 1960s, Clark moved the college forward as a stronger institution, while at the same time showing great empathy for student protests during the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. Clark's presidency contributed much to the university's curriculum development and set an example for mutual cooperation and community relations. In 1969, Clark resigned from SJSU and accepted a position as president of the University of Oregon, a position he held until his retirement in 1975.

Bibliography

Gilbert, Benjamin F., and Burdick, Charles. *Washington Square, 1857-1979: The History of San José State University*. San José, California: San José State University, 1980.

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University of Oregon. *Robert D. Clark Papers Timeline*. <http://robertdclark.uoregon.edu/Timeline/>

Walsh, James P. *San José State University: An Interpretive History, 1950-2000*. San José, California: San José State University, 2003.

Related Material

California State University Board of Trustees Records, MSS-2009-03-10, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt2199r4s5/>

San José State University Oral History Project Collection, MSS-2006-04-01, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt5d5nd3sj/>

San José State College Presidential Office Administrative Records, MSS-2009-04-01, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt8t1nf3qh/>

San José State University Public Relations and Publications Records, MSS-2009-03-11, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt8779s041/>

Related Collections

Robert D. Clark Papers, 1928-1990, Coll. 285, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon. <http://robertdclark.uoregon.edu/>

Scope and Content of Collection

The Office of the President is the highest administrative office for the campus, reporting to the California State University (CSU) Chancellor and Board of Trustees, respectively. As such, the Office of the President records document the overall policies, practices and procedures of the daily operation of the campus, as well as the interaction with other CSU campuses and with the CSU administration. The Office of the President, Robert D. Clark Records, 1953-1969 (bulk 1964-1969), document Clark's tenure as university president. The records consist of administrative files, correspondence, newspaper clippings, meeting minutes, and reports.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into five series: Series I. Administrative Records, 1957-1970 (1967-1969); Series II. Budget Files, 1956-1968 (bulk 1965-1968); Series III. Correspondence, 1964-1969 (bulk 1966-1968); Series IV. CSU Trustees Records, 1964-1969 (bulk 1966-1969) and Series V. Meeting Minutes, 1953-1969 (bulk 1966-1968).

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Clark, Robert D. (Robert Donald), 1910-2005.

San José State University President's Office -- History.

San José State University President's Office -- Records and correspondence.

San José State University -- Athletics Dept. -- History.

San José State College -- History.

San José State University -- History.

Education, Higher -- California -- San José.

Discrimination in housing -- California -- San José.

African American students -- California -- San José.

College presidents -- California -- San José.

College administrators -- California -- San José.

SERIES I: Administrative Records 1957-1970 (bulk 1967-1969)

Physical Description: 22 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series contains the administrative records of President Robert D. Clark (1964-1969). During his tenure, Clark faced a period of extreme budget cuts along side increased student enrollment rates. The state budget cuts affected faculty salaries which subsequently led to the faculty's unionization and a push for salary increases, reduction in class sizes, and the right to collective bargaining. In 1968, such efforts culminated in a faculty strike. Led by the American Federation of Teachers, the strike lasted 36 days. Under these difficult circumstances, Clark managed to take on such tasks as expanding campus facilities and student housing, and improving the educational curriculum. The administrative records in this series are representative of Clark's efforts to address these and other related issues, and include reports, memos, newspaper clippings, general files, and newsletters.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically by date range.

Box 1

Administrative Affairs & Council Files 1957-1967

Box 2 **Department Reports, California State College System Crisis 1961-1967**

Box 3 **Committee Files & Studies 1962-1970**

Box 4 **General Files, C-D 1963-1967**

Box 5 **General Files, E-F 1963-1967**

Box 6 **General Files, G-L 1963-1967**

Box 7 **General Files, P-S, Salaries & Sigma Chi Files 1963-1967**

Box 8 **Athletics Department & Student Unrest Files 1963-1973**

Box 9 **General Files, S-Z 1964-1968**

Box 10 **General Files, F-M 1964-1969**

Box 11 **ROTC/Marines, Salaries, Sororities & Special Case Files 1965-1968**

Box 12 **Campus Expansion & Enrollment Files 1965-1969**

Box 13 **Far West Laboratory Files 1966-1968**

Box 14 **Campus Expansion Files 1967**

Box 15 **Campus Reports 1967**

Box 16 **Administrative Affairs Files 1967**

Box 17 **Collective Bargaining & Vietnam War Files 1967-1968**

Box 18 **Collective Bargaining & Minorities Files 1967-1969**

Box 19 **Academic Department Files 1967-1970**

Box 20 **Administrative Affairs Files 1968**

Box 21 **Newsletters & Newspaper Clippings 1968-1969**

Box 22 **Newsletters & Reports 1968-1969**

SERIES II: Budget Files 1956-1968 (bulk 1965-1968)

Physical Description: 5 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series consists of budget files and reports generated by various San José State University and CSU administrative entities, pertaining primarily to the California State budget cuts in higher education. The records include State of California budget files, SJSU proposed operating budget files, and California State Colleges budget files, among others.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically by date range.

Box 23 **California State College Budget Files 1956-1968**

Box 24 **CSU Chancellor's Reports 1960s**

Box 25 **Budget Planning Files 1963-1965**

Box 26 **General Files, A-B 1964-1967**

Box 27 **General Files, A-G 1965-1966**

SERIES III: Correspondence 1964-1969 (bulk 1966-1968)

Physical Description: 9 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series contains President Clark's correspondence to and from the general public regarding his stance on various campus incidents, particularly relating to issues of racial discrimination and the anti-war student movement on campus.

The rise of the African-American student movement in the 1960s drew national attention to the issue of racial discrimination on campus, specifically as it pertained to the treatment of African-American student athletes. The movement at SJSU was led by sociology professor Harry Edwards and the student group United Black Students for Action. Evidence of the severity of the issue manifests in the many crank letters President Clark received over the course of the year 1969, in which persons expressed in no uncertain terms their opinions on African-American students attending San José State University.

In 1967, Professor Edwards threatened to disrupt the San José State vs. University of Texas, El Paso football game if administrative action was not taken against the issue of racial discrimination. As a result, Clark cancelled the football game to avoid possible violence and entered into negotiations with Edwards, which resulted in the creation of the first Ombudsman position on a university campus in the U.S. The position was filled by J. Benton White, an ordained minister and a founding faculty member of the Religious Studies program at SJSU. President Clark also addressed discriminatory policies in the Greek system.

In the late 1960s, the anti-war student movement against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War also grew. Anti-war demonstrations at SJSU included student protests against the Dow Chemical Company, Navy recruiters, and the disruption of an ROTC drill. Together, these actions drew large public commentary, both in support of and against President Clark's decisions on such divisive issues. This series includes correspondence resulting from these and similar events.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically by date range.

Box 28 **Correspondence: General Incidents 1964-1965**

Box 29 **Dow Chemical Co. & Professor Harry Edwards 1965-1968**

Box 30 **Racial Discrimination & Athletics Dept. 1966-1968**

Box 31 **Racial Discrimination 1966-1968**

Box 32 **Correspondence: General 1966-1969**

Box 33 **Racial Discrimination & Speech Drafts 1967-1968**

Box 34 **General Files, C-J 1967-1968**

Box 35 **Correspondence: General 1968-1969**

Box 36 **Grievances, 1968 Olympics & Professor Harry Edwards 1968-1969**

Series IV: **CSU Trustees Records 1964-1969 (bulk 1966-1969)**

Physical Description: 11 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series contains letters and directives from the Trustees of the California State Colleges, as well as budget reports and meeting minutes.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically by date range.

Box 37 **Presidents Council 1964-1967**

Box 38 **Trustees Letters & Directives 1965-1966**

Boxes 39-47 **Trustees Meeting Minutes 1965-1969**

Series V: **Miscellaneous Meeting Minutes 1953-1969 (bulk 1966-1968)**

Physical Description: 6 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series consists of various council and committee meeting minutes, including SJSU administrative staff meetings, the Academic Council, and the Academic Senate.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically by date range.

Box 48 **Administrative Staff Meetings 1953-1968**

Box 49 **Academic Council 1963-1966**

Box 50 **Academic Council & Academic Planning 1963-1966**

Box 51 **Academic Senate, Administrative Staff Meetings & Student Unrest 1964-1966**

Box 52 **Academic Council & Far West Laboratories 1965-1968**

Box 53 **Academic Council & Administrative Staff Meetings 1966-1969**
