



Letter to Robert Gordon Sproul from Thomas Wayland Vaughan, ca. 1950

President Robert Gordon Sproul
250 Administration Building
University of California
Berkeley 4, California
Dear President Sproul:

Since my retirement in 1936 as Director of the Scripps Institution I have tried conscientiously not to interfere in any way with the activities of the Institution or of the University of California. However, the decision of the Regents on February 24, to dismiss faculty members without a hearing for refusal to take a special oath, seems to me to be so laden with tragic potentialities for the University and for this country that I consider it my duty as a member of the Academic Senate to go on record in favor of the faculty's position. I am in wholehearted agreement with the statement concerning these matters issued on March 14 by the faculty of the Scripps Institution.

I have always been proud of my association with the University of California, not only because of its long record of accomplishment in education and research, but also because of its pioneering leadership in the development of academic democracy and faculty self government. The historical importance of this development will grow with each passing year and the wisdom of the Regents in fostering it will be more and more widely recognized.

The February 24 action of the Regents, though undoubtedly motivated by a desire to protect the University, seems to me quite inconsistent with their time-tested policy of granting joint

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responsibility to the faculty in academic matters. Unless a compromise that receives the assent of the faculty can be reached the foundation of confidence and mutual trust between the faculty and the Regents will be largely destroyed.

Legally, the Regents are responsible to the people of California, for whom they hold the University as a public trust, but morally, they are responsible to the people of the United States to maintain the University as an island of light and freedom in a world of increasing darkness and depression.

I earnestly hope that this issue can be settled in good will and mutual trust, and I am confident that your personal leadership will be as effective as it has been in the past in bringing about a satisfactory solution.

Very sincerely yours
Thomas Wayland Vaughan
Professor of Oceanography and
Director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Emeritus