With the exception of the first semester of the College of Hawai‘i, spring 1908, there has always been either a President, Interim President, or Acting President of the University of Hawai‘i. That first semester, Willis T. Pope refused the title of Acting President and said he would take title Acting Dean instead. By the following autumn, John W. Gilmore, the first president of College of Hawai‘i, had arrived from his former post at the University of California.

Since the beginning of College of Hawai‘i there have been fourteen presidents of the University; six acting presidents; an acting Dean; and one interim president who also became president. As mentioned above, Willis T. Pope functioned as acting dean for spring semester 1908. He recruited five students from the Territorial Normal School where he was Vice Principle to attend College of Hawai‘i. They took preparatory classes under Pope and some others on the faculty. The following fall semester, under President John W. Gilmore, the classes taught were college level classes. Gilmore resigned in 1913, and John S. Donaggho, professor of mathematics, became acting president.

Arthur L. Dean was hired, effective fall semester 1914, as president, coming from Yale University. He remained president until 1927 when he resigned from the University and became head of the Pineapple Research Institute. President David L. Crawford, professor of entomology, became president in 1927 and held the office for the longest tenure in the history of UH, until 1941. He resigned after a controversial battle with certain members of the Board of Regents and at least one faculty person. Nevertheless, he seems to have been well-liked by the students and a considerable portion of the faculty. Arthur Keller, Dean of the collection of Applied Sciences at UH, became acting president.

Shortly after the entry of the United States into World War II, Gregg M. Sinclair became the fourth president of University of Hawai‘i. He retired in 1955, being the second longest president in the university’s history. Paul Bachman became president immediately following President Sinclair’s retirement. His early death in January 1957 occurred in the midst of the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration (dating from the legislative approval of the College of Hawai‘i, not the beginning of classes). Willard Wilson, professor of English and administrator in the University, functioned as acting president for about one and a half years.

Following World War II, the University expanded to include a campus in Hilo. The president continued the function of president for the University, though for a time, Hilo was not considered separate from UH M_noa. With the creation by the Hawai‘i State Legislature of the UH System in 1965, the president’s role expanded to be in charge of all campuses with intermediaries over the other campuses. At times, the president filled this role for M_noa campus, functioning as both president of the system and chancellor of M_noa; at other times the two
offices were separated and two different individuals filled the offices. As a result, some of the records in the President’s Office record group will not contain as much material on M_noa campus; one should also refer to the records in the Chancellor’s Office for additional material.

Laurence H. Snyder became the sixth president of University of Hawai‘i in 1958. Under his leadership, the University of Hawai‘i tried something very unusual, quitting participation in football in the fall of 1961. The regents reversed their decision less than one year later. Snyder left the presidency effective 1963, to be replaced by Thomas Hale Hamilton. Hamilton was president for another five years, resigning the presidency amid a struggle over the tenure of a controversial professor in 1968. Two acting presidents, Robert Hiatt and Richard S. Takasaki, led UH until the appointment of Harlan Cleveland as president became effective in fall semester 1969.


SCOPE NOTE

The earliest records in the Archives from the president’s office date from during the administration of David L. Crawford. Earlier records seem not to have survived. The earliest file in this accession dates from 1921, with several others dating as early as the late 1920s, but most date from the 1930s or later.

The early records of the president’s office do not separate into chronological divisions for each president, but follow a rough categorical organization. A group of files on general subjects arranged alphabetically fill the first nine boxes of the collection. A large group of files on University of Hawaii topics then follows (boxes 10-47); these are also arranged alphabetically by topic. Box 48 contains files pertaining to the City and County of Honolulu. Boxes 49 through 54 contain files on the Territory and later State of Hawai‘i. Files on federal government agencies and programs fill boxes 55 through 59. Box 60 seems to start another alphabetical filing, with the topic “Carnegie Professors,” but box 61 starts over focusing on individuals with file names usually the surname of the person; these are also alphabetical. Some of the individuals are UH related; others have no connection except perhaps as a visiting dignitary or lecturer. Boxes 66 and 67 pertain again to UH; boxes 68 and 69 are with two possible exceptions contain files concerning state government. Box 70 contains a portion of files from the administration of Laurence Snyder labeled “Personal Miscellaneous” letters O through Z. The final three boxes contain records of UH Committees. Most files end in the 1950s or 1960s; the latest date for any file is 1971 which is the year this collection of records came to the University Archives.