THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
Princeton, New Jersey

Some Introductory Information

November, 1951
The Institute for Advanced Study is devoted to the encouragement, support and patronage of learning—of science, in the old, broad, undifferentiated sense of the word. The Institute partakes of the character both of a university and of a research institute; but it also differs in significant ways from both. It is unlike a university, for instance, in its small size—its academic membership at any one time numbers only a little over a hundred. It is unlike a university in that it has no formal curriculum, no scheduled courses of instruction, no commitment that all branches of learning be represented in its faculty and members. It is unlike a research institute in that its purposes are broader, that it supports many separate fields of study, that, with one exception, it maintains no laboratories; and above all in that it welcomes temporary members, whose intellectual development and growth are one of its principal purposes. The Institute, in short, is devoted to learning, in the double sense of the continued education of the individual, and of the intellectual enterprise on which he is embarked.

The Institute for Advanced Study was founded in 1930, by a gift of Mr. Louis Bamberger and his sister, Mrs. Felix Fuld. The Founders entrusted the general supervision and furthering of the Institute's purposes to a Board of Trustees of fifteen members, and to a Director elected by them, who should have primary responsibility for its academic affairs. The first Director was Abraham Flexner; he was succeeded in 1939 by Frank Aydelotte; and in 1947 by Robert Oppenheimer. In a letter addressed by the Founders to the first Trustees of the Institute, their original purposes were set forth. The Founders had in mind the creation of a graduate school, in which the students would have an opportunity to pursue work qualifying them for a higher
degree, and in which the Faculty, unburdened by the teaching of undergraduates, would be free to devote themselves to their researches and the training of graduate students. In actual fact, from the very first, the Institute has developed in a rather different way. It has awarded no degrees, and admits to membership only those who have already taken their highest degree. Its members are characteristically at once teacher and student. It thus carries even further than the Founders contemplated those typical features which were to distinguish it from the college or the university. For its course had been defined in the Founders' letter: "The primary purpose is the pursuit of advanced learning and exploration in fields of pure science and high scholarship to the utmost degree that the facilities of the institution and the ability of the faculty and students will permit."

The academic work of the Institute opened with the appointment of its first professors, eminent in pure mathematics and mathematical physics. A little later, appointments were made in various fields of archaeological and historical study, and in economics. These initial appointments, like the Faculty appointments to be made later, helped to define, though they did not limit, the fields of study at the Institute. On the one hand, the inevitable and desirable limitation on the size of the Faculty, and the importance of some partial community of interest between its members, have clearly foreclosed the possibility of representing all academic disciplines. On the other hand, although we have no policy of excluding members whose interests are remote from those of any member of the Faculty, we tend to support with special emphasis fields in which we have some tradition of fruitful activity.

The Institute has until now sought to work without experimental facilities. In part this is because
the Institute's limited funds could not adequately support such facilities; but it is also a natural consequence of an emphasis on, and solicitude for, temporary members, who manifestly cannot by themselves make feasible the operation of experimental programs. We have made one exception to this policy, and that a modest one, in supporting—with the support of the Government—an electronic computer project devoted both to the logical and mathematical problems of high-speed computing, and to some of its practical applications.

At present the academic work of the Institute is carried on in two schools: a School of Mathematics and a School of Historical Studies. The members of the School of Mathematics are for the most part pure mathematicians and theoretical physicists; but there have been members who have worked in other sciences—chemistry, biology, psychology, astronomy, for example. The School of Historical Studies is perhaps broader still in scope, and includes in principle all learning for which the use of the historical method is a principal instrument. Here, too, our work tends to reflect the interests of the Faculty: Greek archaeology and epigraphy, Greek philosophy and philology, palaeography, mediaeval history and the history of art, modern history, politics and economics, the history of mathematics and the sciences. Here again there have been members, working alone or in concert, in disciplines not represented on the Faculty.

In these two schools, the Institute has some 35 permanent members, or members with appointments of long term. Among the permanent members, there are about a dozen who constitute the present Faculty. The names of these members will be found on a following page.
A principal function of the Institute is to provide for members who come here for short periods, for a term or a year or two years. There are currently some eighty such members in residence. Admission to membership is by vote of the Faculty concerned, and, when membership extends for more than two years, by concurrent vote of the whole Faculty. Perhaps a half or two thirds of our members are invited by us because we know or learn of their work, and believe that a time here would be fruitful for them, for their work, and for that of other members; other members are selected from the many applicants who write to us outlining the state of their researches and their reasons for desiring to come. There is a real competition for memberships, since both the physical limitations of the institution, and the desire to preserve a community small enough to be a true community, limit the number of members admissible.

Again, about half of our members are supported by grants-in-aid from funds available to the schools, and supplementary specific purposes funds of the Institute; the other half are supported by the members' own institutions, by the United States and foreign governments, and by private foundations. Applications for membership may be made to the Director, preferably by January of the preceding year; forms indicating the necessary supporting information are available in the Director's Office.

The Institute maintains some of the facilities necessary for academic life, and relies heavily on a fortunate symbiosis with Princeton University, from which the Institute is organically and administratively separate, but with which it enjoys close academic and intellectual relations. Thus the Institute has a small working library, partially adequate for the fields in which we work; but inevitably we rely on the libraries of Princeton University.
The Institute occupies about a square mile of land; most of this is farm and woodland. Its buildings house libraries, restaurant, common rooms, offices for faculty and for members, seminar and lecture rooms. The Institute operates a housing project for temporary members. It serves luncheon, tea, and, during term time, dinner; and provides transportation between its buildings and the town of Princeton and the University. Information on administrative services is available from the General Manager.

The Institute has always welcomed scholars from abroad and, in so far as possible, has tried to open its doors to qualified members from all parts of the world. More than half of our members come to us from Europe or from Asia.
PROFESSORS

School of Historical Studies
Harold F. Cherniss
Edward Mead Earle
Ernst H. Kantrowicz
Benjamin D. Meritt
Erwin Panofsky
Homer A. Thompson
E. L. Woodward

School of Mathematics
Deane Montgomery
Marston Morse
Robert Oppenheimer*
Abraham Pais
Atle Selberg
John von Neumann
Hassler Whitney

MEMBERS WITH APPOINTMENTS OF LONG TERM

School of Historical Studies
Sir Henry Clay
Paul Frankl
Hetty Goldman**
George Kennan
E. A. Lowe**
David Mitrany
George Stamires
Otto Neugebauer
Walter W. Stewart**
Jacob Viner
Kurt Weitzmann

School of Mathematics
Julian H. Bigelow
Niels Bohr
Jule G. Charney
Freeman J. Dyson
Albert Einstein**
Kurt Gödel
Herman H. Goldstine
Res Jost
Jean Leray
Otto Neugebauer
Wolfgang Pauli
George Placzek
Oswald Veblen**
Hermann Weyl**
Chen Ning Yang

* Director
** Professors Emeriti

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