

[Home](#)

Finding Aid to the Treumann, William, The Controversy of 1955 Records

Treumann, William, The Controversy of 1955, 1953-1989

William Treumann, The Controversy of 1955 records [Bulk Dates: 1953-1957]

1 linear foot

[Biography/History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Controversy of 1955 Records](#).

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the University Archives.

Provenance: Donated by William Treumann, 2007 (Acc 644) and transfer from Special Collection, University of North Dakota, 2008 (Acc 679).

Property rights: The University Archives owns the property rights to this collection.

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Citation: [Identification of item]. William Treumann, The Controversy of 1955 Records, University Archives, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY/HISTORY

North Dakota's top rated story of 1955 was a controversy involving four North Dakota Agricultural College (NDAC) professors and the College President.

The controversy was brought to public attention in 1954 when President Hultz suddenly terminated the Geology Department at NDAC. Although not members of the terminated department, there were four NDAC professors who felt this was a violation of tenure. Drs. Cecil B. Haver (Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics), Baldur H. Kristjanson (Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics), Daniel Q. Posin (Professor and Chairman of Physics), and William B. Treumann (Professor of Chemistry) felt that the sudden termination of the department was one in a long chain of actions taken by President Hultz that were inappropriate.

The controversy progressed when the four became angrier with Hultz for other actions, including his criticism of articles that some of them had published. They considered Hultz's actions a violation of their academic freedom and advocated removing him from his position as President.

The controversy became more heated and the State Board of Higher Education became aware of the disagreement, which had become public by the end of 1954. The State Board studied the matter in early 1955 and found that "an unhappy situation exists that must not continue." They followed by requesting the immediate resignation of the four professors. The professors refused to comply.

One week later President Hultz formally charged the four professors as having "engaged in a course of conduct deliberately intended to interfere with, undermine, frustrate, and render ineffective the administration of the Agricultural College." The professors were discharged from their positions at the NDAC "subject to public hearings" which began in May.

The hearings were so popular with the public and became the state's biggest news story of the year. After two weeks of testimony a final secret ballot by the 13 member Advisory Committee was taken. The ballots, and subsequent vote by the State Board, unanimously dismissed all four professors from their teaching positions at NDAC.

The four appealed to the North Dakota Supreme Court but the court refused to take the case. The American Association of University Professors did review the case and in 1956 censured NDAC for violation of the association's principles of academic freedom and tenure.

Scope and Content

The collection consists primarily of materials (news clippings, correspondence, memos, hand written notes, testimony) donated by Dr. William B. Treumann, one of the four terminated professors. Dr. Treumann donated the materials to the University Archives in 2007. In addition, one paper written by a North Dakota State University student (1977) and another written by a University of North Dakota student provide additional insights into the controversy.

This collection primarily consist of memos, correspondence, and newspaper articles dealing with the controversy of 1955. The majority of the material was donated by William B. Treumann, one of the fired professors. He donated the collection in 2007. Treumann received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Dakota in 1942; he also received a master's degree in 1944 and a doctorate in 1947 both from the University of Illinois. Treumann was an assistant professor of chemistry and mathematics at the University of Illinois from 1942 until 1946. He came to NDAC in 1946 as an assistant professor of chemistry. He was promoted to full professor in 1947 and served in this capacity until his termination in 1955. He received a position as assistant professor of chemistry at Minnesota State University Moorhead in 1960. He eventually became the Dean of Science at MSUM and retired in 1981.

These records consist of four series and all series are in chronological order.. The **first series** includes memos, notes, and correspondence to/from Dr. Treumann dealing with the controversy from 1953 until 1989. The bulk of this series is from the years 1954-1956. The **second series** consists of Transcripts of Interviews held at NDAC between December 1-3, 1954, and an Index to Statements, dated December 7, 1954. The **third series** is a collection of newspaper articles from across the state of North Dakota and a few from Minnesota. The articles range from 1953 till 1956 with most of them being from 1954 and

1955. There is an incomplete index in the first folder. The **fourth series** contains the student papers written in 1977 and 1979.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

BOX 1

Finding Aid

Letters, notes and correspondence – January – December 1953

Letters, notes and correspondence – January – December 1954

Letters, notes and correspondence – January – February 1955

Letters, notes and correspondence – March & April 1955

William Treumann (handwritten) Notebook – April-May 1955

Letters, notes and correspondence – May – December 1955

Letters, notes, and correspondence – January – November 1956

Letters, notes and correspondence – February - December 1957

Letters, notes and correspondence - 1958-1989

Letters, note and correspondence – n.d. (2 folders)

Interviews Held at North Dakota Agricultural College – December 1, 2, 3, 1954

Index to Statements – December 7, 1954

Newspaper articles from 1953-1956, incomplete index in first folder (2 folders)

“The N.D.A.C. Purge of 1954-1956,” by Mark L. Anderson, c. 1977 (Student Paper - INTERNAL USE ONLY)

“The Development of the Controversy at the north Dakota Agricultural college during the period between 1953 and 1955,” by Kirby K. Brandhagen, UND, c. 1979 (Student Paper)