

Dr. William B. Thompson named chairman of Physics department

November 4, 1969

Dr. William B. Thompson, professor of physics at the University of California, San Diego, has been named chairman of UCSD's department of physics, Chancellor William J. McGill announced today.

Thompson succeeds Dr. Herbert York, who in September was appointed Acting Dean of Graduate Studies at UCSD.

A specialist in plasma physics and thermonuclear research, Thompson joined the UCSD faculty in 1961 as a visiting professor from the Culham Laboratory, Oxford, England where he had been head of the theoretical physics division. He returned to England in 1963 to serve for three years as professor of plasma physics at Oxford University. In 1966 he rejoined the UCSD faculty.

Thompson earned his master's degree in physics in 1947 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and in 1950 received his doctoral degree in applied mathematics from the University of Toronto, Ontario.

A member of the American Physical Society, the Canadian Association of Physics and the Royal Astronomical Society, Thompson has concentrated throughout his career on the theory of plasma physics and its application to controlled thermonuclear research. He was one of a small group of scientists who, in 1950, initiated research in this field in England. The group's activities later took form as the Culham Laboratory for Controlled Thermonuclear Fusion.

Author of various scientific publications, Thompson has served as associate editor of the Journal of Plasma Physics, joint editor of Advances in Plasma Physics, and as a member of the editorial board of Interscience Tracts on Physics and Astronautics.

Thompson resides with his wife and two children in La Jolla.