

25 April 2019

Dear President Tessier-Lavigne and Provost Drell,

We, the members of C-LIB, write to express our concern about the announced plan to eliminate the modest (\$1.5M) base subsidy to the Stanford University Press. We worry that this decision will fatally cripple the Press. Consequently, we would like to express our strong belief that any decision about drastic restructuring at the Press should be made only after full consultation and well-prepared discussion in the academic senate, with a chance for all members of the university community to be heard. Moreover, we urge that any decision be based on a careful examination of the Press's operations by an external committee of experts with experience in academic publishing who can offer an assessment of the Stanford University Press and suggestions for improvement.

University presses serve a vital need, disseminating scholarly work and communicating the results of academic research. They exist expressly to publish works that may be groundbreaking but are not necessarily commercial. Accordingly, they are destined to operate at a loss. These losses are made up by a combination of endowment income (both Harvard and Princeton have endowments of over \$100 million), journal income, fundraising and subsidies from their universities. The small annual subsidy the Press receives pays dividends in the form of wide-ranging lists that showcase a variety of academic disciplines. Moreover, because of the Press's reputation for excellence and thoughtfulness, it successfully competes for authors with much larger and better-funded presses. Eliminating the base subsidy will not only undermine an important venue for scholarship but will also send an extremely unfortunate signal about Stanford's commitment to scholarship in the arts, humanities, and social sciences—all fields of inquiry vital to a world class university, as indeed is a strong university press.

We hope you will reconsider any decision to eliminate the subsidy to Stanford University Press pending broader internal and external reviews of The Press's objectives, operations and outcomes, its role in the community at Stanford, and the message it sends on a national level regarding Stanford's commitment to humanities and social sciences.

Sincerely,

Professor Jessica Riskin, Chair
Professor Sigrid Close, Aeronautics and Astronautics
Professor Heather Hadlock, Music
Dr. Daniel Ibarra, Postdoctoral Scholar, Geological Sciences
Professor Thomas S. Mullaney, History
Dr. Julie Parsonnet, Medicine
Professor John Rickford, Linguistics
Professor Jeff Wine, Psychology