

April 20, 2019

Dear Provost Drell and Dean Satz,

I write in connection with the discussions that are ongoing about the future of Stanford University Press. I may not have all the relevant information, but any discussion about the status of a press quickly travels through the academic world. As someone with a forthcoming book from the Press, and as a faculty member who has served with great commitment to the Press as an advisor since 2002, I am not a disinterested party.

As an author, I recently completed editing a very large thirty chapter new edition of *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*. This is a book that was referred to in a review in *Science* magazine as “the Bible” of research on the nonprofit sector. My co-editor is my colleague, Patricia Bromley, an assistant professor in the School of Education. We thought very carefully about which press to go with for the book. The first two editions had been published, with great success, by Yale University Press. But we didn’t want to just repeat and go back to the same press, and wanted to select a publisher willing to give us first-rate service and show a commitment to building a list on nonprofit studies and research on philanthropic institutions. We received offers from Yale, Oxford, and Stanford, and chose the latter. It was an easy choice actually, as the Press showed much greater commitment and savvy about the book. With some work, we extricated ourselves from our Yale Press contract and the book is now in production with Stanford. The care and attention the Press has given has been stellar, and has lead us to think we made the right choice. Needless to say, current discussions about the fate of the Press are deeply worrying.

The contributors to this volume are an intentional mix of distinguished older scholars and the most promising up and coming young faculty. Numerous Stanford colleagues are involved. Besides Patricia and myself, Paul Brest, former Dean of our Law School, and Rob Reich, Professor of Political Science and Philosophy, are contributors. Two young scholars from our sociology department are represented as well.

Two former Stanford postdocs –Ted Lechterman and Claire Dunning, are co-authors of chapters. The University of Chicago and UCLA each have six contributors. Our authors span schools of law, business, education, public policy, and departments of economics, political science, and sociology. This is a book that will change the landscape of research on civil society and philanthropy, and we intentionally chose Stanford because we thought it was the best press to present this interdisciplinary work.

We’re not looking forward to the queries we will soon get about the Press’s status, as news travels fast in the academic world. I do want to emphasize that even though Stanford Press is not an elite press, in the rare league with Harvard, Chicago, or Princeton, I think it punches well above its

weight. And in terms of prizes and media attention, SUP is easily in the top ten. Moreover, the support SUP receives from the University pales in comparison to the endowment funds that elite presses have at their disposal. But the staff of the Press are every equal of the people who work at those university presses. I know this well as I have previously published books with Princeton University Press, The University of Chicago Press, and commercial presses such as Basic Books. I would be more than happy to talk with you about Stanford University Press should you be interested. It seems unimaginable to me that a premier university would not support having a university press and would even consider reducing the publication outlets for young scholars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Walter W. Powell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Walter W. Powell

Professor of Education and (by courtesy) Sociology, Engineering, Business, and Communication
Co-Director Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society