

Stanford News (<http://news.stanford.edu/>)

JUNE 14, 2019

Stanford University Press the focus of Faculty Senate meeting

The 51st Faculty Senate wrapped up its 2018-19 session with a lively discussion on the future of Stanford University Press; annual faculty report released.

BY CHRIS BLISS

The Stanford University Press took center stage at the Faculty Senate meeting on Thursday, with senate members engaging in a lively discussion about the role of a university press, the challenges of academic publishing and the future of Stanford University Press.

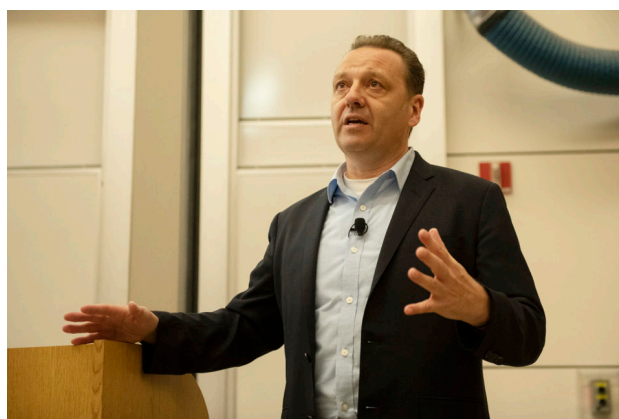
At its final meeting of the academic year, the senate also heard an update from President Marc Tessier-Lavigne on the university's application to Santa Clara County for a General Use Permit. And in a longstanding Stanford tradition, the senate bade a lighthearted farewell to its outgoing chair, Stephen Stedman, professor of political science, featuring a humorous quiz on Faculty Senate history.

In addition, the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity released its annual Report on the Faculty, which outlines gains, losses and overall composition of the faculty.

Stanford University Press

Most of the senate meeting was focused on the Stanford University Press, and senators concluded the meeting by approving the creation of an additional faculty committee that proponents argued will provide additional transparency and an invigorated role for faculty governance in matters pertaining to the Press.

The Press moved into the spotlight in April when Provost Persis Drell announced that, while Stanford would continue to support the Press with base funding, the university did not intend to fund the Press' request for five additional years of \$1.7 million in one-time support.



Alan Harvey, director of Stanford University Press, addressing the Faculty Senate on Thursday. *(Image credit: L.A. Cicero)*

Following faculty concerns, Drell clarified that the university had no intention of closing the Press and that she recommended the formation of a faculty committee to develop a long-term plan to strengthen the Press' financial and operational model. The provost made additional one-time funds of \$1.7 million available to the Press for fiscal year 2020 to assist with this process.

The Press received about \$900,000 annually in institutional support from the university's base general funds and income from a small endowment, and at the senate meeting Thursday, Drell said that support would continue. The Press also receives about \$5.1 million in revenue from book sales and other sources; however, that income does not cover its annual expenses.

"The challenge we've been confronting is that the Press is operating with a structural deficit, which was \$1.7 million in 2008, and that has motivated a succession of requests for one-time funding," Drell said. "There have been attempts to address the structural deficit that have not been successful in the past. We need a strategy and a plan to ensure that our Press is excellent and supported over the long term, and we will be working with the faculty on that."

She referred to the recent formation of the faculty committee, chaired by Judith Goldstein, chair of the Department of Political Science. The committee is charged with seeking insights from the campus community, as well as from outside experts, on various issues relating to the Press, including assessing its optimal size, financial needs, fundraising potential, organizational structure and governance, and reporting relationships within the university.

Drell reassured the senate members of the vital role of the Press. "Academic presses are an important part of the academic ecosystem, and I believe they are critical to supporting an environment of intellectual freedom," she said. "There are areas where the Stanford Press is making a decisive impact on particular academic fields. And we absolutely want to continue to support that.

"There is no intention of closing the Press. On the contrary, our goal is a Press that is healthy and excellent."

Background on Stanford University Press

Providing background and context for the discussion, Alan Harvey, director of Stanford University Press, gave a presentation on its history and operations.

The Press publishes 125 books annually in a variety of fields from anthropology, sociology and politics to literary studies, philosophy and religion. Books in the fields of history and business/economics generate the most sales, according to Harvey.

Noting the role of the Press in launching the careers of young scholars, he said that 35 to 40 percent of the titles are first books. "The publishing we do in all these various areas is really integral to the careers of many scholars," he said.

Harvey highlighted some recent award-winning titles and showed some comparative data relating to other academic presses. While presses such as Oxford and Cambridge publish many more titles per year, he noted that Stanford University Press is much more specialized and is highly competitive in the marketplace. “We punch well above our weight,” he said.

In the discussion that followed Harvey’s presentation, several senators asked about the impact of the recent increased focus on the Press’ operations and finances. Harvey acknowledged that it was “challenging, morale-wise” and that he was concerned that scholars would hesitate in submitting books.

Other senators asked about ideas for other sources of income for the Press. Harvey said that many university presses derive significant income from journals and distribution programs; however, these had been established decades before and it would be extremely costly to create such programs now. He said that fundraising was the most likely source for other income for the Press.

In response to a question about why Stanford doesn’t publish books on computer science, Harvey responded that the overhead in running a science publishing program is very high, which can be offset by producing a high volume of books. To start such a program at Stanford would require a significant investment, he said.

Motion by the senate

A motion was put forth calling for the establishment of an ad hoc committee, in addition to the provost’s committee, to make recommendations to the senate regarding faculty governance and oversight of the Stanford University Press. The committee would assess the academic value of the Press and more clearly define the role of faculty governance in matters pertaining to the Press.

Adrian Daub, professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies, who introduced the motion, commented on the spirit of the resolution. “We want the Press to thrive, to make sure it’s on more solid footing than occasional cash infusions can provide and we want it to be first-rate,” he said.

The motion also asked for both committees to complete their work before any decisions were made about the future of the Press. It was clarified in discussion that for the committee’s work to be helpful in informing the budget process, their work would need to be completed by December. After some debate about which body would establish the charge of the committee, an amendment to the resolution was made so that the committee’s charge would be established by the Faculty Senate’s Committee on Committees. Following discussion, the motion was passed by the senate.

General Use Permit update

Tessier-Lavigne gave an update on the university’s application for a new **General Use Permit** (<https://gup.stanford.edu/>), which is now before the Santa Clara County Planning Commission. The proposed permit would authorize development of academic facilities and housing at Stanford over roughly the next two decades, while also addressing transportation, sustainability and other issues important to Stanford and the community.

After the Planning Commission hearings, the Board of Supervisors will conduct final study sessions and hearings beginning in the fall, during which the supervisors will vote on whether to approve the application.

This week, the university submitted its response to the county's draft Conditions of Approval, which are the implementation rules for the General Use Permit. Tessier-Lavigne said that in its response, the university expressed a willingness to deliver enough new housing to fully satisfy the demand for over 2,000 housing units generated by its proposed new academic development.

"We are actually embracing the opportunity to provide additional housing because taking care of our workforce is one of our highest priorities," he said.

In order to achieve the additional housing, Tessier-Lavigne said, the university is requesting modifications to some of the other conditions proposed by the county that risk making on-campus housing development infeasible.

In addition, he emphasized that Stanford is still seeking to work with the county on a development agreement – a contract that specifies benefits that Stanford would provide to the broader community over the lifetime of the General Use Permit – in exchange for the certainty that the university would be able to complete its long-term development.

He said that in the coming months there will be additional opportunities to engage in the process as the application continues through the county's approval process.

Fall 2018 Report on the Faculty

The fall 2018 Report on the Faculty was distributed to Faculty Senate members before the meeting. Released each year by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity (<https://facultydevelopment.stanford.edu/>) (VPFDD), the report outlines gains, losses and overall composition of the faculty.

The report showed that Stanford's professoriate reached 2,240 in 2018, including 1,579 men and 661 women.

The data revealed a slight increase in women faculty, continuing a trend seen in the past two decades. In 2018, women composed 29.5 percent of the faculty, compared with 25 percent 10 years ago and 19 percent 20 years ago. Women are better represented at the assistant professor level (42 percent) than at the full professor level (24 percent).

While most schools and clusters had a female representation close to or higher than the 29.5 percent university average, gender distributions varied by school. The humanities and arts cluster within the School of Humanities and Sciences had the highest percentage of women faculty (41 percent), followed by the Graduate School of Education (37 percent), Stanford Law School (36 percent) and the School of Medicine basic science cluster (35 percent) and clinical science cluster (32 percent).

In 2018, the Stanford professoriate included 568 members of minority groups, including 149 members of underrepresented minorities, 396 members of Asian descent and 23 members of two or more races.

The percentage of members of minority groups was 25 percent, unchanged from 2017. Underrepresented minorities made up 7 percent of the faculty in 2018, also unchanged from the previous year. Minority faculty are better represented at the assistant professor level (35 percent) than at the level of professor (19 percent).

Minority representation varied by school. The Graduate School of Education (18 percent) and Law School (11 percent) had the highest percentages of underrepresented minority faculty members.

Last year, Stanford hired 105 new faculty members, of which 39 (37 percent) were women. Eighty-four members of the faculty left the professoriate, resulting in a net gain of 21 faculty members in 2018.

Advancing faculty diversity is one of the areas that Tessier-Lavigne and Drell have focused on in the university's long-range plan. (<https://ourvision.stanford.edu/>) In the recently published Provost's Statement on Diversity and Inclusion, (<https://provost.stanford.edu/statement-on-diversity-and-inclusion/>) one of the immediate priorities is "increasing the diversity of the faculty, especially faculty from underrepresented backgrounds including racial and ethnic minorities and women in STEM."

The *Report on the Faculty Fall 2018: Professorial Gains, Losses and Composition* is posted on the VPFDD website (<https://stanford.app.box.com/v/faculty-report-2018>).

In other business, outgoing Faculty Senate Chair Stephen Stedman announced the results of the recent senate election. Tim Stearns, the Frank Lee and Carol Hall Professor, professor of genetics and chair of the Department of Biology, will serve as Faculty Senate chair in 2019-20. Dan Edelstein, the William H. Bonsall Professor in French, has been elected vice chair.

The full minutes of the June 13 meeting, including the questions and answers that followed the presentations, will be available soon on the Faculty Senate website.



(mailto:?)

subject=An%20interesting%20article%20from%20Stanford%20News&body=I%20want%20to%20share%20

