

Stanford University Press gets funding reprieve after protests

Hundreds of professors had signed petition opposing scrapping of annual subsidy from parent institution

May 1, 2019



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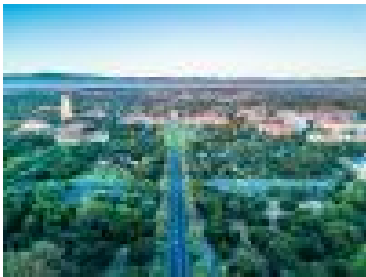


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Stanford University

Stanford University (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/stanford-university>) has retreated from a threat to its celebrated book publishing division, agreeing to continue an annual subsidy and to consider allowing the unit to solicit its own outside donations.

The university's provost, Persis Drell, announced the climbdown in a letter to Stanford professors, hundreds of whom signed a petition (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbEqyRAXcFb84N9Z8YTngOtOdJOd7JoMXBjMLQ-qG_oyt5KA/viewform) protesting Professor Drell's promise last week to cut funding to Stanford University Press.



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"While I expected that this decision would be a difficult one for some of you to hear, I did not anticipate it would touch such a deep nerve in the community of our humanities and social sciences colleagues," Professor Drell said.

Professor Drell had told the faculty senate last week that Stanford, with a \$26.5 billion (£20.3 billion) endowment, could no longer afford a \$1.7 million annual contribution to the publisher, which was formed as one of the university's central components in the late 19th century.

Allies of Stanford University Press warned (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Proposed-Cut-of-Stanford-U/246200>) that the cut could hobble the operation, especially given the institution's ban on outside fundraising. That sparked widespread tributes to the mission and global prestige of the publisher and criticism of the technology-heavy university's apparent abandonment of the humanities. Stanford is well known for its deep ties to Silicon Valley and the technology industry there that it helped create, although the university is also an established leader in the humanities.

Professor Drell, in her letter, thanked faculty for explaining the importance of Stanford University Press and called “deeply regrettable” any suggestion that Stanford sought a “marginalisation of the humanities”.

The provost promised to continue the \$1.7 million subsidy for at least another year, and held out the possibility of easing rules that prohibit the publisher from accepting outside donations.

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