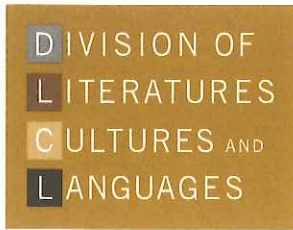


STANFORD UNIVERSITY



Office of the President
Building 10
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-2061

Stanford, 04/25/19

Dear President Tessier-Lavigne, Dear Provost Drell,

We, the undersigned members of the editorial board of Stanford University Press, write to express our concern and, frankly, our bafflement over your recent moves regarding Stanford UP, specifically drastic cuts to the Press's subvention that would force fundamental, possibly fatal, changes at the Press. Other faculty will no doubt write to you about the merits of the case and about the important role the University Press has played for the campus community. We fully share their appreciation of the excellent, necessary work done by the Press, and their discomfort with what is being done to it. But rather than our problems with the decision itself, we would like to express our frustration with the way it was made.

Our understanding of how this decision came about is still spotty at best – and that's the first problem. We know the program, vision, and range of SUP better than most Stanford faculty, and yet we were never consulted. Whatever the specific problems are that this administration has with SUP remain murky to us, and certainly arose without ever speaking to us. From colleagues we have learned that a certain number of department chairs were informed about the planned cuts last Monday, and that they are to form a committee to implement them. We do not understand why it should be H&S departments being made to face this choice – the University Press after all publishes widely in fields such as Law and Business. We also don't understand why the department chairs should be asked to make these vital decisions, rather than, say, members of this committee or others who have greater familiarity with the programs, series and editors involved.

We further object to the speed, even haste with which this decision appears to have been made. We have been impressed with the deliberateness with which you both put the long-range planning process into motion, and the patience with which you are letting it play out. It would make perfect sense that the University Press come up in connection with the issues raised in long range planning – it is a vital part of the question of what kind of university we want to be, what our scholarship should look like, and who our public is. But this makes it all

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Building 260, Pigott Hall
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-2005
USA

TELEPHONE (650) 724-1333
FAX (650) 725-9306

dlcl@stanford.edu
<http://dlcl.stanford.edu>

the more disturbing that in the midst of all this careful deliberation, this decision has the appearance of being rushed through.

We are of the opinion that a downsizing of any kind at any time would be deeply problematic, but to do it now, while the university is actively setting priorities for its long-term future (and gearing up for a massive capital campaign to fund it), would be a devastating statement that the Press—and everything it stands for—is not vital, is not a priority, and is not valued for our shared future. Given these stakes, careful deliberation and transparent decision making would have been all the more essential. While we still don't know enough to say for certain, what we hear from our colleagues who attended the chair's meeting certainly suggests that the decision was based on unclear and possibly faulty premises – misconceptions that we would have been happy to clear up had we been consulted.

We urge you to reconsider any decision you have made, and implore you to open this question up to a broader discussion – we are confident that the continued value of the Press will become evident in such discussions, we are hopeful that alternative funding possibilities will emerge.

Sincerely,

Adrian Daub
Professor of German Studies and Comparative Literature

Richard T. Ford
George E. Osborn Professor of Law

Paula Moya
Danily C. and Laura Louise Bell Professor of the Humanities
Director of the Research Institute of Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity

José-David Saldívar
Leon Sloss, Jr. Professor of Comparative Literature & CCSRE

Ge Wang
Associate Professor, Music and Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics

Caroline Winterer
Anthony P. Meier Family Professor in the Humanities
Director, Stanford Humanities Center