

# STANFORD'S MISSION

The Stanford University Founding Grant (<https://purl.stanford.edu/bz978md4965/>) (pdf), dated November 11, 1885, outlines the founding principles of the University. The Founding Grant describes the "Nature, Object, and Purposes of the Institution" founded by Leland Stanford and Jane Lathrop Stanford in these terms:

Its nature, that of a university with such seminaries of learning as shall make it of the highest grade, including mechanical institutes, museums, galleries of art, laboratories, and conservatories, together with all things necessary for the study of agriculture in all its branches, and for mechanical training, and the studies and exercises directed to the cultivation and enlargement of the mind;

Its object, to qualify its students for personal success, and direct usefulness in life;

And its purposes, to promote the public welfare by exercising an influence in behalf of humanity and civilization, teaching the blessings of liberty regulated by law, and inculcating love and reverence for the great principles of government as derived from the inalienable rights of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Information about Stanford's seven schools and their academic programs and mission can be found by following the links below:

- School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences (<http://pangea.stanford.edu/about/>)
- Graduate School of Business (<http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/about/mission.html>)
- School of Humanities and Sciences (<https://humsci.stanford.edu/about/>)
- School of Engineering (<https://engineering.stanford.edu/about/>)
- School of Medicine (<http://med.stanford.edu/about/vision.html>)
- Graduate School of Education (<http://ed.stanford.edu/suse/aboutsuse/mission.html>)
- Stanford Law School (<https://law.stanford.edu/about/#slnav-sls-distinctions>)

## A Brief History of Stanford

On October 1, 1891, more than 400 enthusiastic young men and women were on hand for opening day ceremonies at Leland Stanford Junior University. They came from all over: many from California, some who followed professors hired from other colleges and universities, and some simply seeking adventure in the West. They came to seize a special opportunity, to be part of the pioneer class in a brand new university. They stayed to help turn an ambitious dream into a thriving reality. As a pioneer faculty member recalled, "Hope was in every heart, and the presiding spirit of freedom prompted us to dare greatly."

For Leland and Jane Stanford on that day, the University was the realization of a dream and a fitting tribute to the memory of their only son, who died of typhoid fever weeks before his 16th birthday, at an age when many young men and women were planning their college education.

From the beginning, it was clear that Stanford would be different. It was coeducational at a time when single-sex colleges were the norm. It was non-sectarian when most private colleges were still affiliated with a church. And it offered a broad, flexible program of study while most schools insisted on a rigid curriculum of classical studies. Though there were many difficulties during the first months (housing was inadequate, microscopes and books were late in arriving from the East), the first year

foretold greatness. As Jane Stanford wrote in the summer of 1892, "Even our fondest hopes have been realized."

What manner of people were this man and this woman who had the intelligence, the means, the faith, and the daring to plan a major university in Pacific soil, far from the nation's center of culture?

## Leland and Jane Stanford

Although he was trained as a lawyer, Leland Stanford came to California in 1852 to join his five brothers in their mercantile business in the gold fields; Jane Stanford followed in 1855. They established large-scale operations in Sacramento, where Mr. Stanford became a leading figure in California business and politics. One of the "Big Four" who built the western link of the first transcontinental railroad, he was elected Governor of California and later United States Senator. One of the founders of the Republican Party in California, he was an ardent follower of Abraham Lincoln and is credited with keeping California in the Union during the Civil War.

## The Case for a Liberal Education

Despite the enormous success they achieved in their lives, Governor and Mrs. Stanford had come from families of modest means and rose to prominence and wealth through a life of hard work. So it was natural that their first thoughts were to establish an institution where young men and women could "grapple successfully with the practicalities of life." As their thoughts matured, however, these ideas of "practical education" enlarged to the concept of producing cultured and useful citizens who were well prepared for professional success. In a statement of the case for liberal education that was remarkable for its time, Leland Stanford wrote, "I attach great importance to general literature for the enlargement of the mind and for giving business capacity. I think I have noticed that technically educated boys do not make the most successful businessmen. The imagination needs to be cultivated and developed to assure success in life. A man will never construct anything he cannot conceive."

## Stanford Lands and Architecture

The campus occupies what was once Leland Stanford's Palo Alto Stock Farm and the favorite residence of the Stanford family. The Stanfords purchased an existing estate in 1876 and later acquired much of the land in the local watershed for their stock farm, orchards, and vineyards.

The name of the farm came from the tree El Palo Alto, a coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), that still stands near the northwest corner of the property on the edge of San Francisquito Creek. Many years ago, one of the winter floods that periodically rushed down the arroyo tore off one of its twin trunks, but half of the venerable old tree lives on, a gaunt and time-scarred monument. Named in 1769 by Spanish explorers, El Palo Alto has been the University's symbol and the centerpiece of its official seal.

The Stanfords gave their farm to the University in the Founding Grant of 1885. They personally financed the entire cost of the construction and operation of the University until 1903, when surviving founder Jane Stanford, who performed heroically in keeping the University functioning during difficult times following Leland Senior's death in 1893, turned over control to the Board of Trustees. The founding gift has been estimated at \$25 million, not including the land and buildings.

The general concept for the University grounds and buildings was conceived by Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park in New York. A brilliant young Boston architect, Charles Allerton Coolidge, further developed the concept in the style of his late mentor, Henry Hobson Richardson. The style, called Richardsonian Romanesque, is a blend of Romanesque and Mission Revival architecture. It is characterized by rectilinear sandstone buildings joined by covered arcades formed of

successive half-circle arches, the latter supported by short columns with decorated capitals.

More than one hundred years later, the University still enjoys 8,180 acres (almost 13 square miles) of grassy fields, eucalyptus groves, and rolling hills that were the Stanfords' generous legacy, as well as the Quadrangle of "long corridors with their stately pillars" at the center of campus. It is still true, as the philosopher William James said, during his stint as a visiting professor, that the climate is "so friendly . . . that every morning wakes one fresh for new amounts of work."

## Current Perspectives

In other ways, the University has changed tremendously on its way to recognition as one of the world's great universities. At the hub of a vital and diverse Bay Area, Stanford is less than an hour's drive or Caltrain trip south of San Francisco and just a few miles north of Silicon Valley, an area dotted with computer and high technology firms largely spawned by the University's faculty and graduates. On campus, students and faculty enjoy new libraries, modern laboratories, sports facilities, and comfortable residences. Contemporary sculpture, as well as pieces from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts (<http://museum.stanford.edu/>) at Stanford University's extensive collection of sculpture by Auguste Rodin, can be found throughout the campus, providing unexpected pleasures at many turns.

The Cantor Center opened in January 1999. The center includes the historic Leland Stanford Junior Museum building and the Rodin Sculpture Garden. Next door is the Anderson Collection at Stanford University (<https://anderson.stanford.edu/>), which houses one of the nation's finest assemblies of modern American art. At the Stanford University Medical Center (<http://stanfordmedicine.org/>), world-renowned for its research, teaching, and patient care, scientists and physicians are searching for answers to fundamental questions about health and disease. Ninety miles down the coast, at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station (<https://hopkinsmarinestation.stanford.edu/>) on the Monterey Bay, scientists are working to better understand the mechanisms of evolution and ecological systems.

The University is organized into seven schools: Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences; Education; Engineering; the Graduate School of Business; Humanities and Sciences; Law; and Medicine. In addition, there are more than 30 interdisciplinary centers, programs, and research laboratories (<http://exploreddegrees.stanford.edu/otheroffices/>) including: the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace (<http://www.hoover.org/>); the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (<http://fsi.stanford.edu/>); the Woods Institute for the Environment (<http://woods.stanford.edu/>); the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory (<http://www.slac.stanford.edu/>); and the Stanford Program for Bioengineering, Biomedicine, and Biosciences (Bio-X) (<http://biox.stanford.edu/>), where faculty from many fields bring different perspectives to bear on issues and problems. Stanford's Bing Overseas Studies Program (<http://bosp.stanford.edu/>) offers undergraduates in all fields remarkable opportunities for study abroad, with campuses in Australia, Beijing, Berlin, Cape Town, Florence, Kyoto, Madrid, Oxford, Paris, and Santiago.

## Stanford People

By any measure, Stanford's faculty, which numbers more than 2,100, is one of the most distinguished in the world. It includes 19 living Nobel laureates, 4 Pulitzer Prize winners, 19 National Medal of Science winners, 171 members of the National Academy of Sciences, 288 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 112 members of the National Academy of Engineering, and 27 members of the National Academy of Education. Yet beyond their array of honors, what truly distinguishes Stanford faculty is their commitment to sharing knowledge with their students. The great majority of professors teach undergraduates both

in introductory lecture classes and in small freshman, sophomore, and advanced seminars.

Enrollment in Autumn Quarter 2019 totaled 16,385 of whom 6,994 were undergraduates and 9,310 were graduate students. Like the faculty, the Stanford student body is distinguished: 116 Stanford students have been named Rhodes Scholars and 90 have been named Marshall Scholars. The six-year graduation rate for freshmen who entered Stanford University full-time in 2010 was 94 percent. In 2018-19, Stanford awarded 1,893 bachelor's degrees, 2,393 master's degrees, and 1,040 doctoral degrees.

Stanford students also shine in an array of activities outside the classroom, from student government to music, theater, and journalism. Through the Haas Center for Public Service, students participate in dozens of community service activities, such as tutoring programs for children in nearby East Palo Alto, the Hunger Project, and the Arbor Free Clinic.

In the athletic arena, Stanford students have enjoyed tremendous success as well. Stanford fields teams in 36 Division I varsity sports. The Cardinal has won at least one national team championship 41 consecutive years, which leads the NCAA. Stanford has won the Director's Cup, which honors the most successful program in NCAA Division I sports, the last 24 years. Stanford scholar-athletes have earned 161 NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships—a national best.

Stanford graduates can be found in an extraordinary variety of places: in space (the late Sally Ride, '73, Ph.D. '78, was the first American woman in space); on the news (Ted Koppel, M.A. '62, created the successful program *Nightline*); Broadway (David Henry Hwang, '79, received a Tony Award for his celebrated work, *M. Butterfly*); in San Francisco live theater (Carey Perloff, '80, former artistic director of the American Conservatory Theater); at the helm of major corporations (Scott McNealy, '80, founded Sun Microsystems, Sergey Brin, M.S. '95, and Larry Page, M.S. '98, founded Google, and Chih-yuan (Jerry) Yang, '94, and David Filo, '90, founded Yahoo); and on the U.S. Supreme Court (two Stanford graduates, Anthony Kennedy, '58, and Stephen Breyer, '59, currently sit on the high court).

## Looking Ahead

In her address to the Board of Trustees in July 1904, Jane Stanford said, "Let us not be afraid to outgrow old thoughts and ways, and dare to think on new lines as to the future of the work under our care."

Stanford's 11th president, Marc Tessier-Lavigne, echoed these thoughts in his inaugural address in 2016: "When I reflect on Stanford's 125-year history, I see a University that has pressed forward through thick and thin, gaining in stature as a leader in education and scholarship, to make increasingly important contributions to society and to human well-being. Thanks to over a century of inspired leadership, including by the distinguished presidents emeriti here today, Stanford has become the "University of high degree" its founders envisioned. Stanford's preeminence derives from its bedrock dedication to fostering education, research, and creativity for the benefit of humanity. But I believe it also stems from its optimism, its resilience, and its courage to evolve."