

October 15, 2008

TO: Faculty Senate Steering Committee
FROM: Jim Canales and Ramon Saldivar,
Co-Chairs, Task Force on Undergraduate Expansion
RE: October 30 Session

We look forward to our session with the Faculty Senate on October 30, 2008. We hope to provide senators with an update on the work of the Task Force on Undergraduate Expansion and to benefit from the senators' perspectives and guidance on the many questions associated with this exploration. This memo provides a brief summary of our work-to-date and outlines several questions we will be discussing. We have also attached some additional background information that provides further context for our discussion.

The Task Force on Undergraduate Expansion was appointed in January 2008 by President Hennessy to explore the advisability of expanding the undergraduate class in order to accommodate additional, highly qualified students. We have attached the charge provided to us by the President as well as a roster of the task force members.

The Task Force met monthly between January and May and our meetings have included presentations by Dean of Undergraduate Admission Rick Shaw, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education John Bravman, Vice Provost for University Budgets Tim Warner, and former Associate VP for Development Tim Portwood. We have also reviewed background materials and discussed with key individuals similar expansion efforts undertaken by peer institutions, primarily Yale and Princeton, in order to learn from those processes.

In addition, we launched a Web site in the spring to invite comments on our exploration, and we have conducted numerous in-person outreach sessions to benefit from the perspectives of other members of the Stanford community, including students, alumni and faculty. We have attached a summary of the feedback we received in two sessions that were especially substantive: the STARS Assembly for top alumni volunteers, during which we held a Town Hall Session devoted exclusively to this topic, and the notes from a Stanford Alumni Association Board of Directors meeting.

At the senate meeting, we intend to provide the faculty with a summary of initial findings to date and to outline the timeline for the next steps in our process, which is slated to conclude with a final report to the President by the end of this calendar year. To inform the Task Force's final report, we look forward to the opportunity to benefit from your engagement. To that end, we have noted several questions below that will form the basis for discussions with the Senate. We include the questions here so you have the opportunity to give them some thought in advance, and, of course, we welcome other observations and input that may not be addressed by these questions.

Questions for Discussion with the Senate:

- What do senators view as the compelling reasons to proceed with undergraduate expansion? What are the central arguments against expansion at this time from the faculty's perspective?
- As we will report at the meeting, the work of the Task Force has raised concerns about Stanford's residential education, housing, and advising programs--do faculty share these concerns? If so, what are the specific concerns faculty have?
- Should addressing these concerns occur prior to a decision to expand or as part of a decision to expand?

We look forward to the opportunity to share what we have learned to date and to benefit from your perspectives as we bring this process to conclusion during the next few months.

Attachments:

Charge to Task Force by President Hennessy

Roster of Task Force Members

Summary of selected outreach sessions (STARS Assembly and SAA Board)

Charge to the Task Force

For the freshmen class of 2007, Stanford received a record number of applications numbering over 24,000. Since 1970, the number of applications has grown by 245% while the number of undergraduates has grown by only 11%. For the class of 2011 with a target for the class of 1650 freshmen, we were able to accept just over 10% of the applicants, who overall were better qualified than the much smaller pool that applied in 1970. In comparison to the small growth in undergraduates in the previous 35 years, the graduate student population grew by 57% and the number of academic council faculty grew by 37%.

Given this situation, the primary question that the Task Force should consider is whether Stanford should expand the undergraduate class to accommodate additional, highly qualified students. In thinking about this question, our expectation is that we would maintain all the advances made in the quality of the undergraduate experience over the past 15 years, that we would continue our historic commitment to need-blind admissions, and that we would continue to have a strong residential-based undergraduate experience. Until these three conditions can be met, expansion should not be considered.

We ask that the committee look at a variety of issues from the quality of the applicant pool, to the costs of such an undertaking, to the more subjective issues such as the “look and feel” of our campus and the impact of more students. For the purposes of this exploration, an expansion of 200 students per class is proposed.

Through the work of the task force, we would hope to answer the following questions:

- How much depth is available in the applicant pool? Could we find an additional 200 students per year, while maintaining roughly the same standards as today?
- Is 200 additional students/class (800 total) a reasonable target assuming other concerns are addressed? Would this target allow us to achieve other goals, such as an increase in the international student populations, more easily?
- Are the additional faculty, staff, capital, and other cost estimates that have been developed adequate assessments of the incremental costs to accommodate the additional students? If not, what is missing?
- There are areas where we still seek to improve undergraduate education, such as advising and residential education programs. Should these areas be addressed as a prerequisite or can they be addressed as a corequisite with any growth in the class?
- What are the views of the committee concerning the impacts on our campus from an increased class size? These impacts range from changes in the interpersonal relationships among class members to the look and feel of campus with the addition of 800 undergraduate beds. Are there ways to ameliorate some of these qualitative negative impacts?
- Assuming other concerns are addressed, what should be the timeframe to consider such an increase? When should it start and how quickly should it proceed?

**Task Force on Undergraduate Expansion
Member List**

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Current Trustee

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Should Stanford increase the size of the undergraduate population?

Synthesis from 28 sets of table notes, April 5, 2008, STARS Assembly
(number) = number of times mentioned; if one time, no number

Pros:

- Increase in international, &/or more diverse representation (12)
- More highly qualified students admitted (8); social responsibility to accept more qualified students (8)
- Larger alumni base - more resources, people, \$ (3)
- Is not really a huge increase; still would be a medium-sized school (3)
- Presents an opportunity to be creative in building cutting-edge buildings, programs for future undergrad populations; more innovation by addressing opportunities missed today (3)
- Opportunity to add faculty in new or underserved areas (3)
- Could strengthen athletics (2)
- Increase in West Coast presence

Cons:

- Dilute quality of the undergrad experience (8); student/faculty ratio, class size (12); disruptions for current students (3); loss of small community feel (3); impact on facilities and services (6); Stanford large enough now (see also key issues)
- Undergrad housing constraints (9)
- Difficulty in recruitment and retention of additional faculty, faculty housing (7)
- Financial costs (6)
- Reasons for increasing size not compelling enough (4)
- Negative impact on neighboring communities (3) (see also key issues)
- Concern that academic resources, faculty/student ratio would impact negatively students and faculty of color
- Could decrease yield, lower Stanford ranking and competition among peer institutions

Key issues/questions:

- Can quality be maintained - access to small seminars? UG life/Stanford experience? Entrepreneurial spirit? (9) student/faculty ratio (3) (see also Cons)
- Why are we considering this? (6); What are we trying to be? (2)
- Given the demographic bubble, why increase now? (6)
- How large an increase? (6)
- Cost? (5)
- What's the impact on GUP? (3); What would we not be able to build? (3)
- Concern that resources needed will take away from current SC initiatives, current student programs (3)
- Is Stanford's approach so unique, it feels obligated to increase UG? (2)
- Impact on neighboring communities (see also Cons) (2)
- How will number in class affect alumni engagement? (2)
- What is past history of student increases at Stanford, at other schools?
- Where do legacy admits fit in, would we admit more?

Other Comments:

- Stanford is big enough (5)
- Don't expand without fixing the current housing/residential life situation
- Other ways to share Stanford experience: Rotation as UCSD and Dartmouth-bring students in from smaller schools; Online courses to increase reach and access; Overseas campuses; Summer expansion
- More leverage if whole new school created rather than several schools increasing enrollment just a little bit
- Targeting the increase is the most important aspect to consider
- How about gradually increasing the UG total and decreasing the grad school total
- Recommend a phased increase – year 1=50; year 2=100; year 3=150; year 4=200
- Do exit interviews for those not admitted
- Let's try not to be Yale
- Keep the Stanford experience the same

Questions 4 – 5 covered sporadically; see table notes.

Notes from meeting with SAA Board of Directors
May 16, 2008

Attended by Ramon Saldivar and Jim Canales

The key points/observations from the discussion with the SAA board:

- Many of the comments encouraged us to start with a vision for undergraduate education at Stanford and then make a decision about expansion based on that vision. For example, what is the role of undergraduate education in advancing the University's mission and how many students make up the right number? For example, would having more students than we do today make it easier for the University to achieve the goals articulated in the various initiatives that comprise the Stanford Challenge?
- On the question of rationale for expansion, it might be instructive to look back at previous expansion decisions that results in significant changes in size, rather than gradual adjustments. The memory of this group was that at some point in the early 1960s, there was a step up in the undergraduate population. Why? What was the rationale at that time? What deliberations informed that decision?
- If the expansion will be radial rather than targeted (which seemed to be the preference of the group), there was a suggestion that we should understand what such a radial expansion might mean in terms of the ability to serve more low-income students and other populations that are traditionally underserved. How many more such students would be able to attend and therefore what might be the value added over time of providing access to a larger group of such students?
- To the extent the expansion is more targeted in nature, there was a sentiment expressed that it ought to focus more on underrepresented communities (low-income or other underserved populations), as an expression of Stanford's commitment to reaching out and a way to make the moral argument for doing this more persuasive.
- We were cautioned that there is right way to expand and a wrong way. The right way would address questions such as why we are doing this at this moment in time, what we are doing to ensure we manage the growth properly, and how we will guarantee that we will not erode quality in the process of expansion. The right way might also suggest that growth is possible, but only under certain conditions that should be clearly articulated.