

STANFORD UNIVERSITY has long recognized the importance of a diverse student body to achieve its educational goals and meet its responsibility to help produce leaders equipped to face increasingly complex social and political realities in this country and the world.

PRESIDENT JOHN HENNESSY, JANUARY 2003

DIVERSITY IN ACTION

at Stanford

Diversity in Action at Stanford

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT RECENTLY REAFFIRMED THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY. But how, exactly, is diversity of value to the educational enterprise? What shapes and forms does it take in the classroom, the lab, the workplace, and what does it add to an already rich environment?

Stanford is deeply committed to celebrating diversity in all its forms and applications and to creating a diverse campus community. Doing so helps Stanford educate the leaders of tomorrow, who will live in an increasingly diverse world.

On the following pages, Stanford people explain what diversity means to them, how they put it to use in their work and how it is indispensable in creating true excellence on the Stanford campus.

Join in our discussion. Read for yourself and decide. Why is diversity important? What diverse opinions and experiences do you bring to the table? How can we learn better from each other? How can you make a difference?



DAVID PALUMBO-LIU

Professor of Comparative Literature

Chair, Undergraduate Subcommittee, Diversity Action Council



JANE CAMARILLO

Director of Residential Education

I AM JAPANESE AND MEXICAN AMERICAN, born in 1957 in San Antonio, Texas. On my birth certificate under “color or race of father of child” is typed “White” though my father was Mexican. The child of a Buddhist mother, I attended 12 years of Catholic school. Completing standardized test forms, I represented my race differently every year. By sixth grade, I was able to select “Mexican” or “Oriental,” but not both, and “Other” was not yet available.

Childhood was filled with examples of conforming to categories that did not describe who I was but reflected values of the time. In my generation, this did not lead to an identity crisis; rather it just seemed the way of life for a multi-racial person.

Well, fast forward to graduate school at UCLA and, for the first time, people identified me as Asian, that is—as Filipino. Though it was briefly satisfying to be acknowledged in a category somewhat closer to my own, Mexican American plus Japanese does not equal Filipino.

As the director of Residential Education at Stanford, my job is to build environments where students, in their personal development, can discover who they are and test what they believe by comparing themselves with what is novel and different. Diversity in the student population enriches that environment and advances the common search from discretely defining one’s identity to creating connections with those of multiple perspectives. And the hope is that, in the journey over the course of four years, one discovers one’s own multiplicity.



DANDRE DESANDIES

Associate Director, Undergraduate Advising Center

AMERICAN SOCIETY, AN INCREASINGLY GLOBAL SOCIETY, IS STRENGTHENED BY a variety of viewpoints and expertise working toward solutions to problems we all face. Whether researching the origins of life or developing technologies that fuel life-altering innovations, Stanford has played a significant role. Here a diverse group of leaders is educated—leaders who continue to make a difference in broadening our approach to human problem-solving.

It has not always been this way. Consider Stanford's founding moment when nearly all the people of color on the Stanford farm were servants or field hands. In the intervening four or five generations, many descendants of these groups have attended the Stanfords' university. Stanford undergraduates and professional staff now reflect a broad range of ethnicity, which makes me hopeful. But much more needs to be done among graduate students and faculty here, and this affects my work directly.

While my goal is to provide outstanding advising to all Stanford students, the challenge of diversity for me is to encourage young minority scholars to overcome any real or imagined barriers to their success. In addition, I must be a voice of diversity at the table when decisions about students' lives are made here each day. Though an uphill struggle at times, this is energizing work. I am committed to playing my bit part as the Stanford story of diversity unfolds. It helps me to realize I am part of an American saga no less significant than the pursuit of justice and equal opportunity for all in our society.

STANFORD HAS AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY TO CREATE AND ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY in higher education because of our national prominence. We also have a unique responsibility because of our location in California, one of the most diverse states in the nation. Recall that Jane and Leland Stanford originally founded the university “for the children of California.”

Given the diversity of California and Stanford’s position as a leader in education, it is critical that we possess the intellectual resources—as well as the human resources—to help our students become leaders in an increasingly complex and diverse world. An institution like Stanford must reflect the multi-racial, multi-ethnic society and pluralistic democracy that serves as a foundation to the university. Otherwise, we could not call ourselves world class.

In the broadest sense, we are here to pursue and disseminate knowledge for the benefit of society. When talking about the creation of knowledge, people often use the metaphor of building an edifice, constructed one building block at a time. While this may be a useful metaphor in the sense that the creation of knowledge is a communal project with many people contributing individual pieces, I don’t think it is quite right. Building blocks—such as bricks—are the same shape and dimension. Thus the metaphor implies that all contributions are the same. But new knowledge—new discoveries, new insights—are never homogeneous. Diversity allows for new shapes, textures and imaginings of knowledge; it encourages the innovation and insight that is essential to the creation of knowledge. A diverse community of scholars asks diverse questions and has diverse insights, and so pushes the forefront of knowledge further, faster.

JOHN ETCHEMENDY

Provost and Professor of Philosophy



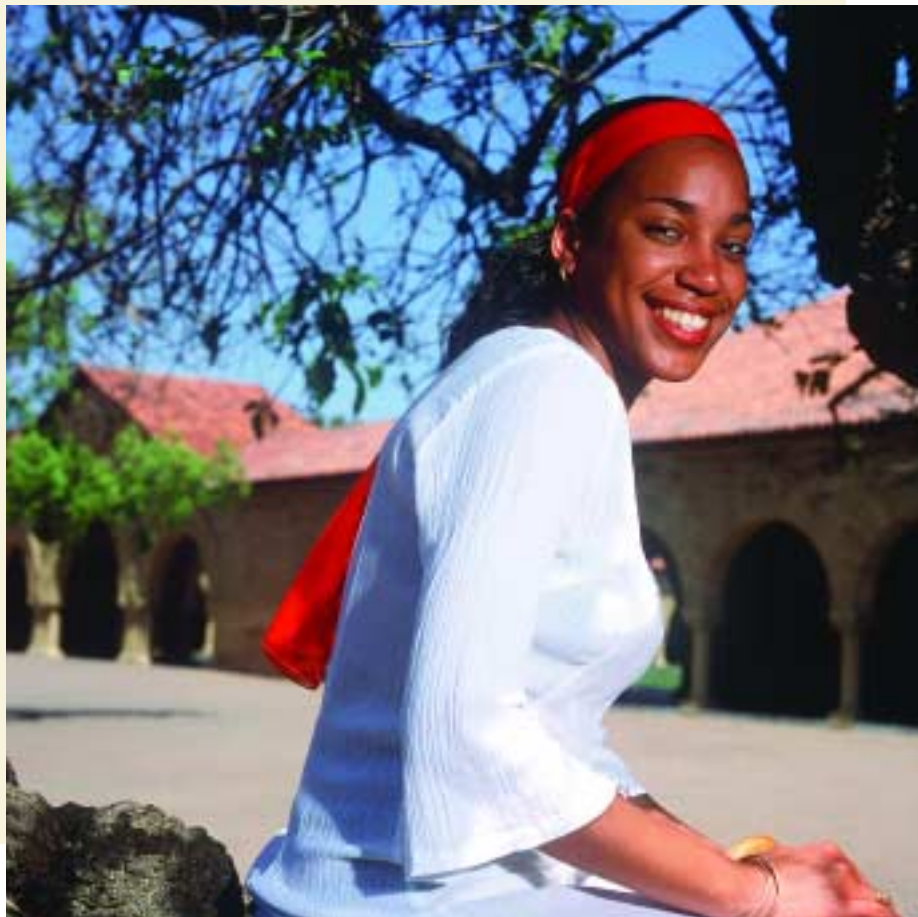
IN THE BROADEST SENSE, EDUCATION IS ABOUT THE GROOMING OF CITIZENS, and, at the university level, it is about the shaping of future leaders. When we talk about the atmosphere at—and moral and ethical values of—an enterprise such as Stanford, we are talking about the environment in which the leaders of the corporate, entertainment and athletic worlds, as well as legal and international systems, come of age and discover their passions in life.

How does a student learn if not by challenging his or her notions of what is correct, just or “normal”? The educational institution is much more than the place from which one receives a degree or diploma—it is a place in which one’s perspective, morals and values are challenged by those who have lived lives that we could not possibly imagine. When we are enriched by the experiences of those who have walked in entirely different shoes, we begin to have a healthier, more accepting and universal view of humanity.

Diversity at Stanford is about striving toward a world in which ignorance and intolerance are no longer excuses for the mistreatment of fellow human beings. After four years at Stanford, people are no longer the “other.” The Muslim or Jew, the gay or blind person or the woman is no longer a myth of stereotypes and strangeness because he or she was your freshman roommate, teammate, object of affection, partner in that impossibly hard class or fellow leader in a student group. The greatest learning experience occurs when you realize that you are just as strange to others as others are to you.

NADIYA FIGUEROA

President, Associated Students of Stanford University, and Senior





PAM KARLAN

The Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Professor of Public Law

AT LEAST SINCE ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE IN THE 1830s, observers have remarked on the central role that lawyers play in the United States. Nowhere is this more true than in how our society deals with difference. This year, I worked on three cases at the Supreme Court. One involved affirmative action in higher education. A second involved a Texas statute that criminalized private, consensual homosexual acts. And a third involved the way in which Mississippi redrew its congressional districts. While each of these questions started out as a decision for politicians or educators, they became legal questions. Judges decide how we elect our representatives, whom we can sleep with, and what law school and college classrooms will look like.

So the reason I care about having students of different races, religions, genders, economic backgrounds and sexual orientations is not primarily because it leads to richer academic discussions. Sure it does. Years later, I still remember the black former cop in “Civil Rights Litigation” who challenged me on lawsuits against police officers, the gay student in “Sex Discrimination” who transformed a discussion of surrogacy contracts, and the working-class student in “Civil Procedure” whose argument for punitive damages in a mock employment injury case swayed his classmates.

But diversity is important even more as a means to an end: making our government more representative. In *An Explanation of America*, the poet Robert Pinsky wrote, “A country is the things it wants to see.” It may be just as true that a country is the people it sees. To look out at a classroom or a courtroom or a legislative hearing room and *not* to see what America really looks like risks making us that much less a country.



JULIE KENNEDY

Senior Lecturer in the Earth Systems Program

WHEN WE SPEAK OF DIVERSITY AT STANFORD, it is often in the context of color. A powerful dividing force in our country for generations, color is a natural starting point. But diversity here is about much more than skin color. It is about different experiences and points of view that may not relate to race or ethnicity. In my teaching, the importance of personal experience or viewpoint arises frequently, as illustrated in this example.

In a class of Earth Systems seniors, one student's comment reflected her assumption that all students in the program had chosen this major because they share the same concerns and viewpoints about the environment. Happily, there was an immediate and outspoken reply from around the table—my motivations for choosing this major are my own; I am not a stereotype. One student sought rigorous interdisciplinary science, while another felt honor bound to take practical skills home to a community facing serious environmental problems. Few sought the role of environmental advocate, nor did they share a common environmental ethic. Their viewpoints were as individual as they were.

We come to Stanford from diverse backgrounds and bring with us different assumptions, interests, needs and goals. Our differences are not always obvious, but our perspectives always affect the questions we ask and the approaches we take. By listening to and learning from others, we open ourselves to new questions and ideas, becoming better students, better teachers, better researchers. We need not be bound by stereotypes—and must not be if we are to do our jobs well.

AT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, we often invite high-ranking executives to speak to MBA students. The students use their life experiences to generate some tough questions. For example, in my elective class on gender relations at work, students confronted a human resources vice president from a company known for progressive policies and practices. “The human resources policies you describe assume the employee is the primary breadwinner in a family and has to supply medical insurance for a spouse and children,” they noted. “What about those of us who have to support an extended family? Are benefits equal for employees in a dual-career marriage with two companies supplying benefits or employees who are single? What about domestic partners benefits? Why does your company have such a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to human resources policies when the worlds of employees are so varied?”

Classrooms in the business school have windows, and sometimes I peek into the elective classes in other fields. There are some electives that are filled, almost completely, with white male students. When I come to my classroom, I am deeply satisfied to be greeted by a sea of faces that vary in color, gender and dozens of less visible ways. Their visible differences reflect differences in life experiences. Those life experiences lead students to raise questions that demand and merit good answers, providing an agenda not just for teaching but for the corporations and nonprofit organizations where our graduates work and for the organizational research that business school professors do. The benefits of diversity reach far outside the classroom, as companies and researchers struggle to go beyond “one-size-fits-all” solutions.

JOANNE MARTIN

The Fred H. Merrill Professor in the Graduate School of Business



I GREW UP IN NEW YORK CITY. When I entered medical school in the 1960s, I was the first from my family to go beyond elementary school. While my experience in medical school opened amazing vistas into science and humanity, cultural diversity was not prominent. My class of 70 had only two women; racial diversity was not much better. When I graduated in 1970, my classmates hardly reflected our nation's diversity. But it was a period of great social turmoil in the United States. My generation believed change was essential.

Change has occurred. Today, women comprise more than half of the class at virtually every medical school. In schools like Stanford, which proactively embrace diversity, white males are now a minority. Importantly, students learn from each other's life experience about the worlds they have come from and will live in. They share knowledge about racial and cultural inheritance, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender and more. In doing so, they celebrate each other's differences. They also learn more formally about cultural competency and, indeed, are now required to do so. Whether their lives and careers focus on serving special populations, working in a laboratory or teaching at a university, they are enriched by knowledge broader than science and deeper into humanity.

I experienced the narrowness of diversity that delineated medical schools just years ago. It is hard to imagine ever going backward. The recent Supreme Court decision regarding the University of Michigan permits us to sustain the diversity that we celebrate at schools like Stanford. Such diversity prepares our students to work, live and change the global community of the 21st century.

PHIL PIZZO

The Carl and Elizabeth Naumann Professor for the Dean of the School of Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and of Microbiology and Immunology





ERIC ROBERTS

Professor of Computer Science

RECENTLY, I GAVE A TALK IN WHICH I ARGUED THAT ACHIEVING GREATER DIVERSITY among computer science students is the central challenge for our discipline.

The importance of this goal goes beyond the notion that equal access to education is a fundamental right. Although all knowledge is power, our culture places a premium on technical knowledge. Those who make computers do amazing things can shape the future. They have greater access to economic power. As long as the technically educated community comes from the social classes that have traditionally been dominant, the inequalities and injustices that plague our culture can only worsen. Moreover, if those who create computing technology remain overwhelmingly white and male, the industry's products will reflect the predisposition and culture of that class. Greater diversity among those who create future technologies will ensure greater diversity among those who can make effective use of those technologies and a broader set of applications of that knowledge.

After my talk, I looked out at the audience and realized the progress our field has made, partly because of Stanford's commitment to diversity. In the audience were at least a half-dozen women who had become computer science professors after graduating from Stanford. There were also two African American alumni who have become part of an all-too-small community of black computer scientists. And there were representatives of the new generation of Stanford students, including a young African woman who is now a computer science sophomore. They represent the face of change for what has been a very narrowly defined population. They can make a difference to the field and to the community, and the world will be better as a result.

MY MOTHER WAS A SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER IN MY HOME STATE OF KENTUCKY. She was teaching multiculturalism long before most people had ever heard of the word. She taught me that people are not the same and should not have to be. She taught me that ignoring differences is not the same thing as treating someone as your equal. To ignore what makes us unique devalues the individual and lessens the richness of our lives. Rather than ignoring diversity, we should respect and celebrate differences.

Sometimes it is difficult to convince others that Stanford still has problems with diversity. That's because true diversity means more than just "non-white." I am in a department of more than 800 where the graduate students represent many different cultures, but African American women number three. I felt ignored by some peers in my first year here. I felt isolated, and it was shocking to me because I knew I wasn't invisible.

My parents taught me that nothing changes until you work to make it happen. Because of my experiences, I am committed to working with the university to increase the diversity of graduate students. As students, we know that Stanford has much potential and many resources. The current undergraduate population proves that when Stanford decides to create diversity, it excels, without lessening quality. Now, those energies are focused on graduate students. In another five years, we will know that we made a difference when we see a more diverse graduate student population, which will lead to university faculties that better reflect our society.

AYODELE THOMAS

Ph.D. Candidate, Electrical Engineering,
Black Graduate Student Association Member





DENNI DIANNE WOODWARD

Assistant Director, Native American Cultural Center

THE NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IS FAR MORE DIVERSE THAN ANY OTHER. With more than 500 distinct sovereign nations, tribes and villages within the United States, we are more different from each other than the peoples of European countries are from each other.

Nearly 100 indigenous nations, tribes and villages are represented within the Native community at Stanford, and forming community from such international diversity can present challenges. Native students at Stanford have a unique opportunity to meet, interact and befriend people from other tribes that they might not otherwise know. Yu'pik Eskimo from Barrow, Alaska; Houma from Houma, Louisiana; Native Hawaiian from Waipahu, Hawaii; and Tonawanda Seneca from Skowhegan, Maine, and more come together at Stanford to learn from each other about their differences and similarities.

It is our responsibility to focus on our similarities and form community to inspire future generations. It is our responsibility to maintain the Native presence here at Stanford and to educate ourselves and others on issues of importance to indigenous people, in and outside the classroom. It is our responsibility to create a collective voice of students, faculty, staff and alumni that will be heard. It is our responsibility, despite our relatively small numbers, to not be dismissed as statistically insignificant, but to always make a difference at Stanford and beyond.

We Native people must continue to contribute our many and unique insights and perspectives. Diversity does indeed add dimension and depth to the academic community at Stanford and to the greater society!



SYLVIA YANAGISAKO

Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology

WHEN I DO RESEARCH IN ITALY, PEOPLE ARE INTRIGUED BY BEING STUDIED by an American anthropologist who, in their eyes, doesn't look American. They are even more surprised to learn that I am from an island in the middle of the Pacific, which they think of as the kind of place anthropologists study. It is hardly surprising that they imagine anthropologists as Europeans or European Americans who study non-Europeans because anthropology emerged in Europe and the United States in the 19th century as the study of "other" people.

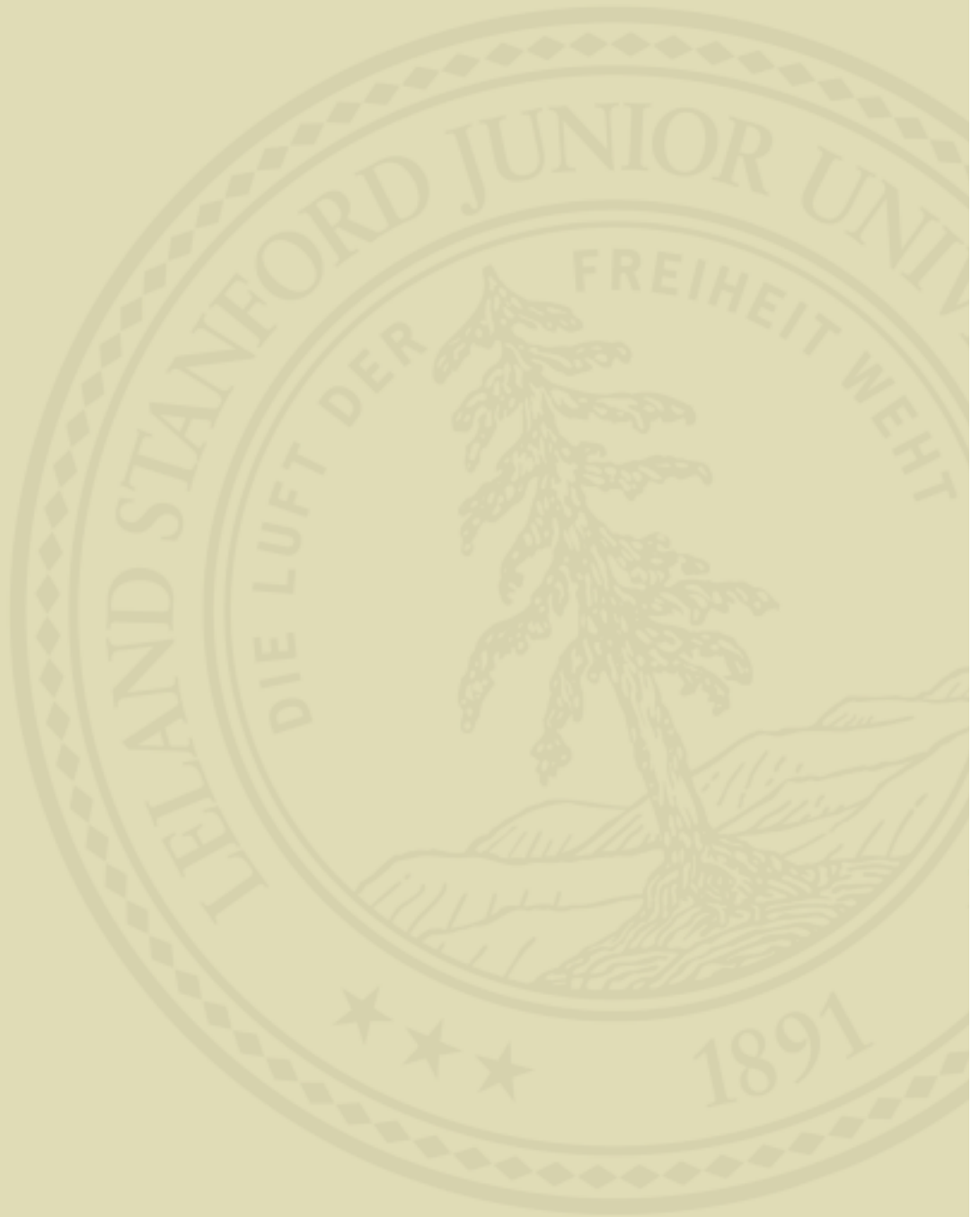
At the same time, it seems surprising that it has taken more than 100 years for a discipline dedicated to studying human diversity to recognize that having scholars of diverse cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds—and of different genders and sexual orientations—would incite productive new questions and innovative concepts and methods. This is precisely what has occurred over the past few decades. The increasing diversity of anthropological scholars has enlivened intellectual productivity, challenged prevailing assumptions and forced us to think in more rigorous ways. It has helped us to rethink whether homogeneity is a "natural" state of human society. We can now see that this is a culturally specific vision of the social world that has not always been shared by people everywhere.

Far from being a "natural" state, homogeneity in social groups—whether communities, societies or campus populations—is created through social acts of exclusion, marginalization and suppression. Diversity has a place in my work precisely as an analytic tool with which to assess these processes of homogenization and their tenuousness.

Resources related to diversity at Stanford

(All numbers have 650 area code.)

Asian American Activities Center	723-3681
Assistant Dean for Graduate Diversity	723-3763
Bechtel International Center	723-1831
Black Community Services Center	723-1587
Casa Zapata	723-3297
Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity	723-8449
Committee on Black Performing Arts	723-4402
Diversity and Access Office	725-0326
Disability Resource Center	723-1066
El Centro Chicano	723-2089
Humanities & Sciences Multicultural Graduate Student Services	723-2275
LGBT Community Resources Center	725-4222
Muwekma-Tah-Ruk	853-9663
Office of the Dean of Students	723-2733
Okada House	723-4144
Native American Cultural Center	725-6944
Ujamaa	723-4209
Women's Community Center	723-0545



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