

Framework Task Force to Recommend New Infrastructure for the Study of Race and the Impacts of Race on Society at Stanford

From slavery, to Jim Crow, to the forced removal of Native American children from their homes, to the Japanese internment camps during WW II, to the red-lining policies of the post-war period, to the persistence of, and in some areas the re-emergence of de facto segregation, to the history of the State of California, American society has fallen short of its promise of equal consideration and standing for all of its citizens. Unsettling racial and ethnic disparities persist in health outcomes; infant mortality; unemployment rates; rates of incarceration; rates of home ownership; college graduation rates; and income and wealth. While these disparities often intersect with education and income, in many cases significant disparities remain even when education and income are accounted for.

We believe that Stanford has a dual responsibility to 1) produce knowledge and understanding that addresses the persistence of racial inequality; and 2) to educate its students for participation in a diverse and multi-cultural world. Through IDEAL, and the racial justice initiatives announced this summer, we hope to increase both the institutional support for and number of scholars focused on racial disparities in America. This includes scholars whose work compares the experiences of different groups in this society and around the world.

Stanford has many truly distinguished faculty doing such work. We also have a number of resources that significantly contribute to such work including (but not limited to) AAAS (African and African American Studies), CCSRE (Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity), the Martin Luther King Center, the Program in Human Rights, African Studies, the Institute for Diversity in the Arts, the Center for Population Health Sciences in the Medical School, RILE (Race, Inequality, and Language in Education) in the Graduate School of Education, and a new Racial Justice center in the law school. But looking to the future, it is important to ask if Stanford currently has the institutional organization to optimize our strengths—perhaps especially in this time of growing national concern about racial justice and inequality. Are we institutionally organized so that these resources have both a generative influence on each other, and maximum effect on research that feeds into public policy, new scholarship and teaching, and indeed contributes to our country's civic life? Are we structured so that the whole of these resources has effects greater than the sum of its parts?

If not, then what infrastructure might accomplish this? What infrastructure might support Stanford achieving the leadership in these areas that it aspires to?

To answer this question, the provost and the dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences charge a Task Force to explore how we might better coordinate and support our current strengths in these areas and, building on them, how we might have a bigger research footprint, a stronger teaching program, and more robust community outreach. In taking up this charge, the task force is asked to address the following:

1. What university structures would best facilitate these research, teaching, and outreach ambitions? The focus here should be first on articulating, with specificity, the university's goals in this area—followed then by development of the university organization and structures best suited to achieving those goals. For example, should there be an institute, a new department or set of departments, an enhanced set of IDPs with faculty billets, or something else entirely? In pursuing these questions, we urge you to think broadly and boldly. We are especially interested in your thoughts on how Stanford might be distinctive, drawing on the fact that we have in addition to a top school of Humanities and Sciences, a set of leading professional schools. How might, for example, the Engineering and Medical school be better integrated into this effort—casting, perhaps, a uniquely Stanford approach to these issues? We urge ambition in your thinking.
2. Given the variety of possible arrangements, we ask you to generate a list of several such arrangements, with the benefits and trade-offs attached to each. It would be helpful for you to look at what others have done; what has worked well and what has not—on campus and at other universities.
3. In laying out the various organizational options, how would the multiple units involved in a larger structure be related to one another, and how would these units be related to departments in H&S as well as to other schools and Institutes across the University.
4. To anchor your thinking, we would like you consider what structures could be established today, without significant resources; we would also like you to share how over time, with increased resources, you would build upon or expand the new structure. Think about this in terms of immediate changes, changes with a moderate addition of resources and the ultimate goal as we inspire philanthropists with our vision.
5. In your consideration of alternatives, please consider the possible departmentalization of AAAS and how that would fit into the overall frameworks that you are proposing. Specifically, we ask you to consider:
 - a. What are the advantages and potential drawbacks of departmentalization?
 - b. How would a departmentalized AAAS relate to the Center for African Studies? To CCSRE?
 - c. What would be the intellectual focus of a new AAAS department and how would its appointments best be structured?

Given the deep engagement of our community in the issues covered in this charge--especially the final element of the charge--we ask the task force to consult broadly and deeply, soliciting

input from all stakeholders, especially the many student groups who have expressed deep interest in this topic. While there are undoubtedly a range of opinions about the best way forward, student voices are especially important as you consider how the various structures affect teaching.

We would like to have your report fulfilling this charge by May 1, 2021. You should anticipate that your work will be followed by faculty committees that further develop the Stanford organization and structures that go forward in this area--whether that involves institutes, centers, departments, or something else.

For this work you will be supported by staff and a research assistantship to help gather information on how peer institutions are organized as well as other relevant material and information. Through the provost, you will also have access to a small and dedicated group of trustees and friends who can provide external advice when requested.

We deeply appreciate your willingness to take on this work.

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