

The Reagan Library:

Reading Into the Stanford-Hoover Connection

by Hal Plotkin

President Reagan last week gave final approval to plans to construct a library in his name in the Foothills above Stanford University. The library site provides a panoramic view of one of the few communities in California to have voted against the President's re-election.

Stanford's decision to house the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library comes on the heels of a two year dispute over the alleged politicization of the University and the propriety of Stanford's association with the Hoover Institution, the conservative think tank.

Indeed, it is the Hoover Institution and not the Ronald Reagan Library which has thus far garnered the lion's share of attention in the controversy. Critics worry that allowing partisan political activities at Stanford could jeopardize the University's non-profit



Robert Frelen

educational tax status. Under its non-profit charter, it must not allow its resources to be used to advance partisan politics.

The Hoover Institution was founded by former President Herbert Hoover who, in 1959, defined the think tank's mission.

"The purpose of this institution," he said, "must be, by its research and publications, to demonstrate the evils of the doctrines of Karl Marx...."

Faculty Asks Questions

The debate about whether Hoover belongs at Stanford began in earnest when, over two years ago, Stanford Professors John Manley and Ronald Rebbholz circulated a petition among the school's faculty which questioned the political activities of the Hoover Institution. The petition asked the school's administration to look into whether the institution was violating Stanford's rule prohibiting partisan political activities.

In response, university President Donald Kennedy and the Stanford

Board of Trustees appointed a committee to examine the Hoover-Stanford relationship, with an eye toward strengthening ties between the two.

Chaired by Professor Robert Ward, a Senior Fellow at Hoover, the committee was comprised of people who for the most part were sympathetic to the Hoover Institution.

The Ward Committee touched off a firestorm of controversy when its report was released last December. The report singled out Stanford's History and Political Science departments, and accused them of being uncooperative in their dealings with Hoover.

Rather than look at the propriety of the Hoover Institution's activities, the Ward Committee focused instead on the activities of Hoover's critics at Stanford.

"Many members of the Stanford Faculty believe the [Ward] report is libelous," charged Professor Manley and Rebbholz in a letter published by the University's in-house publication, *Campus Report*. Along with the signators of their original petition, the two are upset that the issues raised two years ago were never addressed by the Ward Committee.

Manley urged his Faculty Senate colleagues to convene their own study group. "The time has come for a representative committee of the Faculty Senate to study the evidence on Hoover's political activities and advise this community on the wisdom of closer relations between Stanford and the Hoover Institution," Manley and Rebbholz wrote.

The Faculty Senate agreed with the professors last month when they voted to convene a committee and address the questions ignored by the Ward Committee. The resolution passed by the Faculty Senate asked this new faculty committee to study the effects of implementing the Ward Committee's recommendations for closer Stanford-Hoover cooperation.

Up for Grabs

While the debate raged additional fuel was added to the partisan fires when Reagan advisor and Hoover Senior Fellow Martin Anderson, along with then-Counselor to the president, Ed Meese, proposed locating the Reagan Library at Stanford. The move came just weeks after Manley and Rebbholz publicly questioned the political activities of the Hoover Institution, which maintains close ties with members of the Reagan administration.

University officials claim the two issues are unrelated. "There was a juxtaposition in timing," maintains Stanford Vice President for Public Affairs Robert Frelen. "That's all."

Others disagree. "The two issues are related," says Professor Manley. "The problem we face is that Stanford, because of its



The proposed site of the Reagan Presidential Library on the Stanford campus.

association with the Hoover Institution, is the victim of a growing perception that this University is tilting in one direction [conservative]," he said.

"By agreeing to house the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and refusing to even address the question of Hoover's severance from Stanford, the University administration has compounded the problems this University faces," claims Manley.

Much of the flap surrounding the Hoover Institution concerns the policies and activities of its Director, W. Glenn Campbell. Campbell was originally selected for his job by Herbert Hoover and was subsequently confirmed in that post by the Stanford Board of Trustees.

Currently, Campbell serves as an advisor to President Reagan and chairs the president's powerful Intelligence Oversight Board. Official Hoover publications, including the Institution's Annual Reports for 1982 and 1984, boast of the Institution's extensive ties to the Republican hierarchy.

Despite those admissions, University administrators are determined not to investigate the political nature of the Hoover Institution or the activities of its personnel. On the contrary, Stanford President Donald Kennedy lauded the Ward Committee's report, saying the enhanced cooperation it recommends would create "dazzling" opportunities for both Stanford and Hoover.

"The University administration defines the problem with Hoover as

one of 'governance' rather than 'severance,'" observes Professors Manley and Rebbholz in their letter to faculty colleagues. "They [the University administration] have completely ignored our concerns," Manley says.

Cut Off

Amid rising fears of the activities of Hoover Director Campbell and his conservative colleagues at the Hoover Institution, the Stanford administration found reason to enforce its policy against partisan politicking: they disconnected the telephone of the student-run Stanford Progressive Alliance (SPA) which was heavily involved in Walter Mondale's unsuccessful Presidential campaign last fall.

According to Michael Ramsey-Perez of the Dean of Student Affairs Office, the SPA admitted using an on-campus telephone to help students get excited about the Mondale campaign. "That was in violation of the University's policy prohibiting the diversion of University resources for partisan political activities," Ramsey-Perez says.

The Stanford Progressive Alliance still does not have either an on-campus office or telephone and awaits recertification from the administration before it can again operate as an official on-campus organization.

Stanford Vice President Robert Frelen replied with caution when asked how the University can reconcile disconnecting the SPA's phone while looking the other way as Hoover personnel move daily with the political fortunes of Ronald Reagan.

"That is a good question," he said. "I'm not really familiar with the Stanford Progressive Alliance's problems."

Frelen rejected charges that the University administration was selectively enforcing its rules. "I have the sense that we are pretty evenhanded about enforcing the policy," he said. "University rules prohibit the diversion of University resources to advance partisan political causes, and we enforce those rules."

No Debate

In a highly unusual development last month, 16 members of Stanford's junior faculty signed a letter protesting the Ward Committee report and requested that their names not be made public to the University

administration. Their letter charged that the Ward report was "filled with biases and distortions."

"This is a highly charged issue," Manley says. "Indeed, when we circulated our original petition asking for an investigation of the Hoover Institution, several faculty members told me they were in agreement with us but were afraid to sign the petition for fear of antagonizing the University administration." While it is not clear what faculty members stand to lose by public disagreements with the University administration, junior faculty members who have not yet been granted tenure must have their continued tenure approved by academic supervisors appointed by the University President.

"What is clear," Manley says, "is that faculty members who are associated with the Hoover Institution receive substantial tangible benefits as a result of that association." Those benefits, according to Manley, include research assistants, computer time and offices.

The issue of whether the benefits that Hoover provides have been used to advance partisan political objectives has never been addressed by the University administration.

"I don't blame Ronald Reagan for dampening this debate," Manley says. "The University administration has from day one refused to validate the question we raised in our petition. We can talk about anything else except the central issue involved. The University has thus far prevented an informed public discourse on this question."

No Complaints

"I haven't received a single complaint from any members of the Stanford faculty that they have suffered or are afraid of suffering in any way as a result of public disagreements with either the federal administration or the administration of this University," says Frelen.

"If those fears exist, I'm not aware of any basis for them. If anyone around here has any evidence to the contrary there are a lot of people who would like to see it."

Manley admits that the fear of reprisals might be "imaginary, but they do exist. Look, there are a lot of people around who have ties with the Hoover Institution and who strongly endorse the University administration."



John Manley