



STANFORD UNIVERSITY
Ad Hoc Committee on ROTC

Faculty Senate
Stanford, California 94305

November 2010

To: Stanford University community
From: Ad Hoc Committee on ROTC
Re: **Your thoughts on possible relations between Stanford University and ROTC**

Dear Colleagues,

An Ad Hoc Committee on ROTC is now examining whether, and in what form, Stanford University should expand its relationship with the Reserve Officer Training Corps programs within the U.S. military. In a motion on 3/4/10, the Faculty Senate proposed that the Committee “explore the logistical, financial and pedagogical implications of any such relationship for Stanford and its wider mission, and report back to the senate detailing a range of options the university might pursue and the consequences they can be expected to have.” This Committee now writes to solicit your thoughts on this issue, and we hope it will be helpful for you to have a short history of ROTC at Stanford that has been culled from the sources listed at the end of this letter.

The structure and funding of ROTC as we know it today are generally attributed to, among other sources, the National Defense Acts of 1916 and 1920, and the ROTC Revitalization Act of 1964. Stanford’s association with ROTC dates back to the 1916-19 period, with enrollment in ROTC peaking during World War II at about 50% of undergraduate men. Enrollment was about 1100 in 1956, 732 in 1959, 586 in 1964 and 383 in 1968. In October 1968, when sentiment against the country’s conduct of the Vietnam War was high, the Stanford Faculty Senate appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on ROTC to examine whether “proper relations between the ROTC departments and Stanford may be established by review and reform of the present relations.” In February 1969, the Senate by a 25 to 8 vote accepted the Ad Hoc Committee’s recommendation that, by 1973, the university phase out all academic credit for ROTC programs and academic rank for military staff. This was followed later that month by a student referendum in which Stanford students voted 2106 to 1387 that “ROTC has a legitimate place on the campus and deserves the support and credit from the University for all those parts of the program that are of genuine academic interest.” Then, after a series of referenda, Senate actions, reviews of Senate actions by the Academic Council, and negotiations between President Pitzer and the three services, the Academic Council, in a 390 to 373 vote in March 1970, accepted a proposal from the Army that academic credit be given on a course-by-course basis under the aegis of the Committee on Undergraduate Studies.

However, by May 1970, the political climate had changed considerably. Against the backdrop of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, proposals by President Nixon to eliminate student deferments from military service, and threats of violence on the campus, the Senate voted 36 to 8 with 4 recorded abstentions to terminate academic credit for ROTC courses and, on a divided voice vote, requested the Advisory Committee on ROTC Affairs to report “its recommendations as to the termination or retention of ROTC at Stanford in any form.” The following week, the ASSU Senate voted 17 to 9 that ROTC should either be conducted as a voluntary organization or terminated, and then it approved a resolution recommending that the status of ‘voluntary student organization’ be denied any group formed for the purpose of organized military training. In October 1970, President Lyman reported to the Senate that all military training on campus would

be phased out by June 1973, and that the Air Force program would probably be withdrawn by June 1971. The Air Force ROTC program was terminated in June 1971, and the Army and Navy ROTC programs were withdrawn in June 1973. Today about 15 Stanford students obtain their ROTC training at UC Berkeley, Santa Clara University or San Jose State University, depending on their service branch.

Much of the debate leading up to the termination of ROTC focused on academic issues, in particular, course credit, staff rank and departmental status. There were also objections to the punitive clauses in student contracts whereby a student would be subject to immediate conscription for “willfully evading” the stipulated terms of education or service. The majority report of the Ad Hoc Committee of 1968-69 acknowledged that there were some whose opposition to the Vietnam war led them to support the termination of ROTC on the campus, and some whose support of students’ freedom to choose a course of study or a career led them to support the continuation of ROTC. However, the majority was unconvinced by these arguments, arguing instead that their objections to ROTC were “institutional” rather than “political.” It argued that, because the goal of ROTC courses is to educate potential officers, the knowledge disseminated in these courses “is rarely created in an atmosphere of free intellectual activity.” Further, the majority felt that the personal conduct standards of the three services “can seriously limit the student’s free participation in all facets of intellectual inquiry and legal political activity.” It concluded that a formal, on-campus ROTC program was inconsistent with the definition of Stanford University as “a community whose members ... have a primary commitment to the creation and dissemination of knowledge, in an environment of free intellectual activity.”

The minority report of the Ad Hoc Committee of 1968-69 argued that, for the foreseeable future, this nation would require substantial numbers of well-educated and well-trained officers to lead its armed forces. Therefore, participation by Stanford in the education of these leaders would be of considerable value to the nation, and the presence of ROTC programs on the campus (after these have been improved by the recommendations in the report) would provide “military studies of worthy academic quality and proven interest to substantial numbers of Stanford students as academic programs.” This minority report went on to describe reforms to the academic, administrative and contractual features of ROTC that would result in the continuation of ROTC at Stanford “as a compatible and worthwhile academic endeavor.”

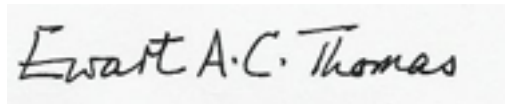
The context for examining the ROTC-at-Stanford issue in 2010 is similar to the context of 40 years ago, inasmuch as (a) any proposed Stanford-ROTC program would have to pass muster “as a compatible and worthwhile academic endeavor,” (b) the value of such a program to Stanford and the nation is still viewed by some as ‘high’ and by others as ‘low’, (c) the potential conflicts resulting from educating an apolitical officer corps within an intellectually engaged student body have to be addressed, (d) students’ freedom of choice is still a relevant concern, and (e) the nation is currently at war. However, the present context differs from the earlier one, because (f) we now have an all-volunteer military, thereby rendering moot the earlier concerns over the punitive clauses in student contracts, (g) the arguments for or against terminating an existing program do not necessarily map into arguments against or for (respectively) reinstating an emended version of that program, and (h) the military is now subject to the controversial, Congressionally mandated policy of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT). Indeed, the current expectation that DADT will be repealed within the next year is one reason for thinking that ours is a timely examination of the Stanford-ROTC issue.

Our examination will rely heavily on the thoughtful input we receive from members of the Stanford community, *inter alia*, about the issues raised in the previous paragraph. We would be most grateful if you would take the time to write to us as soon as possible (and, if possible, before November 22) at rotc_2010@stanford.edu, or at the following address:

Ad Hoc Committee on ROTC
c/o Ingrid Deiwiks
E115 Encina Hall
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-6055

Many thanks!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ewart A.C. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular background.

Ewart A.C. Thomas

For the Ad Hoc Committee:

Greg Boardman, Eamonn Callan, Ingrid Deiwiks, Imani Franklin, Hester Gelber, Akhil Iyer, Sharon Long, Orrin "Rob" Robinson, Scott Sagan and Ewart Thomas (Chair)

Sources: "Stanford University and the ROTC departments: A Report and Recommendations," February 7, 1969; "Log on ROTC at Stanford, 1968 to 1973," by H. Donald Winbigler, September 12, 1973; "Corps Curriculum" by Joshua Davis, *Stanford Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2002; and "Faculty Senate Minutes," March 4, 2010. These sources can be found at <http://faculty.senate.stanford.edu/Ad%20Hoc%20Committee%20on%20ROTC/index.htm>.