“ex officio”

President and Faculty Senate
2000 – 2016

A Bouquet of Personal Notes from Senate Chairs and Academic Secretaries for

John L. Hennessy
Stanford’s 10th President

May 12, 2016
Preface

Some time ago, the question came up how the Faculty Senate could best express its appreciation of John Hennessy’s key role in academic governance over the past sixteen years and his active and spirited participation in the deliberations of the Senate of the Academic Council. That is when the idea was born to ask the Senate Chairs and Academic Secretaries who have served during John’s tenure as President to reminisce about their experience of how Senate and President interacted in conducting the academic affairs of the university and in navigating through the sometimes choppy waters of university governance. The following pages contain a colorful bouquet of memories, reflecting in very personal ways respect and affection for John Hennessy, and providing a unique perspective of the recent history of a great university. We thank our colleagues for readily agreeing to contribute to this project (and for delivering their contributions on time), and hope you will enjoy the results.

Kathryn Ann Moler
Chair, Senate XLVIII, 2015-2016

Hans N. Weiler
Academic Secretary to the University

2015-16 XLVIII Kathryn Ann Moler (Applied Physics)
2014-15 XLVII Russell Berman (German)
2013-14 XLVI David Palumbo-Liu (Comparative Literature)
2012-13 XLV Ray Levitt (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
2011-12 XLIV Rosemary Knight (Geophysics)
2010-11 XLIII David Spiegel (Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences)
2009-10 XLII Andrea Goldsmith (Electrical Engineering)
2008-09 XLI Karen Cook (Sociology)
2007-08 XL Eamonn Callan (Education)
2006-07 XXXIX Sheri Sheppard (Mechanical Engineering)
2005-06 XXXVIII Eric Roberts (Computer Science)
2004-05 XXXVII Rob Polhemus (English)
2003-04 XXXVI Thomas Wasow (Linguistics/Philosophy)
2002-03 XXXV Henry Greely (Law School)
2001-02 XXXIV John Rickford (Linguistics)
2000-01 XXXIII Brad Osgood (Electrical Engineering)
1999-00 XXXII Mark Zoback (Geophysics)

Academic Secretaries to the University, 1999/2000 – 2015/2016

Hans Weiler (2014/15 - )
Kathryn Ann Moler
Physics and Applied Physics

SENATE CHAIR 2015-16
XLVIII
John Hennessy became Provost in 1999 and then, a year later, Stanford’s 10th President. During the year that he was Provost, he had a series of lunches with small groups of faculty women from across campus. MIT had just released a “Study on the Status of Women Faculty in Science at MIT” which I, a new assistant professor and then the only woman in the Department of Applied Physics at Stanford, found deeply disheartening. As we discussed the MIT report and other topics of interest, I felt reassured in equal measures by John’s attentive listening – which showed me that the university’s leader had a genuine interest in every faculty member’s experience, including mine – and by his famously sharp analytical skills – which showed me that I could count on our administration to be both reasonable and proactive. Looking back over the past 17 years, I feel incredibly fortunate to have spent this time at Stanford. Across the country and around the world, colleagues comment admiringly on Stanford’s broad excellence in undergraduate, graduate, and professional education in the humanities, arts, social sciences, natural sciences, earth and environmental sciences, engineering, law, medicine, education, and business. President Hennessy has not only emphasized the highest level of academic scholarship; he has also greatly strengthened Stanford’s traditions of interdisciplinary collaboration and of engagement with issues of major social impact. His approach has provided both a model for higher education and a wonderful intellectual home for me personally.

I have now been a member of the Stanford Faculty Senate for four years and reach my term limits at the end of this year. John Hennessy has been an ex officio member of the Senate for more than four times as long, and brings the same camaraderie, sharp critical thinking, and good humor to his participation in faculty governance that he brought to our lunch 16 years ago. In my view, for example, thoughtful consideration of increasing the size of the undergraduate class is close to a moral imperative. Given the number of students who want to come to Stanford and who would thrive here, why would we not admit as many students as we can accommodate? When John came to the Senate to discuss this issue, I asked him what other opportunities might be foreclosed by increasing the undergraduate class size – in other words, what else might we do with the resources? John replied, “Kam, otherwise I was going to spend the university’s money to increase your salary.” The humor; the consultation with the Faculty Senate; and the measured approach to increasing the undergraduate class size while monitoring the quality of the experience characterize John’s tenure. We are rightly proud of Stanford’s tradition of faculty governance, and the President and the Provost have fostered faculty governance through their partnership and participation.

Kathryn Ann Moler
Chair, Senate XLVIII, 2015-2016
Dear John,

reviewing the record of the 47th Senate and your contributions to it, I discovered that you opened the year announcing the completion of the first roundabout, on Campus Drive and Escondido. Had this remark stood at the beginning of a good novel, I would have immediately recognized it as a symbol of circularity—by which I do not mean that Senate discussions may sometimes be repetitive (although I do not deny that possibility) but that the traffic circle would have foreshadowed the end of the year’s narrative with your announcement that you would be stepping down and returning to teaching and research. You have navigated quite a roundabout: faculty member, Dean, Provost, President, and back to the faculty—or not exactly, “back” to the faculty, since you never really left it. Our system of faculty governance includes both elected bodies, like the Senate, and the expectation that esteemed members of the faculty occupy the key positions of administrative leadership. We owe you thanks for taking so many years away from the primary responsibilities of scholarly life to contribute so successfully to the university.

The year marked some highpoints among your many accomplishments. A few stand out in particular. You have been a tireless advocate for the priority of academics for student athletes. At the December 4 meeting you underscored how the key implication of an NLRB ruling was not the possibility of unionization of athletes but a much more fundamental transformation of their status. Once scholarships are defined as compensation, student athletes cease to be primarily students. In your own words, “They’ll no longer be students, they’ll be employees,” from which ensues a very different relationship to the mission of the university, the pursuit of knowledge.

This was also the year in which the Stanford Energy System Innovation Project (SESII) was completed. You announced this at the Senate on April 16, to great acclaim. SESII is a major contribution to green Stanford, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 68%, as well as many other positive results for the environment. Your attention to our energy footprint will be a lasting legacy with ongoing and very effective benefits.

I want, however, to single out for particular praise your measured and principled statement on divestment in the February 19 session and on the contentiousness of debates over the Middle East in the student body. Before commenting on the technicalities of investment principles, you appropriately gave priority to the urgency of maintaining “civil and rational discussion” as the sine qua non of academic life. In the difficult times that higher education has continued to face and which have likely not come to an end, you have reminded the university of its core mission and the behavior required to carry it out. You may recall as well that your call for civility elicited a mixed response from Senators in a subsequent debate. The conclusion I draw from this is that we happily have a system of faculty governance that includes elected Senators as well as wise faculty leaders like yourself, to whom I and many others are grateful for the bedrock commitment to the academic mission and our scholarly vocation.

Russell Berman Chair, Senate XLVII, 2014-2015
David Palumbo-Liu
Comparative Literature

SENATE CHAIR 2013-14
XLVI
People tend to forget that Stanford’s Faculty Senate was born out of a time of great student protest (even more “active” in expression than today), and whoever wrote up its structure and by-laws certainly was mindful of the climate of the times. When I first took over as chair I was contacted by faculty at different universities, all asking about what made our Senate special. Among many of its distinctive features is the fact that both of our highest ranking officers—our provost and president—attend the Senate and yet do not get a vote. How audacious. But they are not simply there to watch and engage in our conversations and then sit quietly as we (supposedly) have our way. At the start of each session, they have the opportunity to get grilled. They are in this sense “answerable” to the Senate.

I think altogether I have served about nine years on the Senate, all during John’s presidency. In all those years not only has John never not had an answer, he has never not had a comprehensive answer. To anything.

Now I know he, of course, has his staff to do his research for him. But I know from at least one outside-the-Senate occasion that John Hennessy has an encyclopedic, and passionate knowledge of not only every inch of Stanford and its deep history, but also of higher education and liberal education in all its facets.

One brief example. In the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, we have a speakers series—How I Think About Literature. One year students decided to ask someone from outside literature, and indeed outside the humanities, to tell us how they thought about literature. When it was announced that John was to speak I frankly was apprehensive. I went into the room expecting your usual canned, ghost-written, laudatory, speech. Instead John rolled up his shirtsleeves and spoke without notes for nearly an hour about Shakespeare, Dickens, Balzac, Arundhati Roy, and others, in ways that made it clear he spoke from the heart, in a deeply personal and meaningful way. That talk in itself was the most convincing “defense of the humanities” I have ever heard—it was unforced and spontaneous. Now could any of us humanists do the same with computer science? John not only displayed respect for, and understanding of, the humanities, but also embodied its best aspirations—to inform how we see and feel and think about the world.

Thank you for that and so much more, John—all the energy, passion, and decency you have brought to Stanford. It was an honor working with you in the Senate.

David Palumbo-Liu
Chair, Senate XLVI, 2013-2014
Ray Levitt
Civil and Environmental Engineering

SENATE CHAIR 2012-13
XLV
As usual, following Stanford’s unusually democratic faculty governance norms, Senators’ seats for the 45th Faculty Senate were assigned by row, starting from the front, in alphabetical order, including seats for the President and Provost. At the first Senate meeting of that year, Provost Etchemendy remarked:

“One of the wonderful things about the Senate is how at the beginning of the Senate, the first meeting of the year, you come in, you don’t know where your seat is, and it’s all been turned around, and I notice that this year the President’s over there, and I’m over here. It feels kind of like the House of Commons.”

As Chair of the Senate during a year when some moderately controversial issues came up, I would say that debates on the Senate floor were occasionally passionate, but still downright temperate and respectful, compared to those in the House of Commons.

A key activity of the 45th Senate was to wrap up the implementation of the SUES reports recommendations to redesign the undergraduate breadth and writing requirements in order to open up the first two years of our undergraduate degree for exploration and discovery by our freshmen and sophomores.

We bemoaned the required number of units for some engineering and science majors—yet again—but then quickly got down to the business of implementing the SUES recommendations for breadth and writing.

We next focused in the Senate (and the University Cabinet) on the fast-growing trend toward online learning and the beginnings of accreditation of skills and competence by non-university players. We discussed what Stanford’s approach to this fast-moving trend should be. President Hennessy weighed in with two guideposts: we needed to conduct ongoing experiments; and we needed to engage our School of Education to help design and evaluate the experiments we run.

Then we got onto a really controversial topic brought to us by Registrar Tom Black: “What time should undergraduates be forced to wake up to take morning classes?” After impassioned arguments about how the physiology of late-stage adolescents, combined with Stanford’s culture of late-night dorm activities, affected sleep patterns, health and cognition for our students. A second issue was that faculty tend to teach classes at random times, in spite of existing guidance, and this prevented students from enrolling in courses that were blocked by these randomly scheduled classes. Our conclusion was that we needed to formalize the calendar for various class patterns and provide incentives to conform to the standard timeslots – i.e., faculty with conforming classes would get first dibs on the most popular classrooms! A compromise solution about the start time was to move to an 8:30 AM start that would give undergraduates an extra half hour of morning sleep.
At the end of a presentation about another fabulous year of athletics reported by Athletics Director Bernard Muir, President Hennessy could hardly contain himself with pride and excitement. He raised his hand and waved it around to get attention:

“Mr. Chair! Point of Order. And we won the trophy for being one of two schools that had a 100% graduation rate for the cohort graduating this year in football.”

This was one of several occasions during the 45th Faculty Senate when President Hennessy showed the great pride he takes in Stanford’s strength in, and balance between, the academic and extracurricular activities of our students.

Other meetings focused on the budgetary impact on the University of declining federal research spending and how Stanford was coping – as in many of our past financial crises, the President, Provost and Vice Provost for Research were clearly planning ahead. And we discussed the future of the PhD degree, highlighting the options for PhD alumni outside of academics in many fields and ways in which we could adapt our PhD programs to recognize this trend. A somewhat more controversial debate occurred on revisions to the Alternative Review Process for sexual harassment cases from the Board of Judicial Affairs, in which we had to weigh the rights of victims against due process for the accused, all under the threat of federal funding being eliminated if we did not move our process further in the direction of victims’ rights by lowering the standard of proof. The discussions in this meeting were perhaps the most passionate during the 45th Senate, except for the debate about the start time of morning classes!

The fact that our President and Provost routinely post higher attendance at faculty Senate meetings than many elected senators, that they are willing to take unscripted questions from the floor at the beginning of each meeting, and that they both engage in Senate discussions rather than dictate policy, distinguishes Stanford from virtually all of our peer institutions.

We greatly appreciate John Hennessy’s visionary, balanced and thoughtful leadership of Stanford and his strong and respectful, ongoing engagement with the elected representatives of our faculty during his term as President. As Chair of the 45th Stanford Faculty Senate, I extend my fellow Senators’ and my warm thanks and sincere best wishes to John Hennessy for the next phase of his career.

Raymond Levitt
Chair, Senate XLV, 2012-2013
Rosemary Knight
Geophysics

SENATE CHAIR 2011-12
XLIV
As I think back over my year as Chair of the Faculty Senate in 2011-2012, what immediately comes to mind are the deep and thoughtful discussions about revising our General Education Requirements. In preparing this note, I started thinking – what was John’s role in the discussions? What did he think about requiring freshmen seminars? Replacing I-HUM with Thinking Matters? Then I remembered - John was on sabbatical during most of Winter and Spring Quarter, the time stretch when we were focused on the recommendations in the SUES report (more accurately referred to as “Jim’s and Sue’s report”).

So where was the president going? We all assumed: New York, New York! (start spreading the news…) as 2011 was the year of Stanford in New York City. In the first Senate meeting of the year, John had made clear his enthusiasm for this undertaking - the idea of establishing a second major science and technology innovation center, of expanding Stanford’s influence, of attracting faculty and students who could not be convinced to leave the east coast (there are such people?). But by December the decision had been made to withdraw Stanford’s proposal. Despite his enthusiasm for the campus on the East Coast, John could not enter into any agreement that could potentially compromise the future of the university.

With John Hennessy heading off on sabbatical, John Etchemendy stepped in as Acting President and, for some purposes, Bob Simoni stepped in as Acting Provost. This triggered an international search for someone to act for Bob Simoni; it was declared a failed search.

John’s last address to the Faculty Senate in February 2012, before taking his sabbatical, was to announce a truly remarkable occasion in the history of this university – the completion of the Stanford Challenge which raised a total of $6.2 billion. This campaign was so amazing; this campaign was so John. It was about much more than raising money. It was about communicating to the world, and to ourselves, what Stanford is and what Stanford aspires to become. John, with his visionary leadership, captured all of us with his infectious energy. The Stanford Challenge brought in gifts that will support our faculty, staff, and students as we find new ways, through our research, teaching, and service, to address the challenges facing our world. Thank you, John, for leading us into our future.

Rosemary Knight
Chair, Senate XLIV, 2011-2012
David Spiegel
Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

SENATE CHAIR 2010-11
XLIII
Dear John,

I remember vividly as both a member and Chair of the Senate the importance of your regular banter with the Provost, and your expressions of good-natured pride in Stanford’s intellectual and athletic prowess. But context provides perspective. I was talking with a colleague from Harvard whose eyes widened when I casually mentioned that our President regularly attends Faculty Senate meetings (indeed you have had a better attendance record than many of the senators). My colleague was astounded that you would take the time to do that, and his reaction helped me to understand the degree of respect for the faculty that your presence conveyed, not to mention your incisive explanations of University policies and plans. We thank you for that, for making Stanford feel like the collective intellectual enterprise it is, rather than an Administration with an unruly faculty to be managed. I recall the steady and straightforward way you and Etch led us through the last economic downturn, choosing to take the hit right away while everyone was aware of the problem, so that we could lead the way out early as things returned to normal. I appreciate the direct way you addressed the heated controversy about the return of ROTC to the campus, modeling respect for disagreement by disagreeing respectfully but not imperiously when you felt it necessary. You have worn the mantle of leadership lightly but exceedingly well, and we thank you for it.

David Spiegel               Chair, Senate XLIII, 2010-2011
Andrea Goldsmith
Electrical Engineering

SENATE CHAIR 2009-10
XLII
I was first elected to the Faculty Senate during the second year of John’s presidency. It was only 18 months earlier that I had dined at John’s home in his Dean’s welcome dinner for the newly-hired engineering professors. Now he was a few seats down the Senate aisle from me in the ex-officio role of President. In that first Senate meeting, and in all the others during my many terms, John’s participation greatly enriched and enlivened the discussions on the many issues large and small affecting our institution. I found it quite remarkable that Stanford’s president would make himself available every other Thursday to answer any Senate question that would come his way, from the trivial to the profound, with his trademark thoughtfulness, humor and transparency. This open dialogue helped forge the strong partnership between Stanford’s faculty and leadership that has been a hallmark of John’s tenure as president.

A few of my most poignant memories of John in Senate meetings are as follows. I learned of my tenure approval at a Senate meeting via an announcement from the Chair John Rickford. I thought my tenure case was still pending before the Trustees, but John indeed confirmed that my tenure had been granted, and then led an enthusiastic round of applause. A few years later, Larry Summers made his infamous comments about the intrinsic aptitude of women playing a role in their absence from the top echelons of science and engineering. During the next Senate meeting, John was asked what he thought about Summers’ comments. While John demurred to opine on the comments at that time, shortly thereafter he took the unprecedented action of penning, together with the presidents of MIT and Princeton, an in-depth critique of Summers’ comments that was published online and in the Boston Globe. I believe that courageous act had a huge impact on mitigating the damage of these comments to women in engineering and science as well as to girls contemplating entering these fields.

In the spring of 2009 I was elected Stanford’s 42nd Senate Chair. Prior to the start of my term, I asked to speak with several of Stanford’s executives to find out what issues they were most concerned about. My one-on-one meeting with John was truly a highlight of my year as Senate Chair and indeed my tenure at Stanford; it demonstrated all the traits that have made John the most inspirational and effective president in Stanford’s history. The ingenuity, dedication, and passion that John exhibited during our conversation regarding what Stanford must do to lead the world in every dimension of academic excellence far into the future remains seared in my memory. Seeds of John’s later initiatives in undergraduate education, online education and placing a Stanford campus in another geographic location were part of that conversation, and I truly admired John’s bold and compelling goals around these issues. The lively discussions during my Senate Chairmanship in which John’s wisdom and leadership excellence were in full display included the response of the university to the budget crisis of the previous year, the comprehensive charter of the newly-formed Task Force on Undergraduate Education (SUES), the nature of interdisciplinary research at Stanford through its Institutes and Centers and, perhaps most controversially, the possible return of the ROTC program to Stanford. It was in fact John who suggested a Senate discussion on this latter topic as he believed that Stanford should be educating future leaders of the world, including those in the military. This view prevailed in a decision by the Senate the following year to reinstate its ROTC program.
In closing, I would like to say that it has been a true privilege and pleasure to be a part of Stanford’s faculty and Senate during John’s term as president. The impact of his leadership on Stanford’s excellence in every dimension cannot be overstated, and his vision, executive acumen, and personal touch will be much missed by the entire Stanford community. I wish John the best of luck in his future endeavors, which will surely benefit from the many talents he brought to Stanford’s presidency.

With warmest regards,

Andrea Goldsmith

Chair, Senate XLII, 2009-2010
Pictured below with Faculty Senate Vice Chair Harvey Cohen

Karen Cook
Sociology

SENATE CHAIR 2008-09
XLI
John,

I don’t think it is an exaggeration to say that you are the best university president in the nation and certainly you will be missed in this role, though I know you will enjoy your next adventure at Stanford, working with young scholars to develop their potential as future world leaders.

On a personal note I just wanted to say how much I have appreciated your commitment to maintaining close touch with faculty members and their concerns and your ability to communicate how much the university depends on an excellent and committed faculty. In addition, I have enjoyed your capacity for humor and the strength you have shown as a leader in difficult times as well as in the great times and there have been both during your tenure as president. I believe our first meeting was when you came to my office a year after I had joined the faculty during your brief tenure as provost. Even then I was impressed with our conversation and the fact that we met in my office, and I was only one of a very large number of faculty you met with and continued during your presidency to maintain relationships with. I can’t imagine how you were able to manage all the many constituencies you served, always with such equanimity and directness.

I remember being elected Senate Chair in the spring of 2008 when the Senate was pondering how it would deal with a growing endowment with a focus on increasing undergraduate financial aid to be the best in the nation and contemplating a significant expansion of the undergraduate body. What a great time I thought to serve as chair of the Senate. Fall arrived and instead we were facing the worst financial crisis in the nation’s history beyond the Great Depression. (I was even blamed for this Great Recession by the Vice Chair of the Senate when I ended my term, as you may recall). This was not exactly the tour of duty I had signed up for. But what I want to say is that your leadership, along with that of the provost, was so impressive. Not only was there great wisdom in the approach the two of you took to the budget crisis, there was also great compassion - especially when a reduction in force primarily among staff was required. I learned a lot about leadership during a crisis that year and I want to thank you for this. In retrospect I could not have wished for more support as a faculty leader during this time of stress for the university community.

I hope you get elected to the Senate soon so we can continue to have your wisdom as Stanford moves forward on a path that has really been paved with gold by you and the many people you have led as your staff, students and faculty while president. Furthermore, as an alum and Stanford parent, I want to thank you on behalf of all the future Stanford students and faculty yet to be hired for all you have done to create the best university in the world (from my unbiased perspective).

I sincerely hope you and Andrea enjoy the next phase of your lives here at Stanford as well as a bit of well-earned rest and relaxation.

With gratitude,

Karen S. Cook
Chair, Senate XLI, 2008-2009
Eamonn Callan
Education

SENATE CHAIR 2007-08
XL
The Rumsfeld Controversy

Sometimes people show themselves in their best light when they do nothing. That at least is the moral I take from the following story about my year as Chair of the Senate.

Shortly before the first meeting of the Faculty Senate in the autumn of 2007, the Hoover Institution announced that Donald Rumsfeld had been appointed as a Distinguished Fellow at the Hoover Institution to advise a new task force on terrorism and security. The reaction on campus (and in the national media) was predictable. Within days I had received a petition from nearly twenty Senators urging us to invite the Director of Hoover to come to a meeting to explain the appointment of someone as a “Distinguished Fellow” who was now regarded by many Republicans and every Democrat as an egregiously incompetent civil servant during his years as Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush.

The petition raised deep questions of academic principle. On the one hand, the objections to the Rumsfeld appointment were more than the usual misgivings that politically controversial appointments arouse, because his performance in office had been almost universally condemned. On the other, a donnybrook in the Senate about the appointment would certainly be decried in the media as an attack on free speech. That was something John Hennessy gently noted in his contribution to the Senate discussion of the petition, though he emphasized his neutrality on the overall merits of the petition. After a lengthy discussion that only barely steered clear of incivility, the Senate agreed to invite the Director of Hoover to meet with us. We would wait a month until that meeting.

During the intervening weeks I would not have been wholly surprised to receive a phone call from John’s office to hear advice about the need for the Senate Chair to guide discussion carefully when the Director of Hoover met with us so that any reputational threat to the university was mitigated. I would not have been surprised, but I did not really expect to receive the call either. For I knew that John strongly respected the academic independence of the Senate and would likely be averse to something that might seem to encroach ever so slightly on our sphere of decision-making, even in a case where the stakes were as high as in this one. I never got that phone call.

When the meeting occurred, everyone was on their best behavior, and what might have turned into a rancorous debate became an informative and cordial discussion about how appointments were made at Hoover. I was immensely relieved when the Rumsfeld controversy blew over. My respect for John Hennessy also went up another notch.

Eamonn Callan
Chair, Senate XL, 2007-2008
Sheri Sheppard
Mechanical Engineering

SENATE CHAIR 2006-07
XXXIX
A message to John:

John Hennessy has been present in virtually all of my career at Stanford. And this has been a good presence! Over this period, there are three things I have grown to admire about John:

1) His dedication to Stanford over the long haul, not only to have the Institution maintain its excellence, but also to extend and expand what excellence means. John is a dreamer and a doer; what a combo!

2) His care of students. Just as one example, I recently met a sophomore who is being advised by Prof. Hennessy. She was sharing with me that he was challenging her to think about graduate school, something she had not considered before. This is one of our key faculty responsibilities—having students imagine all they are capable of.

3) His love of golf. I know that over the years John has golfed a bit. His keen knowledge of this subject was very useful when there was a discussion at Senate about a proposed 9-hole golf course (this was when I was Senate chair). The provost (who is not as keen a golfer as John H) was trying to explain the game and the function of the new course. I admired how John H. gracefully contributed to the conversation to make sure that correct golfing details/facts were being conveyed.

Stanford will not be the same without John Hennessy at the helm. At the same time, he has left a legacy of excellence and care. And I look forward to seeing what new ideas he works on in his post-Presidency role!

Sheri Sheppard Chair, Senate XXXIX, 2006-2007
I have had the good fortune to work closely with John Hennessy for my entire 26 years at Stanford, first as a colleague, then as Chair, as Dean, as Provost, and finally as President. His thoughtfulness and responsiveness have been great sources of support over that time.

Certainly my closest interaction with John came when we taught Sophomore College together. In 2001, I had taught a Sophomore College on The Intellectual Excitement of Computer Science for six consecutive years and had told the program administrator that I had decided to take a “sabbatical” for a year. The next day, John called me on the phone and offered to teach it with me. How could I refuse? It was a productive collaboration, and I believe that the students got a great deal out of having us both there—all the more so when Sophomore College was interrupted by the tragedy of 9/11.

In Senate, I appreciated John’s wonderful sense of humor. I recalled one meeting after all but one of the 31 students who took the Introductory Seminar I taught with Ramón Saldívar on The Two Cultures signed up for the course under its Computer Science course number rather than its English number, in part because several students reported that their parents wouldn’t allow them to take an English course. John’s suggested solution was instantaneous: Stanford should simply cross-list all courses in CS. We haven’t yet implemented that strategy, but it was delightful to get a laugh out of the situation.

Eric Roberts                      Chair, Senate XXXVIII, 2005-2006
Rob Polhemus
English
SENATE CHAIR 2004-05
XXXVII
I most appreciated President Hennessy’s openness, candor, and, especially, as a participant in the Senate, his tolerance both for divergent views—some of which he of course disagreed with—and for the inevitable boredom that—surprise!, surprise!—creeps into Senate meetings. For me most typical of the President’s style and substantial achievement for the whole of Stanford concerned—and is symbolized by—a matter about art that came up before the Senate during my chairmanship year. A work of sculpture had been approved to be installed, but it aroused controversy as being religiously provocative and inappropriate. President Hennessy, who had to give the final approval, at the behest of the Chaplain and with the advice of trustees, judged he had to veto the artwork. The subject was debated in the Senate and I, a big advocate for the arts, disagreed with his decision. I worried that it meant John Hennessy and Stanford leadership in general didn’t care deeply about the arts.

I couldn’t have been more wrong. Right away, substantively and continuously in his tenure great administrative energy and financial support poured into the arts—as you see, for example, in the Museum, the Anderson building, the Art department and a hundred other ways. By the end of my term, it was clear that the President was doing and would do more for the arts and show more concern about them than any other leader in Stanford history.

My favorite Hennessy Senate moment in my Chair year, though, was personal. We had a session about several wide-ranging matters, one of which was a report from the Stanford Press. My latest book had just come out with the Press, and the head mentioned in passing it got a very fine review in the New York Times. All sorts of things came up that day about the hospital and medical school expenses, budget affairs, grade inflation, etc. After the meeting I asked John what was the most important issue to come up. He smiled and said "your great book coming out to raves." So there you have traits of a born leader: charm, kindness, empathy for others, and the ability to tell a sweet lie.

Robert Polhemus
Chair, Senate XXXVII, 2004-2005
I had the good fortune of chairing the Faculty Senate during a year free of crises -- or at least crises within the Senate's purview. But it was a year in which Stanford athletics was in the limelight, largely because our men's basketball team was at or near the top of the rankings for much of the season. Indeed, the minutes of the January 22, 2004 Senate meeting record Pat Jones describing how President Hennessy, "at the end of the last game ... grabbed the flag and led the Sixth Man Club in a cheer".

The Senate's year started with a communication from a newly-formed alliance of Faculty Senates at Division IA football schools, known as the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), requesting that Stanford join and appoint a representative. We joined, and a few weeks later, the Provost appointed me as the representative. At my first COIA meeting, I was invited to join its executive committee. In the eight years I served in that capacity, I learned a great deal about big-time college athletics and how different Stanford is from any other university that competes at the highest level. At COIA meetings, I often found myself boasting that everyone here, including coaches and athletes, understands.

I was shocked, therefore, at a message that went out to the Stanford community in the fall of 2013, informing us that because of a Thursday evening football game, staff would be asked to leave campus early. I immediately emailed President Hennessy, expressing my dismay that, for the first time in my decades here, the normal functioning of the university was being officially disrupted to make way for an athletic event. Within an hour I received a reply. President Hennessy wrote:

“For better or worse, this is an issue handled by the PAC-12 conference. They agreed to play one Thursday night game per team every other year. Yes, there is a growing concern about scheduling issues, and perhaps growing momentum within the PAC-12 to take a financial hit in return for more control. That is balanced by the fact that 8 of the 12 schools have severe money difficulties and for a few football comes first (even if they wouldn't admit it).

There is a PAC-12 meeting this coming weekend, and I have asked the presidents and chancellors for some time to discuss these issues. Let's see what we can do....”

My reaction was mixed. On the one hand, I was discouraged to learn that even the university's President lacked the power to refuse the dictates of the television networks regarding the timing of games. On the other hand, I was very pleased to know that President Hennessy shared my concern about the corrosive influence of TV money on college athletics. And whenever I have encountered President Hennessy since, he has brought up this issue. He remembers, and he cares. And I very much appreciate it.

Tom Wasow
Chair, Senate XXVI, 2003-2004
Henry Greely
Law School

SENATE CHAIR 2002-03
XXXV
I was Senate chair in 2002-2003, not at the very beginning of the Hennessy/Etchemendy team, but close. Both were rounding into form, getting more comfortable with their roles, including their roles in the Senate.

In my recollection I was lucky to have been chair in a year when problems were few. Looking through the minutes of the year’s meetings, though, I realize it was a year of no pay increases, of fear of SARS, of protests that canceled classes, and of fifty other things to trouble the life of a University president. And yet throughout, both in my memory and in the minutes, John never seemed troubled, but attentive and good natured, solemn when necessary and joking when possible. For a Stanford president, there is no such thing as an easy year – just harder and less hard years.

My other main recollection of that year was just how young we all were. John Hennessy, John Etchemendy, and I were each born in 1952. (I just look 10 years older). The Johns were 50 years old in starting their third year in their jobs . . . mere youths. We are none of us youths now, and yet John Hennessy has kept, throughout the 16 years of his presidency, some remarkably youthful characteristics, including his (to me, truly) incredible enthusiasm for his job, his joy in the University’s accomplishments, and his dedication to its mission. “Though much is taken, much abides.” I hope those characteristics abide with John after his presidency, in whatever roles he undertakes.

Henry Greely
Chair, Senate XXXV, 2002-2003
Dear John:

When I chaired my first senate meeting as Chair of Faculty Senate XXXIV, on October 11, 2001, you were just completing your first year as President of Stanford, and you were relatively unknown to faculty like myself who were not in Computer Science or Engineering. Over the course of the next eight months and twelve Senate meetings—two of them Executive Sessions—I came to know and admire your leadership style and substance. And over the ensuing fourteen years in which you continued to serve as President, that admiration and respect has only deepened. You will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the most dynamic and transformative Presidents Stanford has ever had. It was a privilege to get to know you through my role as Senate Chair, and it’s a privilege to be able to offer you this small tribute as you prepare to step down as President.

The year I served as Senate Chair was, as I said at my final senate meeting on June 13, 2002, “one of the best things I’ve done in my life, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.” One reason is the broad view of the university that it afforded me—a microcosm of what you as President must see and attend to daily, including the concerns and plans of departments and schools quite different from one’s own, issues affecting faculty, staff, undergraduates and graduates across the university, hospital and housing issues, and so on.

Senate year XXXIV began exactly a month after the tragic national events of September 11, 2001, and it was interesting to recall, from Senate minutes, how you had to reassure incoming frosh and their families that all was well, deal with bomb threats, and provide extra security for campus events. We covered a lot of ground that academic year, approving far-reaching new policies extending leave and modified tenure provisions for birth mothers to fathers and adoptive parents, and a new Sexual Harassment Policy that was ahead of many of our peer institutions. I especially remember—because I have lived to see them come to vibrant fruition—the arrangements to make six acres of Stanford land at the corner of Page Mill and El Camino available for soccer field and other recreational use by Palo Alto, the Bio-X presentation by Prof. Matthew Scott and blueprints for the Clark Center, and the plans for new, affordable faculty housing on Stanford Avenue and other sites.

Two qualities I really admired about your leadership style—whether in Senate briefings or in the informal lunch sessions to which you invited us on a rotating basis at the Faculty Club—were your approachability and candor. As faculty we felt we could ask or tell you almost anything, and you never took offense or failed to tell it like it was. That built tremendous trust, and respect.

And it remains flabbergastingly impressive to me that you were able to oversee one of the most dramatic expansions and refurbishings of campus infrastructure I have seen in my 35 years at Stanford, at a time when the national economy was in a downturn and university finances strained. It’s a delight to take visitors through the new buildings on campus, from the new SEQ structures to the new Business School to the Anderson Art Museum and Bing Performing Arts Center and so on, the latter two reminding us that you did as much to develop the Arts and the Humanities at Stanford as you did to enhance the Sciences,
Engineering, and Medicine. For the creative thinking, planning, and fund-raising that went into all this, I thank you on behalf of the entire Stanford community. Stanford is not the same as it was 15 years ago, but is so much the better, thanks to you.

On a more personal level, I must thank you too for your positive response to the approach from my colleagues and myself to create a new Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in Language (CREAL). In this as in so many other respects, you have given us room to grow, intellectually and academically.

As my Caribbean brethren and sisteren would say, in our English-based Creole: *tengki yuu. noff rispek. waak gud!* [“Thank you. Great respect. Walk well.”]

John R. Rickford  Chair, Senate XXXIV, 2001-2002
Some recollections of the 33rd Senate …

The 33rd Senate, convening in September 2000, included five former Senate chairs, almost 30 percent women, and two psychiatrists. It also included a new President and a new Provost. Neither John was a stranger to the Senate, of course, John H. having served earlier as Provost. We knew at the outset that his first year as President would be an eventful one for the university and for the Senate. In fact, John started his first Senate report with a brief summary of the state of negotiations with Santa Clara County over the General Use Permit, the once-a-decade agreement that governs how Stanford can build on its space. Issues around the GUP would emerge periodically over the year, the only thing that seemed certain at the time being an agreement with Palo Alto to relocate proposed faculty housing in order to “preserve that famous first hole of the golf course.” In any event, to ensure that the first meeting and future meetings would be overall times of happiness on alternate Thursday afternoons, my first official act as chair was to declare a honeymoon period that would last at least as long as my own one-year term. It’s lasted longer.

The topics and reports that came to the Senate were wide ranging, and it’s interesting, and mostly fun, to see what was new then become part of the everyday fabric of the place. For example, then Registrar Roger Printup reported on a new system to handle student data called AXESS, early in the year John Etchemendy reported on the “Dish project,” and John Hennessy was pleased to announce that Randy Livingston would soon be coming on board to be the new CFO. At his inauguration John unveiled the Campaign for Undergraduate Education, which has allowed us to do so much to enhance the undergraduate experience. At the May 17 meeting the President read a strong Statement on Faculty Diversity, issued on behalf of himself and the Provost, a document that has continued to guide Stanford’s efforts in this area. One particularly interesting variation on Senate business was a field trip to SLAC to hear a report from then director Jonathan Dorfan, and to tour the facilities. A second variation was an extended discussion of interdisciplinary programs, held at the Faculty Club, with the Senate meeting as a “committee of the whole.”

All told, the 33rd Senate played its own part in the start of a fantastic 16 years. It was an honor and a pleasure to be there at the beginning. Congratulations, John, and all the best for a continuing bright future.

Brad Osgood
Chair, Senate XXXIII, 2000-2001
As Chair of the Thirty-Second Faculty Senate, I recall two issues involving John Hennessy. First, while Provost, he provided much needed advice to the Senate Steering Committee to help prevent the Cold War between H&S Departments and IDPs from escalating into thermonuclear conflict. While elements of the Cold War remain (and skirmishes still break out from time to time) John’s sage advice at the time served the Senate and University very well. The second issue concerning John was the engagement of the Thirty-Second Senate in the search for President Casper’s replacement. No record exists of the Senate’s confidential discussions with the Board of Trustee’s search committee concerning Stanford’s next President. That said, the Faculty Senators involved in that discussion can look back with satisfaction that the Board took their advice (or at least listened). Regardless, it’s more than clear that they made a great decision.

Mark D. Zoback  Chair, Senate XXXII, 1999-2000
Hans Weiler
Education and Political Science, Emeritus

ACADEMIC SECRETARY
2014-PRESENT
Watching John Hennessy in action over the years ...

In October of 1999, under the auspices of the Fulbright program, I brought a group of my fellow German university presidents to Stanford to show them what good universities could be like, and John Hennessy – then still Provost – gave them an impressive introductory talk about how to achieve excellence in higher education. Today, 17 years later, the members of that group still consider that talk one of the highlights of their continuing education.

On another occasion, I took a prominent German politician, Kurt Biedenkopf, to see then President Hennessy for a conversation about university autonomy in public and private institutions of higher education. One of Biedenkopf’s questions was whether, with so much of Stanford’s budget coming from major external donors, Hennessy wasn’t worried about the outside influence over the university’s goals and priorities that this might create. At first, Hennessy wasn’t sure he had understood the question, but then – with a big smile – he went into describing how not only would Stanford never accept a gift for things it didn’t want to pursue, but how Stanford’s donors had long learned the lesson that they could never use their gifts to steer Stanford in a direction in which it didn’t want to go.

More recently, having returned to Stanford in a different capacity, I have seen John function within Stanford’s remarkable system of academic governance, a major feature of which is the close interaction between the faculty and the university’s leadership within the Faculty Senate. Four observations stand out: His palpable sense of pride in the accomplishments of the university and its faculty, which often formed the core of his reports to the Senate; the mixture of patience and didactic skill with which he answered Senators’ questions; the time he took after the end of a Senate meeting to pursue – often with the student representatives to the Senate – some of the more controversial points made during the meeting; and his sense of humor – as in the session where he announced his stepping down from the presidency to a standing and seemingly unending ovation from the Senate, which he finally ended by pronouncing that there was not going to be an encore.

In any book that is written about good leadership in higher education, John Hennessy deserves a very special chapter.

Hans N. Weiler                        Academic Secretary to the University, 2014-
Rex Jamison
Medicine, Emeritus

ACADEMIC SECRETARY
2007-2014
One day, early in my years as Academic Secretary, I went to the Stanford golf driving range to practice. After I finished I noticed an old Saab automobile parked near my car. (Saab had the reputation of being an engineer’s favorite car but it went bankrupt in 2011.) I noticed that the exhaust pipes in the rear of the car were stuffed with clods of dirt and grass. I wondered how that could happen. The only idea I could think of was that the driver had backed the car into a mound of dirt. It also occurred to me that blocked automobile exhaust pipes are not a good idea. So I grabbed a piece of paper, which happened to have on it my name and address, and wrote something like:

“To owner: Your exhaust pipes are plugged. You should unplug them, to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning”.

I put the note on the windshield under the wiper, left and thought no more about it.

At the next Faculty Senate meeting, before the session began, I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was John Hennessy, who smiled and thanked me for the note about his car’s exhaust pipes.

So perhaps I should be considered an important contributor to John Hennessy’s career.

Rex Jamison
Academic Secretary to the University, 2009-2014
Edward Harris
Medicine, Emeritus

ACADEMIC SECRETARY
2002-2007

(deceased 2010)
Susan Schofield
Academic Secretary, Emerita

ACADEMIC SECRETARY
1995-2002
Fall 2000 is John Hennessy’s first year in the President’s “hot seat” in the Senate, and he takes a lot of grilling right off the bat from the faculty about too much money being spent on the Dish area. He also has to parry a suggestion that if student athletes are required to wear the Nike swoosh, why doesn’t Stanford negotiate a Nike contract for faculty to wear logo clothing too. John’s second year begins in the difficult aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and includes faculty pushback over the Living Wage Policy. But he has definitely hit the ground running smoothly. Why, we wonder? Probably because he has just spent the prior year in the Provost’s “hot seat” in the Senate, and what a year that turned out to be! At his first Senate meeting in his first (and to-be-only) year as Provost, Gerhard Casper confirms that he will be stepping down as President at the end of the year. John engages in informed and sometimes witty discussion with often impassioned faculty on a large number of important issues, including: the “unwinding” of the UCSF-Stanford Health Care Merger, a deep dive into faculty housing policy, revision of the Faculty Discipline Policy (about which he says, with uncanny prescience, “I don’t intend to be provost for 20 years ...”), a new county General Use Permit, interdisciplinary teaching program challenges, new learning technologies, and faculty quality of life issues – all of this in the first half of the year! After John is named Stanford’s tenth president in early April 2000, he displays his mastery of Senate repartee when announcing the formation of a search committee for the new provost: “Taking into account the concerns that Professor Simoni might have, that we are losing the president that got us both to the Rose Bowl and to the Pac-10 Men’s Basketball Championship, I am looking for nominations that might address any loss of athletic prowess in Building Ten,” he jokes. Having survived a year in the Provost’s “hot seat” at the Senate, he probably realizes that it might be a lot more fun to watch the next Provost answer most of those pesky Senate members’ questions while he gets to move to the President’s slightly cooler “hot seat” in September 2000.

Just as John Hennessy didn’t intend to be provost for 20 years (see above), neither would he have envisioned then that he and John Etchemendy would become the dynamic duo leading Stanford together for the next sixteen years. It has been my privilege to share a small part of that journey.

Susan Schofield Academic Secretary to the University, 1995-2002
In lieu of a conclusion ...

On April 28, 2016, the 48th Senate of the Academic Council engaged in an extended and probing, and at times very emotional, debate on the assessment and prevention of sexual violence on campus, in the end reaching unanimous support for a motion prepared, after a great deal of deliberation, by the Senate’s Steering Committee. The next morning (at 6:11 am, to be exact), the members of the Steering Committee (Jim Campbell, Hank Greely, Andy Fire, David Labaree, Sue McConnell, Susan Holmes, Mark Zoback, and Kam Moler) received the following email:

Dear Jim, Hank, Andy, David, Sue, Susan, Mark, and Kam:

I have been an ex-officio member of the Senate for almost 20 years (no term limits for ex officio ;-) ). I have seen the Senate tackle some difficult issues, but the issue of sexual assault and violence has been one of the hardest. The hard work and deliberation of the steering committee was clearly evident, and you tackled the issues with fortitude and wisdom. A special thanks to Sue McConnell for her bravery and willingness to speak out. I hope our students can learn from Sue’s courageous determination.

Thanks again and let’s get on with addressing the problem.

Best,

John

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