Endowed Professorships at Stanford University
Recognizing and Retaining our Best Faculty
“I find nothing more fascinating or meaningful than exploring connections. I love thinking about how, through our breathing, the carbon cycle connects us to garden plants, to whales in the Indian Ocean, and to Julius Caesar. I also feel awe knowing that I would not be here were it not for the Bings.”

Gretchen Daily
BING PROFESSOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Endowed Professorships for the Best Faculty

Of the many factors that contribute to a university’s excellence, none is more important than outstanding faculty. The best professors push their fields in new directions and teach their students to do the same. Stanford faculty embody those qualities, exemplifying excellence in every area of teaching and research.

As is the case in any enterprise, competition for the best talent is intense. In the world of higher education, we have few tools to retain our top players. Endowed professorships are our best option. By supporting salary, benefits, and research expenses, endowed chairs recognize and reward the most distinguished professors.

In the School of Humanities and Sciences, the number of preeminent faculty exceeds the number of chairs we are able to award. With more than 500 full-time professors, H&S is the largest school on campus, and the waiting list for endowed chairs is long. In order to compete, the school requires more chairs to honor the very best.

The National Academies

One measure of the finest faculty is membership in the National Academy of Sciences or the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Each of these societies has formed a roll call of brilliant minds, inspiring talent, and humanitarian contributions throughout the history of the United States.

Not surprisingly, many of Stanford’s faculty are members of the academies—about 100 professors in the School of Humanities and Sciences alone. For example, the National Academy of Sciences includes renowned biologist Gretchen Daily, the Bing Professor of Environmental Science, as well as Nobel Prize–winning physicist Robert Laughlin, the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences recognizes luminaries in the arts, sciences, humanities, business, and public affairs. Academy members in the School of Humanities and Sciences include an array of distinguished faculty, from acclaimed author Tobias Wolff, the Ward W. and Priscilla B. Woods Professor, to economist John B. Taylor, the Mary and Robert Raymond Professor. Taylor’s research influences central banks and financial analysts around the world.

Every academy member at Stanford merits an endowed chair, but the School of Humanities and Sciences is unable to recognize all its distinguished academy members in this manner. This deficit increases as more faculty are elected to the academies every year. The school’s inability to provide sufficient chairs increases the possibility of losing top talent.
Honoring the Best at Stanford

Academy members are professors every university aspires to claim as its own. Take, for example, Doug McAdam, professor of sociology and director of the Urban Studies program. He is the world’s leading authority on the civil rights movement, and he reinvented the popular Urban Studies major at Stanford, shifting its focus to reflect the new realities of the city–suburb relationship. He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003, but does not have an endowed chair at Stanford.

Across the School of Humanities and Sciences, there is a need for more endowed chairs in the departments of Political Science, Psychology, and Philosophy. And although Stanford has many nationally top-ranked departments in the natural sciences, there is a lack of named professorships in Biology, Mathematics, Statistics, and Physics.

As the university prepares students to meet the challenges of the 21st century, there is a growing need for professorships that support Stanford’s ambition to become a premier global university.

A Mutually Rewarding Relationship

At Stanford, as at universities around the world, our intellectual community is not confined to campus. It extends to the alumni, parents, and friends who have endowed nearly 200 chairs in the School of Humanities and Sciences since the first was established in 1920. Such gifts often initiate a relationship that not only benefits the university and the chair holder, but also rewards the donor.

Those who give the gift of a professorship often develop long-lasting relationships with their chair holders. The celebration begins at a dinner hosted by the provost to bring together the donor, the professor, and their respective families and friends—the first of many shared experiences.

Marty and David Hamamoto, ’81, have established such a friendship with Professor Savas Dimopoulos, a renowned particle physicist known for his research on the weakness of gravity and the possible existence of parallel universes. The Hamamotos endowed a school-wide professorship, leaving the best use of their gift up to Richard Saller, the Vernon R. and Lysbeth Warren Anderson Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences.

“We believe in empowering university leaders who have the knowledge to direct these funds for the best possible use.”

David Hamamoto, ’81
Over time, the couple has developed a meaningful relationship with the Hamamoto Family Professor. As Professor Dimopoulos keeps them informed of his discoveries, the Hamamotos gain access to the world of groundbreaking physics research.

**A Living Legacy**

Stanford’s founding grant states that the university’s goal is “to qualify its students for personal success, and direct usefulness in life.” More than a century later, Stanford still subscribes to that goal—and more.

To prepare our students to be engaged citizens in the 21st century, Stanford must provide instruction and mentoring from the best scholars and researchers in the world. It is these teachers who will help prepare our students to meet the challenges of a complex and interconnected global environment, and also leverage Stanford’s position as a global university.

Our continued success in the competitive world of higher education depends on the university’s ability to offer endowed chairs to these extraordinary faculty. To attract and retain top talent across a diverse set of disciplines and promote interdisciplinary scholarship, the School of Humanities and Sciences seeks to establish new endowed professorships.

An endowed chair is the most important contribution one can make to academic and intellectual independence. It is a legacy that benefits the university, generations of students, and ultimately, the world as a whole.

**CONTACT US**

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**GIVING OPPORTUNITY**

| ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS | $4 Million |

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**ROBERT LAUGHLIN, THE ANNE T. AND ROBERT M. BASS PROFESSOR, IS KNOWN FOR HIS RESEARCH ON THE FRACTIONAL QUANTUM HALL EFFECT.**

**DOUG MCADAM, PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AND DIRECTOR OF URBAN STUDIES.**