

STANFORD UNIVERSITY HAS TURNED INTO THE SICKEST, MOST DEPRAVED, SCHOOL IN AMERICA

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The most devastating inside account of woke campus 'policing' you'll ever read: Searing investigation exposes Stanford bosses hounding undergrads to suicide that begs question - who'd be a student today?

By [FRANCESCA BLOCK](#)

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Decker Paulmeier grew up working nights and weekends in his family's barbecue restaurant in South Carolina. He took his first double shift when he was eight years old, and eventually hustled his way up from bussing tables to mixing drinks behind the bar.

Like a lot of people who went to Bluffton High School, the medium-sized public school in his South Carolina Lowcountry town, Paulmeier was a working-class kid and the grandchild of immigrants (his mother's parents immigrated to America from the Philippines).

He considered himself a slacker in middle school, but he wanted to go to college. He thought about going to a place like [Georgia Tech](#), where he could study something cool like aerospace engineering and still have time to play club lacrosse and join a fraternity.

But after a family visit to San Francisco brought him to Stanford's expansive campus as a high school sophomore, Paulmeier said he was hooked. He shaped his next two years around getting into the elite college—taking every AP class available to him and pursuing leadership opportunities wherever he could, whether it was as captain of the lacrosse team or as president of the National Honor Society.

'If I didn't get into Stanford, I probably wasn't going to go to college,' he told me.

[STANFORD DOUCHEBAGS](#)

He ended up getting into the school, which rejects 96 percent of its applicants.

At first, Paulmeier loved Stanford. He built strong friendships, pursued a philosophy major, and worked on an independent research project for the college's Ethics in Society Honors Program on how to 'close the inequity gap in the college admissions system,' he said.

After a gap year during the Covid lockdowns, he returned for his junior year in the fall of 2021 hoping to salvage a sense of community and camaraderie after a long period of social isolation. And what better way, he thought, than to host a party at his fraternity, Kappa Sigma, where he was now president.



Paulmeier, now 23, planned the bash at Kappa Sigma for April 15, 2022. But first he had to get approval.

For the past several years, Stanford has required students to adhere to a Student Party Policy, which includes a highly detailed 'Harm Reduction Plan' mandating multiple sober monitors and designated alcohol service areas, and prohibiting the serving of any hard liquor.

Party hosts must also provide 'EANABs,' or Equally Attractive Non-Alcoholic Beverages, to 'contribute to an inclusive and inviting experience' for all partygoers. Hosts are also required to take an online 'Party Planning Course' before submitting their applications.

Paulmeier met all the requirements, and the party was approved. He said student IDs were checked at the door, nobody had to be transported to the hospital for drinking too much, and the music ended by midnight.

'If anything, it was one of the more stable, risk-managed events,' he told me.

He never thought of it much afterward. Then, on April 28, 2022—the Thursday before midterms week—Paulmeier woke up to a frantic string of texts from his fraternity's vice president and an email from the university's Office of Community Standards, also known as OCS.

He let out a sigh, typed in the required passcode to view the message, and saw the words at the top: PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

'Christ,' he remembers thinking to himself, 'this is bad.'

The message went on to state that OCS was investigating Kappa Sigma for three 'concerns.' First, an allegation of hazing after a fraternity member suffered a panic attack. Second, a claim that students under 21 were served alcohol at Kappa Sigma's April 15 party. Third, an incident on April 24 in which a Kappa Sigma member consumed too much alcohol and had to go to the hospital. In the meantime, OCS said it was placing Kappa Sigma on probation, meaning they could not host or be involved in any parties on or off campus.

'Failure to adhere to the interim Probation with Restrictions will result in additional sanctions and will delay the completion of this process,' the letter, signed by OCS Associate Dean Tiffany Gabrielson, read.

Within the hour, a dozen other Greek organizations' presidents were texting Paulmeier, saying they, too, had been placed on probation, according to Paulmeier and one other source.

'This just nuked social life on campus for the rest of the quarter,' Paulmeier told me.

Paulmeier knew OCS had a reputation for being harsh—punitive, even.

The campus had been devastated by the suicide, on February 28, 2022, of his friend Katie Meyer. Meyer was a 22-year-old senior, captain of the Stanford women's soccer team, and a star campus athlete. On the night of her death, she received an email, also drafted by Tiffany Gabrielson, that informed her she was being charged with a conduct violation alleging she had deliberately spilled coffee on a Stanford football player. This letter was open on her computer when she killed herself in her dorm room.

According to a wrongful death suit filed against the university by Meyer's parents, the five-page, single-spaced letter attached to the email contained 'threatening language regarding sanctions and potential 'removal from the university.'

Paulmeier is normally calm and deliberate in the way he speaks, often trying to show empathy to the university when telling his story, even after months of dealing with bureaucratic red tape. But when the conversation turned to Meyer, Paulmeier's 'deep-seated anger' toward the college bubbled over.

'The fact that just such a fucking flippant email... ' Paulmeier said, trying to calm his rage over the letter he claims caused his friend's death.

'Yeah, it's one email,' he said again. 'But what does one email from Stanford mean if you're a Stanford student? One email could mean the end of any kind of life that you had spent every fucking day for years working towards.'

Paulmeier said emails about his own investigation appeared in his inbox for the next seven months—first from OCS, and then lawyers from an outside law firm hired by the university to conduct the investigation into Stanford's fraternities.

The OCS letter from Gabrielson was stern: 'Finally, I want to remind you of the policy of Fraternal Organizations Housed on Campus. . . which provides for a review of fraternity and sorority housing eligibility when a Group is found responsible for 'one major' or 'three minor violations' of university policy within an academic year. Each of these concerns could be considered either a minor or major violation under that process.'



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The campus had been devastated by the suicide, on February 28, 2022, of his friend Katie Meyer (above, center).



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Meyer was a 22-year-old senior, captain of the Stanford women's soccer team, and a star campus athlete.

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She didn't state outright that the fraternity would be kicked off campus, but Paulmeier felt it was implied.

The lawyers from Stanford's outside firm were friendlier, Paulmeier said, thanking him for his cooperation. But regardless, he woke up every morning and checked his inbox with 'worry and dread.'

'Every time I would get those letters, I couldn't help but think of her,' he said of Katie.

As his own investigation continued through the summer of 2022 and into the start of his senior year, Paulmeier said he worked five to ten hours a week trying to piece together the fraternity's defense, and met personally with Stanford's lawyers at least four times to be interviewed about the case. He decided not to hire an outside lawyer for his defense because he said he was confident the allegations were nothing more than misunderstandings. But as the investigation dragged on, he said he found himself navigating legal landmines and wondering whether he should have asked for help.

'I'm sitting in two-hour-long interviews on Zoom with lawyers who are trying to verbally and rhetorically trap people,' he said. 'I had young kids that were 18, 19 years old who are international asking me, 'Hey, can I talk to this attorney and tell them I drank a beer, or am I going to get my visa revoked?''

Eventually, Paulmeier passed his presidency on to another fraternity member. In December, OCS officials emailed the fraternity saying they were found at fault for serving alcohol to at least one person under the age of 21 and for hosting a party in violation of university policy. The fraternity accepted responsibility and agreed to participate in what's called a 'Resolution Through Agreement,' or an RTA.

But the real punishment, Paulmeier says, aren't the mandatory trainings or the months-long probation.

Dealing for months with lawyers and campus investigators drove Paulmeier, typically enthusiastic and motivated, into what he calls an 'exhausted, burnt-out depression.' He told me he had gone through 'a state of mental and physical exhaustion and collapse.'

Paulmeier was doing graduate-level coursework before the investigation. But by the end of spring 2022, he ended up with three incomplete classes. Normally a student who earned mostly As and Bs, he said he started his senior year in the fall by failing a class for the first time in his life.

His grades dropped so precipitously he was placed on academic probation and was in danger of failing out. Worst of all, one of his academic advisors wrote him a sympathetic letter urging him 'in the strongest terms' to withdraw his honors thesis, which explored how elite colleges can reform their admissions processes to attract more students like him.

And all along he felt a nagging sense of guilt. He worried that complaining would make him appear ungrateful for the chance to attend a school like Stanford—an opportunity his family had sacrificed so much for him to achieve.

After being notified of Kappa Sigma's charges in December, Paulmeier typed out an email to Gabrielson and other OCS staff: 'I did everything I could to prove to this institution I was good enough to be here. But now I walk around this place and can't help feeling physically defeated and discarded.'

'This investigation has disillusioned me from loving this place I used to think of as my home,' he wrote. 'I hope that my statements in this letter aren't perceived as character attacks on any individual. The overall effect of this investigation on my health wasn't from one person, or even several, but a system.'



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Like a lot of people who went to Bluffton High School, the medium-sized public school in his South Carolina Lowcountry town, Paulmeier was a working-class kid and the grandchild of immigrants (his mother's parents immigrated to America from the Philippines).

The system of punishment at Stanford is more than a decade old. Class of 1977 alum Bob Otilie first became aware of it in the spring of 2011, when he got a panicked phone call from a Stanford student at his old fraternity, Sigma Chi.

The student told him that, in the middle of a human biology exam, the class coordinator had pulled him aside and accused him and two others of cheating.

The class coordinator's allegation, based not on her own observation but that of an anonymous student, was the only evidence against them, Otilie said. But all three students were charged by OCS with cheating under the university's honor code.

The students knew Otilie ran his own law practice and reached out for his counsel. Otilie agreed to take the students' case pro bono and worked with two other alumni lawyers on their defense—recreating seating charts and finding over a dozen witnesses who were willing to testify to their innocence.

Otilie said he turned up at multiple hearings for the students only to be told by university officials he was not allowed to speak on their behalf, but could advise them from behind the scenes.

After five months of a judicial process that Otilie describes as 'biased against the students,' all three of his clients were acquitted of the charges. But the experience exposed a deep flaw in the university's treatment of its student body, Otilie told me.

'In the process of working with those students, we discovered that Stanford . . . was denying them of their procedural due process rights at literally every step of the process,' he said.

One year later, in 2012, Otilie and two other alumni lawyers formed a group focused on Stanford's disciplinary proceedings called the Student Justice Project, and set up a website for the organization, saying it was 'born out of . . . the failure of University officials and Trustees to protect our students.' They published a detailed report of the cheating case on the site, and listed multiple allegations of mistreatment, including ignoring prejudicial information, giving students false or misleading information regarding their rights, and excluding evidence in favor of the students.

Otilie shared the 60-page document with The Stanford Daily, and personally emailed administrators, from Stanford's then-Dean of Student Life Chris Griffith all the way up to then-President John Hennessy. In the report, he argued that Stanford had violated the terms of its own judicial charter throughout the investigation.

At the time, Chris Griffith told The Stanford Daily that she had received 'really good feedback from the students who've come through our process.'

Griffith also noted that some of Otilie's suggestions in his report—such as the need for more formal standards on evidence that can be admitted during a case—were already being considered by an internal review team. However, she warned that implementing some of Otilie's ideas, such as opening up a student's ability to reach out to witnesses, could have adverse side effects, such as a greater risk of witness intimidation.

In his report, Otilie offered to defend any students under investigation for free to correct what he sees as a stark 'power imbalance.' But 'the university has never even shown the courtesy to respond to our offer,' he said.

Otilie believes the outcome of Katie Meyer's case would have been different had she been given legal representation from the moment she was accused. She 'would have had someone with her from day one,' he told me in an email. 'No student would have ever been alone. She was alone.'

Since Otilie got that first call from a desperate fraternity brother, Stanford has pursued many more probes into student conduct.

During the 2020–2021 school year, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and virtual schooling, the college investigated over 400 students—a number that nearly doubled from the previous year, according to OCS annual reports. The vast majority (97 percent) were accused of cheating.

(For comparison, Princeton investigated 76 students for alleged cheating over a five-year period from the fall of 2017 to the spring of 2022, according to the Princeton 'Honor Committee's' annual reports.)

Of the 201 Stanford students later charged with an official violation in 2020–2021, only five were found 'not responsible,' according to OCS's 2021 report. Punishment for the remaining 196 ranged from mandatory 'academic integrity seminars' to suspension. Worse, the finding of responsibility could end up on a student's transcript, Otilie claims, which can have serious consequences for anyone hoping to get into graduate school or to be hired for a job. (In an email to *The Free Press*, Stanford declined to comment on this claim and all other claims made by the sources in this story.)

Otilie, who has represented over 100 students investigated by Stanford since 2011, said a majority of the students choose to admit responsibility and accept a lesser punishment through what's called an 'early resolution option,' which is like a plea deal. While some take this approach because they committed the violation, he said many choose it because they feel the odds are stacked against them.

He sees Stanford's disciplinary process not as a system designed to find truth, but to punish 'bad behavior.'

'Think about that,' he added. 'That's a presumption of guilt.'

In 2020, Stanford sought to review its process, convening a group of students, faculty, and administrators, nicknamed the Committee of 10. In an April 2021 report, the committee concluded that the university's disciplinary process is 'overly punitive' and 'not educational.'

It also implemented a new reform, called the Stanford Group Accountability Process (SGAP), which allows OCS to differentiate between 'low-level' and 'high-level' violations so that less serious cases are solved more efficiently.

Less than one year later, Katie Meyer was dead.

Meyer had been a campus icon. As the goalie of Stanford's women's soccer team, she led the squad to a 2019 NCAA championship victory that came down to the final penalties. A video of her celebrating after she made a critical save went viral, and was plastered across Stanford's social media pages.

But in August 2020, Meyer rode her bike past a football player who she believed engaged in sexual misconduct with one of her younger teammates. Suddenly and impulsively, she spilled the coffee she was holding onto him.



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Meyer had been a campus icon. As the goalie of Stanford's women's soccer team, she led the squad to a 2019 NCAA championship victory that came down to the final penalties.



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Dealing for months with lawyers and campus investigators drove Paulmeier, typically enthusiastic and motivated, into what he calls an 'exhausted, burnt-out depression.' He told me he had gone through 'a state of mental and physical exhaustion and collapse.'

Meyer later described her actions as an 'accident.' But according to the suit filed by her parents, OCS charged her with violating the university's 1896 'Fundamental Standard,' which calls upon its students to be 'good citizens.' (Meanwhile, Stanford says it initially reported the claims about the football player to its Title IX office and the police, but the matter was dropped because 'the criteria for moving forward with an investigation were not met.' Her parents' suit claims the football player was never properly investigated or charged by OCS or the Title IX office.)

The investigation into Katie's conduct spanned six months, even though her parents' suit alleges the coffee incident was reported by an administrator—not the football player himself—and the player sought to 'make amends' with her because he didn't want her to get into trouble. The suit concludes with the letter Katie received on February 28, 2022, warning her that her diploma was being placed on hold on the eve of graduation, putting her application to Stanford Law School in jeopardy.

When Katie Meyer's parents, Gina and Steve Meyer, first got the call that their 22-year-old daughter had died, they said they thought she must have been involved in a tragic accident, like she had been hit by a car on her bike.

Suicide, her dad told me, 'wasn't even in the realm of possibility.'

They hurriedly made the more than five-hour drive from their home in Southern California to Stanford in a state of grief. In the car, they received the call with the shocking news that their daughter had ended her own life. But it wasn't until they arrived on campus that they first learned about the college's investigation into her conduct.

'She gave everything she had every day to her friends or life or school or her athletic team,' Steve told me. 'That's why it was so hard for us to understand what happened.'

In an email sent to students two days after her death, Vice Provost for Student Affairs Susie Brubaker-Cole offered her condolences to the family, writing that 'There are no words to express the emptiness that we feel at this moment.'

But the Meyers refused to let their daughter be remembered as just a tragic statistic. In November, they filed their wrongful death lawsuit against Stanford, blaming the school for 'institutional bullying.'

The university released a statement two days after the Meyers filed their lawsuit, denying any involvement in Meyer's 'tragic death,' saying: 'After extensive factfinding and the opportunity for both sides to provide information, it was found that the high threshold was met for the matter to proceed to a hearing. However, it is important to emphasize that we are committed to supporting students through the student judicial process under OCS, and we did so in this case.'

In a court motion, Stanford also denied any responsibility in inflicting 'emotional distress' on Katie or her parents, writing that their accusations are 'hopelessly confusing, internally inconsistent, and ambiguous.'

The Meyers' suit argues that the school should have known that the type of students who make it into Stanford—that four percent—demand perfection of themselves. Instead of relieving that pressure these students feel, the suit argues, Stanford's disciplinary process only amplifies it.

As Katie Meyer herself wrote in a formal letter to Stanford administrators on November 21, 2021, responding to the accusations against her, according to the suit: 'My whole life I've been terrified to make any mistakes. No alcohol, no speeding tickets, no A- marks on my report cards. Everything had to be perfect to get in and stay at Stanford.'

'Stanford knows these things, they have these problems, and they're doing nothing about them,' the Meyer family's attorney Kim Dougherty told me. 'It was like the phone was ringing inside the house.'

When he first became Kappa Sigma president, Decker Paulmeier said he worked closely with OCS to follow all its rules. He said he filled out an application for the fraternity to maintain its house on campus, and he applied for other parties that received approval without any major hiccups. For the first two months of his presidency, he said, 'the system worked really well.'

But after the complaint was filed and the university hired outside lawyers to step in, Stanford's so-called reforms, promising a more reasonable approach to their investigations, went out the window, he said.

Instead, he claims, university administrators now just 'adjust the policy to whatever they want it to be.'

Paulmeier said Stanford students like Katie Meyer don't just aspire to be perfect out of conscientiousness. It's a necessity to avoid potential punishment.

'So many people function in this terrible, kind of like mandated state of being, because of the pressure and the prestige; it's the way things work here. And they just so carelessly did that to her. And then they did it to me,' he said.

'Any place that sets a bar so high that you have to be literally perfect to get there; and when you get here, if you don't stay perfect, [Stanford] will punish you with every administrative resource they have for embarrassing them,' Paulmeier added. 'To me, that just sounds like an abusive parent, not like an educational institution you should model your kid's life around.'

I spoke to six Stanford alumni who told me they no longer recognize the school where they learned, laughed, and at times, wandered around the campus like 'a band of misfits,' as class of 1991 alum Samer Hamadeh puts it.

Eric Selvik from the class of 1992 remembers dressing up as a nun when he was the drum major for the Stanford Band during a home football game against—of all schools—Notre Dame. Carrying around a wooden cross in place of his usual baton, Selvik's antics riled up the crowd, prompting one Notre Dame student to run onto the field, tackle him, and rip the nun's habit off of his head.

Then, Selvik laughed, 'she damned me to hell.'

The university forced Selvik to issue a public apology for the stunt. He admits the band was notorious for its pranks, and sometimes they went a little too far, but that's why the group was the perfect embodiment of Stanford's spirit.

'The Stanford motto is 'let the winds of freedom blow.' That's sort of entwined in what our DNA is supposed to be,' he said. 'That's what I think Stanford has always done—given its students responsibility and allowed them to make mistakes and manage themselves.'

But in 2015, a crime happened on Stanford's campus that brought an end to any kind of undergraduate hijinks.

On the night of January 18, 2015, a recent UC–Santa Barbara graduate named Chanel Miller attended a party at the Kappa Alpha fraternity house on Stanford's campus with a few friends. There she met a Stanford freshman named Brock Turner, then 19 and a member of the college swim team.

Later in the night, two graduate students biking past the party noticed two people who appeared to be having sex by a dumpster behind the fraternity house. But it was strange. The man was thrusting on top of the woman. And the woman wasn't moving at all.

When they approached the man, one graduate student saw that the woman's genitals were exposed. Turner tried to flee the scene but the graduate students tackled him until campus police arrived. When police transported Miller, then 22, to the hospital, her blood alcohol level was so high that she didn't wake up for another three hours.

By January 28, Turner had been arrested and charged with five felony counts of sexual assault. He withdrew from the university, which banned him from campus.

Authorities investigated the sexual assault, and Stanford slapped Turner with a Title IX investigation, under the federal law that prevents sex-based discrimination in education. But in the meantime, students spoke out, criticizing Stanford for not doing enough to address the problem of campus sexual assault.

Even though a jury found Turner guilty of three counts of felony assault in March 2016, he received only a six-month jail sentence, with an added requirement to register as a sex offender.

Four days after the sentencing, Stanford released a statement defending the university's handling of the crime. 'In this case, Stanford University, its students, its police and its staff members did everything they could,' the statement read. '... There is still much work to be done, not just here, but everywhere, to create a culture that does not tolerate sexual violence in any form and a judicial system that deals appropriately with sexual assault cases.'

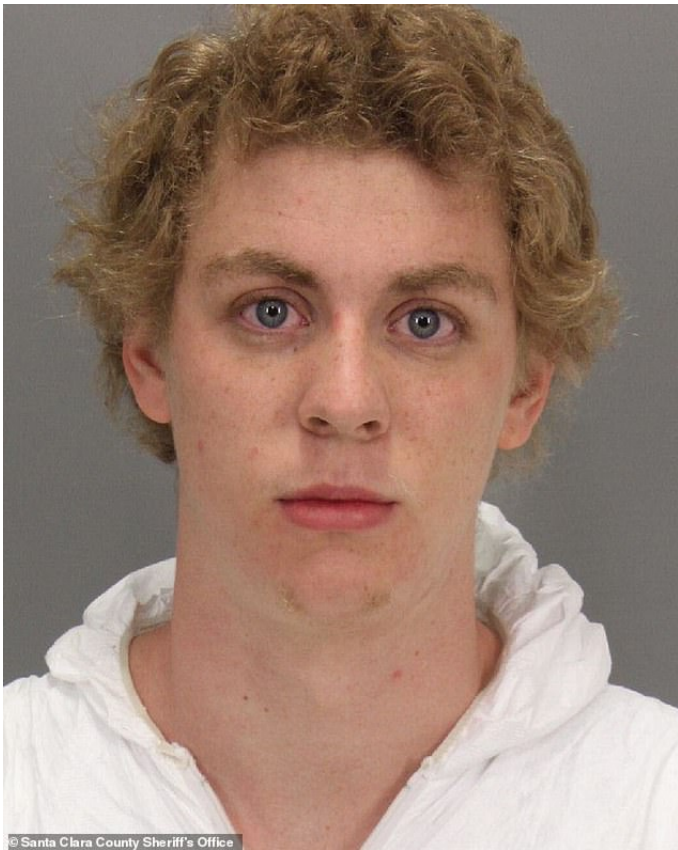
Turner served only half of his sentence before being released, unleashing an even greater tidal wave of outrage, which led to a movement that eventually recalled the judge who imposed his sentence.

Two years after Turner's release, Stanford built a 'contemplative garden' tucked behind the Kappa Alpha fraternity to memorialize Miller and the abuse she suffered that night. Inside it, there's a bench inlaid with a small plaque inscribed with a quote from Miller's victim impact statement that she read during Turner's trial:

You took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my safety, my intimacy, my confidence, my own voice—until today.

Ever since the assault, students and alumni told me, a fear pervades the campus. College administrators are terrified of bad publicity. Students are scared of sexual assault, but they also worry about being called out for any misstep. Sources tell me this has all led to a culture completely intolerant of risk.

'This is the post–Brock Turner paranoia,' said Selvik, the former band leader who now works in medical start-ups, of the current campus climate. 'It just becomes all litigious.'



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By January 28, Turner (above) had been arrested and charged with five felony counts of sexual assault. He withdrew from the university, which banned him from campus



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(Above) Chanel Miller was sexually assaulted in 2015 by a Stanford University athlete named Brock Turner

In 2016, Stanford suspended the university band, accusing it of having a 'systemic cultural problem' after it had been investigated for allegations of hazing, drinking, and sexual harassment. University administrators now run the 200-person organization, which students had managed since 1963.

Stanford now has more than 10,000 administrators who oversee the 7,761 undergraduate and 9,565 graduate students—almost enough for each student to have their own personal butler. (There are about 2,290 faculty members.) These bureaucrats make up an increasingly powerful segment of the university population, as they expand their portfolio and send the message that all conflict should be adjudicated by them. (OCS reports for the 2022–2023 school year have not yet been released.)

This growth of the university administrative state, it should be noted, is not unique to Stanford. Yale's administration has ballooned by 44.7 percent since 2003, according to the Yale Daily News, expanding at a rate nearly three times faster than that of the undergraduate student body. The number of non-faculty staff employed by elite institutions such as Princeton and MIT is also commensurate, if not slightly greater, than their undergraduate populations.

Still, Stanford's heavy-handed administrative practices may have drawn the most attention. According to a 2022 piece in Palladium magazine, Stanford and OCS started picking off Greek organizations one by one, raising charges like the ones Paulmeier's fraternity faced, as an excuse to kick them off campus for good.

One of those organizations, Theta Delta Chi, or TDX, lost their house for six years in 2021 after one of their members, 19-year-old Eitan Weiner, died from overdosing on fentanyl-laced Percocet in the fraternity house's bathroom.

Samer Hamadeh, the 1991 alum and tech entrepreneur, is now leading a lawsuit against Stanford to try to reestablish the house on campus. He argues that the university unfairly targeted TDX for the student's drug consumption. (Weiner got the illicit substance from a kindergarten friend who wasn't a Stanford student; that friend was later convicted of a felony for selling the drugs and sentenced to two years of probation and 100 hours of community service.)

Meanwhile, students say many of Stanford's 'top 10 traditions' either no longer happen or have been tamped down, such as the once-rambunctious 'band run,' where band members picked up freshmen from their dorms and paraded them through campus. (Now university administrators tag along.)

The street of Greek houses called The Row—which once served as the center of social life on campus—is now relatively quiet on Friday and Saturday nights, students and alumni told me. Students drink heavily in their dorm rooms, throwing down shots to get wasted quickly while staying out of view, they said.

'The university basically doesn't have trust in the kids,' Selvik said. 'They treat them like juveniles, they pad all these layers of bureaucracy on top of it, then it becomes this whole bureaucratic process just to be able to have a party.'

'It's just completely, utterly shocking to alums. We can't wrap our heads around it at all.'

Paulmeier and other students and alumni told me they're not asking for Stanford to make it easier for students to cheat, or worse, cause harm to others. All they want is for students to have the chance to make mistakes and learn from them—and sure, allow them to let loose a bit in the process.

'I mean, it's college, for God's sake,' Paulmeier said.

Paulmeier said he came to Stanford because he 'wanted to be someone who could help change the world, who could help my area become better, and to help kids who were like me.'

But now, as he walks across the more than 8,000 acres of manicured lawns and Romanesque sandstone buildings that comprise the idyllic campus, he questions whether Stanford really is the embodiment of what he always thought was the American dream.

'It's unethical to base your kid's life on getting into places like this because at the end of the day, they don't really care about your kid,' he said. 'They never did.'

'Addicted to Funding From China': Stanford Rakes in Chinese Cash Bribes And Payola

Stanford University has taken more than \$27 million from Chinese entities since the start of 2021

[Adam Kredo](#)

Stanford University has raked in more than \$27 million from Chinese entities since the start of 2021, underscoring the Communist Party's influence-peddling operations at major American colleges.

The funding came through 42 donations throughout 2021 and into early 2022, according to the latest figures publicly available through the Education Department's [reporting](#) database. The database does not specify the exact source of the funding, beyond the country of origin, but details the total amount of every gift and contract from the CCP as part of federal reporting requirements. Stanford did not respond to a *Washington Free Beacon* request for further information about the donations or its partnerships with China.

The opacity of this funding—and the millions of dollars China hands out to a range of prominent U.S. universities—could place Stanford in Congress's crosshairs as the Republican-controlled House ramps up investigations into Chinese influence-peddling. Stanford University is not the only university raking in cash from China—the University of Delaware, which houses the Biden Institute, since 2017 [has taken more](#) than \$6 million from the country. The House Select Committee on China is eyeing a potential probe into the Chinese Communist

Party's supply of more than [\\$426 million](#) to U.S. universities since 2011, according to sources who spoke to the *Free Beacon*.

Rep. Jim Banks (R., Ind.), a member of the House Select Committee on China, told the *Free Beacon* that Chinese funding for American schools has skyrocketed under the Biden administration because the administration stopped enforcing a [federal code](#) governing how foreign gifts and donations are reported. Lobbyists representing American schools [have been pressuring](#) the administration to relax regulations governing the reporting of foreign donations. The administration also nixed several federal investigations into CCP influence at U.S. universities, Banks said.

"Colleges are likely pocketing even more than reported," according to Banks. "Even worse, the Biden administration shut down all ongoing investigations into the Chinese Communist Party's influence efforts at our universities. House Republicans need to force Joe Biden's hand and pass legislation to crack down on foreign influence at our universities."

National security analysts have also been sounding the alarm over China's presence in American higher learning. The country has been the largest source of foreign donations to U.S. universities since 2013, according to congressional information, and tuition from Chinese students is worth an estimated \$12 billion per year.

Michael Sobolik, a China expert at the American Foreign Policy Council, said that "American higher education is addicted to funding from China," money that he says "greases the skids for CCP malign influence in our colleges, like espionage, IP theft, and censorship."

While Stanford is not the only university raking in Chinese cash, the school has publicly battled the perception that it is a breeding ground for Communist Party espionage.

In 2021, for instance, the school opened up a Chinese studies center that hosted "scholars, guests, and programs affiliated with groups backed by the Chinese Communist Party," the *Free Beacon* [reported](#) at the time. The Stanford-run institute also has ties to China's Peking University, which work alongside the Communist Party's [defense](#) industry and nuclear weapons program.

That same year, federal authorities [accused](#) a Chinese researcher working at Stanford of secretly working as a member of China's military. The researcher, Chen Song, "destroyed documents in a failed attempt to conceal her true identity," according to prosecutors.

Concerns about China's influence at Stanford come against the backdrop of the university's parallel work on behalf of the Pentagon. The school in 2022 [took in](#) \$1.9 million from the Defense Department to study "multiphase detonation of liquid aeropropulsion fuels," which could apply to advanced military technologies such as hypersonic missiles—weapons of [great interest](#) to China. Other Pentagon grants revolve around work on the Air Force's technology and science sectors.

Banks and other lawmakers say that China's foothold at Stanford could endanger the operational security of these delicate Pentagon-funded research projects, particularly because the Communist regime is bent on stealing proprietary American research.

"It's outrageous that schools like Stanford are taking millions from Beijing while partnering with [the Defense Department]," Banks said. "While some institutions like Purdue, a hypersonics research hub in my state, cut off all ties with its [Chinese] Confucius Institute over espionage concerns, not all schools take national security seriously, and the White House is making it easier than ever for them to cozy up with China."

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