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An update on the admissions fraud scheme



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We are writing to provide a further update to our community on the steps Stanford is taking to respond to the recent admissions fraud scheme, following on our [previous communications](https://news.stanford.edu/2019/03/14/admission-case-info/) (<https://news.stanford.edu/2019/03/14/admission-case-info/>).

We know that this episode has jarred the trust of many Americans in the college admissions process, and it has prompted many questions from the Stanford community. We are determined to take the right steps at Stanford to ensure the integrity of our process and to work toward rebuilding that trust.

To recap the facts, at this point we know the following:

- Our former head sailing coach acknowledged receiving financial contributions to the sailing program in exchange for agreeing to provide an athletic recommendation for two prospective students. The coach's employment at Stanford was terminated, and he pleaded guilty to a federal charge of racketeering conspiracy. However, neither prospective student completed the admission process at Stanford and as a consequence, no students were admitted to Stanford with an improper recommendation from the coach.
- To date we have identified one current student associated with a contribution to Stanford from the foundation implicated in the government's investigation. The contribution was made several months after the student was admitted to Stanford. The student had no recommendation from the former sailing coach, or any other coach, and has not at any time had an affiliation with the Stanford sailing program or any other Stanford athletic team. We are continuing to work to verify the circumstances around this student and will take whatever actions are appropriate.
- We are working to confirm, based on the information currently available, whether anyone else implicated in the government's case is tied to a student at Stanford. At this point we are not aware of others. However, if at any point the university learns that any parent or student may have falsified information as part of an

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application to Stanford, the university will investigate. As has long been our practice, we rescind a student's admission to Stanford if we determine the student submitted false information.

Since the admission fraud came to light last week, we have been working to address the clear issues it has laid bare, as well as to look for additional issues that we need to attend to.

Today we want to share two things: first, the steps we are taking with regard to our policies and protocols overall; and second, the steps we are taking specifically regarding the applicant pool for fall 2019 undergraduate admission, who will receive their decisions at the end of this month.

First, regarding the steps we are taking regarding policies and protocols overall:

- We are preparing to launch a comprehensive external review of the procedures we follow in providing an Athletics Department recommendation for the admissions process, as well as the procedures around the acceptance of gifts for athletic programs, to ensure that we have strong controls and can reassure our constituents of the integrity of our processes. Should we become aware of any further improprieties in the process, this review also will ensure that we take appropriate action in those cases.
- Stanford Athletics has put in place a new protocol in which a member of the executive leadership of the Athletics Department responsible for each of Stanford's 36 varsity men's and women's sports will review and confirm the athletic credentials of all recruits who are proposed by a coach to receive an athletic recommendation. This will provide a second, higher-level verification of the athletic credentials of recruited student-athletes before that information is shared with the admission office, to be considered as one factor in a comprehensive review of each student's qualifications for Stanford admission.
- As previously announced, we already have confirmed the athletic credentials, prior to admission, of all members of our sailing teams who received an athletic recommendation during the admission process, dating back to 2011.
- The university is working to determine the appropriate process for the distribution of the funds donated to the sailing program from the foundation implicated in the government's investigation. We have been communicating about the process with the California Attorney General's office, which has responsibility for overseeing foundations.

Second, we are taking specific steps with regard to the applicant pool for fall 2019 undergraduate admission, to assure all applicants that the process has been sound and has given them the comprehensive consideration they deserve. Our steps include:

- We are reviewing every Stanford applicant who has been involved in the athletic recruitment process to confirm their legitimate athletic credentials. We are working to make sure that no one with falsified athletic credentials is admitted to Stanford, and to date we have no evidence of any such person in this year's applicant pool.
- We have verified that Stanford has received no other contributions, beyond those already reported, from the foundation implicated in the government's investigation. As a result, no one in this year's applicant pool is associated with a contribution from that foundation.
- We will continue to emphasize to admitted students that if anything in their application materials is

3.1 discovered to be fraudulent, their admission to the university may be revoked.

- Finally, unrelated to the fraud scheme: Because a Stanford admission officer was arrested this winter on separate criminal charges unrelated to his Stanford work, we have put in place a further review process. Applications that were assigned to this admission officer have undergone an additional review to assure his assessments were sound.

Stanford has high expectations for the integrity and personal conduct of everyone in our community. We will continue looking to determine what additional steps are needed to ensure that our policies fully live up to our ideals. In particular, we are committed to ensuring that financial contributions to Stanford receive the proper scrutiny, and to ensuring that donors are never under the impression that a place at Stanford can be bought.

We are deeply engaged in this important work, and we will continue to keep you updated.

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