Dear alumni, faculty, staff, and community members,

I am writing today regarding our martial arts and archery student organizations. These clubs are valued sources of community and recreation for many of you, and I know you are concerned about the future. In order to respond to all who have contacted us before too much more time passes, I am writing one letter sharing the current status and plans for next steps. In addition, we have prepared and posted responses to frequently asked questions. You will find them here.

Our work this summer: ensuring sound management

We received more than 150 letters in support of these organizations from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighboring community members. I have read each message thoroughly as I believe that any deliberation is enriched by the full range of perspectives brought forward. In addition, I have discussed your viewpoints, observations and suggestions with my counterparts in the Department of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation (DAPER) and the Stanford Alumni Association (SAA).

It is understandable that many who wrote were opposed to the university’s decision to suspend martial arts and archery activities for the summer. Please know that we expect most groups to resume functions this fall with certain adjustments to their practices. We have provided each group with a specific list of needed adjustments and materials to prepare for review in order to align with student organization policies and resume activities for fall. Materials for review include:

- A revised constitution that aligns with university policies
- An updated website reflecting the organization’s approved scope and activities
- A student roster reflecting a minimum of 10 active members and at least three active student leaders. The three student leaders must be current Stanford students, on-campus during their tenure (summer excluded)
- A summary of the organization’s finances for the last two years, reflecting that expenses are for activities that directly benefit Stanford students. This should also reflect that for club sports organizations, national travel is permitted, with prior approval. For other martial arts groups, the main activity should be practices/classes and occasional workshops
- Identification of an on-campus advisor, working closely with DAPER for club sports organizations, and DAPER and Office of Student Engagement (OSE) for other martial arts groups
- A risk-management plan
The focus of this process is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, as well as the financial integrity of each organization.

Many of you have inquired about what led to these measures. Through a routine internal audit in the spring, we discovered that administrative practices of archery and the Stanford Martial Arts Program diverged significantly from university policies. OSE (which oversees student organizations) and DAPER responded by reaching out to archery and the 13 martial arts groups to review the irregularities uncovered during the audit. The summer suspension was created to ensure time to address these concerns.

**Next steps: meeting evolving needs of student organizations**

The form and function of student organizations have evolved over the years. Originally, the university sought to help students create and operate organizations for themselves and other students. Most if not all costs were borne by student fees appropriated by the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU).

Over time, many organizations have grown in sophistication to include student and non-student participants of different ages engaging in activities under the guidance of volunteer and paid coaches and teachers. This evolution has introduced complexities not envisioned in our original policies, and we believe it is time to reassess and realign university policies and expectations. For example, what structures should be put in place for volunteer or paid coaching positions, or the participation of non-students, especially with respect to university accounting, safety and inclusion policies?

To assess and realign policies with the evolving landscape, we will launch a working group to study and recommend structures and policies for student organizations, including non-student participation in student organizations. This group will consult with university offices, seek comment, and provide recommendations to me by the end of fall quarter. Associate Vice Provost for Inclusion, Community and Integrative Learning Emelyn A. dela Peña will convene the group, and ASSU, DAPER and SAA have agreed to collaborate. Membership will include an SAA staff member and an alumnus. This work will begin immediately. I am committed to sharing the group’s report with the university community later this year, and then providing an opportunity for further feedback before final decisions are made.

While awaiting the outcome of the working group, we will continue to work with student leaders of the impacted clubs to help them meet university standards for student organization governance, accounting, safety and well-being.
We welcome your input

I would like to invite all of you to continue to submit your thoughts and concerns, but please be assured that concerns you’ve expressed to date have been catalogued and will be shared with the working group. We have established a web portal to collect new comments from all community members. I will keep you updated, and look forward to your continued involvement.

Sincerely,

Susie Brubaker-Cole
Vice Provost for Student Affairs