Patricia J. Gumport was appointed Stanford University’s first Vice Provost for Graduate Education in January, 2007. Assuming additional responsibilities, her title was subsequently changed to Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. Dr. Gumport concurrently serves as Professor of Education and Director of the Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research at Stanford University (SIHER). This profile highlights her academic experience and contributions.

As a sociologist of higher education, Dr. Gumport has focused her research and teaching on key changes in the academic landscape and organizational character of American higher education. She has studied the dynamics of academic change in several arenas—to illuminate what facilitates change and what impedes it—across and within different types of colleges and universities. Driven by an abiding interest in knowledge change, Dr. Gumport has analyzed how organizational, intellectual, political, economic, and professional interests redefine the content, structure, and relative legitimacy of academic fields. Specific studies include: the emergence and institutionalization of interdisciplinary fields; professional socialization across academic disciplines; organizational restructuring and selective investment; the ascendance of industry logic in public higher education; forces that promote and inhibit academic collaboration; decision-making about appropriate organizational forms to support new ideas; and leading organizational change for optimal effectiveness with internal and external stakeholders. Her research within the United States and Europe examines how universities that are ostensibly competitors determine when and how to collaborate. Her analyses include implications for academic leaders who pursue strategic initiatives, manage environmental pressures and stakeholder interests, and foster leadership development.

Research and Publications

Dr. Gumport’s academic publications include seven books, one currently in press as well as one under review. She has also published 60 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and commissioned reports. Selected books include:

*Academic Legitimacy* (forthcoming 2019) analyzes the ascendance of industry logic over the last quarter of the 20th century: the explicit expectations throughout public higher education to become more efficient and accountable, to demonstrate contributions to state economies as well as to develop more and deeper ties with industry. These contrast with longstanding imperatives to prioritize societal functions of expanding access and diversity, comprehensive educational offerings, and democratic civic responsibilities. Grounded in sociological theory, the findings are anchored in case studies of research universities, comprehensive state universities, and community colleges, illuminating their transformation during the last quarter of the 20th century. The book analyzes how organizational restructuring aligned with political, economic, and technological changes to yield some notable gains, yet also profoundly intensified tensions among divergent beliefs as to what a public college or university should be and do, as well as how it should be organized and managed for legitimacy. Framed as a comprehensive historical study, rich qualitative data and conclusions deepen our understanding of perennial challenges throughout higher education as well as those faced by contemporary decision-makers in a wide range of campus settings. The accessible study will appeal to a range of readers, as it seeks to inform and inspire reflection among administrators and faculty as well as public system and state policymakers. The book and its website with supplementary material will be of interest to scholars of higher education for its profound implications, theoretically framed and empirically grounded.

*Sociology of Higher Education* (2007) stands as the first book to trace the development of this vibrant field of study and identify factors that have contributed to its evolution along major lines of inquiry.
Academic Pathfinders (2002) examines the emergence of feminist scholarship to identify the conditions in which new knowledge is created and becomes institutionalized as colleges and universities deliberated over appropriate organizational forms for new and cross-disciplinary ideas.

Awards and Professional Recognition

Dr. Gumport has received numerous awards for her research and teaching. She received the 2006 American Educational Research Association’s Exemplary Research Award in recognition of her outstanding scholarly contributions to the study of higher education. These contributions were made possible by $17M in research grants from government agencies and foundations over two decades. For her largest grant award (1996–2004), she served as the founding Executive Director and Principal Investigator of the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement headquartered in the Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research at Stanford University.

Dr. Gumport’s expertise is recognized both nationally and internationally. She has presented over 100 peer-reviewed papers at professional conferences and over 75 invited addresses to higher education organizations and institutes in the United States (such as the American Council on Education, the Association of Governing Boards, and the Washington Higher Education Secretariat) and abroad (in Copenhagen, Hiroshima, Kassel, London, Mexico City, Rome, Stockholm, and Sydney). She has served on the editorial boards of three leading higher education journals: *The Review of Higher Education*, *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, and *The Journal of Higher Education* (Chair, 1994–1995), and reviewed book manuscripts for major university presses. She has served on the Board of Directors for the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and on advisory boards for significant national research projects.

Dr. Gumport was selected as a Fellow in the inaugural cohort of Stanford University President’s Leadership Academy in 2008 and as a Fellow in the American Leadership Forum—Silicon Valley in 2011.

Consulting Activities

Dr. Gumport’s consulting activities span a wide range of topics and clients. Through interviews, focus groups, in-depth case studies, and commissioned projects, she has provided expertise to higher education leaders and policymakers facing contemporary pressures for change, challenges in organizational restructuring, curricular change, strategic planning, academic program review, faculty productivity, graduate education, interdisciplinarity, diversity and inclusion. For state systems, she has consulted on undergraduate education, academic planning, academic program reviews, inter-organizational collaboration, and public higher education system design in Arizona, California, Illinois, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, and Texas. At the national and trans-national level, she has served the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Council of Graduate Schools, the Fulbright Commission, the National Science Foundation, the OECD, the Social Science Research Council, and the U.S. Department of Education. She has also advised philanthropic foundations such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Education

Dr. Gumport received her graduate degrees—two master’s degrees (sociology, education) and her PhD (higher education administration and policy analysis)—from Stanford University. She holds a BA in philosophy and English from Colgate University, where she worked as assistant dean of admissions upon
graduation and later served on the Board of Trustees. After receiving her PhD, she was a postdoctoral scholar on a Spencer Foundation funded study with Burton Clark, where she was responsible for the United States analyses in a five-country study on historical and contemporary challenges in graduate education and research. She then became a tenure-track assistant professor of organizational studies in higher education at UCLA.

Academic and Administrative Experience at Stanford

In 1989, she joined the Stanford faculty in the Graduate School of Education, teaching primarily graduate-level courses, in both Education and Sociology. Her administrative and university service includes directing the Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research while concurrently chairing the higher education doctoral and master’s programs, and serving a term as chair of the division of Social Sciences, Policy and Practice in the Graduate School of Education. She has a record of longstanding service on university-wide committees, including the Provost’s Budget Group, several terms on the Faculty Senate, the University Planning and Policy Board, the Diversity Cabinet (co-chair), the Provost’s Committee on the Status of Women, and the Executive Committee of Stanford’s AAUP Chapter.

In 2006, she was invited to serve as Stanford’s first Vice Provost for Graduate Education and began to plan for the launch of this new university-wide office in January, 2007. As Vice Provost, she has provided leadership to promote academic innovation as well as to address systemic challenges. She has sought to identify synergies for collaboration by designing, overseeing, and expanding programs, initiatives, and policies to enhance excellence in graduate education as well as postdoctoral affairs. Priority areas have included advancing diversity and inclusion, intergenerational mentoring, interdisciplinary learning, professional and leadership development, faculty advising, and the optimal use of graduate student funding. Her academic leadership roles, including 12 years as Vice Provost, as well as mentorship of students and younger colleagues, have generated initiatives that help inform faculty and administrative leaders who work in academic affairs and student affairs in a variety of institutional types.

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