

The War on Fun - Jessie Kong

Free stuff is everywhere at Stanford. Free shirts, food, stickers, you name it, some event at Stanford probably has it. But what about the things that Stanford does not want us to get our hands on? The idea for this map started with a free salad at Casper Dining, which keeps its salad bar outside of the card scanning area. Ricker Dining does the same with dessert. While a free side-dish here and there might not seem like much, as soon as Residential and Dining Enterprises realized this loophole, they removed all the plates, forcing students to go inside and use a meal swipe. Stanford took a much more drastic approach to end Steam Tunneling. After a website was made that documented all the known entrances to the tunnels under Main Quad in 2018, the unlocked entrances were quickly shut off, limiting access only to people who could lockpick.

Over the years, various people have discovered and exploited many bigger holes in the Stanford system to trespass, get free housing, and steal university property. My fascination with “hacking” Stanford was increased when I learned about multiple squatter incidents, including Azia Kim and Elizabeth Okazaki in 2007, a homeless man in 2018, William Curry this year, and more stories from various university faculty. In both the 2007 and 2022 incidents, the Stanford Daily reported that university officials took action to educate residential staff about security. But is Stanford’s administration response to these incidents proportionate?

The relationship between Stanford’s administration and the rest of us can be modeled by the cat and mouse. Over the last decade, admin has been steadily banning various social events, shutting down parties, sanctioning the marching band, and completely draining Lake Lag. These actions have been collectively dubbed “Stanford’s War on Fun,” for as soon as students find new outlets for expression or protest, admin cracks down to avoid liability. Admin’s actions against student culture led me to design this map’s iconography to suggest a full-out war on campus, where admin is trying to fight everyone else.

Stanford admin’s reputation for erasing campus culture and limiting outlets for playful expression has caused me to question how much data I should actually put on the map. Many cartographers have purposefully withheld various aspects of their data in order to ensure exclusivity, protect certain people, or to omit sensitive information. When mapping the locations of ICE prisons, for instance, Alex Gil Fuentes and his “mobile tent” team purposely did not release the exact locations where children were being held in order to prevent protesters from “[going] there and creating an even more traumatic experience for the kids” ([Gil Fuentes](#)). Likewise, while my map shows well-known hubs for protest like the Football Stadium, it also alludes to more secretive knowledge that is only spread by word of mouth. In making this countermap, I have decided to make

these locations ambiguous in order to prevent more student secrets from meeting the same fate as the Steam Tunnels.

I used both MapBox Studio and Adobe Illustrator to make this map. MapBox Studio's basemap editor proved useful for creating the optimal backdrop to portray the War on Fun. I manually erased minor features to reduce clutter and highlight the buildings that students use the most. As for symbology, I settled on a slingshot to represent places where students have rebelled. Like slingshots, the actions shown on this map are relatively harmless. By contrast, the tanks used to represent admin emphasize the power imbalance between administrators and students and the excessive retaliation we face for harmless acts. While the crowns that represent the President's Office and Police Station are the hubs of control, the tanks move throughout campus in order to signify their omnipresence.