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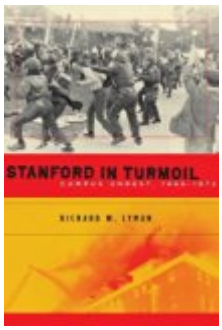
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Richard W. Lyman. *Stanford in Turmoil: Campus Unrest, 1966-1972.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. x + 236 pp. $45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8047-6079-9.



Reviewed by Dexter Alexander

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Commissioned by Jonathan Anuik (University of Alberta)

Richard Wall Lyman joined Stanford University's faculty in 1958 as a thirty-five-year-old "nontenured associate professor of history" (p. 5). After a few years in the classroom, he developed an interest in higher education administration and worked as Stanford's associate dean of Humanities and Sciences from 1964 to 1967. The associate dean's position gave Professor Lyman the opportunity to continue his teaching and research and to see if administration was a lasting interest. Associate Dean Lyman had a talent for administration, and Stanford's board appointed him provost in 1967. In 1970, he became Stanford's seventh president and served in that position until 1980.

Lyman entered university administration in interesting times. The period his book covers, 1966 to 1972, was a period of student unrest on many U.S. college and university campuses. Some institutions' faculty also joined in the political and social upheaval the author calls "the era of disruption" (p. 86). At Stanford University, the disruption included the student sit-ins that became a symbol of student dissatisfaction. The disruption at Stanford also included the destruction of a president's office and his lifetime of work, the burning of a research professor's office and his lifetime collection of research notes, and a climatic charge of Santa Clara County sheriff's deputies against students who were gathering to occupy a campus building. Lyman dealt with these events in both of his administrative roles: provost and president. Near the end of Lyman's presidency, a faculty member told him: "you'll be remembered for having saved the university" (p. 201). His two immediate successors also made a remark at a trustee's dinner about President Lyman having saved the university. Lyman observes that neither Stanford nor any U.S. college or university "was destroyed, or even very seriously damaged," during the era of disruption (p. 201).

The book is not a history of Stanford University from 1966 to 1972. It is not an analysis of the social and political conflicts of those years. It is not a guide to ideal university governance either in times of crises or in more peaceful academic years. It is, according to President Emeritus Ly-

man, “a cross between a case study and a memoir” (p. 1). The book has value to historians of higher education because, as a memoir, it contains valuable primary source material. Scholars who study the administration of postsecondary institutions are likely to find the case study an interesting description of what does and does not work in times of institutional crises caused by inflamed political and social passions. How does one govern a university in turmoil? This book gives readers Lyman’s solutions to these leadership challenges, the consequences of his individual decisions, and the collective decisions made by institutional governing bodies.

What lasting changes occurred within Stanford University from 1966 to 1972? Over time, university governance changed. The board of trustees was expanded to include eight trustees directly elected by the alumni. Faculty and student representation were added to most board committees but not to the board of trustees. An elected faculty legislature was established. A formal system was established for creating and enforcing rules of student conduct. This system included much more student involvement than previously. The lasting governance changes were evolutionary, according to the author. Ironically, Lyman writes: “the Stanford that emerged from the time of troubles was characterized by more formal structures for decision making, with more explicit recognition of particular interest groups than existed previously, and a greatly increased involvement of lawyers” (p. 200).

Scholars studying the “era of disruption” can find a description of those days at Stanford from a leading administrator’s point of view. Academics investigating the turmoil at major research universities during the unrest that soon left the campuses and politicized U.S. nonacademic communities’ attitudes toward, primarily, the Vietnam War and civil rights can use the many Stanford minutes and correspondence contained in the book to make comparisons with other institutions. Scholars who specialize in institutional governance can find a very good case study of crises-driven change. Readers are able to learn, from Lyman’s perspective, the following, pessimistic view: “Today’s administrators are unlikely to be any more able to make the center hold than they were in the late 1960s” (p. 199).

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