



The R Foundation Conference Committee
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To the R Foundation Conference Committee:

We are writing to propose that the campus of Stanford University, Stanford California in the United States, be considered as a possible venue for a future R User Conference (useR!). We would be especially pleased to be considered as a possible host for the conference to be held in the summer of 2016 as that would coincide with Dr. John Chambers 75th birthday and would mark a major milestone in the life and contributions of an individual pivotal in the development of the R language.

Location

Stanford University is one of the world's leading research universities. It is known for its entrepreneurial character, drawn from the legacy of its founders, Jane and Leland Stanford, and its relationship to Silicon Valley. Areas of excellence range from the humanities to social sciences to engineering and the sciences. Stanford is located in California's Bay Area, one of the most

intellectually dynamic and culturally diverse areas of the nation. Established in 1885, the Stanford community includes 6,980 undergraduate students, 8,897 graduate students and 2,043 faculty members which include 22 Nobel Laureates.

The Stanford campus is located on 8,180 contiguous acres is backed by the Santa Cruz mountains to the West and the San Francisco Bay to the East providing a host of scenic hiking, biking and other outdoor activities. The majestic Pacific ocean is 24 miles to the West of the the campus with opportunities to view birds, marine mammals and scenic vistas. The Palo Alto downtown area is within walking distance of the campus. A free shuttle bus service provides regular transportation to downtown Palo Alto from multiple locations within the Stanford Campus. Palo Alto provides a wide variety of restaurants including Chinese, Indian, Central American, African, and Middle Eastern cuisine.

Summer weather in Palo Alto is typically mild, sunny with a daily average high of 26°C and low of 14°C, and average humidity of 83%.

Dates

We propose to hold the conference over four days with tutorials beginning on Monday, June 27, 2016.

Organization

The following individuals comprise the conference organizational committee:

- John M. Chambers, *Stanford (Statistics)*
- Sandrine Dudoit, *Berkeley (Statistics)*
- Trevor J. Hastie, *Stanford (Statistics)*
- Susan Holmes, *Stanford (Statistics)*
- Simon D. Jackman, *Stanford (Political Science)*
- Olivia Lau, *Google*
- Nicholas Lewin-Koh, *Genentech*
- Norman S. Matloff, *UC Davis (Computer Science)*
- Jacqueline Meulman, *Stanford (Statistics)*
- Balasubramanian Narasimhan, *Stanford (Statistics)*
- Karthik Ram, *Berkeley (Institute for Data Science)*
- Joseph Rickert, *Revolution Analytics*
- Duncan Temple Lang, *UC Davis (Statistics)*

Further members will be added as needed. We will enlist the support of individuals through the Bay Area R Users Group (BARUG), local industries, as well as Stanford and neighboring universities (Berkeley, East Bay State, San Jose State, SF State, UCSF, and Davis). Stanford has staff that can assist with meeting planning and logistics, and the organizing team has already contacted them for initial estimates and services.

BARUG is one of the most active R users associations in the world, with a mailing list of over 3,400 Bay Area R users. It meets monthly, typically at tech firms such as Google, Facebook, Dropbox and so on, typically with two or three speakers at each meeting. The presence of BARUG adds further to the list of myriad reasons why the proposed venue is perfect for UseR!.

Venue and Facilities

The location of the conference will center on the Frances C. Arrillaga Alumni Center which is located on the corner of Galvez and Campus Drive. It is a comprehensive conference and event facility available for events directly organized and conducted by a Stanford school or department. With unique meeting rooms equipped with sound systems, an elegant reception hall and beautiful outdoor gardens, the Alumni Center has an auditorium that can seat a maximum of 600 people (McCaw Hall) with adjacent breakout rooms in the Fisher Conference Center that can be configured to provide, 6 rooms for 40 people each each or 4 rooms seating 80-100 people etc. In addition, the Koret-Taube conference room in the adjacent Gunn-SIEPR Building Center which can seat 120 people will be used for focus sessions.

Facilities at the Alumni Center include

- Free Wi-Fi
- Use of the Munzer Business Center with PCs, fax, copier, and printer
- Access to The Alumni Café during normal business hours Monday through Friday
- A dedicated event manager to help coordinate and oversee the conference
- Front desk security for evening events
- Up to two golf cart rentals, for a nominal fee
- Convenient, nearby parking: the Track Lot or for large events, the rentable Galvez Lot.

The free Marguerite Shuttle conveniently stops in front of the Alumni Center and can take conference attendees around campus or back to the Palo Alto train station.

Capacities

The floor plans and seating arrangements for McCaw Hall, Fisher Conference Center and Koret-Taube Conference Room 130 are shown in the figures 1, 2, 5, 6. Table 1 gives a comprehensive picture of the room capacities under varying configurations.

Accommodation

We are able to provide three levels of accommodation within close proximity to the conference venue: business class hotels, budget hotels and on-campus housing for students. Budget hotels

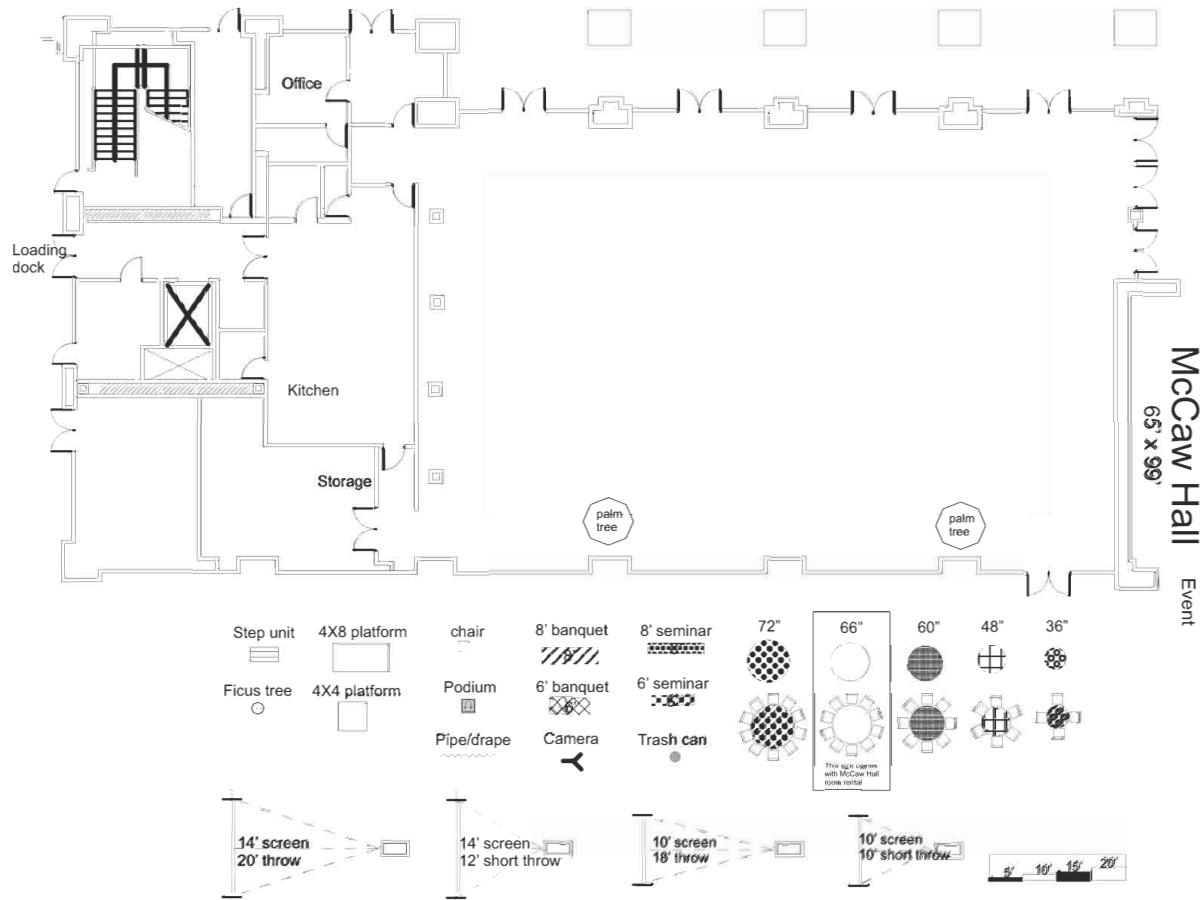


Figure 1: McCaw Hall Floor Plan and Seating Styles



(a) McCaw Hall Arrangement 1



(b) McCaw Hall Arrangement 2

Figure 2: McCaw Hall Seating Configurations



(a) Palm Court



(b) Palm Court Fountain

Figure 3: Palm Court Area



(a) Fisher Foyer



(b) Fisher Seating Arrangement

Figure 4: Fisher Rooms and Foyer

Venue	Dimensions (feet)	Area (sq. ft.)	Theatre	Reception (standing)	U-Shape	Board Room	Dinner	Classroom
McCaw Hall (Wooden Floor Area)	99x65 80x48	6435 3840	600	942	N/A	N/A	400	250
Lane	24x29	696	60	60	24	26	40	36
Lyons	24x18	432	40	36	15	16	20	12
Lodato	24x17	408	40	36	15	16	20	12
Lane & Lyons	24x47	1128	100	120	39	46	40	48
Lyons & Lodato	24x35	840	80	100	24	36	40	24
Lane & Lyons & Lodato	24x64	1536	150	170	63	70	100	80
Barnes	24x17	408	40	36	15	16	20	18
McDowell	24x18	432	40	36	15	16	20	18
Cranston	24x15	375	40	36	15	16	20	9
Barnes & McDowell	24x35	840	80	100	24	36	40	27
McDowell & Cranston	24x33	792	80	100	24	36	40	27
Barnes & McDowell & Cranston	24x50	1200	120	140	36	50	80	54
Fisher Reception Area	50x17	850	N/A	100	N/A	N/A	50	N/A
McColl	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60-100	N/A

Table 1: McCaw Hall Capacities

Fisher Conference Center Event

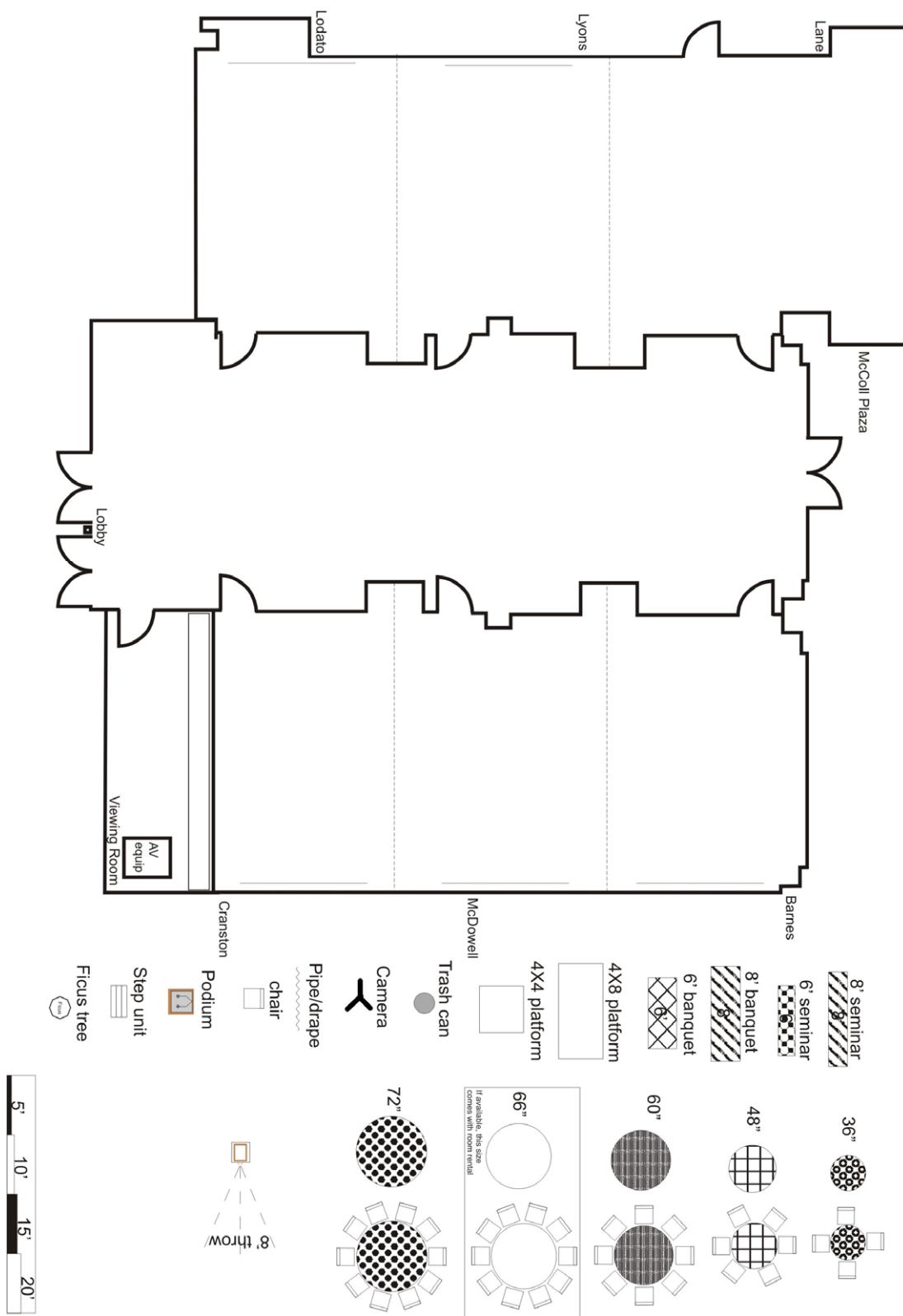


Figure 5: Fisher Rooms Floor Plan and Seating Styles

KORET-TAUBE CONFERENCE ROOM 130

Fifteen 60" Rounds with 8 chairs. 120 seated.

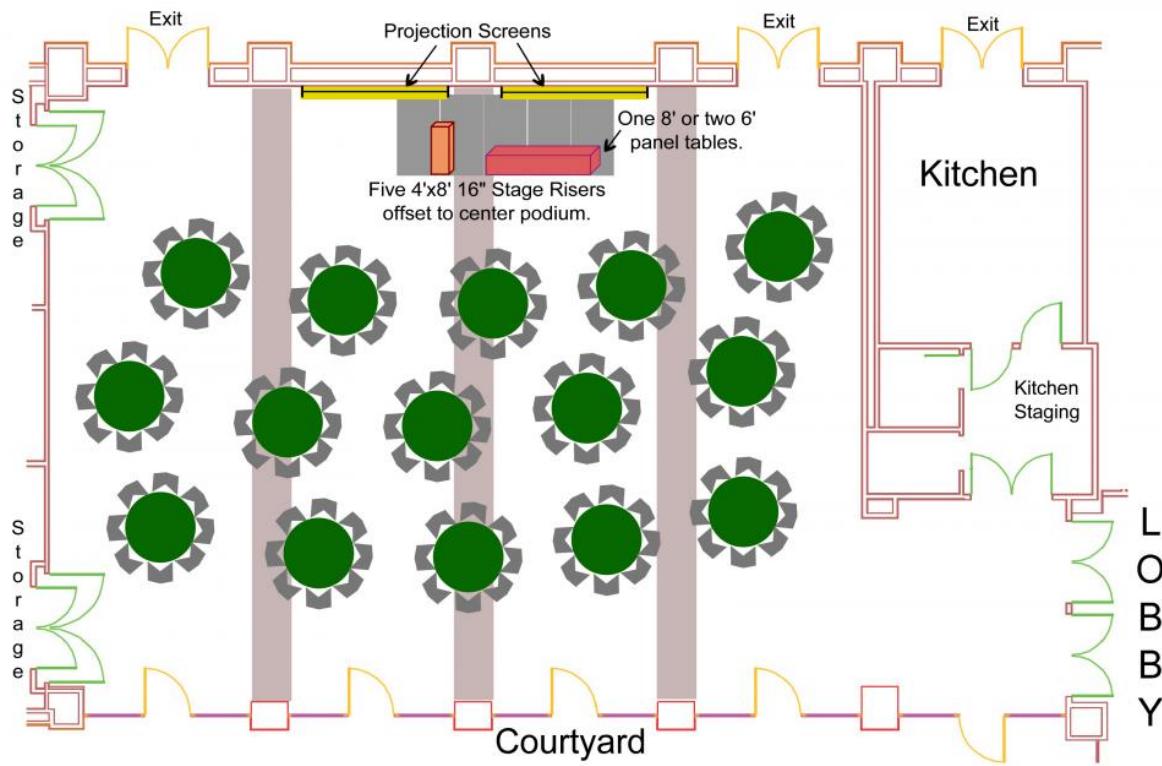


Figure 6: Koret Room 130 Floor Plan and Seating Styles



Figure 7: Koret Room 130 Seating Arrangement

run around \$XXX/night and we hope to negotiate a group rate that will bring down the cost for a four night stay to around \$XXX. On-campus housing is cheaper although dependent on demand and length of stay. Current costs for single dorm rooms run to about \$XX/night. Conference services at Stanford with whom we have partnered will help us reserve a set of on-campus dorm rooms.

Sponsorship and other financial support

The Department of Statistics, Stanford University is sponsoring the conference and is contributing funds towards the conference. In addition, the Bay Area is home to companies known world-wide. Several of them have already pledged verbal support and once our proposal is approved formal arrangements will be set up. Income from corporate sponsors and other sources is expected to be bounded below by \$XXK.

In addition, we expect to have stalls for companies to display / sell books and related materials.

Budget

The expected fixed costs are for the facility, conference room, IT services, catering, security and administration. The catering includes a welcome reception, coffee and lunch every day of the conference. Table 2 shows the registration fees for useR! 2012 (Vanderbilt University) and the useR! 2014 (UCLA) which are at the two extremes. (There are some differences in what is included in the registration fee, but that would be getting in the weeds.) We expect our fees to be closer to the UCLA (more on that below).

	Academic	Non-Academic	Student/Retiree
Registration: Early	(XXX, XXX) _{30%}	(XXX, XXX) _{15%}	(XXX, XXX) _{20%}
Registration: Regular	(XXX, XXX) _{15%}	(XXX, XXX) _{5%}	(XXX, XXX) _{5%}
Registration: Late	(XXX, XXX) _{5%}	(XXX, XXX) _{0%}	(XXX, XXX) _{5%}
Registration: On-site	(XXX, XXX) _{0%}	(XXX, XXX) _{0%}	(XXX, XXX) _{0%}
Short Course	XXX	XXX	XXX
Tutorial	XX	XXX	XX

Table 2: Registration fees at recent useR! conferences (2012, 2014). Our assumed distributions are in subscripts.

The conference dinner costs an additional \$XXX/person.

Detailed Budget

Tutorials

Variable Budget (per person)		
Description	Income	Expense
Tutorial fee (average fee)	XXX	
Meals, Lunch, coffee, tea:		XX
Tutor fee (50% of tutorial fee):		XX
Total	XXX	XXX

We expect a small surplus from the tutorials that will no doubt be swallowed up by other expenses.

Conference

Fixed Budget		
Description	Income	Expense
Sponsorship	50,000	
Conference Hall (McCaw, 3 days)		X,XXX
Parallel Session Rooms (Fisher, 4 days)		X,XXX
Focus Session Room (Koret-Taub Room 130, 3 days)		X,XXX
Furniture/ Audio Visual/Staff		XX,XXX
Ford Gardens (3 days, Outdoor Lunch/breaks)		XXX
Poster Session (Lawn, Umbrellas)		X,XXX
Mixer (Palm Court)		XXX
Invited speaker travel		XX,XXX
Gratis participants (sponsors, organizers)		X,XXX
Total	XX,XXX	XX,XXX
Balance		-XX,XXX

The fixed costs are substantial and is expected to run us in the red to the estimated amount of \$XX,XXX. However, we might have been conservative in our estimate of corporate sponsorship.

Variable Budget (per person)		
Description	Income	Expense
Avg. Registration fee [†] (2012, 2014)	(XXX, XXX)	XX
Breakfast, coffee, tea, lunch (Tues-Thurs)		XX
Poster BBQ & Bar		XX
Miscellaneous Expenses		X
Buffer		5
Total	(XXX, XXX)	XXX
Balance		(XXX, XX)

The surplus from the varying cost is \$XXX per registrant using the 2012 registration fees. Therefore, the break even point for the conference is XX,XXX/XXX ≈ XXX participants. With 300, 400, 500 and 600 participants, the balances amount to \$XX,XXX, \$XX,XXX, \$XX,XXX and \$XX,XXX respectively.

Using the 2014 numbers, the expected income per registration then drops to approximately \$XXX. This brings down the the varying cost surplus per registrant from \$XXX to \$XX. The break-even point goes up to 347 registrants from 223. The surplus with 400, 500 and 600 registrants are \$X,XXX, \$XX,XXX and \$XX,XXX respectively.

Considering the reported attendance numbers for useR! 2014 (over 500), we have good reason to expect that our registration fee would be close to that of 2014.

Conference Dinner

[†]Averages are computed using the assumed distribution in table 2; fees used were those for the 2012 and 2014 conferences.

Variable Budget (per person)		
Description	Income	Expense
Conference Dinner fee	XXX	
Bus fee		XX
Meal, drinks, venue		XXX
Total	XXX	XXX
Balance		0

The budget for the conference dinner should mostly balance itself.

Note Our budget was based on a detailed three-page estimate prepared by Conference Planning Services at Stanford. They are highly experienced and we have no reason to suspect their numbers. They quoted \$XXX per head (venue, meals, drinks) and \$XX for the transporatation for 2014. So if the costs don't move much, we can bring this down to \$XXX.

Finally, as remarked earlier, our sponsorship income estimate is conservative. Our goal is really to break even while attracting as large an audience as we can. Therefore, as the conference approaches we will make every effort to lower the per participant registration and conference dinner costs.

Scientific Program

There is now a more or less stable format for useR! contributions, namely kaleidoscope talks, focus talks and lightning presentations. We see no reason to deviate from this.

Some concern has been expressed that we have industry participation on the conference committee. We plan to provide some guidelines for session organizers so as to reduce the chance of overly commercial talks. We also realize that we have to be creative about giving the sponsors visibility. Therefore, we've noted this as an item for discussion with the larger organizing committee—mostly academicians we hasten to add—as we move forward in the process.

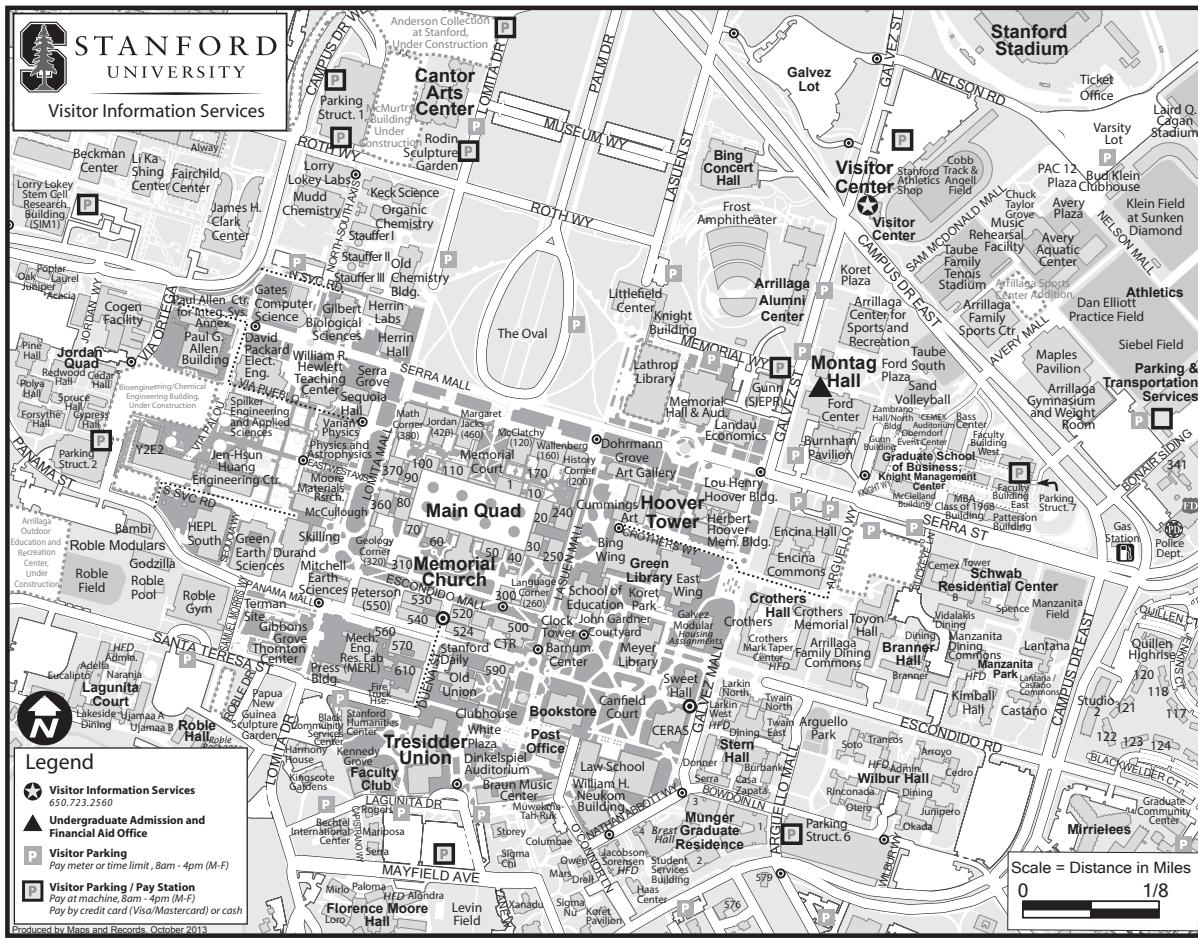
Social Program

We envision providing three social events during the conference: an on-campus welcoming reception on Monday night, a dinner on Wednesday evening in the Palo Alto/Mountain View area and an outing to San Francisco on Friday morning. Among the possible venues are the Computer History Museum and the Mountain Winery.

Transportation

Stanford is situated in Santa Clara County approximately 35 miles from San Francisco and 20 miles from San Jose. The campus is accessible from 3 international airports, San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland as well as from interstate rail. Via Caltrain, Amtrak rail travelers can reach Palo Alto by transferring trains in San Jose. The campus is accessible locally via train (Caltrain), or the local bus systems SAM trans and Santa Clara VTA.

Caltrain, the local commuter train, has a station in downtown Palo Alto, and connects to the Bay Area Rapid Transit system (BART, subway/light rail). The BART connection makes travel to and from the San Francisco airport easy, and enables convenient side trips for attendees to visit San Francisco and Berkeley.



Campus Map

Attached is a campus map that shows the location of the Frances C. Arrillaga Alumni Center (near Montag Hall) where the conference will be hosted.