

# Stanford University, Palo Alto, California

## ■ Foundation

When railroad tycoon Leland Stanford and his wife Jane lost their only child, Leland Jr., died of typhoid fever in 1884, they decided to build a university as the most appropriate memorial, and donated a large fortune to the project. Leland Stanford Junior University – still its legal name – opened on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1891. The founder aimed for their new university to be affordable to produce cultured and useful graduates, and to teach both traditional liberal arts and technology and engineering, which were already changing America. The campus occupies what was once Leland Stanford's favorite residence of the Stanford family in Palo Alto near San Francisco. The Stanfords purchased an existing estate in 1876 and later acquired much of the land for their stock farm, orchards, and vineyards.

## ■ Architectural style

The general concept for the University grounds and buildings was conceived by Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park in New York. Then a brilliant young Boston architect, Charles Allerton Coolidge, further developed the concept. The style is a blend of Romanesque and Spanish Mission Revival architecture<sup>1</sup>. It is

characterized by rectilinear sandstone buildings joined by covered arcades formed of successive half-circle arches, the latter supported by short columns with decorated capitals.

## ■ Stanford University today

Today, Stanford University includes seven schools and 18 interdisciplinary institutes with more than 16,000 students, 2,100 faculty and 1,800 postdoctoral professors. Stanford is an international institution, enrolling students from all 50 U.S. states and 91 other countries. It is also an important athletics campus, with 900 current student-athletes and a history of hundreds of sport awards.

Stanford University has branches in many other countries, among these the Breyer Center for Overseas Studies in Florence. The Program of the Centre focuses on total academic and cultural immersion in the Renaissance, the European Union, the Mediterranean, and Italian language, history, and contemporary culture.

1. The first Spanish Mission style buildings were constructed in California between 1769-1823, the style later emerged at the end of the 19th century.



## 1 Match the highlighted words in the text to the Italian equivalents.

ENGLISH		ITALIAN
1. tycoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. laureati
2. affordable	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. fattoria per l'allevamento degli animali
3. graduates	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. magnate
4. estate	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. vigne
5. stock farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. economicamente accessibile
6. orchards	<input type="checkbox"/>	f. proprietà terriera
7. vineyards	<input type="checkbox"/>	g. frutteti

## 2 Read the text and answer the questions.

1. Why did Leland Stanford decide to build a university?
2. When did the university open?
3. What was the aim of the founders?
4. What is the location of the campus?
5. Who conceived the general concept of the project?
6. What is the architectural style of the university?
7. What does Stanford University include today?
8. Where do the students come from?
9. Why is Stanford University famous in the field of sports?
10. What does the Breyer Center in Florence focus on?



The Stanford family