

Lecture: The Emergence of Life Science Clusters in the U.S.: The importance of public research in technology ecosystems

Date: TBD

Place: Club Room at WU's Library and Learning Center

Speaker: Prof. Walter W. Powell, Professor of Education (and) Sociology, Organizational Behavior, Management Science and Engineering, Public Policy, and Communication at Stanford University, USA

Abstract

Much social science resembles a play that begins with the second act, taking both plot and narrative as an accomplished fact. Scant research asks how a play comes to be performed, or why this particular story is being staged instead of some other one. A notable challenge, then, is to explain the genesis of organizations and institutions – why do specific elements combine to make distinctive configurations possible only at particular moments in history and in certain places? In this talk, I answer this question in the context of the development and growth of life science clusters in the United States, underscoring the critical importance of relations among universities, nonprofit research institutes and start-up firms.

About the speaker

Woody Powell is Jacks Family Professor of Education, and Professor of Sociology, Organizational Behavior, Management Science and Engineering, and Communication at Stanford University, and a faculty fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. He was a founding co-director of the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society in 2006, and currently shares the Marc and Laura Andreessen Co-Directorship with Rob Reich and Robb Willer. At PACS, he heads the Civic Life of Cities Lab, which studies civil society organizations in the SF Bay Area, Seattle, Shenzhen, Sydney, Taipei, and Vienna. Woody was the 2018 -19 recipient of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching in the School of Humanities and Sciences. Prior to moving to Stanford in 1999, he taught at Yale, MIT, and the University of Arizona. He has received honorary degrees from Uppsala University, Copenhagen Business School, and Aalto University, and is a foreign member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Science. He served as an external faculty member of the Santa Fe Institute from 2001-13, and continues his involvement with SFI today. His most recent books include *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets*, with John F. Padgett (Princeton University Press) and *The Nonprofit Sector*, co-edited with Patricia Bromley (forthcoming from Stanford University Press). His research interests focus on the processes through which ideas and practices are transferred across organizations, and the role of networks in facilitating or hindering innovation.