Revs extends Stanford car research to humanities, social sciences

By Tyler Brown

Faculty unveiled the Revs Program at Stanford Thursday in a delecting symposium examining the culture of the automobile.

According to Revs director Cliff Beiker, the program aims "to tap into the potential for enormous amounts of research and opportunities for students to learn that just hasn’t been tapped into, not just by Stanford, but by no university." (http://www.stanforddaily.com/2011/04/08/revs-expands-stanford-car-research-to-humanities-social-sciences/)

"There’s nothing that’s been less studied relative to its importance than the automobiles," Beiker said. "There’s little academic work on the automobile and its role in society is so large. The potential is so great that it really was out of sight that no one was doing this." (http://www.stanforddaily.com/2011/04/08/revs-expands-stanford-car-research-to-humanities-social-sciences/)

Revs is in some ways similar to the industry-sponsored Center for Automotive Research at Stanford (CARS), a two-year-old program that brings together researchers, but seeks a broader approach to studying cars than just through design work.

"You’ve got us all interested in being supported by individuals more so than industry because it’s not looking just at the future, but at the present and the past," he added.

Not only is Silicon Valley becoming the Detroit of the 21st century, Silicon Valley is now home to more than 100 classic cars and vintage replacement parts for many of them. Collier also owns related memorabilia and artifacts, including newspaper clippings, magazine covers, design plans and hundreds of thousands of photos. Collier also owns twins from 20th century American literature, Collier and the collector "Eddie Hall" Bentley

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"There really isn’t an opportunity available [besides this] to go out and study all of these amazing artifacts, these amazing people, these amazing archives might become a substantial part of the program as well. And what it comes to research, Beiker says, "there’s that’s another important change that we’ll be tracking and looking at." (http://www.stanforddaily.com/2011/04/08/revs-expands-stanford-car-research-to-humanities-social-sciences/) (© 2011, Stanford Daily)