



Persis S. Drell

Dean of the School of Engineering

James and Anna Marie Spilker Professor and Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and Physics

Persis S. Drell is the Frederick Emmons Terman Dean of the Stanford School of Engineering, the James and Anna Marie Spilker Professor in the School of Engineering and a professor of Materials Science and Engineering and Physics at Stanford University.

Drell, who assumed the post of dean in September 2014, has been on the faculty at Stanford since 2002 and was director of the 1,600-employee U.S. Department of Energy SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory from 2007 to 2012.

During Drell's tenure as director, SLAC transitioned from being a laboratory dedicated primarily to research in high-energy physics to one that is now seen as a leader in a number of scientific disciplines. In 2010, the laboratory began operations of the Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS), the world's most powerful X-ray free electron laser, which is revolutionizing study of the atomic and molecular world as it performs basic scientific research and drives applications in energy and environmental sciences, drug development and materials engineering.

After stepping down as director, she returned to the Stanford faculty, focusing her research on technology development for free electron lasers and particle astrophysics.

Drell received her bachelor's degree in mathematics and physics from Wellesley College in 1977 and earned her doctorate in atomic physics from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1983. She then switched to high-energy experimental physics and worked as a postdoctoral scientist with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

She joined the faculty of the Physics Department at Cornell University in 1988. In 2002, Drell accepted a position as professor and director of research at SLAC and worked on the construction of the Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope. She became deputy director of the lab in 2005 and was named director two years later.

Drell is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is a fellow of the American Physical Society. She has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Presidential Young Investigator Award.

Persis is married to SLAC accelerator physicist, Jim Welch and they have three children. Persis' father is Stanford professor emeritus, Sidney Drell.

There is a Wellesley tradition in Persis' family. Graduates include her mother, '48, her sister, '87, and her daughter, '16.