

The Administration of Vulnerability, Part 2

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In an Open Forum column from January, 2016, I detailed the pincer movement of outsourcing and marginalizing staff members and hiring increasing numbers of non-tenure track faculty, a pincer movement that was creating a more vulnerable and more easily exploitable employee structure at the university. I did not say anything about the growth of the administration itself, which is another way in which it can gather power and create vulnerability among those at the university it administers. It is time to address that issue.

First, the numbers on upper administration, so that we can see its expansion. In 2011 there were 34 upper administrators (dean-level and above); in 2016 there were 46. The collective salary of those 34 administrators in 2011 was \$6,294,420. The collective salary in 2016 was \$9,353,522. Using constant 2016 dollars for the collective salary, we have \$6,771,540 for 2011. So we have a (2016) dollar increase of \$2,581,982, or 38% increase in collective salary.

However, some will ask, hasn't the number of faculty increased as well? It has, but the expansion of full-time faculty hasn't kept pace with either student or administrative expansion. In 2011 there were 1051 full-time faculty, including temporary ones. In 2016 there were 1169. This should not be surprising, since the student body has also increased. The total student body in 2011 numbered 19,914, and in 2016 it numbered 23,406.

So, although the total number of full-time faculty has increased, the student-to-full-time faculty ratio has also slightly increased, from 18.9 students per faculty to 20.0, a roughly 5% increase.

In contrast, the student-to-upper administrator ratio has not increased but rather decreased. It has gone from 585.7 students-to-upper administrator to 508.8, a 13 percent decrease. Moreover, students are paying significantly more for our upper administrators. In 2011 the collective salary per student ratio was \$340 (once again, in 2016 dollars), while in 2016 it was \$400, a 17.6 percent increase.

While there are slightly more students to full-time faculty, then, there are significantly fewer students per upper administrator, and students are paying significantly more for their administrators.

We are now in 2017, and, as you know, other upper level administrative positions have been advertised. What we are seeing here is at once an expansion and centralization of administrative power. Faculty governance has never been robustly recognized at Clemson. However, those very words are becoming increasingly empty. Empty words that, to be sure, will continue to be employed by those who are undermining them, but without becoming any less empty for all that.

If we are to hold on to any sort of real faculty governance, it will be through struggle and organizing as well as solidarity with those other communities that find themselves even further marginalized at this university: lower-paid staff, African Americans, international students, the LGBTQ community, and so on. Otherwise, we can expect to become little more than cogs in the administrative machine, diligent members of a corporation rather than participants in a university.