

**FREE SPEECH
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Take care of what you have . . .

Over the last year or so, the Clemson administration has touted a move to the "offense"; correctly realizing issues of faculty and staff reward and retention. This basic concept has long been part of the operation model of the athletic department, but has never been vocalized relative to the heart and soul of the University operations. The concept of "divest to reinvest" was proposed as the mechanism to do so, based on the recognition that state funds would not be a practical way to address reward issues.

To the contrary, what we have seen over the last few months is more about growth of the family, than taking care of it. The announcement of numbers of early retirements across the campus was trumpeted with the comment that this would allow hiring of new faculty. The construction of the new architecture and biological sciences facilities is said to provide opportunities for growth into these areas, with coincident hiring of new faculty. Discussion is rampant toward potential increases in the student population, and what would be needed to address such increases; i.e. space, faculty, and staff.

Contrast these trends with the recent 2.2% across-the-board average raises for each business unit at the University. To what end would 2.2% in any unit be expected to reward and retain faculty and staff? Sure, 2.2% (on average) looks good relative to four years of 0%, but which presently-employed person feels rewarded. Who wouldn't entertain a better offer versus 2.2% and no in-stone plan for the future. Be mindful that University policy is that all new faculty hires must be done at or above national averages. There is no statement or plan to get those currently here, and successful, to any sort of national norms. Very simply, the Clemson administration took a pass in setting the recent raise policy. Are all business units equally

excellent, or poor? Are all payrolls equally above, or below, their national peers? Yes something had to be done, but where is the plan that lets any member of the Clemson faculty or staff know that there are just-rewards in the offing for previous years of excellent performance?

To be sure, everyone presently employed at Clemson is here by choice, and is free to leave. But if this is truly a “Clemson family”, why are we not taking care of our own? What about doing the right thing? On the other hand, the *market forces* card is constantly employed in the hiring and retention of administrators, coaches, and some faculty. The offensive coordinator of the football team just had his salary tripled, to keep him off the market after only one year of success! Mind you, I do not begrudge the coach in this case, my beef is with an administration that does not appear to view competitive compensation as the way you treat high quality staff and faculty. This is not just a business decision either, it’s just the right thing to do. People presently employed at Clemson do enjoy a number of subtle benefits, but even in paradise you still get wet if the roof leaks. The right thing to do is to reinforce and protect a solid base. Before we expand the student population and payroll, let’s prove that we can take care of what we have lest we lose it (as has been seen across campus). Ultimately, if we are to lock arms and march forward to the future Clemson University, should not we all feel that our own worth is validated in substance, and not just word.

Times have been tight, to little fault of the CU administration. Plans are being made for all forms of growth and hiring in the future. Students come and go, but what is the plan for reward and retention of the people that have made this University what it is today? What are the goals and what is the plan?