

## Notes from a Commuting Faculty Member

Affordable housing for faculty and staff in the Clemson area should be a high priority for the university. No one should be priced out of living near their job. However, recent remarks made by Faculty Senate leadership in [The Greenville News](#) (Simon, 2019) are tone-deaf to the lives led by faculty and staff who do not live within Clemson city limits.

When I started at the university in the 1990's, one of my new colleagues asked me where I lived. I told her the name of my non-Clemson community. Oh no, she said – then you won't be able to go out with us. And apparently, she meant it; I was never included in a single social plan she made with our Clemson-dwelling colleagues. Over the past 22 years, I've encountered this attitude many times and in many different forms. I've also engaged in many different service roles, both formal and informal (including Faculty Senate). I have returned to campus or even just stayed on campus for multiple evening service events. My commitment to the University is unwavering. From what I've seen of my commuting colleagues, most of us share this commitment with most of you who live in Clemson.

But my commitment to the larger community around Clemson? As long as locals express dismay that I don't actually live there, I'm certainly not going to intrude in a group that doesn't think I belong to it.

Yet I feel very much a part of Greenville, another city I've never lived in. Why? It's not because Greenville is closer: it's about the same distance from my home to most places in Greenville and in Clemson. But yet I'm part of several recreational groups that meet in Greenville. I attend recreational and cultural events in Greenville. Most importantly to me, not a single Greenville person I've interacted with seems put off by the fact that I don't actually live in Greenville. In fact, if I want to participate in whatever it is, I am welcomed regardless of my address.

Why don't I live in Clemson? It doesn't matter. But if you want to know why faculty who don't live in Clemson might not participate as much in local or after-hours events, you might try asking us rather than just assuming that we won't be there and never will. You want more collegial relations with your commuter faculty colleagues? Stop judging our commitment to the university based on our addresses.

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## Reference:

Simon, M. R. (2019, March 20, 2019). Here's why fewer Clemson University faculty members are living in Clemson. *The Greenville News*. Retrieved from [https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2019/03/20/fewer-clemson-university-faculty-live-clemson-sc/3138969002/?fbclid=IwAR0tq5-cLVXrcFjVqPi5RGXpX6\\_GlsqF1LBpqAcDbNrxgLBqBWyTT6pwQ1E](https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2019/03/20/fewer-clemson-university-faculty-live-clemson-sc/3138969002/?fbclid=IwAR0tq5-cLVXrcFjVqPi5RGXpX6_GlsqF1LBpqAcDbNrxgLBqBWyTT6pwQ1E)