

## **The Administration of Vulnerability**

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Here are some numbers you should know:

1. Since 2006, 26% (700) of Clemson staff have been outsourced, moved to time-limited positions, or had their duties streamlined or eliminated.
2. Since 2005, the percentage of tenure or tenure track faculty among full-time instructional faculty has declined from 81.4% to 77.4%. This decline has been steady (in 2010, for instance, the ratio was 80.8%), reflecting an increased hiring of non-tenure track instructional faculty, mostly lecturers. And perhaps more predictive for future trends, the number of full-time non-tenured but tenure track instructional faculty has risen 14% during the past ten years from 236 to 270, while the number of full-time non-tenure track instructional faculty has risen 41% from 181 to 256.

What we see here is a pincer movement, one whose effect (and perhaps its goal) is to create a more vulnerable working force at Clemson. On the one side, to be sure, the staff has always been vulnerable. Staff members do not have the protection of tenure and are subject to various abuses from their supervisors and sometimes from callous faculty members. However, this vulnerability is increased when they no longer have even the advantages accorded to full-time staff members. For instance, non-FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff members were ineligible for the \$800 bonus given to staff members this year. They also suffer from other inequities, such as ineligibility for retiree group insurance benefits (health, dental, vision) unless they served the last five years consecutively in a full-time, permanent position, forfeiture of accumulated sick leave, and a lack of grievance rights.

On the other side, non-tenure track faculty, who make up an increasing percentage of instructional faculty, have the same vulnerabilities as many staff members. In addition to exploitative pay, they can be released at the end of the academic year and so are likely to be fearful of criticizing any aspect of university functioning. Many of us who are tenured have had lecturers in our offices confiding difficulties they face which they do not feel they can publicly address.

You will already recognize this as the increasing corporatization of the university structure. One effect of all this, among many, is the chilling of campus speech. We are all familiar with the administrative encomiums to open discussion and dialogue. However, when the university is being restructured to create more vulnerability among its faculty and staff, free expression withers and those encomiums ring hollow.

We can be quite sure the administration will not leap to address this issue. The more vulnerable the staff and faculty are, the more powerful the administration is. Does the recent history of Clemson (or any history of any institution) evidence a willingness of those in power to cede it to those over whom their power is exercised?

There is only one group that can confront this issue: the tenured faculty. If we allow the trend to continue, we will be participating in the demise of the university as we know it. Instead, we must pull together, stand alongside the most vulnerable people in our community, and demand that the administration create a more empowering employment structure. If you are interested in doing so, please email me at [mayt@clemson.edu](mailto:mayt@clemson.edu). If there is enough interest, I will pull together a strategy meeting where we can begin to organize a return of Clemson to the full mission and structure of a university.