

REMARKS

GENERAL FACULTY MEETING
DECEMBER 18, 2013
BROOKS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, THEATRE

David Blakesley, Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees - “Where did *that* semester go?

It made a whoosh not unlike a Nolan Ryan fastball. And then, like Kayser Soze, poof, it was gone. I always feel this way at the end of a fall semester, as I'm sure many of you do. What happened?

What do we faculty members do, anyway? Well, I took some assessment. For me, there were over 200 letters of recommendations, 300,000 words of student work to respond to, 6,000 emails requiring a response, too many committee meetings to mention, and many balls still in the air—new partnership deals, research projects, and a lot more. Imagine the numbers you'd get when you multiply this across more than 1,100 full-time faculty members. We're talking mega-millions.

One of my goals as Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees is to convey to the Trustees that the job of a faculty member is much more complex than many may realize. Of course, we take great pride in our teaching, which is a hallmark for Clemson. The foundation of great teaching is research and the knowledge it produces, a form of intellectual and symbolic capital without which good teaching is impossible. Sure, many people may perform well enough in the classroom, but great teachers distill the best that can be known, they recognize and appreciate that the simple is often more complicated than it might initially appear, and they understand that there are hierarchies of knowledge or even *good* practices and *best* practices. To borrow from the well-known lines of Daniel Patrick Moynihan: we are entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts. The research and creative work that we do gives us credibility and authority—in the classroom and beyond. It gives Clemson the intellectual capital without which there can be little to say.

It is a bittersweet moment for us today as we say goodbye (but not “so long”) to our great president, Jim Barker, and welcome a new president to the Clemson family. It is a bittersweet moment for me personally as well. I'm a proud father of 17-year-old twins, Meagan and Matt, both of whom are in the midst of the college application process (what fun that can be!). Both will be leaving for college soon, another whoosh and poof—for my wife and I (and probably for my savings account).

And with that, I'm gone, too. May you all have a safe and happy holiday!”