

Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees
October 2017 Report
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September 19, 2017

Summary:

In this quarter's report, I want to return to a more focused look on *recruitment, retention, and reputation* for the faculty. Many of these thoughts stem from comments and discussion with Board Members over the past few months. I have also received additional feedback from colleagues and have summarized these discussions below.

During this reporting period, I was again reminded that the best resource we have at Clemson is our people. Nonetheless, this is a resource that could be better utilized, better supported, and better appreciated. Providing the correct constructs to achieve this ensures the long-term success of the University and our students. Making the longstanding investment in people, builds a sustained culture for achievement.

Recruitment and Retention:

Part of having outstanding people at Clemson is making a compelling argument that one should make their career at Clemson. From the faculty prospective, this is a complex proposition with many competing factors. Most notably is the work environment that they are considering joining. As a scholar, will they have the resources available to create new knowledge and train students effectively in their field? Will they be rewarded and encouraged for their efforts? Is there infrastructure to support the needs of their family? Will the University provide support in times of crisis so that mission centric activities are not ignored?

Scholastic resources: As we have discussed in previous meetings there is a correlation between research space and research expenditures. If Clemson is to grow this number, we need to create new spaces. In the past decade, athletics and student affairs have benefited from an investment in infrastructure, while our core academic needs have been underserved. In addition, faculty workload needs to be reassessed so that time and effort can be better allocated. For example, the student to instructional faculty ratio was 14.3 in 2008; in 2016, it was 18.5. This represents nearly a 30% increase of responsibilities and duties in teaching alone. In addition, there has been significant changes in the support structure for faculty activities.

These need for these resources are especially important when one remembers academic scholarship is a student centric endeavor. The product are the projects, presentations, posters, papers, and patents with student working closely with a faculty member. Herein, the Clemson faculty enable this "Clemson Experience". It is the student-faculty bond that makes Clemson special. This is something we have historically done extremely well and need to preserve going forward.

Reward and encouragement: Recent discussions have alluded to a two-tier compensation for faculty. While such a move might have short-term financial benefits, there are long-term morale and productivity costs. A recent Wall Street Journal article by Dr. Peter Cappelli of the Wharton School of Business had some interesting comments on the cognitive bias of binning employees

(<https://tinyurl.com/WSJ-ABCplayer>). In short, by having a predetermined evaluation of one's potential for performance does a poor job accounting for the actual performance, and does not allow employees to reach their true potential.

Family Policy: The need for a child-care center is something I had in my remarks since I first took this position. I want to applaud VP Brett Dalton for his leadership and communication with the faculty about this important issue. I am hopeful in coming months we might see some movement in this area.

Distractions: The first three weeks of this semester have been a series of external storms (in some cases literally). Each of these events have challenged those at the University to unify behind our shared beliefs in *Integrity, Honesty, and Respect*. Nonetheless, each of these events have required faculty and staff time to be pulled away from our main missions. I encourage those in leadership to develop better response strategies to minimize external factors on the day to day operation of the University.

Reputation:

In the past few months, discussions of our reputation as an academic institution has been renewed. In a sense, this is a question of the Clemson Brand and how we are perceived from the outside. More specifically, do we have the scholarly productivity of a world class institution?

In thinking about this matter in greater detail, I started going through what contributing factors might influence an external view of our academic reputation and the Clemson brand as a whole. One approach might be the key indicators used by the Association of American Universities (AAU). For those in higher education, these are great indicators of academic productivity. These include federal research expenditures, members of national academies, faculty awards, citations of scholarly work, doctoral education, and number post-docs. In each of these areas I see excellent opportunities for growth.

Research Expenditures. Research funding is inherently competitive between institutions. Each school is constantly making a case to the many program managers and review panels that their ideas are better and they have the research infrastructure to carry out the project. While there is large variance in funding by field, research expenditures are an important metric in comparing comprehensive universities. According to the National Science Foundation (NSF) Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges/Higher Education Research and Development Survey (HERD), Clemson ranks 114 nationally with a total \$171,215,000 in expenditures in 2015, while removing medical school expenditures we are ranked 81. Increasing the amount of external funding is key measure in the *ClemsonForward* plan. Nonetheless, the required resources to achieve this goal will require a long-term commitment by the University.

Members of National Academies. The National Academies represents the “in clubs” for scholars. Just becoming a member is huge acknowledgement of the contribution of that individual. Moreover, it speaks one's place in the greater network of the scientific community. Clemson currently has no members of the National Academy of Science or the National Academy of Medicine. We do have two affiliated members of the National Academy of Engineering, but one is a retired faculty member and the other is a visiting faculty. Here is an area that will take

significant work to identify individuals that have the potential for membership and develop a strategy to have them nominated.

Faculty Awards. Here is an area where we could utilize the accomplishments of the Clemson faculty to expand our brand of academic reputation. The AAU guidelines utilize the National Research Council's list of faculty receiving "highly prestigious awards that included: research/scholarship awards, teaching awards, prestigious fellowships or memberships in honorary societies." With the help of Associate Provost Ellen Granberg, individuals at Clemson who have reached these high honors have been identified. Through the use of software, we can also identify faculty who match the profile for some of these awards, and encourage and mentor the faculty so that we have a larger profile on world stage. With a focused effort, we could make a major shift in how we are perceived as an institution, while also improving the retention of the very best at Clemson.

Citation of Scholarly Work: An additional way an institution's reputation can be quantified is the number of times others reference their work. Using the Thomson Reuters, InCites dataset, over the past 5 years, Clemson produced on average about 1,000 papers per year. Based on the number citations of our scholarly work, we are in the mid-30 percentile of national institutions. For our academic reputation to grow, we need to grow the amount of meaningful scholarly output per faculty member. This is best accomplished through the expansion of undergraduates involved in research, graduate education, and number of post-doctoral appointees.

Doctoral Education and Post-Doctoral Appointees: The number of PhD graduates and post-docs is an excellent indicator of the scholastic health of an institution. In a sense, it captures the amount of research focused education taking place. In past year, Clemson conferred 233 doctoral degrees and mentored 77 post-docs (making Clemson 241th and 134th nationally ranked, respectively). Moreover, compared to our Carnegie R1 peers we are very low in the number of PhD graduates in the arts and humanities. This is obviously an area where great improvements can be made. Methods for improving these metrics including greater endowments for graduate education, enhanced graduate recruitment, and increased research expenditures from federal and industrial agencies.

Other areas of build Clemson's academic brand: Finally, I want to use this opportunity recognize the work of Clinton Colmenares in the office of Media Relations and Clemson Broadcast Productions. This team has put together quite the portfolio of videos that highlights the incredible work being done here on campus. Moreover, I especially like how he is telling the student side to scholarship. Great examples of these "Clemson Moments" can be found Research and Innovation Playlist. <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClemsonUniversity/playlists>. This is an excellent example of the many ways we can portray the University as a "high seminary of learning".