Faculty Senate Consideration: April 2021

Topic: Recognizing the outstanding service of Clemson University staff members during COVID-19.

Whereas, COVID-19 is pandemic of global proportions that has impacted every aspect of our University; and

Whereas, the efforts to mitigate against COVID-19 has called upon our healthcare staff, facilities staff, human resources staff, financial staff, student services staff, communications staff, technical staff, administrative staff, media relations staff, cleaning and maintenance staff, housing staff, dining staff, transportation staff, public safety, and all others to extend their roles and sometimes take on new and unfamiliar roles; and

Whereas, we have called on our staff to help keep the University running during the pandemic, sometimes by tearing down the boundaries between home and work and sometimes by working amidst the active pandemic on our campuses; and

Whereas, our staff have answered these calls and carried out their critical missions, to help support the health, safety, and welfare of our campus community and to minimize the disruption that COVID-19 has caused to our daily lives; and

Whereas, some staff have put themselves in harm’s way to keep the university running for our students, our faculty, fellow staff members, and our state; and

Whereas, all of our staff have continued to meet their existing job-related responsibilities while overcoming staggering new COVID-19 challenges; and

Whereas, our student services staff and academic affairs staff among others have maintained student engagement and enthusiasm to the greatest extent possible through advising, virtual graduations, and social media posts; and have gone out of their way to follow up on students who were struggling with isolation or had to make a switch due to COVID-19; and
Whereas, our dining staff have ensured that our on-campus students had healthy food, safe places to eat, and provided sustenance for those who were sick or in quarantine; and

Whereas, our communications staff have provided the tools and remote network access that enabled us to continue to meet our obligations to our students and research partners, and even stay as connected as possible amidst physical isolation; and

Whereas, our housing and transportation staff have made sure that our students had safe places to live on campus with a means to get to and from campus, and other vital services while socially distanced; as well as deliver supplies and food to those who contracted COVID-19 or were otherwise quarantined; and

Whereas, maintenance, custodial, and facilities staff have played a critical role in minimizing the spread of COVID-19, particularly in high-risk places that must remain open, including our classrooms, labs, testing locations and other critical facilities; and

Whereas, healthcare staff have maintained access to care and resources necessary for students to receive attention when dealing with impacts of COVID-19; and

Whereas, Clemson faculty and staff have developed a comprehensive campus and community wide testing program that safeguards the health of the broader University community; and

Whereas, technical staff have maintained access to research facilities and laboratory space to the greatest extent possible during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, our financial staff have helped us navigate unprecedented budget cuts while continuing operations with additional COVID-19 expenses; and

Whereas, departmental administrative staff have continued to support critical departmental functions, while working remotely in most cases; and

Whereas, staff who are telecommuting for personal reasons and/or to minimize the spread of COVID-19 have creatively worked to ensure minimal interruptions of work and can continue to do so without a return to work order; and

Whereas, Libraries staff have kept Cooper and our other facilities open, retrieving library materials, answering questions and providing safe study spaces for students; and
Whereas, our Clemson University staff have continued to perform critical and essential missions during the COVID–19 pandemic; it is therefore

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate of Clemson University:

(1) recognizes and praises the contributions of our staff during the COVID–19 pandemic;

(2) appreciates that our staff have gone out of their way to serve our university during these unprecedented times; and

(3) acknowledges the enormous stress that these contributions have placed on our staff;

(4) commends the staff who have had to work amidst the pandemic and have risked their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of their loved ones, to continue their work during the COVID–19 pandemic;

(5) urges the Clemson University administration to evaluate workspaces for safety as staff return to on-site work, make reasonable accommodations to ensure the safety of all, and continue to allow telecommuting options for staff when warranted by personal circumstances and/or when work efficiency will not be impacted; and

(6) recognizes the immense debt of gratitude that we owe our staff for their selfless service during the COVID–19 pandemic, and thanks them.

Krista Oldham
Faculty Senate Secretary