Report of the Immediate Past President of Faculty Senate: Provost Helms introduced Jeremy King, the 2012-13 Faculty Senate President. He provided the year-end report and introduced the 2013-14 Senate President, Kelly Smith.

“Thank you Provost Helms.

Good morning.

The Senate year began with a cloud of uncertainty with the move of the Senate Office to the main floor of Cooper Library, and the hiring of a new coordinator to replace the irreplaceable Cathy Sturkie, who retired after serving the Senate so ably for many years. We welcome Ms. Monica Patterson, with whom many of you have become at least electronically acquainted. Monica has managed the Senate and Grievance Board with great ability and passion as she pulls us into the digital age.

The Senate year ended similarly, with elements of uncertainty introduced by the approved establishment of a stand-alone Education unit to be headed by a new dean, and the impending loss of President Barker and Provost Helms. Human choices about whom to follow seem to be unconscious, though not capricious, and drawn to certain leadership features: wisdom, passion, vision, generosity, courage, and bringing out the best in others. We were fortunate to have a President and Provost with these characteristics, and the Senate thanks the President and Provost—not just for their service as a perfunctory part of a vocation, but for making the University a deep and personal part of their lives for so long.

At this time, I’d like to introduce the new Faculty Senate President who has the task of navigating us through the fog of uncertainty: Kelly Smith. Kelly ably served the Senate last year, and is a passionate advocate for shared leadership and transparency. I expect Kelly will work hard to ensure that our education faculty have a strong voice in shaping their own future, and that he will represent well faculty interests on the search committee for the next University President. I strongly urge faculty to e-mail Kelly (facsen@clemson.edu) the desired qualities of a new University President, and the names of potential candidates.

As always, the Senate made a few Faculty Manual Changes. The one with the broadest interest to faculty is probably the change designed by the Policy Committee in the Form 1,2,3 process, which will now be linked to FAS and made electronic.

Efforts of other Senate committees are often less visible, but no less important. The call in yesterday’s Inside Clemson to provide comments to the NSF’s request for information in reducing administrative burdens in sponsored research—that was the Senate Research Committee in action. The ability in iROAR to restrict student registration in the absence of advising was fought for and won by the Senate Scholastic Policies Committee. Both the Welfare and Research Committees worked with HR to ensure standardized, and in some cases enhanced, benefits for special faculty ranks. The Finance Committee continued to press the critical need for improved and better maintained campus infrastructure, and reports that faculty should expect to see tens of millions of dollars devoted to such efforts each year for at least the next 7 years.
The Senate leadership advocated for a rational and transparent process to ensure the performance-based market-driven compensation adjustments we saw earlier this year, and for the adjustment hires that many of your Departments are in the process of making.

The Senate continues to wrestle with the complex and emotional issue of special faculty ranks. One of the most exciting Senate initiatives this year was the establishment of Senate Delegates: two lecturers or senior lecturers from each College who will serve on Senate committees and be non-voting participants in the Senate and all its functions.

There remains much to be accomplished by the Senate next year. Based on their examination of the COACHE Survey Results this year, I expect the Welfare Committee to soon provide the administration with proposals concerning parental leave, internal sabbatical programs, and administrative internship programs.

I’ve encouraged the Research Committee to carefully scrutinize proposed changes to the University’s Intellectual Property Committee and to not relent in ongoing efforts to reopen the University’s Intellectual Property policy to introduce sorely needed common sense, fairness, self-consistency, and late 20th century innovations such as online courses and Creative Commons Licensing.

Senate President Smith has asked former Senator Bill Pennington and I to continue work on a University Professor initiative, recommended by the Huron consultant report, to ensure that outstanding senior faculty are recognized, rewarded, and retained in a distinctive Clemson fashion.

I urge the new Senate to realize that mixed feelings regarding strategic hires, and the urgent necessity of reconsidering diverse models of faculty in an austere fiscal climate are not disparate issues. New faculty hires in key areas can certainly push initiatives past a tipping point if supported by infrastructure and start-up funds. But so can reinvestment in current faculty via internal scholarship funds, graduate students, post-docs, and new models of Research Professors that can be placed in off-campus RECs, advise Ph.D. students, and be partially backstopped with E&G funds.

Finally, I urge the new Senate to consider cross-campus intellectual diversity in this reinvestment. Once faculty have lost a commitment to and knowledge of what gives life its meaning, how we should live and how we should die, historical and theoretical paradigms, process and methodology, and a few thousand years of history, thought, and content, the success of strategic hires will lose its patina—because we will have lost everything that really matters in the human experience.

I believe the Faculty Senate remains the best insurance policy to protect against such an outcome. I hope you will consider serving your colleagues and the University on the Senate in the near future.

Have a safe and rejuvenating summer!”