September 2012
Senate President’s Report

New Faculty Welcome
With the semester well underway, let me extend a warm welcome to all new faculty and offer my best wishes that you are settling in and finding Clemson to be a productive and rewarding academic home. I hope some of you might, some day in the future, consider service in the Faculty Senate. We invite you to join us the second Tuesday of each month @2:30 at the Madren Center; have some coffee and a biscuit and watch the world's second-most-deliberative body in action!

It's a pleasure to thank Marvin Carmichael, from the University President's Office, for his continuing efforts to recognize and welcome new faculty. This fall, new faculty members were invited to visit the University President's Office to receive free tickets to the Ball State football game. New faculty are also able to attend a Brook's Center event of their choice subject to space availability. Thanks to Athletic Director Terry Don Phillips and Brooks Center Director Mickey Harder for their support of these initiatives.

Issue Updates: The Magnificent Seven
As described in the May newsletter, last spring President-Elect Kelly Smith and I joined a small faculty-administrator group outlining 7 issues on which we wanted to work in a collaborative fashion: revisiting the mission statement, competitive faculty compensation, faculty hiring, faculty coordination with/representation on the Administrative Council, campus leadership issues, Grievance Board

The Grievance Board
The Grievance Board is a process available to professors and lecturers who want to file a formal complaint. The Grievance Board handles two types of grievance categories. Category I consists of complaints regarding termination and/or discrimination. Category II are complaints concerning improper procedures and actions. Grievance counselors are also available to help any faculty member or administrator seeking assistance in understanding grievance procedures and/or organizing petitions and responses.

The Grievance Board strives to facilitate all cases with confidentiality, respect, dignity and care, while ensuring fairness and expediency. All complaints will be heard before a peer faculty panel for review. In addition to representing faculty, the Grievance Board also represents the best interest of the university and will, therefore, take all viewpoints and evidence submitted by the named parties into their deliberation before reaching a decision, which will then be considered by the provost or president. That said, the Grievance Board should be the last option faculty choose. Faculty should attempt to seek other services, via the University Ombudsman for Faculty and Students to resolve their issues first. The University Ombudsman operates as an independent, informal, neutral, and confidential resource (free of charge) to assist in exploring alternative dispute resolution options. More information can be found at http://www.clemson.edu/administration/ombudsman/.

Because most grievances stem from miscommunication or

Continues on page 2
The Grievance Board
Continues from page 1

a misunderstanding of the Faculty Manual, faculty, lecturers, and administrators can help themselves and the Grievance Board by becoming familiar with their roles, responsibilities and rights as understood within their department/units and colleges included in college and departmental bylaws. More information can be found within the Faculty Manual, available on the Faculty Senate website at: http://www.clemson.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/manuals.html.

Jane Lindle, a faculty member since 2004, chairs the Grievance Board. She is a Distinguished Eugene T. Moore Professor of Educational Leadership. She is certified to teach in three states and works as a consultant for state agencies in relation to education accountability among other specialization areas. She is also involved with the NDPC Fellows, a program working to reduce drop out rates.

The Grievance Board also includes Julie Northcutt, Food Science; Rachel Moore, History; Bob Horton, Teacher Education; John Meriwether, Astronomy and Physics; Lydia Schleifer, Accountancy and Finance; Claudio Cantalupo.

TPR Process Reminder

As the TPR process gears up across campus, the Senate urges TPR committees and Chairs to hold to its consistent repeated interpretation of the Faculty Manual that: a) prohibits Chair involvement in the formal deliberations of a TPR committee and b) requires separate recommendations that c) are not sequential and are instead shared with each other once complete, but d) does not prevent chairs and TPR committees from serving as resources of information for each other upon request. For more on the reasoning behind this, see the President's Column below. The two relevant paragraphs of Part IV, Section D of the Faculty Manual are provided below: The department chair shall ensure that any faculty member eligible for renewal of appointment, tenure, or promotion is given an opportunity to be reviewed. The appropriate committee reviews each case in accordance with departmental procedures and policies, and renders a written recommendation. The department chair does not participate in the deliberations of the committee, but may, upon request of the committee, serve as a resource for the committee. In addition, the committee may, upon request of the chair, serve as a resource for the chair. The chair and the committee issue separate recommendations, free from coercion and interference from any parties. The department chair and the committee shall provide each other with a copy of their recommendations once both have been completed. The chair shall ensure that the affected faculty member is promptly informed in writing as to the results of and rationale for both recommendations, and the faculty member may elect to include a letter of response in the materials forwarded to the dean. In cases of promotion or early tenure consideration, the candidate may withdraw from further consideration at this point.

The chair shall forward to the dean both recommendations, the supporting evaluations, and the candidate's dossier. In cases in which there is a discrepancy in the rationale for retention, tenure, or promotion between a faculty member's peer committee and that of the department chair, that administrator shall make the dean aware of the discrepancy. The dean will meet with the chair and with the peer committee to discuss reasons for the discrepancy. A “Request for Personnel Action” form shall be attached to provide a record of the review at all administrative levels.

Senate Presidents Report
Continues from page 1

enhancing opportunities in Greenville, and the faculty’s role in University development. In moving forward with these, we have only worked on those issues where significant accomplishments could be made—no more getting the faculty to invest hope, time, and sweat only to see these investments return nothing. Where do we stand? Continues on page 3
First, as noted last month, the Board should consider a revised draft of the mission statement in October. Second, President Barker and your Chair will have updated you regarding performance-based compensation tied to market benchmarks. For many of you, the results should be seen in the last October paycheck. I’m sure the process, which had significant faculty input, was not perfect, but I hope you agree that it’s a step in the right direction. If you have suggestions for refinements in the future, e-mail me (jking2@clemson.edu), Kelly Smith (kcs@clemson.edu), and, your faculty representative to the Board of Trustees, David Blakesley (dblakes@clemson.edu). Kelly and David will continue to serve on President Barker’s Compensation Advisory Group during the 2013/2014 academic year. Let us know what worked well and what did not.

Just as exciting to me are possible future developments concerning compensation. There are several recommendations beyond market salary in the Huron report that I believe faculty will welcome. The Senate (via its Policy, Finance, and Welfare committees) will get to work on these this year, even though they might not be completed on the schedule of the academic year. I believe the Senate Welfare Committee and the University administration are both committed to exploring benefits in developing a bigger, more robust picture of compensation. Faculty should also be pleased that the University is taking steps to systemically and robustly monitor compensation versus the market going forward into the future. I’m hopeful that Chairs and others will soon have ready access to desktop tools, internal data, and market data to do this on-demand in quasi-real time. The sleep-deprived Director of Human Resources Michelle Piekutowski and our new Director of Recruitment and Compensation Rumame Samuels are providing excellent leadership on these issues, and I thank them for their tireless efforts.

One of the best-kept non-secrets on campus seems to be the faculty market salary database available at http://workgroups.clemson.edu/A_A_5690_OIR/market_salary/ Have a look and see how you think this might compare to data for a focused realistic peer group for your discipline. Thanks to Associate Provost Aziz for calling this tool to my attention.

Third, the group continues to discuss faculty hiring needs. While the Department Activity Summaries available on the OIR website are a few years out of date, my review of them indicates wide variance in student-faculty ratios across campus and that there are several Departments with unusually critical needs for investments of faculty. Newer data should yield a more reliable and timely picture of these needs. Should analysis of such data lead to approval of new hires, I know many of you will be concerned that October is already upon us. However, I know you would also rise to meet the challenge and opportunity of any such hires.

In the Hollywood film, only three of the Magnificent Seven survived. I’m hopeful that, come April or May, we can better that ratio with the seven issues noted above. The Hollywood film, only three of the Magnificent Seven survived. I’m hopeful that, come April or May, we can better that ratio with the seven issues noted above.

Faculty Leadership: Lab Safety and Environmental Regulations

Given the arrival of new students and the return of continuing students to faculty research and teaching labs (in their varied forms) across campus, I want to strongly encourage my colleagues to work deliberately and exhaustively to ensure that all laboratory participants are intimately familiar with safety and environmental regulations and protocols.

Neglect or ignorance of these regulations can lead to personal injury, environmental injury, possible significant fines and penalties for the University, and jeopardize the funding and research of other faculty and students. Strong leadership and vigilance on the part of faculty are absolute necessities for creating a laboratory culture in compliance with applicable regulations in order to avoid such outcomes.

Press coverage of significant oddities and violations at other universities suggests that students are often cognizant of safety violations (and research misconduct) and become placed in awkward positions as a result. Let’s work to avoid placing Clemson students in such a position. Some of you might not have been aware that
our EHS office was reorganized in May. Tracy Arwood still oversees Research Safety, while Environmental Safety now reports to Bob Wells in University Facilities. The Research Safety and Environmental Safety groups should have separate websites in Spring 2013. In the meantime, if you have questions or need assistance in addressing concerns, please refer to the listing of areas, responsibility, and contacts at the EHS URL: http://ehs.clemson.edu/contact/index.html

Senate President’s Column

Embracing the Faculty Manual’s TPR Process and the Culture of Integrity: Hobbes’ Rule of Law, Chesterton’s Fence, Swinney’s Ticket and Baves’ Theorem

Last month I promised to share with you a recent National Bureau of Economic Research report on the economic returns of college sports, and ask you to consider a cost-benefit analysis of those returns in light of growing medical concerns associated with the FB! enterprise. I’m going to defer that discussion of athletics and amygdalas until next month. With tenure-promotion-reappointment season already upon us, it is apparent that someone should speak up in defense of the wisdom of the Faculty Manual (I suppose I should eat my own cooking and call this the FM!) in dealing with the roles of both department chairs and TPR committees in the TPR process, and in defense of adhering to the Faculty Manual in this regard.

Some faculty and Chairs dislike the current separate recommendations by Chairs and TPR committees as stipulated by the FM!. There are several arguments I (and the Senate) have heard, and I would respond as follows:

~There is the argument that this prevents exchange of information between Chairs and TPR committees. This is not so. The FM! explicitly allows chairs and TPR committees to serve as information resources to one another (p. 19).

~There is the argument that two separate recommendations that conflict with each other increases the chances that some bit of factually incorrect information will slip into one of the letters and propagate upwards and become the linchpin in a Dean or Provost recommendation. Again, the FM! accommodates this concern by requiring a meeting between the Chair, TPR committee, and Dean in cases of discrepant recommendations (p. 19). By the time of this required meeting, TPR committees and chairs would have shared their final recommendations with each other and can catch any factual errors and discuss them together with the Dean.

~There is the argument that differences in recommendations should be smoothed or homogenized away—apparently, as I understand it, to make nice in the Department and to keep up the appearance of Department accord in the eyes of one’s Dean.

This last argument is an encounter with Chesterton's fence. That such an argument would actually be made is, I believe, exactly why the Senate has stood by this part of the FM! Tearing down this fence in the FM! without understanding why it is there leads to grave risk: the dreaded information cascade that, if unrecognized and not understood, has brought woe to many well-intended and rational people throughout history. My opinion is that such a desire for homogenization is antithetical to the academy, and antithetical to what one might hope we are sharing with our students regarding a large canon of thought, the impact of rhetoric on making economic decisions, and the science behind information cascades. Why some faculty would disregard this body of knowledge, thinking themselves unconstrained by it or somehow above it, confuses me. Thus, I make the three best arguments I can as to why we should follow the FM! in this regard.

It's the right thing to do. This is an argument that straddles the ethical and the moral—a return to Hobbes’ arguments in The Leviathan concerning the rule of law and its concomitant benefits. Hobbes understood the need for some entity to enforce a beneficial social contract that accommodated the needs of people for both assurance and freedom, and thus combat the “nasty” and
“brutish” endemic elements of human nature. The leviathan to Hobbes, who was surrounded by hordes of radicals, roundheads, and various religious sects, was certainly the Monarchy. Whether the Faculty Senate should play the role of the heavy—the Clemson leviathan—is an interesting question that I believe should be answered with a “No”. Instead, the Senate is that crucial crucible in which the alchemy of policy, politics, mission, and judgment takes place. More important here is the role of the FM!, one product of this crucible, as Hobbes’ social contract. I believe that the FM! is a robust social contract in that it does provide assurances, via accommodation of those reasonable concerns (an expression and idea later developed by Hamilton, as noted in July’s column) noted above, while also providing liberty for variance of opinion and judgment. Those disagreeing ought to enter the crucible and do better. This is all to say I think it worth (re)considering Hobbes’ admonition “...that a man be willing....to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself”. As cosmopolitan colleagues, I’m sure you witness in the national and international daily news the suffering and lack of prosperity and happiness for those living without a social contract and without some form of leviathan. Indeed, the recent passionate Financial Times editorial by George Soros (http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7f88e0a07ce11e28354401444ebd0.html#axzz27nSL2C00) identifies the absence of rule of law as a grave threat to the U.N.’s Millennium Development Goals. The same thing happens when we obviate the social contract – the FM! - here at Clemson. We feel the consequences, but perhaps don’t understand from whence they spring. Here’s a list of hypothetical phenomena: paying research faculty with funds not from grants or foundation monies; giving people inappropriate faculty titles and conflicting corresponding position classifications; administrators making neither yes nor no personnel decisions when yes or no personnel decisions are required by established policy. All of these circumstances can result from emotionally viable decisions by people of good will and intentions. Alas, they also run afoul of the FM! and are not intellectually viable because they are ultimately destructive and misallocate scarce resources.

What harm results from such breaches of our social contract? The above examples can divert monies from their intended purposes and destinations in the academic core. They present needless obstacles to developing and efficiently implementing compensation- and hiring-related policy. They skew information on funds and personnel that are used to make data-driven decisions. They diminish confidence in leadership. These are big prices to pay for short-term peace of mind.

Moreover, the misallocation of time and treasure needed to investigate, address, and rectify such obviations represent time and treasure that can not be devoted to the core academic enterprise that is the reason we are all here. So why investigate, address, and rectify at all? Because the above obviations, as well as merely the perception of ethical raggedness (e.g., perceptions formed from press reports about the aftermath of well-known staff member’s traffic stops) erode the culture of integrity. Faculty, administrators, and staff should not expect students to demonstrate the true leadership manifested in choosing integrity and ethical decisions at critical junctures if they themselves are not willing or not able to do the same.

This is worth repeating: deliberate FM! obviations and perceptions (correct or not) of ethical lapses erode the culture of integrity on campus. It is just exactly this culture that Rutgers' Donald McCabe, who studies student cheating, identifies as of central importance in deterring student cheating. You can download an interesting 2001 review of McCabe's at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15327019EB1103_2

This is also the point of the recent Chronicle article on the importance of culture over honor codes in combating academic integrity violations (http://chronicle.com/article/Honor-Codes-Work-Where-Honesty/134542/). Writes McCabe: “It is not the mere existence of an honor code that is important in deterring college cheating...a truly effective code must be well-implemented and strongly embedded in the student culture...a strong culture of
academic integrity can exist at an institution that has no formal code but communicates the importance the community places on integrity in other ways.” I believe the best form of communication in this context is one’s actions.

As a group of diligent, passionate, and well-meaning undergraduate students seeks to develop support for a voluntary Honor Creed on campus, many questions have been raised. Alas, the one question I have not heard is the most important one: are we sure we have a sufficiently robust pre-existing culture of integrity in which to place such a Creed? If we do not, then the Creed itself will not only be meaningless, it will be a misallocation of time and treasure by many. If we do not, then how much time and treasure are we spending investigating, addressing, and rectifying academic integrity and student conduct violations that could be best mitigated by first enhancing our culture?

Such a discussions are difficult, but, as all of us working in the academy should realize, the most meaningful and needed conversations usually are. However, for those who truly desire to be good citizens in a learned community genuinely concerned about the culture of integrity, that’s not an excuse for reneging on our obligation to have them—especially when asked. Once attired in a shroud of silence, the erosion of a culture of integrity occurs most efficiently and vigorously.

I hope faculty (and others) concerned about academic integrity and student conduct would think carefully about the culture of integrity as a dominant influence on such phenomena, and (re)consider the importance of adhering to the FM!—even as they might criticize or seek to change it.

Information Cascades

Shiller’s point notwithstanding, the human experiments of Asch and Deutsch & Gerard some 60 years ago have long-established that the dangerous effects of herd mentality predominantly arise from information effects and not social factors. This phenomenon, where individuals make decisions based on the information signals of other deciders rather than based on their own signals or interpretations, is known as an information cascade. Both experiment and mathematical theory indicate the conditions conducive to such cascades:

- When deciding parties don’t have private interpretations of data or can’t draw on private judgment or expertise
- When decisions are reached in a sequential process
- When decisions are yes/no
- When decisions require subtle or nuanced interpretations
- When many criteria or data are important to the decision
- When deciders do not have the time and resources to be intimately and personally familiar with all pieces of information

These criteria provide a pretty good description of a sequential committee-to-chair TPR process envisioned or desired by some. The information cascade can be
mathematically understood as a consequence of Bayes’ Theorem, where rational actors will adjust the prior probability based on signals provided by others. The independent recommendations by TPR committee and chair asked for by the FM! provide a means to short-circuit those signals. It also mitigates social reputational/authority factors stemming from the chair-faculty relationship. The dual information and social status dampening is important, and not unlike the wikipedia entry examples of those used to check information cascades in other contexts: military courts voting in inverse order of rank to alleviate the influence of authority on estimates of prior probabilities, and the bans in some European countries on polling close to election day.

That’s my 3-pronged best defense of the wisdom of the element of separate chair/committee recommendations in the FM!. As always, I welcome your feedback and thoughts to the contrary (jking2@clemson.edu).

Jeremy King is solely responsible for the views expressed in The President’s Column. They neither reflect the views of nor are endorsed by the Faculty Senate or Clemson University.