Faculty Senate Report to Board of Trustees
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It’s been an eventful year, so I took some time over the holiday break to assess where Clemson now stands from the faculty perspective. I am delighted to say that the state of Clemson is strong, but I do want to point out some concerns as to how we still might, in Chairman Wilkins’ immortal words, “screw this up.”

First on the list has to be the recent hiring of Clemson’s 15th president, Jim Clements. President Clements has only been here a short time, but I have heard only positive feedback from faculty, which is definitely noteworthy. As I often say, part of my job is to be skeptical of the administration, but unless I very much miss my guess, Jim is going to do a great job and take Clemson to new heights. Of course, perhaps it would be kinder to Jim if I just said, “I think he might be ok”. As President Obama can attest, high expectations are hard to fulfill...

Our next major goal is to hire a permanent provost, a position that in many ways is far more important to the daily running of the university, and the lives of the faculty in particular, than the president. We want a provost who is a true national leader, and the quality of the recent presidential pool suggests that this is quite possible. Here the worry is about the search: in a nutshell, if Clemson wants to be in league with the big boys of higher education, then we need to conduct searches like the big boys. The provost is the chief academic officer of the university and as such it is critical that she be hired in a process which is completely transparent and unquestionably faculty driven.

Along these same lines, I have just submitted a postmortem of the recently completed presidential search to Chairman Wilkins and the members of the search committee. In it, I reflect on what we did well and where we can still improve the process. I also make a proposal for a procedure to be used in future presidential searches which will help us make the kind of world class hires Clemson needs to take us to the next level. I urge you all to read it carefully and discuss amongst yourselves.

The University administration will be changing in other ways as well, with new deans coming on board and potential changes to our college structure. The most pressing concern at the moment is the creation of the new education “unit” from what used to be the college of HEHD. I say “unit” with scare quotes because it is not entirely clear just what this entity is. This needs to be clarified – in particular, if this unit is going to be a degree granting entity with a dean, then it needs to be formally designated as a college. Failure to do so will create a number of problems with the faculty constitution and faculty manual. We also have to get closure on exactly what will become of the other elements of the old college of HEHD as soon as possible, since long-term uncertainty is corrosive.
There are a number of other projects the faculty senate is engaged with that I wanted to briefly make you aware of. We are working with several other groups on campus to investigate the possibility of elevating the culture of scholarship on campus by creating a *scholar’s walk* like they have at the University of Minnesota and other places. The idea is to spotlight Clemson faculty with truly exceptional achievements in a public place so as to inspire others. The senate is also working with the Provost’s office to develop best practices with respect to faculty collegiality. The trick is to prevent problems without compromising academic freedom. I expect we will soon be presented with a formal proposal from the tobacco free task force to consider, about which you will have heard from others at this meeting. And finally, a group of senators plans to get together this summer and rewrite the faculty manual cover to cover. The manual has been tweaked and fiddled with for decades without a systematic editorial revision and, as a result, there are many places where it is unclear or even inconsistent. Our goal is not so much to make substantive revisions as to better organize what we already have in ways that make sense to those who have to use it. However, if you have suggestions for needed changes, now would be an excellent time to make them – we are certainly open to input from all sources.

Thank You and Go Tigers!