“Good afternoon

I am your faculty representative to the Board of Trustees. This position is part of the shared governance of the University. “Shared governance requires transparency, communication and accountability at all levels of decision-making within the University.” I am a firm believer of open communications as a way to improve how we operate.

In this focus of in shared governance, today, I want to ask each of you to join me and drink the purple Kool-Aid.

Now, let me take moment to explain what I mean by this, and no my name is not Jim Jones

I think most of us in the audience are familiar when someone in the larger community says, “I think he or she is drinking the orange Kool-Aid.”

I want to offer an alternative. What I am suggesting that we as a faculty recommit to practicing in earnest the activities that we are true specialist: these are academics and scholarship. Not only is purple part of our school colors. And if I am honest the color I am talking about is RGB code “522D80 - Regalia.”

That is an excellent word for us to rally behind… Regalia. The word itself means leadership. As academics we each motivated to be the very best in our respective fields. This is much more than scoring that big grant or getting that big manuscript accepted. The faculty is what builds the reputation of the University. I want each our faculty to be the smartest person in the room and free to communicate his or her ideas in an accepting environment. I am especially excited about a number of leadership training and development projects that will be rolled out in the coming months. We have a great opportunity to improve ourselves to be true leaders on and off campus.

Part of leadership is also helping those around you. I want to congratulate our award winners today and those who are finalizing their tenure and promotion. Your success is a great example to all of us. I want to challenge you and all those in audience today to share this success with your colleagues. Take the lessons that you have learned and help those who may not had the experiences that you have had. It is through mentorship and communication that we can advance Clemson. In short, we need to work better together.

Finally, effective scholarship, leadership, and mentoring cannot occur without a supportive environment. As faculty we need all the help we can get to serve our mission. I am cautiously optimistic about the Clemson Forward plan that is in its early stages of implementation. Nonetheless, the work environment here at Clemson has many hurdles to overcome. We need to create an environment where all members feel both safe and included. We need support services that promote a healthy work environment. This includes support for families and making Clemson place where one wants to spend time to expand their social network. We need salary and benefits that allow us to recruit and retain on the international stage. We need to have the support structure to be effective scholars. I want to remind everyone that scholarship is an inherently student centric process. Our students would be better served with facilities that support
their own scholarly pursuits. Part of the Clemson Forward plan is to turn the attention to our core mission. When I walk through the various buildings on campus I see space that is need of an upgrade. The time to improve this space is now. Over the coming years we have a great opportunity to build the campus environment that will take us to the next level.

I want to thank you all for the opportunity to speak today. As your representative, I am I always seeking input on improving Clemson. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any question.

So…..Come drink the Purple Kool-Aid.
Be a fantastic scholar,
be leader,
be a mentor,
be a good neighbor,
be awesome.
Thanks.”