

Clemson professor criticizes salaries, cost increases at school

By John Staed

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CLEMSON UNIVERSITY — Clemson University's president has sent a letter to faculty and staff explaining how the university has grown in administration and administrative salaries.

James Barker said in his letter that there was "some incomplete and misleading information" circulated about large raises for administrators and growth of administrative personnel.

The letter, which was sent recently, is meant to clarify information that was sent to the news media and others and included lists of salaries and percentage increases for various employees. The Independent-Mail received a copy of the information compiled by John C. Bednar, professor emeritus at Clemson.

Bednar, in an interview Wednesday, said that while Clemson University in the past three years has not had "any great increase in student body or faculty, the size of the budget in the president's office has doubled from 2006 to 2008."

Budgets also have risen in the provost's office by 35 percent in the same time period, he said, and increased in the university advancement office.

The office of the president's personnel costs were \$1 million in 2006, \$1.4 million in 2007, and \$2.2 million in 2008, according to Bednar. Personnel costs in the university advancement office rose from \$4.2 million in 2006 to \$7.1 million in 2008, according to Bednar's figures. Personnel costs in the provost's office rose from \$6.2 million in 2006 \$8.9 million in 2008, Bednar said.

That comes as Clemson has furloughed employees, asked retired professors to teach for free and asked for contributions for the One Clemson Furlough Relief Fund to help those who are at the lower end of the pay scale deal with the furloughs, Bednar said.

Average faculty raises for the past three years were 1 percent in 2008 and 3 percent in 2006 and 2007, Bednar said. He claimed Barker received a 21.5 percent raise in 2006, a 4.9 percent raise in 2007. No 2008 raise was listed for Barker.

Barker, in his letter, said Clemson "pumped significant resources into hiring faculty and increasing faculty salaries so we could compete with the best universities in the nation for the best faculty." The investment was part of an effort to move the university into the top 20 in the rankings compiled by U.S. News & World Report.

Between 2001 and 2008, 148 new faculty positions were added, 134 of them instructional faculty, Barker wrote. He said, however, that the number of those administrators at the associate dean level and above increased from to 59 in 2008 from 46 in 2001. Of those, 13 were new positions and the majority were internal promotions, he wrote.

Administrative salaries are at 102 percent of peer institutions for 2000 to 2007, a decline from 104 percent, he wrote.

“Most of the perceived growth in administration is actually the result of reorganization,” Barker wrote.

Two attorney positions were moved to the Office of General Counsel, and the access and equity office now reports to the chief diversity officer, who all now report to Barker.

“Only one new position was created — the chief diversity officer,” Barker wrote.

“Where there has been growth in academic administration, it is primarily because we added new programs and services such as the Academic Success Center,” which helps students keep LIFE scholarships and has improved graduation rates, he wrote. Meeting federal and accreditation needs also requires additional staff, he wrote.

“Our investments in improving faculty and administrative compensation were made during years when there was increased state funding and double-digit returns on our endowment,” Barker wrote.

And, Clemson’s administrative overhead costs are below peer institutions in North Carolina and Georgia, he wrote.

Bednar said the explanations given in the letter are very weak.

“The fact remains that top administrators at Clemson University are making a whole lot of money,” he said.

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