



Posted on Fri, Jan. 25, 2008

Former Clemson adviser sues over tuition increases, firing

The Associated Press

Clemson University fired a former adviser to its board of trustees after he raised questions over the school's tuition increases, according to a lawsuit filed by the man earlier this month.

In his suit, Chalmers Eugene Troutman claims Clemson has raised tuition in the past eight years to overstuff a rainy day fund that now totals \$80 million.

The school disputes all his claims, university spokeswoman Cathy Sams said

Troutman said he was asked to resign and later was unfairly fired after questioning the trustees, according to the suit.

Troutman is seeking unspecified actual and punitive damages and wants to be rehired in his same position as board secretary and adviser to university President James Barker, one of the defendants in the suit.

Troutman was hired in 2005 and "during his two years and two months of service, Troutman never received any reprimand, warning, criticism, adverse performance rating, or other indication he was not performing his duties as required and expected," according to the suit filed earlier this month in Richland County.

Sams said Troutman was fired after an unanimous vote by trustees, citing "management and work style" issues.

Clemson does have a surplus of \$79 million, but it was built by keeping jobs vacant or extra money brought in by multiyear contracts, Sams said.

The school needed to increase tuition over the past several years because of budget cuts, inflation and efforts to improve the quality of its undergraduate program, Sams said.

Tuition at Clemson University rose 5 percent last fall to \$4,935 for in-state undergraduate students and 10 percent to \$10,900 for out-of-state students. But other state colleges and universities also saw increases.

The University of South Carolina raised tuition by about 7 percent in fall 2007. In-state undergraduates paid \$8,346, while out-of-state tuition increased to \$20,632.

In-state freshman at The Citadel paid \$569 more a semester this fall, while out-of-state first-year cadets paid about \$1,187 more.

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