

Burnt Orange

By [fitsnews](#) • on March 16, 2008



ALLEGATIONS OF FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT ROCK CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Officials at [Clemson University](#) hid nearly \$140 million from state lawmakers at the same time they were begging the state for more money and nearly tripling tuition costs for parents, a [lawsuit filed against the school alleges](#).

Additionally,Â Clemson more than doubled the salary of its top lobbyist from \$80,000 to \$180,000 a year (among other massive pay raises) at the same time it was allegedly hiding information from its board members and forcing out at least two employees who tried to correct the fiscal abuses.

The explosive lawsuit, filed in federal court by former Clemson official [Gene Troutman](#), has been dismissed by the University, which denied any wrongdoing and predictably labeled Troutman as a “disgruntled former employee.” From *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* reporter Bob Dalton’s [brilliant investigative report](#):

Chalmers Eugene “Gene” Troutman III of Greenville, who served as executive secretary to the board of trustees for more than two years, says in the suit that between 2000 and 2007 the university increased in-state tuition from \$3,590 to \$9,900 while amassing \$137 million in unrestricted cash. Troutman also claims university officials intentionally kept the state Legislature from learning about the fund’s growth for fear the lawmakers would reduce the school’s budget appropriation.

Unbelievably, House Speaker [Bobby Harrell](#) rushed to defend Clemson’s questionable spending practices, telling the *Herald-Journal* that “this is a fired employee who is saying these things because he’s angry about losing his job. Under these kinds of circumstances, I don’t put much credence into something like this.”

Of course not, Mr. Speaker. Although I have fun explaining your position to the thousands of parents forced to pay Clemson’s exorbitant tuition increases. We’re not sure who advised Harrell - a rumored 2010 gubernatorial candidate - to suck up to Clemson so gratuitously, but his reaction to this breaking scandal could very well be the first major political miscalculation of his career. Well, aside from the [orgy of new spending](#) he’s inflicted on South Carolina taxpayers over the past three years.

IRONIC UPDATE - Get this ... according to the *Anderson Independent-Mail*, Clemson is [hosting a symposium](#) later this month on white collar crime. Should be one informative session, people!

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