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Barker answers critic's charges

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Clemson University President James Barker responded to sharp criticism from a former professor Tuesday, while praising the faculty and offering good news about this year's budget and encouragement about the 2009-10 budget.

Professor emeritus John C. Bednar, the first speaker Tuesday during a Faculty Senate meeting, leveled a variety of concerns regarding the current administration, including claims of nepotism and that Barker is drawing compensation from a company that also does business with the university.

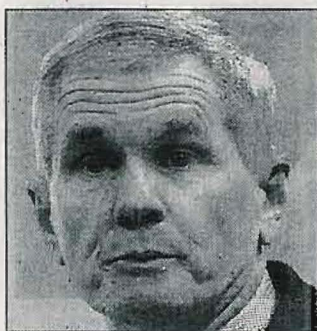
Barker denied any wrongdoing. He said he does have family members who work for the school, but that their hiring and employment falls within state regulations regarding nepotism.

He also said that while he serves on the board of The Shaw Group, that company has no connection to Shaw Industries, a flooring-products company that has had business dealings with the university.

Bednar also called for Barker and Provost Dori Helms to leave the school.



Bednar



Barker

Bednar said he wanted the Faculty Senate to pass a "motion of no confidence" for Barker and Helms, "and I further suggest that it would be appropriate, under the circumstances, for these top two administrators to resign immediately, and for Clemson University to put its house in order."

In his response, Barker said, "We're not immune to some unease and some uncertainty created by the current budget crisis that we're in. A few of us are tapping into that uncertainty to create fear and anger."

Barker also said he has no plans to resign but rather that he and his staff are looking ahead to the 2009-10 budget.

He said although he anticipates budget cuts for next year, there would be no additional job losses or furlough days this year beyond what have already been announced.

He told faculty members and the large audience that cuts in next year's budget will be "disproportionately" weighted toward administrative and support areas, which could see budget reductions of up to 15 percent, while the school's classes and centers and institutions could see reductions of up to 5 percent.

Barker told faculty members that Clemson is a solid and respected institution, despite budget concerns.

"We do not have a quality crisis at Clemson," he said. "We have a budget crisis. But that's all that it is."