

Comment Summaries

Faculty provided over 250 pages of typed comments, which are presented in their entirety in the appendix to this document. Below, we provide a brief synopsis of the most commonly-voiced concerns and suggestions. Any summary of this type is necessarily an imperfect reflection of the range and nuance of faculty opinion; therefore, we encourage readers to peruse the full comment set in detail. It contains candid opinions and concrete, thoughtful suggestions for change.

Facilities, Funding and Support

We received approximately 150 comments on the subject of Facilities, Funding and Support. The most frequently cited issues were the following:

- **GADs.** One third of the comments in this section were related to the GAD process, which faculty believe is seriously undermining graduate recruitment and training across the university. They find the accounting process confusing and question how funds are collected and distributed. In addition, they believe that funding agencies are unwilling to pay the high cost of GADs as currently structured. By making the cost of graduate students prohibitively high, the GAD policy encourages researchers to employ post docs rather than train graduate students. Respondents suggested that we investigate how graduate tuition is handled more effectively at other universities.
- **Graduate student education and support.** Approximately 25 comments dealt with inadequate support for graduate students and/or a lack of emphasis on graduate training. Faculty stressed the importance of TAs, fellowships and bridge funds to recruit graduate students and to pay students when their degree timeline does not coincide with the start and end dates of large grant projects.
- **Support for research.** Over thirty respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the level of support for research at Clemson. Internal research funds are seen as inadequate, teaching loads are often perceived as too high, maintenance of labs and equipment is seen as subpar, and offices such as OSP and EHS can be difficult to work with. There is a general sense that upper-level administrators are out of touch with the reality of running a productive, top-20 research lab and that expectations for research productivity are not matched with appropriate infrastructure.
- **Classroom and Office Space.** Over thirty comments dealt with inadequate office space, classroom space, and instructional technology. The level of

dissatisfaction in these areas appears to differ across colleges. Some respondents were forced to share cramped offices with other faculty members, making it difficult to meet with students or administer make-up exams. Surrine, Lee, Daniel and Tillman Halls were singled out as being particularly poor working environments.

- Additional areas of concern included a decreasing emphasis on quality undergraduate teaching, reduced support for the university's land grant mission, and excessive focus on the Top 20 ranking.

Salary and Evaluation Issues

We received approximately 175 comments on the subject of Salary and Evaluation. The most frequently cited issues were the following:

- **Administrative raises.** Over one third of respondents were deeply troubled by the recent disparity in salary increases between faculty and administration. Many faculty called for large administrative raises to be rolled back and questioned whether the University receives value for money from its administration. A number of respondents indicated that they had no knowledge of how administrators are evaluated by the faculty they serve.
- **FAS.** More than 50 comments addressed the FAS system, which faculty find poorly-designed and difficult to use. Many respondents feel that the parallel reporting mechanisms of FAS and TPR notebooks are redundant and wasteful of faculty time.
- **Salary inequities.** Faculty salaries are perceived as inadequately keeping pace with the cost of living. Salary compression is a concern, as is the disparity in salaries across colleges and between tenure and non-tenure track faculty.
- **Rewarding teaching excellence.** Seventeen comments centered on the perception that quality teaching is not recognized or rewarded in current evaluation procedures, despite the fact that it is frequently cited as a key University mission. Over-reliance on student evaluations was questioned.
- Additional areas of concern included the 2008-09 furlough plan, excessive numbers of administrators, and concerns with the structure and implementation of promotion and tenure policies.

Offices, Administration and Faculty Governance

We received approximately 110 comments on the subject of Offices, Administration and Faculty Governance. The most frequently cited issues were the following:

- **Office of International Affairs.** Seventeen comments dealt with the Office of International Affairs, which was cited for incompetent handling of visa and study-abroad paperwork. Several respondents have ceased taking students overseas and/or recruiting international students because of poor experiences with this office. It should be noted that newly-hired staffer Peter Li was commended by one respondent for excellent service.
- **Office of Sponsored Programs.** Seventeen respondents voiced dissatisfaction with the Office of Sponsored Programs (both pre- and post-award). Grant offices were seen as creating impediments to efficient grant submission and to the development of funding relationships outside of the traditional NSF/NIH model. An exception is the CES grants staff, particularly Dianne Myers, who was repeatedly praised for her help to faculty.
- **Administration transparency and decision-making.** Twenty-seven comments dealt with a lack of transparency and trust in university decision making. Faculty indicated that their views were not solicited or valued during the administrative decision-making process. Lecturers in particular felt disenfranchised.
- Additional areas of concern included dissatisfaction with the PSA administrative structure, disagreement with the handling of the budget crisis, and the existence of multiple top-down pedagogical initiatives (CI, ePortfolio, etc.)

Department and College Issues

We received approximately 105 comments on the subject of Department and College issues. The most frequently cited issues were the following:

- **Funding for Colleges and Departments.** The most common concern was the lack of funding for individual colleges and departments; reduction in funding for Gen Ed was also seen as a significant issue. Many faculty perceive that the core missions of their departments are being compromised, while expensive off-campus initiatives are being maintained.
- Additional areas of concern included excessive focus by the Research VP on a small number of research areas, the need to recombine the PSA and CAFLS

administrative structures, and discord between the BBS faculty and the BBS dean.

General University Issues

We received approximately 100 comments on the subject of General University Issues. The most frequently cited issues were the following:

- **Library resources.** Library staff were consistently praised for their work. However, a large number of respondents (27 comments in this section) were concerned that library budget cuts would limit their ability to acquire necessary research materials. Faculty feel that library budgets should not merely be spared – they should be increased.
- **Parking.** Few faculty expressed dissatisfaction with parking fees. However, the availability of parking spaces was seen as a very serious concern, limiting the amount of time that many faculty members spend on campus and causing others to spend an inordinate fraction of their work day attempting to park. A number of faculty expressed support for a parking deck and/or the use of gates and magnetic card readers to curtail illegal student parking.
- **Daycare and tuition benefits for dependents.** Over 25 respondents stressed the need for university daycare and tuition waivers for faculty dependents. These initiatives were seen as vital to making the “Clemson Family” a reality. Spousal hiring policies and elder care were also requested.
- Additional areas of concern included the Blackboard/myCLE system (perceived as slow and difficult to use), the level of employee benefits at Clemson compared to peer institutions, and the need for stricter parking enforcement.

Faculty Senate Issues

We received approximately 65 comments on the subject of Faculty Senate Issues. The most frequently cited issues were the following:

- **Lack of Effectiveness.** The Faculty Senate is often perceived as ineffective (21 comments). Many respondents felt that the decisions of the faculty senate were not taken seriously by University administration (17 comments).
- While a number of respondents praised the activities of the Senate, an equal number were unaware of its activities or criticized its lack of response during the present budget crisis.