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## Clemson official fired

Trustees say he overstepped his bounds as board executive secretary

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Clemson University trustees on Friday fired the board's executive secretary, Gene Troutman, saying he overstepped his authority by appointing an auditor to monitor president James Barker's administration.

But Troutman, reached at his Greenville home, said he had followed all board guidelines in his effort to create needed financial oversight for the Clemson administration.

On July 11, Troutman announced the appointment of Alan Godfrey to be executive director of fiscal control and policy compliance, the auditor who would police Clemson's financial practices.

Trustee Bill Amick said, "It's clear to me that he failed to establish and maintain an effective working relationship between himself and the board of trustees, and the administration.

"It is also clear to me," Amick said, "that Mr. Troutman improperly circumvented the board policy manual, especially the policies relative to the executive and audit committees, when he announced the reorganization of the internal audit department without the prior knowledge or approval of the executive and audit committees."

Troutman disputes that.

"It was totally in order," he said. "What the board did not like was that they felt the administration did not need a watchdog.

"Clemson is in denial about many practices, about concealment of many practices that should be made public," Troutman said.

Troutman said that, for legal reasons, he could not provide details on his allegation of bad management at the state's second-largest state university.

Board chairman Bill Hendrix said in response to Troutman's accusations that he has "seen nothing at all that gives me any concern" about the university's financial practices.

"We are very proud of our financial practices," Hendrix said. He said the annual audits conducted in cooperation with the state auditor's office are "completely transparent" and are posted on the university's Website.

Hendrix said the trustees had met three times in closed meetings hoping to resolve the issue "without a formal board action, in a way that would not embarrass anyone."

"Our efforts have not been successful. In fact, they have been met with threats, and unfounded claims regarding Clemson's business practices," Hendrix said. "I recognize it may be difficult for many of you to have this discussion in a public setting. However, we have reached a point where we must take action. This action requires a vote of this board, which must be held in public session."

The trustees voted unanimously to fire Troutman, who had been employed by the board since April 2005.

Troutman has hired lawyer Joel W. Collins, a former U.S. attorney for South Carolina.

"They are damaging my name, which is totally improper," Troutman said. "The administration just did not want a watchdog. I was doing my job as set forth in the board of trustees policy manual."

The board executive secretary and the internal audit department report directly to the board of trustees, not to president Barker. The University of South Carolina and other universities maintain similar internal auditing structures.

General counsel Clay Steadman was named interim executive secretary, pending a search for a permanent replacement. Troutman did not attend the 8 a.m. meeting Friday.

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