

## **Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees Report**

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For my quarterly report to the Board of Trustees, I will focus on 1) general attitudes of the faculty, 2) faculty feedback from the recent merit informed raises, and 3) a discussion of my goal to have each board member visit the campus and meet with faculty on an individual basis during my tenure as board representative.

### **Faculty status**

As faculty representative to the Board of Trustees, my role is to provide feedback to the Board regarding the state of the faculty. With over 1,300 instructional staff, I certainly cannot give the opinions of all faculty. However, I can state based on the discussions and interactions that I have had for the last semester that the faculty are tired. Having restructured their courses for online and hybrid instruction, developed creative ways to keep research programs moving forward, and balanced increased personal needs such as in-home schooling and other family responsibilities, the faculty are tired. However, we continue to work and deliver a remarkably high level of undergraduate and graduate education. When I have spoken to Board members in person at recent Board meetings, each of you have always commented on the admiration you have for the faculty and that is certainly appreciated. Your support is needed now more than ever as we go into the Spring semester with the omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus looming. We are confident that our robust testing program will continue to be our best resource for keeping the campus and community as safe as possible. Helping to assure that testing program is supported and protected should be a high priority of the Board of Trustees and the Clemson administration.

### **Follow-up activities from the merit informed raise procedure**

Last fall, a merit informed raise process was used to determine salary increases for unclassified staff. While salary increases are certainly welcome, there have been a number of questions from the faculty regarding the overall process and rationale. I have been in frequent discussions with representatives from the Provost's office to discuss the process with the goals of:

1. informing the faculty why this process was utilized in this particular year,
2. evaluating the overall process to ensure transparency and determine if the overall process meets the goal of providing a finer resolution in the annual evaluation process to identify meritorious faculty,
3. providing documentation to the faculty describing the overall process at a similar level of detail that the tenure and promotion guidelines are provided, and
4. having the documentation and each departments merit based evaluation criteria posted on the shared governance website (<https://www.clemson.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/shared-governance/>).

With regards to goal #2 above, I chaired a team of faculty representatives who evaluated the initially proposed system for the Provost in 2017 and met with many departments to help them develop their merit informed evaluation processes during the implementation phase that followed. Thus, I am already quite familiar with how the faculty view this process. Positive engagement with the Provost's office has been critical thus far and I look forward to reporting on our progress at future Board meetings.

### **Planning for Board visits to meet with faculty**

During my time as faculty representative, I hope to bring one primary message to the board: *Investments of time, money, and resources supporting research and scholarship will help us achieve excellence in undergraduate education and research which will improve our academic reputation and help fulfill our land-grant mission.* To fully understand this, it would be helpful for the Board to meet with the faculty and see how our research and teaching programs function on a day-to-day basis. The board members I have spoken with about this idea have been very enthusiastic. In discussions with Chair Wilkerson, it seems the most efficient way to manage these visits will be to find time away from the Board meetings when Board members may be on campus for committee meetings or other activities. In the coming months, I will be reaching out to the committee chairs to discuss dates and begin to coordinate these activities. A few example activities to consider are listed below and I'll be happy to coordinate any other activity you may be interested in.

1. Attend a faculty member's research group meeting
2. Observe a research-based class such as a Creative Inquiry class or a capstone design course
3. Tour one of our research user facilities such as the Electron Microscope Lab or the Light Imaging Facility with a faculty member who has active ongoing research in the facility.
4. Attend a M.S. or Ph.D. student defense, where the student is making the final presentation of their thesis or dissertation research
5. Observe a proposal development meeting where the faculty are developing the core ideas that will go into a research proposal
6. Visit or tour one of our many field/testbed based research facilities with the lead faculty member.

I hope that you will be enthusiastically engaged in these visits. I guarantee that your presence will make a lasting impression on the faculty, and it will give you a greater insight into the day-to-day life of the faculty.