

Australian guests impressed with Clemson, university

BY GREG OLIVER
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International Town-Gown Association Executive Director Kim Griffo, second from left, shows Michael Hefferan and Pamela Wardner, of University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia, a display at the Madren Center.

CLEMSON — Clemson and Clemson University have received numerous awards throughout the U.S. for being tops in town-gown relations. Now, their partnership is drawing interest from Down Under.

Professor Michael Hefferan, pro vice-chancellor and professor, property and development, and Pamela Wardner, teaching and research fellow property and development for the University of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia, visited Clemson last week to meet with city and university officials.

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CLEMSON: 'University's links with its roots is tremendous'

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Hefferan said he wants to include Clemson and Clemson University in a book of which he is one of the principal authors.

"We've got an international study going on about how universities work with their communities, and Clemson and Clemson University have been recognized for doing that," Hefferan said.

"While a lot of universities say they work together, Clemson and Clemson University do it very well."

During a tour of the Madren Center, conducted by International Town-Gown Association Executive Director Kim Griffo, Hefferan and Wardner said they want to use Clemson as

one of eight examples around the world where cities and universities "do it well."

In the introduction of its synopsis and outline for the upcoming book, "Out of the Ivory Tower," Hefferan and fellow professor Robert Greenwood say all 8,500 universities globally have basic philosophies and functions dating back some 600 years — the pursuit of knowledge through research and exploration; the transfer of that knowledge through teaching and learning and engagement with various stakeholders; and the ability to stand independently, and through reputation, rationality and an evidence base, to address problems and promote a range of

values and aspirations of that community.

"I think Clemson University's links with its roots is tremendous," Hefferan said. "It's here for a purpose and it hasn't fundamentally changed since its foundation in 1889. The university is about the three platforms of education — resource, engagement and service — and we're here because we think they have a very fascinating and good type of service."

The pair said Clemson and Clemson University will be joined in the book by another U.S. university — the University of Colorado at Boulder — and abroad by Australia, Canada, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Finland.

Hefferan and Wardner said the book is not just about a university looking unto itself, but its importance to people outside of the institution.

"It's looking out — from the university's point of view and from the communities as far as how the universities operate," Wardner said.

In addition to its high academic emphasis, one thing that especially impressed Wardner was Clemson University's ability to market itself.

"You know you're coming into Clemson and entering the zone (due to the Tiger paws painted on the highway)," she said.

Griffo said she is pleased the visitors from Down Under recognize the importance that Clemson and Clem-

son University place on town-gown relations.

"I just think their willingness to include the city and university in a book is a huge compliment and confirms the long tradition of town-gown relations," Griffo said. "The great part is that this is the culture of Clemson and the compliments go to everybody — from the city to the university and students. The fact that we are being included in the first book on town-gown relations is wonderful."

Griffo added that the University of the Sunshine Coast is the fastest growing university in Australia, and that university officials are working very closely with Queensland officials to build a town-gown relationship.

"They want to learn from Clemson and other institutions around the world in connecting the academic world with the real world," she said.

Not only did the Australian visitors meet with Clemson University President Jim Barker and top university officials during their first day, they met the following day with Clemson Mayor Larry Abernathy and City Administrator Rick Cotton.

A tour of the city was also provided during their stop.

Wardner said the book, expected to contain 250 to 300 pages, will be available through the ITGA bookstore www.itgaonline.com or amazon.com sometime next year.