Clemson, CU top town-gown relations for 5th year

BY GREG OLIVER
The Greenville News

CLEMSON — Clemson city and Clemson University officials have set the standard when it comes to working together, and their efforts haven't gone unnoticed.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Princeton Review has named the city and university as the number one town-gown institution in the nation. Clemson Mayor J.C. Cook and Clemson University President Jim Barker will celebrate the occasion today, walking onto the field at Death Valley with a banner displaying the achievement at the end of the first quarter of today's Clemson-Boston College football contest.

'It shows we're all doing a good job.'

J.C. Cook
Clemson mayor



Cook said the achievement is even more special as the Princeton Review's top rankings, including Best City-University relations, were voted upon by students in a survey conducted by the book.



Cook

"I know the students recognize there is a good relationship between town

SEE GOWN, PAGE A7

GOWN: 'Clemson is a great place to live,

FROM PAGE A1

and gown," Cook said. "It shows we're all doing a good job."

The Princeton Review survey asked 126,000 students at 378 top colleges to rate their schools on dozens of topics and report on their experiences at them.

The survey asks students 80 questions about their school's academics, administration, student body and themselves.



Barker

"Clemson is a great place to live, work and study and that's because we all work together to improve both the school and the city," Barker said. "We are grateful to Mayor J.C. Cook and the citizens of Clemson for their support of the university and our students. I don't think there's a better college town environment anywhere in the country."

Although the city and university have joined together to provide fire service since Clemson University's establishment in 1889, it was the efforts of The late Larry Abernathy, who served as Clemson mayor for more than 35 years, and then Clemson University President Walter Cox in 1984 who brought town-gown relations to the point they are at today.

The Joint City-University Advisory Board, founded in 1990; Clemson Area Transit, formed in 1996, which provides bus service through federal grants to the tri-county area; infrastructure improvements, that include a new sidewalk by Riggs Field; and the Team Up for Clemson Regatta, that benefits the local non-profit organizations; are just a few examples. In 2004, both the city and university founded the International Town-Gown Association whose membership has expanded to numerous cities and universities throughout the U.S.

While past town-gown conferences, normally held in June, have taken place throughout the country, the 2014 conference will be held in Clemson.



Trent

"I think the greatest thing is that we work better together," said council member Butch Trent. "When there's any problem or concern, we have a way to talk about it."

Council member Crossie Cox said the fact that Clemson University is the largest employer in Pickens County makes it imperative that its partnership continues to thrive and expand in positive ways.

"Our relations with the university have been strong for as long as I can remember and I attribute that to the willingness of both entities to make it happen," Cox said. "Our joint City-University Advisory Board consists of seven members from the city, seven from the university and two students, undergrad and grad, and our monthly agendas are usually full of pertinent information that is readily received and acted upon. We understand how important it is to keep one another abreast of the latest projects being promoted, constructed or contemplated as they pertain to the health and well-being of our two communities."

City Council member John Ducworth said hard work has gone into maintaining a relationship "that is both necessary and mutually beneficial."

"Clemson, while it is a small town, has a big name because of its association with the university," Ducworth said. "But the fact it is a small town, the lives of the university employees and students and other residents of town are very intertwined.

'Our relations with the university have been strong for as long as I can remember.'

Crossie Cox
Clemson City Council member

"The activities the university offers contribute to the quality of life for the residents and the small town atmosphere of the town contributes to the quality of life for the faculty and students."

goliver@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6687