New hires, projects top university '2020' plan

THE JOURNAL STAFF

CLEMSON — Clemson University trustees have approved a 10-year strategic plan to invest in faculty, staff, students, facilities and technology.

Most of the required funding will come from existing resources. Officials acknowledged that the plan will require eliminating positions through attrition or phasing out low-enrollment degree programs.

The plan includes new faculty, student engagement opportunities, compensation, new buildings and equipment upgrades.

Details of the plan — the Clemson 2020 Road Map — were presented to the campus earlier this semester after more than a year of planning.

Clemson President James F. Barker said the plan puts Clemson "back on offense. For the past two years, we've been playing defense during the 'Great Recession,' but it's time to move into the future.

"The plan is conservative, appropriately for these economic times, but it is also strategic, focused and aggressive. It invests in priorities that will make Clemson a stronger, more efficient and more productive university without sacrificing the characteristics that make it special," he said.



Barker

Barker said aggressive efforts to generate more revenue from research, private gifts, summer programs, and online and distance education will be undertaken to minimize the impact of program cuts.

He stressed that divestments and reallocations are not merely to offset state budget cuts. "They are necessary to fund the plan," he said. "Without divestments, there is no plan."

He contended that academic and administrative restructuring will improve academic quality, create opportunities for collaboration that lead to new degree programs and enhance student services.

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PLAN: Most funding from existing sources

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One specific goal is to give all students engagement and leadership opportunities, which Barker called "the heart and soul" of the plan.

"The 21st century economy needs graduates who are well-schooled in a discipline but also creative and entrepreneurial, who understand what it takes to start and run a business," he said. "This requires us to teach differently and give students hands-on, real problem-solving opportunities working directly with faculty and staff mentors."

The plan also calls for developing a compensation plan to work toward more market-competitive pay for faculty and staff, who have seen three years of stagnant wages and a one-time furlough.

In other business the trustees:

- Approved moving forward with plans for construction of a new 80,000-square foot indoor football practice facility that will house a full-size synthetic turf football field, a coaches tower, training room, video recording platforms, lighting and sound systems. The building will be adjacent to the football practice fields and the indoor track facility on campus and funded through athletic department revenues;
- Approved a project to improve and expand Memorial Stadium, West End Zone, Northwest Plaza with private funds. The project will provide future growth of football operations, including recruiting, support space for food service, restrooms, mechanical equipment and storage;
- Approved lease-outs for lab and office space in the Clemson University Bioengineering Translational Research facility at the Greenville Hospital System Patewood Campus to research partners and companies for economic development purposes.