

Six-figure Clubs Growing at USC, Clemson

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By Rick Brundrett - The Nerve

Last week, the Clemson University Board of Trustees gave president Jim Clements a five-year contract extension and an \$86,200 raise through the university's private fundraising arm, bringing his total annual salary to nearly \$1 million, according to media reports.

About a third of his new salary – \$318,781 – comes from the state of South Carolina. And Clements isn't the only six-figure employee at Clemson and the University of South Carolina – the state's two largest colleges.

The Nerve's review of the state salary [database](#), maintained by the S.C. Department of Administration (SCDOA), found that as of Sept. 1, a total of 2,102 USC and Clemson employees were making at least \$100,000 yearly. That represented 48.5% of the 4,330 state workers in the database with salaries of at least \$100,000.

In comparison, South Carolina's per-capita income as of last December was \$45,438, according to the state Department of Revenue.

The number of six-figure employees at USC and Clemson as of Sept. 1 totaled 1,269 and 833, respectively, up by 76 and 26, respectively, from July 2020, The Nerve's review found. As of Sept. 1, USC had a total of 6,063 employees, while Clemson had 3,926 workers, SCDOA records show.

USC head football coach Shane Beamer is the top-paid employee listed in the state salary database with an annual salary of \$1.1 million. That doesn't include other income sources; his total base salary as of January was \$2.75 million, according to a State newspaper story.

Of the 24 employees in the database with salaries of at least \$400,000, 14 work in college athletics departments – 11 at USC.

The database lists the salaries of state employees making at least \$50,000. As The Nerve previously has pointed out, the database doesn't include the salaries of 17 agencies, including the [S.C. Judicial Department](#) and state-owned utility [Santee Cooper](#).

Of the total 24,911 employees in the database earning \$50,000 or more, 6,578, or 26.4%, work at USC or Clemson, The Nerve's latest review found.

That includes Clemson head football coach Dabo Swinney, whose state salary as of Sept. 1 was \$245,000. His total compensation as of October 2020 was \$8.3 million, which included non-university income sources, according to a report from USA Today.

At USC, Harris Pastides, whose total compensation as president was more than \$1 million before he retired in 2019, returned to his former position in May following the resignation of Robert Caslen.

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Partido's annual salary as interim president was set at \$750,000, according to a story in the State newspaper; the SCDOA database lists his state pay at \$312,643.
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Clemson and the eight-campus USC system have plenty of money for well-paid employees, state budget records show. Clemson's total budget for the fiscal year that started July 1, which includes state, federal and "other" funds, is \$1.28 billion; the collective budget for the eight-campus USC system is \$1.61 billion.

"Other" funds includes such things as college tuition, fees and fines, lottery proceeds, state gasoline taxes and part of the state sales tax earmarked for K-12 education. The Nerve last month [revealed](#) that the state ended last fiscal year with at least \$5.6 billion in total other-fund surpluses.

The other fund surpluses included \$251.4 million at Clemson and \$455.4 million at USC's main Columbia campus.

Clemson, which, according to its website, has 26,406 undergraduate and graduate students, and USC, which on its website lists a total of 35,468 students at its Columbia campus, kept their tuition and required fees for full-time, in-state undergraduate students at \$15,120 and \$12,688 (Columbia campus), respectively, for the current academic year, according to the S.C. Commission on Higher Education.

Lawmakers for this fiscal year appropriated about \$6.5 million and a collective \$14.8 million to Clemson and USC's eight campuses, respectively, for "tuition mitigation," state budget records show.

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