



SUMMARY

A Review of the Clemson University Public Service Activities (PSA)



BACKGROUND

Members of the General Assembly requested the Legislative Audit Council to conduct an audit of the Clemson University Public Service Activities (PSA). The requesters were concerned about expenditures, activities as they relate to PSA's mission, duplication of effort with other entities, and executive-level staff responsibilities and compensation.

Clemson PSA, established through Clemson's status as a land-grant institution, is a network of research and outreach programs serving the citizens of South Carolina. In addition to promoting research in areas of agriculture and environmental science, PSA programs provide extension services to the public in the form of community development, leadership, and youth programs such as 4-H.

Clemson PSA receives funding from several sources, including state general funds, federal funds through grant allocations, and other funds from fees for services, sales of publications, products and programs offered, local support funds, and returns from sponsored research.

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FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

We examined funding sources for Clemson's Public Service Activities, and, in particular, the use of appropriated state funds for PSA programs. The major budgetary program areas of PSA are regulatory services, livestock-poultry health, agricultural research, and cooperative extension. Over the last three fiscal years, approximately 90% of state general funds spent on PSA's major budgetary programs have been for the agricultural research and cooperative extension programs. Between FY 07-08 and FY 10-11, total PSA funding decreased approximately 28%, from approximately \$91 million to \$66 million, with state general funds decreasing by nearly one-half — from approximately \$52 million to \$28 million.

Clemson PSA operates and funds 41 different activities including programs ranging in scope from natural resources and environmental research to community development with a residential program for pregnant teenagers.

Our review of Clemson's adherence to employee travel guidelines for the last three fiscal years found:

- Although colleges and universities are exempt from lodging limits when paying for travel from sources other than general funds, Clemson PSA could reduce expenditures by adopting the state employee travel policy on lodging limits. We found examples of lodging expenditures of \$64 and \$77 per night over the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) lodging rates, the rate allowed for state employees.
- Of the mileage reimbursement records examined, there were 4 trips where Clemson PSA employees received mileage reimbursements for driving their personal vehicles, when it would have been more cost effective to use a vehicle from the University's contracted rental fleet.

We also reviewed records of dual employment, where employees are hired to perform additional temporary, part-time employment outside of the employee's normal job duties with the same or another state agency. We found that management should ensure that dual employment requests are approved in compliance with state and University human resource policies, including specific times for employment, allowing only full-time equivalent employees to obtain dual employment, and limiting dual employment compensation to 30% of the employee's annual salary.

PROGRAMS, MISSION, AND POSSIBLE DUPLICATION

Four federal acts guide the activities of PSA's programming: the Morrill Act (1862), the Hatch Act (1887), the Smith-Lever Act (1914), and the McIntire-Stennis Act (1962). State law also gives PSA and Clemson University the authority over certain programs including livestock-poultry health (animal diagnostics lab and the meat and poultry inspection program), regulation within the plant industry (pesticide regulation), and agricultural biosecurity. We reviewed PSA programs and determined:

- Clemson PSA organizes its activities into five focus areas, which coincide with the goals of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA): Agrisystems Productivity and Profitability, Economic and Community Development, Environmental Conservation, Food Safety, Nutrition and Health, and Youth Development and Families.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION

Our full report, including comments from relevant agencies, is published on the Internet. Copies can also be obtained by contacting our office.

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SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Legislative Audit Council
Independence, Reliability, Integrity

Thomas J. Bardin, Jr.
Director

1331 Elmwood Ave., Ste. 315
Columbia, SC 29201
803.253.7612 (voice)
803.253.7639 (fax)

- Some Clemson PSA activities do not fall under the umbrella of agriculture and natural resource education, research, or regulation. We found that programs such as the Youth Learning Institute (YLI), which provides a variety of camp-based programs for youth across South Carolina, do not specifically relate to agriculture and natural resource education. These programs are authorized by the USDA and approved in a plan of work submitted by Clemson PSA annually. Less than 5% of YLI's \$8 million annual budget comes from state general funds.
- We identified programs which have a questionable relationship to Clemson PSA and are unrelated to USDA programs, including Leadership South Carolina and the Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs. Leadership South Carolina received no state funding in FY 10-11 and Clemson reports that state general funds for the Strom Thurmond Institute will be discontinued in the near future.
- Both Clemson PSA and the USDA inspect meat and poultry slaughter and processing facilities in South Carolina. Turning over the PSA program to the USDA could save \$949,672 in state general funds that could be used to fund other PSA programs.
- We reviewed the activities of seven other state agencies (the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Environmental Control, Social Services, Juvenile Justice, Natural Resources, Commerce, and the Forestry Commission) with similarities to Clemson PSA to determine if their efforts duplicate those of Clemson PSA. We found that some programs administered by Clemson PSA appear to duplicate other state agencies' programs; however, our analysis indicated that duplication did not exist in most of these programs. However, we did identify specific duplication of effort between Clemson PSA activities and the Forestry Commission regarding youth forestry education programs, as well as landowner associations. Duplication also exists between Clemson PSA and the S.C. Department of Agriculture regarding workshops to educate South Carolina growers about farmers' markets and work with community gardening.

The PSA mission encompasses a wide array of disparate programs, and is sufficiently broad to include almost any type of activity that, in general, serves the citizens of South Carolina.

EXECUTIVE-LEVEL STAFF

One of our objectives was to identify executive-level employees of the PSA, describe their responsibilities, and discuss their compensation. We identified 24 executive-level staff whose salaries ranged from approximately \$62,000 to \$243,000 annually. In our review, we found that the majority of the executive-level employees were in unclassified positions. These employees received pay raises, some significant, from FY 05-06 through FY 09-10; however, the human resource files of these employees did not include appropriate documentation justifying the amounts of raises awarded. In addition, the job performance of 19 of 20 unclassified employees had not been formally evaluated in the past five years. We also found:

- Two employees' job titles were "lecturer" even though their job duties did not include lecturing or teaching. This designation exempts them from state pay bands, allowing the University to pay these employees any salary.
- In addition to an employee's base salary, an employee may receive other types of pay, including awards, performance pay increases, supplemental pay, dual employment, and bonuses. For example, one employee received a \$1,200 bonus in 2008, in addition to his regular salary, even though University policy prohibited bonuses for unclassified employees earning over \$100,000.
- Employees appointed to positions of higher responsibility normally receive a pay increase to serve in an interim position and an additional pay increase when the assignment becomes permanent. We found that one employee received a 10% increase to serve in an interim capacity then received another 15% increase when the position became permanent.