

**Minutes from Government Relations Committee Meeting
UF Board of Trustees**

December 5, 2003

Marion Hoffmann, Associate Vice President for Government Relations, presented the Government Relations update on behalf of Vice Chair Dianna Morgan and Dr. Rick Bucciarelli who were unable to attend the committee meeting due to scheduling conflicts. Ms. Hoffmann began with an overview of the outlook for the Florida budget.

BUDGET:

The total state budget passed by the Legislature during the 2003 session totaled \$53.6 billion:

General Revenue:	\$21,260.4 M
Tobacco Trust	\$ 424.6 M
Other Federal Trust	\$16,783.6 M
Other State Trust	\$13,955.6 M
Lottery Trust	\$ 1,128.6 M

TOTAL **\$53,552.8 M**

The tobacco settlement money helped the state balance its budget in the 1990's. Now, the state is relying on non-recurring revenue items to help fill the gaps in the budget. Currently, it is estimated that there are \$1.9 billion in non-recurring dollars available for this session (this does not include the funds allocated for Scripps) that are the result of \$900 million from the federal economic stimulus package and the remainder from increased revenue estimates. It is good news that there are additional funds available; however, there are numerous pressing state needs such as funding for Medicaid, the implementation of Article V, the class size initiative and corrections issues. Furthermore, many legislators believe that non-recurring funding is not always appropriate for recurring budget items like enrollment growth. However, some legislators feel that non-recurring funds are appropriate for issues such as matching gifts and for upgrades for the National High Magnetic Lab.

The outlook for Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds for facilities has recently changed. On September 24, 2003, the estimating conference increased the forecast for PECO to \$479 million which is an increase of \$193 million from the previous forecast. This includes \$131.1 million for the State University System.

SPECIAL SESSION UPDATE

A special session of the Florida Legislature was convened October 20 – 24, 2003 by the Governor to address \$310 million of proposed funding to recruit Scripps to Florida. These funds were approved by the Florida Legislature after much discussion. We conducted grassroots outreach to our “Gator Friends” to urge them to convey to the elected officials that the Scripps initiative could be a positive development for UF.

Also, during special session, \$30.1 million of unclaimed lottery funds was approved to help pay down the backlog in Challenge Grants for Major Gifts to be distributed to universities on a pro-rata basis. Approximately, \$10.5 million of this amount will be given to UF. Additionally, in November, the Speaker of the House convened a meeting for University Board of Trustees Chairs and foundation leaders. UF Trustee Cindy O’Connell, Paul Robell, Juan Galan and Marty Fiorentino represented UF. During the meeting, the Speaker indicated his interest in paying off the backlog in Major Gifts and promised to push this issue with Senators and House Members during the 2004 session.

The Gator and Seminole Caucuses worked together during the special session trying to secure \$10 million for the National High Magnetic Laboratory. This initiative based in Tallahassee is a partnership between FSU, UF and Los Alamos. Although we were not successful in obtaining funding, the Governor committed to help the Magnetic Lab in his proposed budget. (Note- in the Governor’s budget released January 20, 2004, he is recommending \$5.4 million for the Magnetic Lab.)

NEW WORLD SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Dr. Gene Hemp, the Interim Provost for the New World School of the Arts (NWSA) provided committee members with a brief update on the meetings he has been having with legislative leadership and with members of the Miami-Dade delegation to urge their continued support for NWSA. This is a unique collaborative program between Miami-Dade County Public School, Miami-Dade College and the University of Florida. Dr. Hemp has been making a concerted effort to educate legislators about NWSA before session commences to protect its funding.

FEDERAL UPDATE

Ms. Hoffmann stated that there is a meeting scheduled in Tallahassee Monday, December 8th with Jim Pirus, the federal lobbyist for the state university system. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss upcoming legislation and to set legislative priorities. Dr. Bucciarelli and Mike Hall will be participating for UF.

GATOR DAY

Gator Day will take place in Tallahassee on Thursday, April 15, 2004. We will schedule lobbying visits for members of the Board of Trustees as we have done in previous years. We will partner with Alachua County and hold a combined BBQ luncheon in the Capitol Courtyard. UF's main event for the day will be the reception on the 22nd floor of the Capitol at 5:30 p.m. We have invited a very special Gator to be our guest. (Note – Danny Wuerffle has accepted our invitation to be our special honored guest.)

ACTION ITEMS

Chairman Fernandez urged the UF lobbying team to put together a detailed plan to lobby the governor and his staff to help produce a favorable budget for universities. (Note: Vice Chair Morgan then traveled to Tallahassee the first week of January and met with the Governor's Budget Director, Mike Hansen; Chief of Staff, Denver Stutler and Deputy Chief of Staff Alan Levine to urge support for universities and UF in the proposed budget.)

Chairman Fernandez also requested that the UF Trustees be given a grassroots plan to contact their assigned legislators to advocate for UF's legislative agenda in advance of the 2004 session. This is being developed and will be distributed to trustees in February.

Having no other business, the meeting adjourned.