

External Relations Committee Notes
November 29, 2007

The External Relations Committee was called to order by Chairman Carlos Alfonso at 12:48 p.m.

Committee members present were David Brown, Courtney Cunningham, Roland Daniels, Ryan Mosely and Cindy O'Connell.

The minutes of the September External Relations Committee meeting were approved.

The committee's discussion began with an update on the results of the special session of the Florida Legislature results. UF recurring revenues were reduced by \$22.1 million or 3.6 percent. Chairman Alfonso and Trustee Brown noted that the state has not seen revenue shortages like the one we are facing in many years.

During special session, the legislature also approved a 5 percent tuition increase effective January 2008, an automatic annual tuition increase based on the consumer price index and a 5 percent technology fee for fall 2009.

A discussion followed on the outlook for the next fiscal year, with trustees noting that the budget will be very tight. Members then reviewed a list of projects for which UF will seek funding, depending upon the availability of state funds. High priorities include increased base funding for UF as well as funding for the medical school, Florida Opportunity Scholarships and graduate student health insurance. The committee discussed a public relations campaign to communicate the success of Florida Opportunity Scholars. The committee was briefed on the proposed legislative agenda for the FY 08-09.

The committee also discussed the legislature's desire for UF to assume management control of the state owned historic buildings in St. Augustine and the need for funding to develop a master plan for the area and to renovate the buildings.

The federal update began with the report that UF received \$6.6 million in the Defense Appropriations bill, with additional earmarks pending. A committee discussion on alternative sources of private funds for UF research followed, with trustees asking that Paul Robell and Win Phillips be consulted on the potential of seeking funding from private foundations, such as the Gates Foundation. Staff was asked to research foundations and present a strategy for accessing funds from these sources at the March meeting. The committee also discussed the importance of increasing focus on Washington, DC, noting that to date, most efforts have been directed at the state legislature, not Congress.

Committee members reviewed the regular presentation on media coverage and were briefed on new Holiday Card Initiative that will save an estimated \$25,000 in printing and postage. This initiative is the first step in the print certification and consolidation program that was discussed in the September meeting. Several samples of the electronic cards were shown.

As a follow up to the last committee meeting, trustees reviewed a presentation comparing UF tuition to SEC schools and AAU peer institutions.

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The committee meeting continued with a report on two recommendations of the Campus Cost Reduction and Efficiency Committee that have been discussed in prior committee meetings. They are the consolidation of print jobs with the negotiation of contracts with preferred vendors and the conversion of many print publications to electronic distribution. Each recommendation is estimated to generate approximately \$500,000 per year.

Chairman Alfonso concluded the meeting by noting that the committee should reconvene before the next meeting in order to monitor progress on the private funding initiative.

The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.