

Meeting Notes: University Relations  
March 29, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. Chairman Cunningham, Trustees Alfonso, Brown, O'Connell and Powell were present.

Following approval of the minutes, the committee was provided an update on the 2007 legislative session. Highlights include the following:

- To date UF projects are slated to receive \$10 million from the House and the Senate. In many cases, UF projects are in one budget or the other; therefore it is unlikely that the university will receive that amount of funding when the budget is completed.
- Major Gifts funding is \$74 million in the Senate and \$22.5 million in the House.
- The Senate is considering a change in the enrollment formula that would reward universities for performance in areas such as graduation rates.
- The House and the Senate are both calling for a 5 percent tuition increase

UF and USF have partnered to seek additional funding for medical education. With the addition of new medical schools, UF believes that the state should commit to a base level of funding per medical student regardless of which university the student attends.

On the Academic Enhancement Fee, the committee was informed that the bill has passed out of the Senate Higher Education Committee. An amended version, which would reduce the amount of revenue and delay its full implementation, has passed out of the House Postsecondary Committee. Opposition from Prepaid is significant and has generated concern from legislators. We will continue to work on this issue and seek a resolution that will generate as much funding as quickly as possible in order to proceed with hiring faculty and advisors.

The prospect for PECO funding looks positive this year. The House has approved the BOG list, which provides more than \$95 million for UF.

Other Fixed Capital Outlay projects are under consideration. The House has proposed a \$20 million demonstration ethanol plant for IFAS and the Senate is considering funding for a UF facility at Burnham. However, the House does not fully fund the Courtelis Facilities Matching program.

Following the Government Relations discussion, Dr. Lonnie Ingram presented information on the status of ethanol research at UF. He detailed the availability of bioenergy feedstocks in Florida and the potential of producing more than 8 billion gallons

of ethanol per year in Florida from biomass. UF's expertise in energy along with industry and government partnerships and the state's ability to grow biomass mean that UF can make the State of Florida number one in renewable fuels from biomass.

The branding report included information on the in-state advertising campaign, plans to merchandise "UF is the Foundation for the Gator Nation" brand and progress on the new Gator Nation license plate.

The committee received a report on UF marketing's annual research survey, which was conducted in February. It shows that UF is headed in the right direction but needs to continue efforts on increasing awareness and that it should focus on research. In addition, the research showed that Floridians place a high level of importance on having a top 10 university.

The committee had a lengthy discussion on the need to make major changes in the university's communications strategy. Committee members unanimously supported moving away from print media and publications and focusing on web based communications. Chairman Cunningham suggested that the university develop a regular email communication and a website, and sell advertising to generate revenue for UF. The committee asked staff to investigate new communications strategies and report back at its June meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.