

External Relations Committee Meeting Notes

The External Relations Committee was called to order by Chairman Carlos Alfonso at 8:37 a.m.

Committee members Courtney Cunningham, Cindy O'Connell, Roland Daniels and Kevin Reilly were present.

The minutes of the September 4, 2008 meeting were approved.

The meeting began with an update on the university's grassroots effort, Gators for Higher Education. Staff members have researched and benchmarked other programs, retained a software vendor and are designing a website to be available in January.

Led by Chairman Alfonso, presentations promoting the program have been made to groups including the Alumni Association Board of Directors, the Foundation board, regional advisory committees, college advisory committees and the Government Relations Advisory Committee. The program also has been publicized in publications of the Alumni Association, which is partnering with UF government relations on the effort. Committee members discussed aspects of the website, including a connectivity feature and use of video.

A smaller group of Gators has been formed to complement the website program. Organized in seven regions, these groups will also work with legislators to communicate UF's legislative agenda.

The committee was briefed on additional government relations developments, including newly elected officials, state revenue shortfalls and our legislative agenda. That agenda includes passage of the Governor's tuition increase proposal, College of Medicine funding, PECO funding and the continuation of the Major Gifts program. Committee members suggested seeking funding for St. Augustine in any upcoming federal stimulus packages.

The new phase of the branding campaign, "When Did You Become a Gator" was presented to committee members. They saw the new television spots and ads and were briefed on the accompanying public relations campaign that encourages Gators to video tape their stories of when they became Gators. To date, more than 200 people, including several soldiers in Iraq, have videotaped their experiences. An additional 100 people used UF's mobile TV studio to tell their stories this weekend in Atlanta at the SEC championship. Committee members discussed highlighting UF accomplishments in future spots.

Committee members were updated on changes in the way UF handles media relations to maximize coverage in new media. In addition, they received a briefing on a public information campaign to help reduce the number of students who are injured during

football weekends. The campaign, called Gator Watch, was implemented at the time of the South Carolina game, and injuries that weekend were the lowest of the season.

The committee discussed potential public relations opportunities for the upcoming BCS National Championship Game, including an alumni street party and a volunteer project.

The committee adjourned at 9:40 a.m.