

External Relations Committee Notes 09-04-2008

The External Relations Committee was called to order at 12:49 p.m. by Chairman Carlos Alfonso. Trustees Courtney Cunningham, Roland Daniels, Danny Ponce and Kevin Reilly were in attendance.

The minutes from the June meeting were approved as submitted.

The meeting began with the introduction of Lee Patouillet, the new executive director of the UF Alumni Association. Dr. Patouillet discussed ways an alumni association can support the university, including promoting government relations, improving student life, generating scholarship aid and providing career planning.

The committee heard a presentation on a program to generate support for the university's legislative agenda. Email lists of Alumni Association members, Foundation board members, donors and other friends of the university are being compiled and will be used to recruit Gators to join a grassroots network. By registering on a website, these volunteers will be able to access information on the university's legislative agenda, get contact information for their legislators and send emails or faxes in support of UF.

Trustee Daniels suggested that text messaging be used to communicate with grassroots members. Trustee Ponce led a discussion on the advantages of personal contacts with legislators versus letters and emails, and the committee recommended that both be used. Trustee Reilly suggested involving students and Trustee Cunningham said videos of the President discussing the legislative agenda may be useful.

Chairman Alfonso told the committee that the grassroots program is a priority of the committee and that further updates will be provided at future meetings.

The committee received an update on the university's print to electronic communications initiative. To date approximately 165 publications have been converted from print to electronic deliver resulting in a savings of \$1.06 million. Postage and mailing procedures are being added to the Think Before You Ink internal public relations program.

The new brand campaign was unveiled to the committee. "Remember when you became a Gator" is the theme and will feature a new television commercial, print ads and a public relations effort. The new television spot will be launched during the Florida vs. Georgia Football Game.

The GoGatorNation.com web site will be renamed Inside The Gator Nation and will be enhanced with short videos from students, alumni and friends about their recollections of the moment they became a Gator.

Committee members then received an update on the university's news and media relations efforts, including a presentation on how University Relations is enhancing its approach to "new media" outlets and the wire services.

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.