

External Relations Committee Minutes

The External Relations Committee was called to order on Thursday, June 11, at 12:55 p.m. Trustees Alfonso, Cunningham, Daniels, Johnson, O'Connell and Ponce were in attendance.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved.

The committee began the meeting by passing a resolution honoring Randy Roberts, a UF alum and co-chair of the Governor Relations Advisory Committee who passed away in April.

The discussion portion of the agenda began with an update on Gators for Higher Education. The grassroots program started in February and since that time 3000 alumni and friends have signed up to be advocates for UF. We asked these volunteers to contact their legislators on behalf of the UF legislative agenda three times. They responded by generating 1,000 emails or faxes to their representatives and senators.

Committee members suggested that efforts be focused on increasing membership in Miami and Tallahassee. Trustee Cunningham encouraged the use of Facebook and Trustee Johnson urged that students be included in the program.

The committee meeting continued with a presentation on pending federal funding proposals. The University of Florida submitted 23 research proposals to members of the Florida Congressional delegation for consideration in appropriations bills. 15 proposals were forwarded to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees from various Florida members. The appropriations committees will meet over the summer and we expect to have more information at the next committee meeting.

UF also has submitted proposals for funding in the National Defense Authorization bill and the Transportation Authorization bill.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides funding opportunities for UF, primarily from federal agencies making competitive research awards. UF has submitted 381 proposals to date. Already \$1.7 million in stimulus funds have been awarded to UF. The university is also considering applications for stimulus funds for facilities and energy efficiency improvements.

The committee was informed that UF's contract for representation in Washington, DC will be opened for bids.

Turning to state government relations, committee members were briefed on the results of the legislative session. Despite economic challenges and the resulting budget cuts, UF did receive funding for various programs. The College of Medicine received an additional \$5 million, the Lastinger Center received \$1.2 million, the McKnight Brain Institute received \$500,000 and \$100,000 was restored for the Veterinary Medicine Racing Lab. In addition, \$50 million from tobacco tax revenues will be made available for cancer research in the state.

The legislature also passed legislation that mandates the development of a funding formula for Colleges of Medicine to ensure funding parity that allows unfunded Courtelis projects to remain

eligible for state matches and operational funds and that permits UF to build a columbaria on campus.

Trustee O'Connell commended Florida Blue Key for its efforts in support of UF during the legislative session, including a reception at the Governor's Mansion.

University branding was discussed next, and the committee opened with a discussion of the communications reorganization proposal that was presented as part of President Machen's budget request.

Associate Vice President Joe Hice explained that the proposal was to create an agency-type communications organization with units focused on Design and Creative Services, News and Editorial Services, Public Relations and Account Services and Strategic Planning. He said the proposal had generated considerable discussion among UF communicators and that he believed a "hybrid" version of the proposal probably made more sense on campus given the diverse nature of the colleges and units. He said a final recommendation will be presented to Dr. Machen by October 31.

Chairman Alfonso said he and the committee are in favor of the reorganization effort in a manner that made sense for UF and requested an update at the next meeting.

Hice then discussed the Strategic Communications Planning initiative just launched. Debra Amirin of the UF Law School will chair the Strategic Communications Planning committee. Key faculty including, Dr. Richard Lutz, Dr. David Denslow and Dr. Linda Hon will be participating along with leadership of communications across campus. Trustees recommended that the UAA and students be represented in the process and that alumni communications professionals be consulted.

The initial draft will be completed by October 31, with a final draft submitted to Dr. Machen in early January 2010.

A new "Remember When" television commercial was presented to the committee. It will air beginning in August. Hice said he believed the work was as good as any in the nation.

A quick review of a focused public relations effort around UF Research followed. Explore Magazine, the UF News Bureau, Sponsored Research and the Office of Technology Licensing will be working closely together on the outreach.

Think Before You Ink! has reached the 12-month mark and as a result, UF has saved more than \$1.4 million in recurring expenses. About 199 publications have been modified or reformatted for an electronic delivery format. New copy contracts have resulted in savings ranging from 20% to 35%.

Finally, an overview of UF's print and broadcast media efforts was given. Once again, UF ranks in the top five for print and web outreach and first when it comes to broadcast media.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.