

External Relations Committee Meeting
Minutes
March 16, 2009

The External Relations Committee was called to order at 3:50 p.m. by Chairman Carlos Alfonso.

The minutes of the December 8, 2008 meeting were approved as read.

Committee members were asked to approve the university's requests for federal earmarks in the FY 10 budget. The earmarks are proposals for funds to support UF research, which are solicited from faculty members. Last year Congress approved \$ 16 million in earmarks for UF. The committee unanimously approved a list of projects to be submitted to Congress for consideration this year.

The committee received an update on UF's grassroots program, Gators for Higher Education. The web site is now online, and alumni were invited to join via an email from President Machen last month. More than 1400 have signed up. The first alert, which will encourage GFHE volunteers to contact their legislators in support of the tuition bill, is expected to go out in the next few weeks.

The committee discussed the process for engaging volunteers in the effort, including holding regional rallies, meetings with President Machen as he travels the state, and providing giveaways.

The alumni association is also organizing alumni on a regional basis for the purpose of supporting the university's legislative efforts. Groups have been created in Orlando, Tampa, Miami, West Palm Beach, Tallahassee and Naples. We expect to organize a similar group in Jacksonville as well.

A report on the state budget and the university's legislative agenda followed. New revenue estimates released by the state on Friday indicate that revenues for the current year and next year will be lower than predicted. As a result, the FY 09-10 budget could be more than \$6 billion short. Federal stimulus money as well as new revenues are anticipated to help reduce the deficit to approximately \$3 billion. The committee discussed the stimulus package and how the funds would be distributed in Florida.

Stimulus funds also are available through the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and other agencies through competitive grants, which UF is pursuing.

Moving to the marketing portion of the agenda, the committee heard an update on the UF Branding Campaign and the "Remember When" initiative. The Remember When television commercial that aired during the SEC and BCS Championship football games reached an audience of more than 42 million Americans. More than 400 Remember

When YouTube videos have been posted to the Inside The Gator Nation Web site since the campaign began in October and another 200 written stories have also been posted.

A new public relations and advertising initiative focused on UF's impact on the state's economy and on job creation has begun. The UF News Bureau is heading a media relations outreach in conjunction with the UF Office of Technology Licensing.

Results from the 2008-2009 UF Marketing Research study were reviewed. The survey found that 86% of Floridians say it is important to have a Top 10 university in the state. Not surprisingly, UF's strongest reputation is in Athletics followed by Academics and Research.

All committee members agreed that a committee priority will be to communicate the importance of UF research to the state and its relevance to economic development.

One year after the Cost Reduction and Efficiency Task Force recommendations, more than \$1.37 million in savings have been realized from moving publications from print to electronic and other efforts.

The meeting concluded with a discussion about Florida Blue Key's legislative reception at the Governor's Mansion on March 31. Trustees will receive invitations within a week.

The committee thanked Kevin Reilly for his service and leadership as Student Body President. Carlos Alfonso also wanted to publicly acknowledge the passing of a great Gator friend, Randy Roberts, who served on the UF Government Relations Advisory Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.