

External Relations Committee Minutes

The External Relations committee was called to order on Thursday, September 10, at 2:18 p.m. by Chairman Ponce. Trustees Alfonso, Daniels, Johnson, O'Connell, and Powell were in attendance, along with BOT Chairman McGriff.

The minutes were approved.

The committee received an update on the Gators for Higher Education grassroots program, including information on efforts to increase awareness and membership. The committee asked for additional information about outreach efforts on Gators for Higher Education as well as the activities of the regional Flagship Councils. Other government relations briefings included the status of UF research funding on the Congressional level and efforts to work with the City of Jacksonville on funding for the College of Medicine on the Jax campus.

Committee members also heard about revisions to the branding campaign. A new "Do you Remember When you became a Gator" television spot aired during the first game and will air throughout the rest of the academic year. The value of the "free" institutional spots could exceed \$4 million this year thanks to the national coverage received by UF Athletic events.

A "Remember When" public relations campaign will accompany the new branding ads. Students and others will be encouraged to videotape their own "Remember When" stories and post them to www.insidethegatornation.com.

A new program designed to promote the Florida Opportunity Scholars program was also introduced. Called "Gator OPS," the campaign will allow people to make individual \$5 donations to Florida Opportunity Scholars by texting a simple message to a predetermined number.

Twitter will be used to support the campaign and Urban Meyer and Billy Donovan will use Twitter to challenge each other and their fans to get involved with Florida Opportunity Scholars. The committee also discussed other social media and web site communication efforts and Trustee O'Connell asked for data on online hits and links from others.

Committee members were informed that the Strategic Communications Planning initiative is moving forward and a final report will be presented at the committee's December meeting.

On media relations, UF once again outpaced all in-state rivals and was among the best in the nation with its print and broadcast outreach campaign. The committee also discussed a new effort under way to publicize to the state and the Legislature UF's economic impact on Florida. A UF News Bureau writer has been assigned to an economic impact beat to produce at least one news release per week about UF's economic contributions. In addition, all campus communicators have been encouraged to highlight UF's economic impact in their publications. Trustee Alfonso urged the staff to focus communications on economic impact.

Under old business, the committee addressed the overall topic of UF communications. There was considerable discussion about processes for developing key messages, determining the value of publications, and enhancing communication and coordination among public relations and publications operations on campus. Chairman Ponce asked the staff to provide the committee at the December meeting with a proposal for enhancing communications.

The committee concluded the meeting by recognizing Joe Hice for his outstanding contributions to UF since joining the university four years ago and wishing him well in his new position as Chief Communications Officer at North Carolina State University.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.