

Committee on External Relations  
Minutes  
December 9, 2010

The External Relations Committee was called to order at 2:02 p.m. Chairman Danny Ponce and Committee Members Carlos Alfonso, David Brown, Ashton Charles, Cindy O'Connell and Carolyn Roberts were present. Chairman Mac McGriff also attended the meeting.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved.

The meeting began with a review of the November federal and state elections. The new leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives will include three Floridians who will serve as committee chairs. They are Rep. John Mica, Transportation and Infrastructure; Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Foreign Affairs; and Rep. Jeff Miller, Veterans Affairs.

Rep. Bill Young is expected to serve as Defense Appropriations Subcommittee chairman and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz will serve again on the Appropriations Committee.

Departing members Allen Boyd and Adam Putnam will be missed as they were strong supporters of agriculture research and other UF priorities.

While the future of earmarks is uncertain, UF has developed a list of projects for consideration in the event Congress funds special projects. They include research, equipment and renovation projects. Trustee Brown noted there may be other opportunities for funding for university projects in other Congressional bills.

Next, the committee was briefed on UF's state legislative priorities, which include the university budget, employee benefits, Medicaid reform and funding for research projects and university facilities. The latest state estimates indicate that PECO funds for building construction are down significantly. Trustee Roberts said it is early in the process and that number will change.

The committee also discussed the importance of pursuing funds for the Courtelis and Major Gifts programs, under which the state matches private contributions for university facilities and endowments. The state has not funded this program for three years, and there is a backlog for UF of \$130 million. Trustee O'Connell asked about the university's strategy for this agenda item. The committee had a lengthy discussion about the need to continue talking with legislators about the backlog in spite of current economic conditions and asked how the university is communicating with donors about the lack of funding. Chairman Ponce urged the university to stay on top of this serious issue.

The committee was informed that UF is providing input into Gov.- Elect Scott's transition teams. Trustee Alfonso serves on the Regulatory Reform committee, Trustee Scott serves on the Education committee and President Machen serves on the economic development team. Trustee Alfonso noted the transition teams are soliciting ideas and encouraged trustees to contact the transition teams if they want to contribute ideas.

The committee was briefed on recent university events, including a groundbreaking at Lake Nona and a luncheon to unveil the long-term vision for Innovation Square, a development at the site of Alachua General Hospital. The area will include an incubator, other tech transfer buildings, residences, retail and restaurants.

Communications integration efforts with between University Relations and Development and Alumni Affairs were discussed next. In addition to his marketing and public relations responsibilities for the university, associate vice president Andy Fletcher has assumed similar responsibilities at the University of Florida Foundation and the Alumni Association. University Relations is also participating on the UF IT Governance Council with a leadership assignment for web based initiatives. A new web strategy for ufl.edu is forthcoming as a result. University relations has also restructured to include an additional focus on creative services.

The committee received the regular report on media coverage and a briefing on the latest emergency communications exercise. Trustee Charles asked about the ability of student s who have graduated but still in town to receive the alerts.

The committee adjourned at 2:58 p.m.