Minutes
Committee on Strategic Initiatives
March 21, 2013

After confirming a quorum, the meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Corr at 11:07 a.m. Chair Corr welcomed everyone and introduced newly appointed Trustee, David Thomas.

Committee Members Present:
Chris Corr (Chair), Cheri Brodeur, C. David Brown, II, Susan Cameron, Carolyn Roberts, and T.J. Villamil. Steven Scott was unable to attend.

Others Present:
Trustees David Thomas and Michael Heekin, President Bernie Machen, Sr. Vice Presidents, Joe Glover and Win Phillips, Vice Presidents Jamie Keith, Jane Adams, Paula Fussell, Matt Fajack, Tom Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President, Jamal Sowell, and Dan Williams, Janine Sikes, Melissa Orth, Iske Larkin, Joy Fletcher, Jeanna Mastrodicasa and Cheryl May (recording)

1. Review and Approval of Minutes
Chairman Chris Corr noted that the Committee members received copies of the December 6, 2012 Committee meetings’ minutes and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Trustee Carolyn Roberts made a motion to approve. With no further discussion desired, the Committee voted unanimously in favor of the minutes.

2. Action Items
There were no action items before the Committee.

3. Discussion/Information Items
Chair Corr stated this was the second meeting of the Committee and it’s an exciting time for the University of Florida. He then turned to the following matters.

3.1 Vice President Jane Adams presented SWOT Analysis for UF in a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Telling the UF Story: An Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.” (A copy of the slide set is attached.)

3.2 There was a discussion on the Impact of “Top 10” Initiative on Strategic Positioning including thoughts on how to advance UF to a Top 10 university.

3.3 The impact of the State’s “Online Initiative” – will be discussed at the strategic discussion or full Board meeting tomorrow.

3.4 No new business was presented.

4. Adjourn
Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.
Telling the UF Story: An Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
Objective

- Identify the factors that impact public comprehension of the university, its various components, achievements and contributions
Strengths

- Academic Excellence: The quality of education at UF is among the highest in the nation. Related strengths are:
  - Undergraduate Education
  - Graduate Education
  - Students
  - Faculty
  - Research
  - Technology Transfer
Strengths

- Healthcare and Medical Research
- Multidisciplinary Approach
- Associations
Strengths

Gator Pride: Alumni and fans are genuinely proud of UF and their connection to the university. Athletics plays an important role in this, but it runs deeper and to a great extent is strengthened by the connection Gators feel toward one another. Related strengths are:

- History
- Athletics
- Development
- Size and Scope
Strengths

- Image and Reputation: UF is considered the top university in Florida and a top tier public research university in the U.S.
  - Flagship Designation
  - Political
  - Gators for Higher Education
  - Value
  - Location
Strengths

- IFAS Statewide Presence: UF provides valuable services that change the way Floridians experience their lives, and we do it through a physical presence in every county.
Strengths

- Leadership: Despite years of budget cuts and major challenges, UF continues to provide high quality education and research and leads the SUS in innovation.
  - High Performance Computing
  - Strong skillsets
  - Issue Management
  - Social Media
Economic Impact: UF infuses $8.76 billion into the economy each year and provides more than 106,000 direct and indirect jobs.
Weaknesses

- **Resources:** Significant budget cuts have impeded the university’s ability to recruit faculty and graduate students, and threaten critical infrastructure.

- **Balance between decentralization and centralization:** University decentralization empowers units and faculty within them. As applied to communications, however, it fragments the messages. We could more effectively enhance UF’s image and reputation through a unified, consistent and high quality strategic communications plan.
Weaknesses

- **Focus:** UF embraces broad academic offerings and research endeavors. As a result, we do nearly everything rather than have selective priorities.

- **Declining awareness:** Awareness of UF in Florida peaked during last year of branding campaign (2009) and is now trending lower.
Weaknesses

- Political/Legislative: There is a tendency to treat all state universities the same, resulting in a drive toward mediocrity.
- Size: While there are advantages to being large, UF can be intimidating to students.
Opportunities

- **Increased awareness:** Awareness in Florida peaked with last branding campaign.
- **Research/Tech transfer:** UF has reputation for research discoveries and tech transfer; Innovation Hub and Square offer more opportunities.
- **Online:** UF is a national leader in online education and will expand in the future.
Opportunities

- Prestigious Faculty: UF is a respected university that can recruit and retain prestigious faculty if we have the resources.
- New Media: UF has strong social media presence, but can expand.
- UF/IFAS Extension: UF’s presence in all 67 counties provides ability to meet land-grant mission and promote UF as a whole.
- Economic Impact
Opportunities

- **Partnerships:** UF partnerships with Medical City stakeholders have increased visibility in important market.
- **Development:** Donors showed strong support for UF in last campaign, looking to enhance efforts in next campaign.
- **Rankings:** UF ranks among national leaders in academics, research, value, tech transfer.
Opportunities

- **New Programs and Centers:** Innovation Academy, CTSI, EPI are examples of programs that can generate enhanced visibility.

- **Integrated Communications:** University Relations reorganization can maximize coverage across multiple media platforms.

- **UFCN:** Organization of 150 UF communicators who could increase the power of UF communications through coordinated efforts.
Threats

- Decreased funding: Uncertain budget climates in Washington and Tallahassee could further erode UF’s resources through funding cuts, reductions in research grants and limits on tuition.
- Political/Economic: Today’s unsettled political and economic environments make it difficult to anticipate and strategize.
- Changing public support: The general public is questioning the cost of higher education and whether it prepares students for jobs.
Threats

- Competition: More universities are actively pursuing target audiences, including prospective students.
- Balance between centralization and decentralization
- Impact of the web: Traditional ways of pushing out information is counter to the way audiences want to receive information today.
- Unforeseen occurrences: The UF campus is the size of a small city. While we have issues management and crisis communications processes in place, the unforeseen can happen.