

The External Relations Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Carlos Alfonso at 12:45 p.m.

Committee members present were David Brown, Courtney Cunningham, Roland Daniels and Ryan Moseley.

The minutes of the June External Relations Committee meeting were approved.

The committee's discussion began with an update on the pending special session of the Florida Legislature to reduce spending in the FY 07-08 budget. Governor Crist asked state agencies to identify 4 percent cuts, which would result in reductions to the State University System budget of \$110 million. However, he subsequently released a revised state budget that would make a SUS cut of \$188 million.

It is not clear what the legislature will do about budget cuts or a tuition increase during its special session, which has not yet been scheduled.

The committee was briefed on a top legislative priority for next year's regular session. It is funding for the College of Medicine, which has experienced budget cuts over the last four years. Those cuts require the faculty clinical practice to increase revenues to subsidize medical education at UF. Our goal is to seek a level of support from the state that is equal for all medical schools in the state.

The committee was also briefed on efforts to recognize legislators over the summer and recent visits from the Governor and Lt. Governor. Staff also reported on a recent meeting of SEC government relations officers who shared information on state funding and tuition. A more detailed report will be provided at the next meeting.

Committee members reviewed the regular presentation on media coverage and were briefed on a new media tracking vendor that will provide additional information on the effectiveness of UF's news bureau efforts.

The new Go Gators television spot, which was shown to the trustees at the last meeting, has begun airing. The committee also heard new radio spots and reviewed new print ads for the third year of the university's branding campaign.

The committee meeting continued with a discussion of the university's print and electronic communications. As a result of earlier committee discussions, UF is unveiling today an electronic newsletter to communicate with alumni and friends. **Inside the Gator Nation**, will go to more than 135,000 email addresses on a regular basis.

The committee also continued its conversations regarding the reduction of printed publications and increase in electronic communications. It received a report on the results of an independent communications audit. Its findings include:

- There are 355 printed publications at UF, 25 percent of which are also available electronically
- The cost of these publications is more than \$3 million annually
- Some of the publications contain ads, which last year generated \$210,000
- UF should consider segmenting its target audiences by demographics to determine when to use print and electronic communications

University Relations has forwarded the results of the survey to the Efficiency Task Force. That group will consider its findings in its review of university operations and cost savings measures. Trustees noted that the goal is to communicate effectively, not to focus only on savings.

The committee concluded the meeting with a discussion of the branding campaign and whether the focus should be shifted from a Florida audience to a national audience and peer institutions. Suggestions included producing video messages to distribute to university administrators, increasing efforts toward coverage of UF in national publications.

Chairman Alfonso concluded the meeting by noting that the financial problems the university faces will probably continue. He challenged the trustees to think of new ways of operating in this climate.