

## External Relations Committee Minutes

The External Relations committee was called to order on Thursday, June 10, at 2:24 p.m. by Chairman Ponce. Trustees Alfonso, Brown, Charles, Daniels, O'Connell and Roberts were in attendance.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved.

The committee began with an introduction of Andy Fletcher, the new Associate Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations. He led a discussion about branding and the effects of the recession on marketing. He talked about shifting consumer expectations and purchasing patterns and powerful brands that emerged during previous economic downturns.

The committee then received a summary of the 2010 legislative session, including information on budget items and policy changes affecting the university. Among the discussion items was the \$20 million appropriation for UF's Academic and Research Center and efforts to prevent a veto. UF was supported by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors, as well as a wide coalition of research organizations and Orlando community leaders in our effort to secure the funding.

There was also a discussion on state government relations activities during the summer, at which time Chairman Ponce and Trustee O'Connell suggested inviting the Board of Governors to hold meetings at UF to help educate its members on the university's activities. That discussion was followed by an update of Gators for Higher Education. During the session, the grassroots program generated nearly 40,000 emails from UF alumni to legislators. Trustee Alfonso noted the large jump in emails from the previous year. Trustee Charles inquired about the role of students and a discussion followed regarding a new student group for GFHE.

Government Relations partnered with Florida Blue Key and the Alumni Association for Gator Day in April. Trustees met with Governor Crist, Senate President Atwater, Speaker Cretul and other legislators, attended an Alumni Association luncheon, followed by a Capital Area Gator Club welcome reception and Florida Blue key reception for its membership. There were more than 100 alumni, students and Gators in Tallahassee for the day.

Marion Hoffmann, Associate Vice President of Government Relations, gave an overview of three intern programs in Tallahassee which provide UF students valuable experience in state government. The first is the Gubernatorial Fellows program, which is modeled after the White House Fellows. Four UF graduates just completed their terms and three UF students have been selected for the new class. The second program, which is offered by the Graham Center for Public Service, places interns in the legislature. In 2009, there were 10 UF legislative Interns working in various offices in Tallahassee and 14 this past year. Under the third program, UF graduates work in the university's Office of Government Relations. All of these intern programs

are valuable to the students and provide an important presence for the University at the Capitol and state agencies as well as legislative offices.

Following the Government Relations update was a report on UFAAlert, the university's emergency notification system that uses tools such as text messaging, mass e-mails, loudspeakers, news media, the UF home page, social media and reverse 911. Goals for system improvements include more efficient alerts and a dedicated Facebook page and Twitter account for emergency notification. Trustee Charles asked about the policy for removing recent graduates from the alert lists and trustee Brown inquired about the confidentiality of the phone numbers used for text alerts.

Finally, the committee heard a report on UF media exposure that showed UF broadcast hits reached an estimated total audience of 269.3 million – up 5 percent from the same quarter in 2009 – and print hits for the quarter totaled 9,647, on par with UNC Chapel Hill and more than the University of Virginia. That included eight hits in the New York Times, three in the Washington Post and two in the Wall Street Journal. Trustees Alfonso, Brown and O'Connell discussed media coverage of the Gulf oil spill and noted that UF faculty have expertise in many areas related to the spill's impacts on the environment and tourism.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.