

Committee on External Relations
Minutes
3/15/10

The External Relations Committee was called to order at 2:15 p.m. by Chairman Danny Ponce. Trustees Carlos Alfonso, Roland Daniels, Jordan Johnson, Cindy O'Connell, and Carolyn Roberts were in attendance. Minutes from the December 10 meeting were approved.

The committee began with an update on the state's budget process. While early in the process, the House has a preliminary budget that cuts higher education by 4.6%, the House also assumes a 15% tuition increase that would reduce the 4.6% cut to less than 1 percent. The Senate appropriations committee would reduce the higher ed budget by 6%, and then add back in half of that amount for priority needs. The Senate also assumes a 15% tuition increase, and that would result in a 3.72% increase.

Neither the House nor Senate at this point provides additional funds for the College of Medicine or the Major Gifts program. Cuts in employee compensation and/or benefits are in the House bill and are anticipated in the Senate budget.

The university is working with Florida Blue Key and the Alumni Association on Gator Day events, at a date to be scheduled. There will be opportunities for trustees to meet with legislators, attend an Alumni Association luncheon, followed by a Capital Area Gator Club welcome reception and a Florida Blue Key reception for its membership. We expect students to have displays, as well.

An update of the Gators for Higher Education program was provided to committee members. Current membership is more than 4200. We are continuing to grow membership with outreach activities, including participation in Gator Club events throughout the state, alumni reunions and other Alumni Association events. The first action alert of the legislative season will be made by the end of week 3.

The committee received a report on media coverage of the past three months. UF led among our peers, including the Universities of California, Michigan, North Carolina and Florida State University in broadcast market hits. Fans on the UF Facebook page increased 113% to 46,000 members since June 2009.

The committee was briefed on UF's new project, Innovation Square, a technology transfer development on Second Avenue. It will be anchored by the Innovation Hub, a new incubator/tech transfer building. It is expected that additional related public and private development will grow around the Hub.

The committee adjourned at 2:57 p.m.