

Minutes  
External Relations Committee  
March 17, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chairman Danny Ponce. Trustees Alfonso, Brown, Charles, Daniels and Roberts were in attendance.

The minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2011 were approved.

The meeting began with a report from Vice President Tom Mitchell on the status of the Florida Tomorrow campaign. He recognized the units that have surpassed their fundraising goals, listed the university's fundraising priorities and outlined plans for the future of the Florida Tomorrow campaign as well as the next fundraising effort. He also briefed committee members on the search for the new Alumni Association Executive Director.

A government relations update by Vice President Jane Adams followed. She discussed the university's government relations activities in Washington, which have changed focus as a result of the ban on Congressional earmarks. Committee members discussed the loss of earmark funding and reduced budgets for NIH, NSF and other federal agencies in relation to the university's research program.

The committee was then briefed on the university's agenda for the 2011 legislative session, which began two weeks ago. State budget cuts have required the university to focus efforts on minimizing reductions, seeking higher education policy changes that do not require funding and offering economic development opportunities. Committee members discussed the status of programs including employee pension and health care benefits, Innovation Hub, the Research and Academic Center at Lake Nona, PECO funding, World Class Scholars, and Matching Gifts.

The members discussed at length the use of facilities during the summer months. The group also talked about Medicaid reform and offered assistance in speaking to legislators about its effect on UF.

Trustees were encouraged to participate in Gator Day, which will be held on March 30. The day's events will include legislative appointments, a luncheon sponsored by the Alumni Association and a reception hosted by Florida Blue Key.

As usual, we are engaging our alumni and friends to advocate on behalf of the university's legislative agenda. The first alert to members of Gators For Higher Education generated 215 contacts to legislators. To date we have nearly 5700 advocates and we are Facebook friends with 35% of the House of Representatives and 25% of the Senate.

In the marketing update, Andy Fletcher discussed the ongoing collaboration and strategic support for efforts underway at UF & Shands. These initiatives include the Shands Hospital for

Children at the University of Florida, a comprehensive brand review and an internal campaign focusing on the patient experience.

As part of recent IT governance restructuring, University Relations is also leading the planning efforts for updating the primary university website, ufl.edu. Additionally, plans are underway to enhance our news and PR efforts. New programs will focus on enhanced on-line efforts including respected science sites, bloggers and social media opportunities.

Chairman Ponce requested an update at the next meeting on savings the university has realized from increased use of electronic communications as opposed to printed publications.

The committee finished with a regular report on media coverage.

The committee adjourned at 11:45 a.m.