



**COMMITTEE ON MARKETING, PUBLIC RELATIONS
AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2019

President's Room 215B, Emerson Alumni Hall

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

Time Convened: 4:58 p.m.

Time Adjourned: 5:41 p.m.

Committee and Board members present:

Robert G. Stern (Chair), David L. Brandon, Ian M. Green, James W. Heavener, Morteza Hosseini, Leonard H. Johnson, Daniel T. O'Keefe, Rahul Patel, Marsha D. Powers, Jason J. Rosenberg, Katie Vogel Anderson and Anita G. Zucker.

Others present:

Winfred Phillips, Executive Chief of Staff; Charlie Lane, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer; Amy Hass, Vice President and General Counsel; Elias Eldayrie, Vice President and Chief Information Officer; Zina Evans, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost; Antonio Farias, Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Advisor to the President; Jodi Gentry, Vice President for Human Resources; Edward Jimenez, Chief Executive Officer for UF Health Shands; Mark Kaplan, Vice President for Government and Community Relations; Mike McKee, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer; Thomas Mitchell, Vice President for Advancement; David Norton, Vice President for Research; David Parrott, Vice President for Student Affairs; Nancy Paton, Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing; Jack Payne, Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources; Curtis Reynolds, Vice President for Business Affairs and other members of the University community.

1.0 Verification of Quorum

Vice President Liaison Paton verified a quorum with all Trustees in attendance except Board Vice Chair Thomas G. Kuntz.

2.0 Call to Order and Welcome

Committee Chair Stern welcomed everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 4:58 p.m.

3.0 Review and Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Stern asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 27, 2018, December 6, 2018, December 18, 2018 and February 26, 2019 meetings, which was made by Trustee Zucker and a second, which was made by Trustee Johnson. Committee Chair Stern asked for further discussion, and then for all in favor of the motion and any opposed, and the motion was approved unanimously.

4.0 Discussion Item

Committee Chair Stern stated that Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing Nancy Paton will present the Strategic Plan for the Marketing, Public Relations and Strategic Communications Committee

This comprehensive plan will advance our reputation and increase our rankings and stature. The basis for this plan to be successful lies in the alignment to the organizational goals. The plan sets forth a framework that will align to our advancing our aspirations as the premier university that the state, nation and world look to for leadership as expressed in the Decade Ahead Strategic Plan. It also provides a strategic framework for establishing a more integrated, cohesive and aligned communications organization. It will help us come together as an institution as One UF and provide the momentum and direction to continue to enhance our reputation and rise to five.

Vice President Paton quoted Warren Buffet, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.” Let’s see how we will do things differently.

Vice President Paton stated that people expect to receive information and engage with each other and companies in a different way. We must look outside of higher education for what and how national brands are innovating in new and impactful ways to connect with their audiences. We are in an Information Age where technology has disrupted our world. Successful companies are leveraging technology and we will need to incorporate these new and innovative platforms into our strategy. In the past, brands have used famous spokespersons to endorse their products. In today’s world, micro-influencers serve that role by garnering the trust of their followers and building brand affinity. Micro-influencers are everyday people who have gained a large following on social media by posting their interests in an authentic way. The telling of our stories of impact in new and engaging ways and reaching our diverse audiences on their preferred channels will create conversations relevant to building these relationships. The optimizing of technology to communicate in real time and across diverse channels is another way to share our messaging.

Vice President Paton stated that the University has brand ambassadors who are uniquely positioned to create partnerships that reach forward to solving grand challenges. Studies have been conducted that show educational institutions and academic experts are trusted sources and we must use this to our advantage in our communication approaches.

In December I shared some key themes from my first 160 days and now I will summarize the collective findings. What came across loud and clear with the importance of One UF that aligns with the recognition, understanding and behavioral embodiment of the efforts across campus to reach the Top 5 Goal.

Several themes emerged:

Tell the University story nationally

Integrate relationships with University and decentralized communicators and marketers to build a best-in-class communications organization which will raise the competency of the communications effort

Use the Gator Nation to advocate as brand ambassadors to advance our research and academic reputation to help accelerate our national brand prominence

Use technology to reach and engage our multi-faceted audiences

Expand staff expertise, create effective and efficient processes to leverage our collective strength and measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the team of communicators through the use of key metrics.

So now we will use what has been learned to discuss the future of Strategic Communications and Marketing. In order to communicate effectively with our many audiences, we must deploy demographic-centric communications around their needs for highly personalized and relevant information to build the UF brand. Different messaging should be used to motivate audiences but the brand essence must remain consistent.

Robert Stern

The plan centers of 5 critical major goals/strategic imperatives to advance our reputation and rankings to reach our aspiration as the premier university that the state, nation and world look to for leadership:

- 1 Build a distinctive national brand
- 2 Propel UF's thought leadership reputation
- 3 Safeguard the UF brand and reputation
- 4 Transform and innovate through technology
- 5 Establish internal brand strategy

Vice President Paton stated that building a distinctive and differentiated brand position will advance our reputation and rankings. It entails a truthful expression of who we are through our behaviors and values. When we communicate who we are and what we stand for, then we will move in the direction we are seeking.

Vice President Paton indicated that 160over90 conducted research to help UF assess its national image and understand its position within the higher education landscape, particularly in comparison to the Top 5 public universities. In spite of our high name recognition, we also have high levels of "don't know" ratings related to specific areas of expertise-beyond athletics. These findings show we need to create a position that authentically demonstrates the distinctiveness of the breadth, depth and impact of the University of Florida. We will discover who we are, what we do and why it matters from our audiences' point of view. The knowledge gained about our distinctive and differentiated culture will be used to create a powerful positioning platform in support of our aspiration and goals. This will help guide the institutional communications and marketing strategies.

Strategic Communications and Marketing implemented a communications plan for campus communicators to use when sharing their own news, but can also serve as a means to create consistent messaging about the University's sweeping achievements. This new tool will be used for future announcements of institutional impact.

With our well-earned and strong reputation as well as respect nationally and internationally, the university has an opportunity to leverage this reputation and raise the University's stature among a wide variety of influential audiences through the creation of a thought leadership strategy.

The reports that access to news outlets has been declining is not true and is indicative of the changing media landscape and changing news consumption patterns. This is an opportunity for us to serve as trusted experts who provided sought-after points of view but also as impact-makers whose work betters society.

To strengthen our audiences' perception of UF as a national thought leader will require the development of a proactive strategy in partnership with representative leaders from across the university. The alumni deepen the bench of our UF thought leaders and represent an opportunity to engage them in a think tank model where we can explore new ideas to communications and marketing innovation. We will introduce our thought leaders to the new contacts we make in the media and plan media tours with national reporters, editorial boards and other media influencers. The team is tracking current events and capitalizing on opportunities in the news through the use of op-eds, The Conversation and offering leadership and faculty to journalists seeking expert sources for their stories. Sharing our content on more non-traditional channels that include increased use videos and other more dynamic and captivating digital tools will offer depth and breadth to our storytelling efforts, allowing us to meet the needs of national outlets, which are communicating on multi-channel platforms. Our staff will expand and refocus to create a bench of specialists who will deeply understand critical areas of our university and partner with campus communicators and how to tell our stories to broader critical national media outlets.

In today's digital world, news outlets are no longer bound by geographic limits. Their influence can therefore be expanded into other areas. Vice President for Student Affairs David Parrot, wrote an op-ed that was originally placed in the Tampa Bay Times. Through the University's social media sharing efforts, the University of California System's National Center for the National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement located in DC picked it up organically. This is how regional news can instantly become national news and influence our peers. Two stories from the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune are direct results of a partnership with the Provost's office which provided funding to encourage faculty to share their research. This is one of the new and innovative ways that was used to land us on the national stage.

Protecting the University's reputation is as an important as advancing it. The paraphrased quote from Warren Buffet earlier in the presentation, all the good will that results from investing in building a brand can be quickly depleted if we don't effectively safeguard it.

To ensure transparent and timely communications, the University must stay ahead of issues which requires constant anticipation, vigilance, preparation and building a strategic organization. We have been advancing several of these strategies such as partnering with the College of Journalism and Communications which is providing space for an emergency response center; building a website for transparent access of university position statements and related

communications and establishing an analytics platform to help us understand online conversations.

An analytical platform was used to measure the volume, understand sentiment and see the primary states where conversation around #UF23 took place. This platform simplifies and analyzes a fast moving stream of data. We can learn in real-time the success of communication efforts and learn where there may be future opportunities. This tool will help us understand trends and emerging issues so that we can engage in conversation, when necessary.

Gaining our audiences' attention is a challenge. We don't want to be viewed as just another distraction. Social media should be relevant to all audiences by breaking through the clutter and being a voice that is appreciated, understood and human.

Consumers think about the content and the platform when they think about how they consume information. The ways we tell our stories varies by platform and it is important the way we tell our story is suitable for the platform on which we are engaging. Content can come from influencers and brands.

We are aiming to lead and seek opportunities in the world of communications while others are finding comfort. Our goal is to inhabit new landscapes presented by technology before our audience arrives to surprise and delight, to craft better stories and to be the voice that is heard amidst the noise.

We want the University of Florida to be regarded as a national leader in social media and not just higher education social media. We must explore and capitalize new apps, like Giphy, so that we remain at the forefront of the industry. Giphy is used for Gifs that loop graphics on Facebook and on Twitter. They are used as a means of expression. UF is the only university to reach 1 billion gif views which puts the university in the mix of national brands. Not higher education, but brands like Nike and Amazon. This is important before it signals engagement and advocacy.

Research has shown the importance of communicating with employees and engaging them in ways that they understand their role in the organization's success. So that the employees can serve as advocates. To bring the faculty, staff, students and alumni into the conversation. It is important to engage with our community to tell our distinctive stories of impact, experience, mission and vision.

We will think about our internal community as brand ambassadors by engaging them within conversations to help achieve our aspirations. Communications is a lever to our university's success. Foundational to the success of our efforts is the opportunity to align our vast community of university communicators through strategic integration.

The success of the strategic communications and marketing plan will only occur if we build a strong infrastructure to drive our efforts. We will create a central organizational structure aligned to support and advance these strategic initiatives by strengthening our acumen, improving how we integrate our communications strategy and measuring the effectiveness and progress on achieving our goals.

We will focus on ensuring that our university community has the tools and messaging they need to serve as organizational ambassadors and we will learn from others receiving inspiration and increasing our knowledge from those closest to us who are making an impact in their own professional realms.

Committee Chair Stern said that critical to ensuring ongoing progress and success of our strategic plan is to measure, track, analyze and optimize our efforts. The environment in which we communicate changes constantly and we must be bold in our efforts to ensure that we are moving to where the puck is going and not to where it is. We will create a comprehensive dashboard that will provide a rich array of key metrics that will track our progress against our major goals/strategic imperatives.

Board Chair Hosseini stated that the Governor is interested in the University of Florida becoming a Top 5. He said we need to market ourselves. Take us to the Moon! Trustee O'Keefe commented that this was an incredible amount of time and effort of where are we and where are we going. We had the road plan and direction, just need to implement. This went beyond what was expected. Trustee Johnson said this effort has the ability to move the needle. Nobody knows we are great. He is thrilled with what has developed. He said Gator Giving Day was everywhere on social media. Board Chair Hosseini said this shows passion and knowledge!

5.0 New Business

There was no new business to come before the committee.

6.0 Adjourn

Committee Chair Stern adjourned the meeting at 5:41 p.m.