

## **Committee on External Relations Report**

**December 1, 2011**

The Committee on External Relations convened with the following members present: Trustees Brown, Criser, Heekin, Levine, and chair Roberts. Board Chair Alfonso also attended.

The committee heard from Vice President for University Relations Jane Adams, who presented the Legislative Agenda Update. The Legislative session begins in January, and large budget cuts are expected but the size of the cuts and when they will be made are unknown.

On the issue of higher education reform, Vice President Adams noted that President Machen sent his response to Governor Scott's request for information that the governor will use to develop his plan for higher education in Florida. Committee members suggested that the President's report be distributed through Gators For Higher Ed and other university communications. Chairman Alfonso said he heard unofficially that the response was well received.

Regarding PECO funding, members were informed that the October revenue estimate is \$113 million for all of education. In a good year, UF alone would receive that much in PECO funding. The BOG is requesting \$14 million for infrastructure and maintenance. UF's future years list includes \$6 million for the Lake Nona Research and Academic Center and \$58 million for a new chemistry building.

Vice President Adams also said the state's Matching Gifts program has not been funded since 2008-09 and is not likely to be funded this year unless there is a large pot of non-recurring funds. The Major Gifts funding backlog for the SUS is \$285 million, with UF accounting for \$130 million of that total. The Courtelis backlog for the SUS is \$100 million, with UF accounting for \$28.2 million. .

More cuts are expected in Medicaid, and Shands hopes to maintain \$9.7 million in recurring funds for indigent patients and maximize funding from the cigarette tax for the Cancer Center and competitive grants to fund cancer research.

The committee then heard from Alumni Association Executive Director Danita Nias, who gave a report on the Alumni Association's Strategic Plan. Director Nias said the association will focus on improving its Number 13 ranking among alumni associations in the U.S. and creating programs that put Gators first. Those include maintaining the Student Alumni Association's Number 1 status and adding more programs for Gator Clubs. As an example, 234 people attended a recent Gator Club panel discussion on how to leverage being a Gator during a job search. Director Nias also said the association is partnering with Gators for Higher Education.

Finally, Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources Jack Payne gave a report on the university's plans to participate in the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Morrill Act and the Land Grant Mission. A two-week event marking the occasion is scheduled for late June and early July in Washington, D.C., and UF will be the only university presenting an exhibit with water as its theme. The exhibit will include live alligators and examples of invasive species in Florida such as pythons. Vice President Payne said President Machen is in charge of the event at the request of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, which is organizing the celebration.

He added that the anniversary also will be celebrated with events on campus and throughout the state.