



External Relations Committee  
December 6, 2022  
FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms

MINUTES

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**1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks**

The Florida International University Board of Trustees' External Relations Committee meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Gene Prescott at 11:41 AM on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the External Relations Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Gene Prescott, *Committee Chair*; Chanel T. Rowe; and Roger Tovar, *Board Vice Chair*.

Trustees Jose J. Armas and Carlos Trujillo were excused.

Board Chair Dean C. Colson and Trustees Cesar L. Alvarez, Carlos A. Duarte, Natasha Lowell, Cristhofer E. Lugo, and Marc D. Sarnoff, and University President Kenneth A. Jessell also were in attendance.

Committee Chair Prescott welcomed all Trustees and members of the University administration. He also welcomed Trustees attending via the virtual environment and the University community and general public accessing the meeting via the University's webcast.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Committee Chair Prescott asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the External Relations Committee meeting held on April 26, 2022. Hearing none, a motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the External Relations Committee meeting held on April 26, 2022.

**3. Information/Discussion Items**

**3.1 Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs Update**

▪ **Strategic Communications Update**

Senior Vice President, Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs Michelle L. Palacio commented on divisional goals and accomplishments. She indicated that division-wide accomplishments include crisis management, national, state, and local campaign rollouts, advocacy wins, opening FIU in Washington, D.C. 2.0, operational efficiencies, increasing peer awareness, merchandising, and integrated campaign executions. She highlighted two (2) representative examples of the accomplishments of the division's integration and partnerships across the University. She

stated that the first example relates to a campaign that visibly showcased FIU at the national level by working with Clear Channel Communications at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. She noted that said ads highlighted student success and research excellence, including research in origami antennai, the Wall of Wind, and profiling the work of the Institute of the Environment and others on Everglades preservation and restoration. For the second example, she explained that FIU has been a leader in environmental preservation and restoration for more than 40 years. She presented a commissioned, limited-edition print by artist JohnBob Carlos that is currently being shared with peer voters, including presidents, provosts, and admissions officers. She stated that 97% of incoming students across the country believe that the environment is a top priority.

Sr. VP Palacio pointed out that strategic communications are rooted in four pillars: reputation, affinity, enrollment marketing, and advocacy. She stated that the University's brand "Real Triumphs" was launched mid-pandemic in 2020 and is being refreshed for a reintroduction in 2023 as an efficient University-wide communications infrastructure. She indicated that all campaigns are focused on building reputation, increasing affinity, supporting admissions, and advancing advocacy efforts for student success and research excellence.

Sr. VP Palacio highlighted the results of the peer assessment surveys. She noted that the survey is anonymous and performed by a third-party. She added that the number of 5/5 ratings have increased and the "do not know FIU" rating has decreased significantly. She pointed out that the total number of voters has decreased as the division has focused on communicating and educating peer's about FIU's accomplishments. She added that the University's media buying has significant investment in digital, print, and targeted advertising in the Chronicle of Higher Education, and the research reflects that it has made an impact. Sr. VP Palacio indicated that the University's data and national surveys continue to report that academic leaders receive most of their information on peers from the Chronicle of Higher Education by a disproportionate amount. She noted that the division and 160/90 continue to execute the national campaign and commented on key investments in digital and print marketing and conference sponsorships. She mentioned that FIU sponsored the American Public Land Grand University (APLU) awards luncheon, which included a daily newsletter and a post conference "departure" coupon for use at the Denver International Airport where advertisements had been strategically placed for the duration of the conference.

In terms of building affinity, Sr. VP Palacio stated that the division has launched a new daily 90,000 subscriber email that is shared with all University faculty, staff, and students. She added that the division is also piloting a monthly alumni newsletter via the University channels in partnership with Alumni Relations. She also commented on targeted social and digital ads in recognition of FIU's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including billboards around Miami, a Miami Herald take-over, and local magazine and newspaper ads. Sr. VP Palacio expressed her gratitude for those who helped accomplish the earned media coverage, including local elected officials, community leaders, and University friends across the county. She commented on the division's realignment and investments in social media and social media monitoring. She remarked on the video with the mantra "I will pass all my exams," which gained 5.3M views on TikTok and has over 15M video views to date on all social media platforms combined.

▪ **Governmental and Community Affairs Update**

- State, federal, and local

Sr. VP Palacio indicated that the next FIU Day is scheduled for March 22, 2023. She commented on FIU's legislative priorities, including, FIU Top 50 Operational Support, FIU Program of Distinction on Environmental Resilience, FIU STEM Education, Engineering Building Phase II, and the Honors College Building. She stated that the Center for Community Impact and Public Purpose will engage the community and highlight the work of FIU students and faculty. On behalf of the Chair of the FIU President's Council, Sergio Abreu, Sr. VP Palacio invited members of the FIU Board of Trustees to the annual Vine and Dine fundraising reception, which will support the President's Council Excellence Fund. She also commented on the 2023 eMerge Americas.

Sr. VP Palacio provided a federal relations update. She commented that advocacy efforts and programming supported 19 major federal grant campaigns, yielding seven successful grants totaling \$25M. She noted that the South Florida delegation secured four earmarks for FIU, totaling \$5.5M. She remarked on pending final congressional actions for fiscal year 2023, including \$24M in earmarks and over \$20M in potential "plus-ups" that are expected to benefit FIU's research portfolio. She indicated that FIU's new center in Washington D.C. is a 5,000 sq. ft. facility for the use of students, faculty, researchers, and partners. She explained that the Talent Lab, is a student program that is the cornerstone of FIU in D.C.'s investments as it offers a robust and multi-faceted approach. She added that, in addition to over 139 internships last year, said program includes support, preparation, placement, and unique "student fly-ins". She noted that fly-ins are three (3) to five (5)-day experiences that aim to expose students to Washington's public, private, and non-profit sectors, leading alumni, agencies, elected official offices, and FIU researchers. She presented a listing of recent programs and partnerships that have been developed by the FIU in D.C. team, including partnerships with government and the private sector.

Sr. VP Palacio introduced a video highlighting FIU in D.C. Trustee Chanel T. Rowe commented on Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Cheryl Campbell's visit to FIU.

**4. New Business**

No new business was raised.

**5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Committee Chair Gene Prescott adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees External Relations Committee on Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 12:14 PM.