

MINUTES OF THE ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL SPRING MEETING

Thursday, March 23, 2023 | 1:30-3:30pm | Straughn Center, Room A

Members in Attendance: Chair Peter Chaires, Membership/Nominating Committee Chair Kenneth Parker, Communication and Education Committee Chair Bernie Hamel, Executive Director Cody Helmer, Reggie Brown, Staci Sims, Kim Sams, Patricia Dewar, Ernest Sellers, John Woeste, Steve Smith, Tom Hart, Roger Davis, Larry Mack, Tim Garman, Mike Joyner, Mike Lester, Melissa Putnam, and Michael Schadler.

Member Prospect Guests: Joe Joyce, Robert Williams, Hugh Dailey, and Andy Seiler.

Guests: 4-H Board members Isaac Chandler and Todd Bundy. UF/IFAS Advancement staff members Julie Conn, Phillip Buchyn, Caylin Hilton, John Ramfjord, Sara Olson, and Pamela Matchett.

Other Activities of the Council: Prior to the official business meeting, Advancement Council members participated in a lunch with UF/IFAS Leadership and the Florida 4-H Foundation Board of Directors. Afterward, Shelby Thomas, Communications & Engagement Manager for UF/IFAS Animal Sciences Department, led a tour of the Animal Sciences facilities.

Call to Order..... **Peter Chaires**
Council Chair

Chaires called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Welcome **Peter Chaires**

Chaires welcomed everyone and introduced guests.

Minutes of Previous Meeting..... **Pamela Matchett**
Acting Secretary

Chaires called for reading and approval of the minutes from the September and December Council meetings.

Motion was made and seconded to waive the reading of the minutes and approve. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

By-Laws Committee Report..... **Peter Chaires**

Chaires went over some of the changes to the By-Laws, including the SHARE Council name change to Advancement Council; new memberships will now be effective immediately upon approval at the Fall or Spring meeting; communicate actions of the Executive Committee via email; reduce the standing committees to two (eliminating the fundraising committee); and a few other minor changes provided for clarity. There was discussion about the 25% membership quorum requirement, as it was not certain if 25% of the membership always attended. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to insert “active membership” to the By-Laws, so that a quorum now consists of 25% of “active” members instead of just “members.” All other aspects of the By-Law changes were approved.

Membership/Nominating Committee Report..... *Kenneth Parker*
Committee Chair

Parker reported that the Advancement Council currently has 24 active members. Membership is promoted to be spread out geographically. There were two member candidates in attendance: Joe Joyce and Robert Williams. There were also two member prospects in attendance: Hugh Dailey and Andy Seiler. Parker motioned to accept the two candidates into membership. Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the candidates into active membership.

Communication/Education Committee Report *Bernie Hamel*
Committee Chair

Hamel reported that the new Advancement Council logo is now finished and approved. It was brought to the Council’s attention that Kelly Westfall created the graphic. Hamel also mentioned reaching out to other publications within UF and the agricultural industry to get more notice of IFAS. There was discussion about approaching and promoting agriculture from a different perspective such as with food and the food supply chain.

Executive Report..... *Peter Chaires*

Chaires gave Strategic Planning updates. He said the new onboarding document will be helpful not only to new members, but to older and experienced members as well. He said we now have a new mission statement, a new name, revised by-laws, a new logo, and a refreshed website. Chaires said we have all gained a keen understanding of the functions and the value of the Council, and the ways we can serve the Advancement staff and help achieve their goals and priorities. He said the membership Committee should be commended for adding new leaders from a diverse group of Ag sectors; that we have an excellent group of agricultural and industry leaders on this Council, and through this strategic process he has heard over and over from Council members that they are standing ready to commit their time and expertise. Council members can bridge the Advancement staff, the key decision makers and potential donors to cultivate relationships, provide strategic direction to the staff, and make introductions to open doors for them. These are our primary functions as participants and members of the Council.

Helmer stated that strategic planning is dependent on the leadership transition, i.e., the new UF president. With that transition, we will have many changes in the way of policy and protocols. At the same time, there has been a transition on the Advancement side at the central level, which is the Vice President of Advancement being re-assigned to the President's office. Helmer stated that there might be changes coming in gift acceptances. UF leadership wants absolute assurance that the gifts that we are accepting are not going to cost the University anything. Council members asked for updates as things progress.

Helmer talked about the McCarty Hall classroom renovations. He said this has been one of our priorities for three years and we have raised \$124,000 for the classroom renovations. He said \$74,000 of that came from Giving Day, the Advancement Council, and a few other support mechanisms. He said we also received \$50,000 from another individual who committed to doing one of the rooms, so we have two classrooms completely named.

IFAS Advancement Updates.....Cody Helmer

Helmer introduced new Senior Director of Development Sara Olson who is going to be handling the Extension fundraising for IFAS. He went over the organizational chart for the office that explains the duties and supervision of each Advancement employee.

Helmer then talked about the Campaign “Next” & Communication Plan. He thinks we may not look at the next steps of another campaign for another 12 to 18 months, which gives us more time to plan a communication strategy to highlight impact gifts for UF/IFAS and fundraising priorities for the next campaign. What we are working on right now is an 18-month communication plan to highlight the previous campaign’s impact and say, “thank you.”

For Campaign “Next”, Helmer said there will be three areas of emphasis: People, Places and Programs. Anything that we fundraise for is going to fit in one of those three buckets. For People, the focus will be graduate student endowments, undergrad funding, and faculty endowments. For Places, it is AI Center at GCREC, on-campus student facilities, and off-campus student facilities/REC dorms. For Programs, it is Florida 4-H, Coastal Collaborations, and UF/IFAS unrestricted.

Helmer talked about our current fundraising priorities, one of them being the Gulf Coast REC Artificial Intelligence Center. He asked Kenneth Parker to give the group some information.

Parker said it’s called the Center for Applied Artificial Intelligence...keyword being “applied,” which has caught the attention of national and multinational companies that have an interest in what will go on at the Center. The cost of labor is an issue where robotics can play a part. Robotics have improved the sustainability of every industry in America other than agriculture, but now the processing speeds have come so far that we are now able to, in real time, have an autonomous vehicle moving through a field with several different types of sensors, and these sensors create an action. And that action takes place at precisely the right place and the right time, whether that's picking fruit, planting plants, pulling weeds, shooting the weeds with lasers. There are many applications for robotics and AI. Dr. Angle stated that he wants this to be the Silicon Valley of Agriculture. He stated that we are looking at a completion date of October 2025. He said if we cannot utilize AI in the state of Florida, we may not be competitive in the marketplace.

Helmer said in talking with Jack Rehcigl at GCREC that this could be enormous for IFAS, and the impact it's going to have on mechanizing pickings, getting away from manual labor, plant breeding, disease and identification of plants, pest identification, and reducing fertilizers and reducing inputs just because of having that AI technology on hand. It's going to be big in reducing costs across the industry.

After much discussion on AI, Helmer briefed on the Center for Urban Pest Management. Urban Entomology is a top five industry and UF/IFAS Entomology and Nematology Department is ranked number two in the world. Up until the last couple of years we've had two sides to pest management...you had the spray system and the bait system...and never the two shall meet, so to speak. However, it has changed in recent years, and we found that our researchers who are working both of those sides have come together in a good way to really move some things forward. On top of that we have several alumni who are highly placed in pest management companies who have come back to Florida and said, “We want to see something special happen for this.” So, they've started to work with those faculty members to put together this center of excellence, and then essentially creating a center in southeast Florida that doesn't exist anywhere else.

It's going to be heavily focused on Extension and expanding programs and positions and focusing on research. They are trying to work on a \$42.4 million fundraising goal. They have the attention of several industry partners with a gift of \$250,000 and are working on a \$1 million grant.

Helmer then talked about Emerging Enterprises, which is essentially an ongoing project to find alternate types of crops to develop in the state of Florida. He said more would be discussed in the next meeting.

Helmer then asked his Advancement team to talk about current fundraising projects. Caylin Hilton began by introducing Isaac Chandler, president-elect of the Florida 4-H Foundation. Chandler announced that Todd Bundy, present at this meeting, was one of the 2023 incoming class members of the Florida 4-H Hall of Fame. Bundy was pleasantly surprised. He said 4-H is near and dear to his heart. He and Isaac and Robert Williams have been working together in 4-H for a long time, about 35 years. Bundy thanked everyone.

Hilton then talked about the 4-H Camp Cherry Lake Cabins and the 4-H Signature Programs and Scholarships. She said that Bundy has been a wonderful champion and helped grow their annual fundraiser; and she congratulated him. She said there are three 4-H camps in Florida. The leadership team has a strong vision for seeing those camps used year-round for school groups for outreach, getting more students connected to 4-H, hands-on learning, outdoor agriculture, education, etc. There is Camp Timpoochee in Niceville; Camp Cherry Lake in Madison; and Camp Cloverleaf in Lake Placid. Each of them will have their specialty. Camp Cherry Lake was a project in the 1930s and it looks very much like it did when it was originally built, so it needs a lot of love, and they are not able to have that camp fully operational. However, they are working with the USDA for \$1.125 million for a multipurpose education building out there.

She said the big lift that they are talking about right now at Cherry Lake to get it back open and fully operational is \$3.5 million to get five new cabins built that are very similar to the one newest cabin they have out there. Florida Rural Rehab was key in that venture and under Dean John Woeste's leadership and Larry Mack. She shared that they have about a \$30 million need overall across the three camps.

She then talked about their 4-H Signature Programs and Scholarships and said their focus is on obtaining support for those programs and support for scholarships to help youth attend camps. They were successful in getting about \$100,000 in camp scholarships from a couple of military grants this past year, which brought in Army and Air force youth to the camps. Endowments provided about \$60,000 in camp scholarships in the last month or so.

John Ramfjord, who came on board last July, talked about the CALS Dean's Circle, which was a major giving society. Ramfjord said they visited with several Dean's Circle members trying to get their feedback and present that feedback to CALS Dean Elaine Turner. Moving forward, they will use it more like an annual giving society/alumni engagement that Dean Turner will use to engage younger alumni. It will provide non-scholarship support to students for research trips, conferences, etc. that will allow Dean Turner to help students along their journey a lot more freely. He said they will re-launch this in the fall with new branding and new membership. It started out with the lowest level of membership at \$1,200, which probably precluded a lot of recent graduates. So, they are now looking at starting membership levels at \$120 year or \$10 a month.

Julie Conn talked about Altman Specialty Plants. She said it is something that's unique that they are trying to collaborate with two other land-grant universities to create a collaborative for Mr. Altman, who is very invested in how research happens at universities, and how it benefits the nursery industry. They have all been designated experts in one particular area, so they have been working with Dr. Paul Fisher in Environmental Horticulture.

She said they have asked Mr. Altman to seed-fund a project for \$250,000. They are hopeful that at the end of this test gift that he will endow a chair at the University to continue the work.

Helmer talked about Giving Day 2023. He said that many of the people here in the room were very helpful in making Giving Day a success. There were 1,072 gifts, which was better than last year. The overall giving number was lower at \$79,230.80, but we had 763 unique donors: 138 first time donors to UF and 269 first time donors to IFAS. This is a win for us, and we are happy and thankful for all the help you (Advancement Council members) provided.

Helmer then talked about New Gift Commitments. He said that Conn and Davies worked together to secure a gift-in-kind (mosquito catchers) worth \$2.3 million from the Florida Insect Control Group. He said the 1923 Fund is heavily involved in giving toward purchases of land surrounding the UF/IFAS Ordway Swisher Biological Station and recently gave an additional \$400,000. He mentioned the \$250,000 gift from Carol Postley, a sheep breeder, who has been involved with animal sciences.

For Anticipated Gift Commitments, Ramfjord talked about the \$100,000 gift coming from Southeast Produce Council that will help develop an undergraduate assistantship program through using UF faculty or Extension to help their members stay on top of industry, and best practices through either marketing or packaging. Hilton talked about a new donor looking to make a \$100,000 legacy gift. He is a retired airline pilot who is interested in drone technology programs. She is also working with The Miami Foundation to secure a \$70,000 gift for the Miami-Dade County 4-H Program. Conn said she is working with Bank of America to secure a \$80,000 gift.

Helmer nominated Dana Eller for the 2023 UF/IFA Volunteer of the Year Award. Eller, an alumna who lives in southeast Florida, has served on the ABE steering committee since 2019. He's been heavily involved with the steering Committee for the new ABE Lab Building since its inception. His family committed matching funds for the ABE Lab on Giving Day for the past three years. He has introduced us to many people who are interested in supporting the ABE Lab and just supporting the program in general. His father was an engineering alum who switched to ABE almost accidentally and was a part of the first class that was officially in CALS. A motion was made and seconded to accept the nomination.

Conn went over the list of Conferences and Conventions for the year, and those development officers who plan to attend various ones.

The Council members wanted to know how they could help, and Helmer responded that help could be provided by sending connections to those who are interested in any of the programs in the People, Places or Program areas outlined earlier. Helmer also mentioned that he will create and forward to the Council members a brochure highlighting success stories and what we are celebrating up to this point.

Helmer then briefed the Council members on Flavors of Florida event that was starting at 6:00 p.m. that evening, and the biographical information and sponsorships in their packets. He also covered the upcoming events of this year.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment..... Peter Chaires

Seeing no further business, Chaires adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.

Reported and respectfully submitted by:

Pamela Matchett

Pamela Matchett, Acting Secretary