

MINUTES OF THE ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL SPRING MEETING

Thursday, March 21, 2024 | 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. | UF Beef Teaching Unit South

Members in Attendance: Chair Peter Chaires; Acting Membership/Nominating Committee Chair Larry Mack; Communication and Education Committee Chair Bernie Hamel; Executive Director Cody Helmer; Roger Davis; Michael Garcia; Joe Joyce; Mike Joyner; Mike Lester; Kim Sams; Staci Sims; Wayne Smith; Debbie Swindle; and Robert Williams.

Member Prospect Guests: John Hooker and Ben Bolusky

Guests: Interim Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources Robert Gilbert; 4-H Board member Isaac Chandler; UF/IFAS Advancement staff members Julie Conn, Haley Felton, Caylin Hilton, Pamela Matchett, Sara Olson, and John Ramfjord.

Other Activities of the Council: Prior to the official business meeting, Advancement Council members participated in a lunch and Question and Answer Session with Interim Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources Robert Gilbert. Afterward, Cody Helmer moderated a Prospect Review Session with Advancement Council members.

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 ready and approval of the minutes from the September meeting.

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

Committee Reports

Executive Committee Report..... Peter Chaires and Cody Helmer, Executive Director

Chaires asked the committee members what they learned from hearing Dr. Robert Gilbert answer their questions. Robert Williams started the conversation with comments on 4-H. Other council members chimed in about the 4-H pavilion match, emphasis on nutrition, and Ag in the Classroom. Helmer talked about presidential priorities, Artificial Intelligence, and student engagement.

Helmer announced that CALS Dean Elaine Turner will be stepping down at the end of the year. He also stated that there will be a 15-20% increase in fundraising numbers in fiscal year 2025.

Membership/Nominating Committee Report Larry Mack, Acting Committee Chair

Mack stated that the Membership/Nominating Committee met on February 26, 2024, and discussed the active member list and prospective member updates. There are currently 23 active members. Mack introduced John Hooker and Ben Bolusky as member prospects, adding that John Hoblick couldn't make it but hopes to attend in the fall. He said the Committee keeps a running list of prospective members, and

several have been identified to invite to a future meeting. He said to send additional member suggestions to Kenneth Parker, Larry Mack or the IFAS Advancement team.

Mack stated that Mike Joyner, Mike Lester, Melissa Putnam, and Kim Sams have reached the end of their three-year terms and wish to remain active for another term.

Mack stated that Richard Barber and Sharon Spratt have reached the end of their three-year terms and wish to become Emeritus members.

Mack stated that Michael Schadler has reached the end of his three-year term and wishes to become a past member.

After some discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve these member term transitions.

Mack then stated that John Hooker was a candidate for membership and had expressed his interest in becoming an active member. A motion was made and seconded to approve John Hooker as an active member of the Advancement Council.

Mack said that the current Executive Committee members — Peter Chaires, Chair; Reggie Brown, Vice Chair; Kenneth Parker, Membership and Nominating Committee Chair; and Benie Hamel, Communication and Education Committee Chair — have all agreed to serve another two-year term in their current positions. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Executive Committee members’ two-year term.

Communication/Education Committee Report.....Bernie Hamel, Committee Chair

Hamel reported that the “How it Happened” communications campaign covered eight out of 18 stories about gifts made during the “Go Greater” campaign. The Advancement team shared performance data later in the meeting. Hamel thanked the Council members who shared posts on their social media and their organizations’ accounts.

Hamel asked the Council to review the summer conferences list, which outlines the ones the Advancement team members will be attending throughout the year. He stated this is an opportunity for Advancement Council members to also attend and facilitate introductions and conversations between Advancement team and prospective donors at these events.

Hamel said the Committee discussed the opportunity to follow up with event partners after the Flavors of Florida event to thank them for participating. A contact list was included in their folders.

Hamel concluded saying that the Partners Reception would be at Wilmot Gardens prior to the Flavors of Florida event, which was an area of interest for the Council because of its focus on mental health and as one of President Sasse’s strategic funding initiatives.

IFAS Advancement UpdatesCody Helmer

Helmer discussed the “How it Happened” 18-month long communication series that began in July 2023. It highlights impact gifts for UF/IFAS by posting one blog post each month that is broadcast across IFAS social media platforms. He provided a chart that showed how the blogs are successful with impressions and engagements from viewers.

Helmer then talked about current Advancement projects he is working on: Center for Urban Entomology; DeLuca Stakeholder Event (Dec. 9). Julie Conn discussed her projects: Costa Proposal; Revamping the CALS Partnership Program; and the \$6m Trimble gift of software/hardware with Design, Construction

and Planning. John Ramfjord talked about merging the Dean’s Circle fund with the CALS Florida fund; and the CALS Retired Faculty Planned Giving Workshop. Caylin Hilton discussed the 4-H Camps, Camp Cherry Lake cabins, and the 4-H Legacy Planning Seminars that she will be hosting along with Alex Pribil from the UF Foundation.

Helmer then discussed the new gift commitments the Advancement team are bringing in, which include \$250k from Don Bennink; \$160k from the National 4-H Council; \$125k from Lazzara; \$119k gift-in-kind from Friendship Farms; \$50k from Amy Lohman; \$50k from Dewar Nurseries; \$30k from Wayne Smith and Mitzi Austin; \$30k from Dave and Kristen Hall; \$26k from Bloom and Grow Society; and \$20k from Publix.

Helmer and the team then went over the upcoming anticipated gift commitments as follows: \$2M from Wayne Davis; \$800k from The Aylesworth Foundation; \$142k from Florida Strawberry Growers Association; \$130k from The Ichetucknee Partnership; \$100k from the Everglades Equipment Group; \$100k from Bloom & Grow Society; \$100k from Pauline Lawrence; \$80k from Bank of America; \$80k from Jacqueline Dupont Trust; \$50k from Bruce Christmas; \$30k from Vera Damron; and \$30k from AgTech Logic.

Helmer then nominated Bruce DeLaney as the 2024 UF/IFAS Volunteer of the Year. DeLaney has coordinated 28 individual real estate purchases for the Ordway Swisher Biological Station since the 1923 Fund began donating to IFAS in 2011. Since his retirement in 2014, he has volunteered his time for the procurement of OSBS properties. He has waived the agent fees in these closures while working pro bono. He also advocates with the 1923 Fund Board on behalf of OSBS and IFAS and actively works with landowners to negotiate property acquisitions. A motion was made and seconded to approve DeLaney as the 2024 UF/IFAS Volunteer of the Year.

Helmer went over the results of the 2024 “Stand Up & Holler” Gator Nation Giving Day. Overall results showed 469 “unique” donors; the average donor gift was \$234; and \$109,972 in revenue collected. Results by constituent type showed that Alumnus provided 56% of gifts with Friends, Parents, Students and Staff providing the remainder. Results by channel showed the highest results of 371 donors providing \$60k via the web; 54 donors provided \$8,168 via social media/email; and 28 donors provided \$4,405 via mail. The highest result via appeal code showed 301 donors providing \$31,829 via the Giving Day website landing page.

Helmer then reviewed the Flavors of Florida event with bios of some of those attending; a schedule of events, including the Partners Reception at Wilmot Gardens and where to catch the shuttles; and where to park and enter the Champions Club at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

Helmer went over the list of upcoming events and asked the Committee members to reach out to their committee chair if they were interested in joining a particular sub-committee. He asked them to follow IFAS accounts on social media and share donor/gift stories, “How It Happened” blogs, and to follow up with Advancement staff on prospect connections.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment.....Peter Chaires

There being no further business, Chaires adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

Reported and respectfully submitted by:

Pamela Matchett

Pamela Matchett, Acting Secretary