The External Affairs committee met yesterday. The minutes from the January 18 meeting were approved. Mark Lanier, assistant to the chancellor, provided a legislative update. The university hosted the UNC Board of Governors for their March meeting. At that meeting, they approved the FY18-19 Operating Budget Priorities and 2018 Legislative Policy Proposals. Some of the UNC System priorities align with several of the highest priorities for UNCW, mainly enrollment growth funding.

He also reported the budget request for 2018 legislative session includes numerous items that are important to UNCW. This includes student success initiatives, faculty recruitment and retention, employee compensation, lab schools, and innovation in manufacturing biopharmaceuticals. The budget request doesn’t have a specific amount for facility repairs and renovations. Instead, it asks for proportional percentage of total repair and renovation funding. The UNC policy agenda consists of five financial and capital efficiency requests and four technical corrections. The full documents can be found on the BOG website.

Eddie Stuart, vice chancellor for university advancement, reported that more than $9.9 million has been raised in gifts, new commitments and planned gifts as of March 31. This is roughly a 12 percent increase over last year at this time. He also told the committee about Nicole D’Alessio, a freshman recipient of the Board of Trustees Scholarship. He reported the scholarship’s endowment has a market value of over $190,000. Endowment reports which highlight the investment performance and campus impact were also provided to the board. Mr. Stuart also told the committee about the Give More in 24 challenge which will happen on Tuesday, April 24. This year marks the 5th year for the giving day challenge. The goal is to get 1,000 donors in 24 hours to unlock a $55,000 matching gift. More information will be shared on the website and on social media in the days leading up to the challenge.

Lee Knight, director of legacy gift planning, talked briefly about how the recent tax reform may impact charitable giving. Limitations on or elimination of some itemized deductions (but not the charitable deduction) encourages use of standard deduction. This could encourage donors to make larger one-time gifts or move to a donor advised funds. The new tax law changes will likely have a more significant impact on athletic giving. There are specific provision of the tax code that eliminate the deductibility of certain gifts to collegiate athletics programs. Gifts for priority seating rights are no longer deductible. Discussion is underway on how to address and educate our donors as to how they may be impacted by these new changes.
Lastly, the committee did vote on a closed session action item which will be brought before the board in closed session.