The External Affairs committee met yesterday. The minutes from the July 19 meeting were approved. At the meeting, we heard updates from each unit pertaining to their responses to Hurricane Florence. Mark Lanier, assistant to the chancellor, provided a legislative update. In the third extra session, the state passed a bill to provide $30 million for repairs and renovation to facilities at UNCW, UNCP and Fayetteville State University. The money will be allocated by the Board of Governors. UNCW should receive between $22-27 million. The bill also provided $2 million for emergency aid for students.

Eddie Stuart, vice chancellor for university advancement, provided an update on the two emergency relief funds. The employee fund has received 117 gifts totaling $26,422 and so far has received 53 requests. All 53 requests were granted at least a portion of the money they requested and totals $23,593 in awards. The student fund has received $81,601 and so far they have received 303 requests. As of now, 219 awards have been made totaling $61,690.

Janine Iamunno, chief communications officer, told the committee about the various communications outlets used during the storm. Through Facebook, UNCW reached out to more than 2.1 million. The emergency information website had more than 200,000 views. There was also 900 various other media stories along with emails and special webpages produced by the office to provide students, faculty and staff with updates and information. The office is also working on a new series of Hurricane Heroes stories that will be shared soon.

Jimmy Bass, director of athletics, told the committee five teams which are currently in competitive season were relocated to the Chapel Hill area. Other institutions such as Elon, UNC, UNCG, Duke and NC State shared their facilities to enable the teams to stay on track with their training and their games. He also announced the men’s basketball team will hold an exhibition game against Clemson on Saturday, October 27 at 5 p.m. Tickets are $20 and all proceeds will benefit the Good Shepherd Center and UNCW’s campus emergency fund for students.

Lindsay LeRoy, director of alumni relations, told the committee 25,000 alumni live the Cape Fear region and after storm, two themes were commonly heard- how can it help and I need help. The alumni office through emails and social media posted ways for people to help and get help by sharing the master list compiled by the office of student leadership and engagement with various resources for those who needed assistance and also ways to give back. The alumni office also had to reschedule several events that were slated for September and October but those will be held in the spring. The Cape Fear Alumni
Chapter will hold a free concert on October 26 at 6 p.m. Guests will be encouraged to bring non-perishable items and alumni in need can take these items on site. Any leftover items will be donated to Nourish NC and the Diaper bank.

Bill Kawczynski, director of military affairs, told the committee about Student Veteran Organization VP Jay Richardson who attended the SVA National Leadership Institute in Washington. While there Jay spoke with the deputy secretary for the VA about the concern for a potential loss of GI Bill benefits for students due to the hurricane since classes weren’t in session. The deputy secretary ensured that funding would not be cut for those students affected.

At the end of the reports, Trustee White suggested the university reach out to the county to see if they can be part of the county’s emergency communications center for training and events to allow the university to part of that group.

Lastly, the committee did vote on a closed session action item which will be brought before the board in closed session.