The External Affairs committee met on Thursday, April 29 at 1:00 p.m. The following board members were present: Agnes Beane, Robert Fensom, Gidget Kidd, Yousry Sayed, Maurice Smith, and Jimmy Tate. As chair, Dr. Sayed called the meeting to order and read the required statement of ethics. No conflicts were identified. The minutes from the January 28, 2021 meeting were approved.

Mark Lanier, assistant to the chancellor, provided a legislative report. He discussed the American Families Plan that was introduced in the State of the Union address that has some features that would be good for some sectors of higher education, yet it would need modifications to gain support from most four-year institutions. Mr. Lanier then reported that the federal government has not provided guidance yet for the use of the third round of funding for UNCW approved by Congress in the American Recovery Plan. He then reported that Congress is unlikely to pass comprehensive budget bills this year. Instead, continuing resolutions will be needed to keep the government functioning, in which case community projects would not be funded. Mr. Lanier then reported that at the state level, the General Assembly continues its work on the state budget and other legislation. All signs continue to be positive for most of UNC and UNCW priorities, including enrollment increase funding, building reserves, and capital projects, including the Randall Library expansion and renovation project. It is not clear whether the legislature will fund compensation increases for UNC faculty and staff equivalent to other state employees. It has been three years since the last legislative salary increases for university employees, so the university continues to advocate for this as a very high priority.

Mr. Lanier then presented a resolution in support of the myFutureNC educational attainment goal. Cecilia Holden, UNCW graduate and the President and CEO of myFutureNC, requested that this Board consider adoption of the education attainment goal that was adopted by the myFutureNC Commission. Designed to address the “skills gap” in North Carolina, the goal is that there will be 2 million North Carolinians by 2030 with a high-quality credential or post-secondary degree. Over 200 organizations have endorsed the attainment goal, including businesses, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, community colleges, independent colleges and universities, the UNC System Office, the North Carolina General Assembly, and many others. The committee unanimously voted to approve supporting the myfutureNC resolution, and I bring it to the full board today with recommendation for approval.

Eddie Stuart, vice chancellor for university advancement, provided a Campaign update reporting that the university has received over $86M in gifts and commitments since July 1, 2015. The Campaign public launch was covered by over 30 media outlets. Due to the pandemic, face-to-face development visits are down by 60%, but we remain enthusiastic. The Campaign public launch was covered by over 30 media outlets. Alumni Relations recently hosted our first virtual Homecoming. Seahawks Give was our most successful 24-hour giving challenge to date: raising over $372K with 1,888 donors. Recent notable gifts were announced including a new $1M Distinguished Merit Scholarship. Eddie introduced student-athlete Dominique “Dom” Travers, a scholarship recipient who is currently working on her Master’s of Education and is involved in many volunteer endeavors on campus. She shared how being a scholarship recipient provided financial relief for her family. Eddie also thanked new Trustee Jimmy Tate for leading by example by creating a gift in memory of his brother.

Jimmy Bass, director of athletics, reported on the required UNC System Intercollegiate Athletics Survey, which is completed by the Registrar’s Office. The data collected reflecting the academic characteristics and performance of the system athletes and athletic departments is disclosed to the Board of Governors. The survey concluded that UNCW Athletics 1.) does not have any freshmen student-athletes who do not meet the minimum
admission or course requirements 2.) does not have any student-athletes flagged for course clustering 3.) student-athletes average GPA is higher than the student body and 4.) student-athletes are heavily monitored by compliance and academic departments. Many of our teams were relocated for practice or had their seasons cut short due to the pandemic.

Eddie Stuart introduced Dr. Jeanine Mingé, associate vice chancellor for community engagement. Dr. Mingé oversees the Office of Community Engagement and Applied Learning in the Division of Academic Affairs, which is a recently added unit reporting up through External Affairs Committee to the Board. Dr. Mingé presented a UNCW Engagement Report, including the mission, reach and unit reports from the Office of Applied Learning, Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Office of the Arts and the newly evolving Equity Institute. She shared a video spotlighting the Learn to Swim program.

With no old or new business brought before the committee, Chairman Sayed adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.