

Staff Senate Updated on Foundation Investments

By Janet Cappiello



The Staff Senate met on Monday, February 10th in Ekstrom Library's Chao Auditorium.

Staff senators were updated on the state of the UofL Foundation's investments by Executive Director Keith Sherman. The PowerPoint, "[Reforms Pave Way for a Sustainable Future](#)," shows how changes made since 2017 are helping to restore the university's endowment after years of poor management.

He said the university's endowment as of Dec. 31, 2019, totaled \$637 million. Stricter spending rules have been imposed that will gradually replenish the endowment, he said. "We don't overspend," Sherman said.

Sherman pointed out that the foundation is not responsible for fundraising – that falls to University Advancement – but noted that donors who had stopped honoring pledges are once again making payments. "Donors are getting more comfortable and realizing it really is a new day," he said.

Senators got a surprise visit by UofL Police Chief Gary D. Lewis Jr. during a discussion about the Feb. 7 false evacuation warning that appeared on university telephones.

Lewis answered questions about the incident for about 10 minutes after a staff senator at the meeting in Chao Auditorium texted him that senators were expressing their concerns about public safety on campus.

The chief said the message appeared on all university telephones in the late afternoon because of an IT error and had not originated with ULPD. ULPD was quickly alerted to the problem and, after confirming no threat existed, sent a text message via the RAVE warning system that the telephone message was sent in error.

Lewis said the evacuation message appeared to have originated from a campus telephone and IT was investigating the incident. He added that ULPD was planning to hold a tabletop exercise with senior leadership to address public safety in an emergency.

Staff Senate President John Smith said during his report that the Board of Trustees had approved new bylaws giving the university president veto power over the UofL Athletic Association board. The move will “give us a lot more institutional control,” Smith said. The chair’s full report is [online](#).

The Bylaw Revision Committee presented its first reading and received comments.

Christopher Tillquist, anthropology associate professor, reported that Faculty Senate is looking into the issue of free speech on campus. He encouraged staff senators to read the university’s policy on speech and literature distribution, last revised in 2011.

The next Staff Senate meeting is March 9 on the HSC campus.