

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students
of

The University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras
San Juan, Puerto Rico
by

A Self-Study Evaluation Team Representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared After a
Visit to the Institution on:
February 28 – March 2, 2016

The Visitors:

Dr. Mildred García (Team Chair)
President, California State University, Fullerton

Dr. Arturo Alonzo, Jr. (Team Member)
Former Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration/Chief
Operating Officer, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Dr. H. Eliot Chenux (Team Member)
Vice President for Student Affairs Emeritus,
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Dr. Gerardo del Cerro Santamaría (Team Member)
Director of Assessment and Professor
Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science & Art

Dr. Karen S. Goldman (Team Member)
Assistant Director for External Relations, Development, and Assessment and Research
Associate, Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures, University of Pittsburgh

Dr. M. Karen Jogan (Team Member)
Professor of Spanish and Founding Director of Planning and Assessment
Albright College

Dr. Alberto LaCava (Team Member)
Professor, Department of Computer Science, and
Former Associate Dean for Assessment, Felician College

Dr. Joann La Perla-Morales (Team Member)
President, Middlesex County College

Working with the Visitors:

Dr. Tito Guerrero, III
Vice President
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

At the Time of the Visit:

President/Chief Executive Officer:
Dr. Carlos E. Severino Valdez, Chancellor

Dean for Academic Affairs
Dr. Palmira N. Ríos González

Chair of the Governing Board:
Mr. Jorge Sánchez Colón

I. Institutional Overview

The University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras Campus (UPR-RP) is the oldest and most complex of the eleven campuses within the University of Puerto Rico System. A public research-oriented and comprehensive doctoral institution, the campus provides a diverse array of academic offerings that include 68 undergraduate programs, 48 master's degrees, and 16 doctoral programs, as well as postgraduate certificates and a continuing education program.

Known affectionately as "la IUPI," the campus, which was founded in 1903 as Puerto Rico's first public university, began with a mere 173 students. Over the last 112 years, growth has been exponential, both in terms of size and achievements that have contributed to the school's reputation as the most prestigious and respected institution of higher learning in Puerto Rico. In addition, the UPR-RP is recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a Doctoral Research Intensive University.

Today, the institution's reputation extends beyond national and international borders, crossing oceans, languages, and academic disciplines. It is bolstered by the solid formation and professional success of UPR-RP graduates in multiple fields as well as the accomplishments of first-rate professors who are committed to the goals of a tertiary education of excellence.

Experienced non-teaching professional staff provides support and services that enrich course offerings, campus activities, and the intellectual and professional formation of students. The UPR-RP has a diverse faculty with academic degrees that have been awarded by world-class universities. It includes numerous professors who have received prestigious international awards. Each year, the most talented and academically prepared students among Puerto Rico's high school graduates tend to choose the UPR-RP as the place to complete their higher education.

The campus serves approximately 18,220 students annually. Recent figures show 14,000 undergraduates, with 3,500 students at the master's level and 770 pursuing doctoral degrees. This population makes the UPR-RP the largest degree-granting institution in the Caribbean.

The UPR-RP students are educated at an institution committed not only to academic quality but also to economic accessibility. They attend one of the most affordable universities in the country, with students who began in 2012 paying \$55.00 per undergraduate credit and \$137.00 per graduate credit. Scholarships are available to all economically disadvantaged students who would not be able to study without such aid, consistent with the mandate established by the organic act of the University of Puerto Rico, namely, that no qualified person should be barred from studying at the institution due to a mere lack of financial resources. Tuition waivers are also granted to graduate students who are employed as research and teaching assistants. In these instances, students must study full time and maintain a minimum grade point average.

II. Nature and Conduct of the Visit

This visit was conducted by a team of peer evaluators as part of the process of determining if the Institution is in compliance with the Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation.

Meetings conducted during the visit include:

TEAM MEETING

Celeste Freytes	Faculty of Education, Chair Self Study Group
Juanita Rodríguez	Faculty of Business Administration, Co-Chair Self Study Group
Agnes Bosch	Assistant Dean, Faculty of Humanities
Aracelis Rodríguez	Faculty of Humanities
Don Walicek	Faculty of General Studies
Luis Villaronga	School of Law
María del Carmen García	Faculty of General Studies
Marta Medina	Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
Luis Rodríguez	Student Council Representative

Palmira N. Ríos-González	Dean of Academic Affairs
Pedro Rodríguez-Esquerdo	Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Grisele Meléndez	Dean of Administration
Gloria Díaz-Urbina	Dean of Students
Francisco Rodríguez	Dean of School of Architecture
Jorge Santiago Pintor	Director School of Communication
Vivian Neptune	Dean of School of Law
José Sánchez-Lugo	Director of Graduate School of Information Sciences and Technology
José González-Taboada	Dean of Faculty of Business Administration
Carlos González	Dean of Faculty of Natural Sciences
Dagmar Guardiola	Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences
Roamé Torres González	Dean of Faculty of Education

Carlos Rodríguez-Fraticelli	Dean of Faculty of General Studies
María de los Angeles Castro	Dean of Faculty of Humanities

MEETING WITH DR ALONZO

Daphne Dominguez	Director, Office of Conservation of University Facilities
Miguel Pagán	Director, Office of Planning and Physical Development

MEETING WITH DR. LA CAVA

Cynthia Corujo	Program of Educational Academic Services
Eilleán Cruz	Program of Educational Academic Services
Ivonne Denis	Educational Innovation Program
Mariana Franqui	Upward Bound Program
Evelyn Rivera	Talent Search Program
María Rodríguez	Talent Search Program
Marta Medina	Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

LUNCH

Palmira N. Ríos	Dean of Academic Affairs
Dolores Miranda	Director, Dept. of Psychology
Alex Betancourt	Director, Dept. of Political Science
Ana Matanzos	Professor, School of Law
Rafael Irizarry	Professor, School of Planning

MEETING WITH DRs. DEL CERRO AND JOGAN

Nadia Cordero	Director, Office of Evaluation of Student Learning (OEAE)
Chamary Fuentes	Evaluation Coordinator, Graduate Students (OEAE)
Joel Lucena	Evaluation Coordinator, Undergraduate Students (OEAE)
Julio Rodríguez	Advisor OEAE & Professor Faculty of Education

MEETING WITH DR. CHENAUX

Gloria Díaz	Dean of Students
Marilú Pérez	Associate Dean of Students
Estela Pérez	Assistant Dean of Students
Raquel Rodríguez	Assistant Dean of Administration, Office of Dean of Students.
Luis Irizarry	Assistant Dean of Students for International Affairs
Darwin Marrero	Assistant Dean of Student Services

María Jiménez	Director, Student Counseling and Development
Rose Marrero	Assistant Director, Orientation and Counseling
David Alemán	Director, Athletics Department
Rafael Chaves	Coordinator of Social Events
José Nieves	Director, Student Housing
Anibal Alvalle	Director, Financial Aid
Gilberto Caraballo	Director Medical Services
José Raúl Ocasio	Director, Office of People with Disabilities
Nylka Torres	Coordinator, Infant Laboratory
María Lugo	Legal Advisor
Brenda Hernández	Student Housing
Ramón Vázquez	Administrative Assistant, Student Housing
José Martínez	Director, Housing Program
Sandra Echevarria	Coordinator, International Relations, Faculty Exchanges
María Avila	Official, International Programs
Alma Ramos	Official, International Programs
Lindsey Vázquez	Administrative Assistant, International Relations
Tania González	Director, Economic Aid Program
Carmen Heredia	Secretary, Center for Occupational Development
Migdalia Llanes	Office of Assistant Dean of Administration
Hernán Rosado	Office of Medical Services
Carla Rodríguez	Coordinator of Technical Services
Abdiel Nuñez	Administrative Assistant
Sandra Pagán	Administrative Assistant
José Rodríguez Vicenty	Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Office of Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Freddie Ramos	Coordinator, Department of Athletics

MEETING WITH DR. ALONZO

Rosa Marta Alers	Director, OPEP
Samary Cunningham	Director, Office of Finance
Ida de Jesús	Special Assistant to the Chancellor

MEETING OF DR LA CAVA

Carlos Rosado	Continuing Education Program (DECEP)
Karla González	Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, Distance Learning Education
José Sánchez	Director of Graduate School of Information Sciences and Technology

TEAM MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE DEANS

Palmira Ríos	Dean of Academic Affairs
Pedro Rodríguez	Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Grisele Meléndez	Dean of Administration
Gloria Díaz	Dean of Students

MEETING WITH DRS. ALONZO AND DEL CERRO

Rosa Mara Alers	Director, Office of Budget and Planning
Zulyñ Díaz	Coordinator, Institutional Research
Annette De León	Coordinator, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

MEETING WITH DR. LA CAVA

Gisela Negrón	Director, Dept. of Social Work (BA)
Carmen England	Coordinator of Internships and Cooperative Programs, Faculty of Business Administration
María Jiménez	Director, of Legal Clinic, School of Law
Sandra Sánchez	Assistant Dean of Students, Faculty, General Studies
Milagros Martínez	Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

INDIVIDUAL MEETING WITH DR. JOGAN

Vanesa Irizarry	Coordinator of Assessment, Faculty of General Studies
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MEETING WITH DR. CHENAUX

Juan Aponte	Registrar, DAA
Angel Echevarria	Director, Office of Enrollment, DAA

MEETING WITH DR. JOGAN

Carmen Báez	Dept. of Spanish, FGS
Laura Martínez	Dept. of English, FGS
Luz Miriam Tirado	Dept. of English, FGS
Aracelis Rodríguez	Humanities Faculty
Don Walicek	Dept. of English, FGS
Astrid Cubano	Associate Dean, Faculty of Humanities
Europa Piñero	Associate Dean, FGS
Rosaura Ramírez	Associate Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences
Marta Medina	Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

MEETING WITH DR. CHENAUX AND DR. DEL CERRO

Guillermo Guasp	President GSC
Luis Rodríguez	Student Rep in Self Study Group
Anibal López	Alternate Student Representative, Administrative Board

Luis Cintrón	Social Sciences Faculty Rep, GSC rep. at Council of Graduate Studies and Research
Roberto Nava	Vice President, CGE
Irlanda Alvarez	Humanities Faculty Rep, GSC rep. at Council of Graduate Studies and Research
Mirna Leticia Alvarez	Council of Student Housing

TEAM DINNER

Uroyoán Walker-Ramos	UPR President
Delia Camacho	Vice President Academic Affairs
Gladys Escalona	Associate Vice President of Research, former Chancellor UPR-RP
Carlos Severino	Chancellor
Palmira Ríos	Dean of Academic Affairs
Pedro Rodríguez	Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Gloria Díaz	Dean of Students
Grisele Meléndez	Dean of Administration
Eduardo Berrios	Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs
Ismael García	Executive Assistant to Chancellor
Josue Hernández	Special Assistant to Chancellor

TEAM MEETING WITH UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS

Uroyoán Walker-Ramos	President
Delia Camacho	Vice President of Academic affairs
Carlos Severino	Chancellor Rio Piedras Campus
Claribel Cabán	Secretary Faculty Senate
Norberto González	UPR Director of Finance
Basilio Rivera	UPR Director of Budget
José Juan Estrada	UPR Associate Director of Budget
Margarita Villamil	Vice President of Student Affairs
René Vargas	Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
Gloria Díaz	Dean of Students
Hernán Rosado	Acting Student Ombudsperson

TEAM MEETING / LUNCH WITH GOVERNING BOARDS REPRESENTATIVES

Victor Castro	Faculty Senate and Administrative Board
Edgar Resto	Board of Governors
Christian Arvelo	Student Representative at Board of Governors
Raúl Cotto	University Board
Claribel Cabán	Secretary Faculty Senate
Criseida Navarro	Faculty Senate
Beatriz Rivera	Faculty Senate and Administrative Board
Carmen H. Rivera	Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Marta Medina	Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

TEAM MEETING WITH STUDENTS

Wettka García	Student
Janice Crespo	Student
Verónica I. Zayas	Student
Hannah Ortiz	Student
Wanda I. Táborá Tirado	Student
Ricardo Góngora Rojas	Student
Hilda M. Pietri	Student
Lizmarie Román	Student
Carlos E. Camacho	Student
Edgar Villanueva Rivera	Student
Alvaro Morales Butter	Student
Anavelle Allen	Student
Miguel Santiago Cruz	Student

TEAM MEETING WITH FACULTY

Manuel Gómez	College of Natural Sciences
Ana Matanzo	School of Law
Mary Frances Gallart	College of General Studies
Estevao Rosim Frachini	College of General Studies
Humberto Corallin	School of Architecture
Lizette Vicéns	College of Natural Sciences
Agnes Vázquez	College of Natural Sciences
Raúl L. Cotto Serrano	College of Social Science
Myrna López Pinto	School of Business Administration
Emilio Pantojas García	College of Social Sciences
Julia Vélez	College of Natural Sciences
Suny Cabrera	College of Humanities
Elizabeth Borges Ocasio	Library System
Noemí Cintrón	College of Natural Sciences
Silvia Alvarez Curbelo	School of Communication
Gladys Capella	College of Education
José C. Vicente	College of Education
Rosa V. Flores	College of Natural Science
César Urides	College of General Studies
Elsa Pinto	College of Natural Science
Miguel A. Prieto Alvarez	School of Law
María del C. García Padilla	College of Education
Agnes M. Bosch	College of Humanities
Astrid Cubano Iguina	College of Humanities
Juanita Rodríguez	ADEM
Iris Rodríguez Parrilla	Library System

Blanca Ortiz	College of Social Science
Guillermo Bernal	College of Social Science
Sylvia J. Figueroa	College of Natural Science
John Celty	College of Education
Aracelis Rodríguez	College of Humanities
Michelle Borrero	College of Natural Science
Daniel Nina	College of Business Administration
Criselda Navarro	Planning Graduate School
Jorge Santiago Pinto	School of Communication
Carlos J. Corrada	College of Natural Science
Carmen A. Figueroa	School of Business Administration
Roamé Torres	College of Education
Lizette López Gracia	School of Law
Luis A. Ferrao	College of General Studies
Aida Andino Pratts	School of Business Administration
Adeliza Rodríguez	School of Communication
Juanita Rodríguez	College of Education
Manuel García	School of Architecture
José L. Ayala	School of Communication
Chamary Fuentes	College of Education
Nellie Zambrana	College of Education
Marisol Gutiérrez	Library System
Don E Walicek	College of General Studies
Rubén Rosado	College of Education
Consuelo Torres	College of Education
Rubén Malavé	College of Education
Michelle Schelske Santos	College of Natural Sciences
Ivonne Figueroa	College of Education
Milagros Méndez	College of Social Sciences
Isabel Rivera Collazo	College of Social Sciences
Haydeé Seijo	School of Communication
Luis A. Ortiz	College of Humanities
Jorge Giovannetti	College of Social Sciences
Carmen Haydeé Rivera	College of Humanities
Purisima Centeno	College of Natural Sciences
Juan Peña Hevia	School of Business Administration
Carla Restrepo	College of Natural Sciences
Sally Everson	Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Victor Castro	College of Humanities
Carmen Pujols	College of Education
Miguel Santiago	Library System
Loida Martínez	College of Education
Jeannette Lebrón	School of Law
Margarita Moscoso	College of Education

III. Affirmation of Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the institution's self-study and appendices, interviews, and other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation.

IV. Commendations and Summary of Institutional Strengths

Commendations and indications of institutional strength are noted in the following narrative under each standard.

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The Rio Piedras Campus, rightly known as the "jewel in the crown" of the University of Puerto Rico System, has a distinctive mission, which reflects its unique characteristics and status in the history of the Island. The mission clearly defines the institution's purpose within the context of higher education in Puerto Rico and situates it as an invaluable asset to the students, faculty and staff, the larger community, the Caribbean region, and beyond. Indeed, the Campus is seen as the lynchpin to the future of the Island. The mission's five general areas (student learning; graduate education; undergraduate education; teaching, research and community service; and innovative and relevant programs) represent core values that underlie and frame the institutional vision and aspirations articulated in both the Vision Universidad 16 strategic plan and the 2016 MSCHE self-study. A careful examination of nearly every facet of the RP Campus demonstrates that the mission is intentionally incorporated into the fabric of the academic community; the undergraduate and graduate curricula, the faculty, the staff, and the culture of the institution overall. This is particularly important in an environment that is subject to continually changing external circumstances.

Commendation:

The University is commended for the strong emphasis in the mission on the UPR-RP's role as an agent for positive change in the surrounding community and throughout the Island, and its commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of the Puerto Rican people.

Suggestion:

The mission is lengthy and sometimes redundant. In fact, it does not contain a traditional mission statement, rather a sequence of aspirational characteristics. The UPR-RP might benefit from the development of a concise, comprehensive statement that is easy to remember and disseminate among the various campus constituencies.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

Utilizing a review of the self-study and analysis of other institutional documents, interviews with faculty, students, staff, and other stakeholders, the team reached the following conclusions regarding this standard:

The University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras (UPR-RP) is engaged in a robust and comprehensive process of strategic planning, evaluation and institutional renewal. Although the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the University System and ultimately, the UPR-RP are facing considerable economic and fiscal challenges, UPR-RP is using the self-study process and other measures in a balanced approach to evaluating strengths and weaknesses. There are several plans, both at the System and University level, that are ongoing and that lead to the goal setting in a strategic manner, resulting in accountability and improvement.

Key Points:

- The steering committee that developed the self-study report is a broad and representative group of faculty, students and administrative staff. Approximately 50 people were engaged in the effort with many more contributing by providing reviews and comments on the drafts;
- The self-study steering committee operated in an open and transparent manner, holding several meetings and communicating frequently and openly with constituents;
- The self-study committee adopted an approach that integrated the concepts and relationships between and among the 14 standards, rather than examining each one as a separate and independent standard;
- Planning at the System level has been robust, with the adoption of Ten for the Decade: 2006-16, a plan that has guided decision-making within the institutions and identified specific areas that should be evaluated in order to measure institutional effectiveness;
- At the University level, in compliance and in support of the system-level plan, UPR-RP approved its ten-year plan, VU 2016;
- VU 2016 is a strategic plan for the University that allowed the campus to examine all aspects, including academic offerings, enrollment, retention and graduation rates. The University-level planning has complemented the strategies and goals set by the University system;
- Both at the System level and at the University level, planning has involved encompassing and representative groups of constituents, including teaching staff, students and support staff;
- Three areas of planning that support improvement in decision making have been strengthened in the last 5 years:
 - a. Leadership
 - b. Communication
 - c. Institutional assessment

- The University is sensitive to the need to link planning and budgeting in order to meet the needs of the projects on its campus;
- Indicative that the University recognizes the importance of linking planning and resource allocation is the merging of two distinct offices into one office. In 2013, the Budget Office and the Office of Academic Planning were merged into one office, Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting (OPEP). This new office reports to the Chancellor, once again, underscoring the importance placed on linking planning and resource allocation.
- OPEP's main responsibilities are:
 - Strategic planning and assessment;
 - Budget planning and projections;
 - Institutional research.
- OPEP coordinates the annual cycle of planning and budget allocation.
- It is important to note the OPEP is committed to conducting training and professional development to all units on campus in order to strengthen the link between planning and resource allocation.
- Another indicator of the importance placed on proper allocation of resources is the creation of the Institutional Budget Committee (CIP) in 2011-12. This committee sets budget priorities and ties the allocation of resources to the annual plan.
- It appears that great strides have been made in the last 10 years in linking long-range planning to decision making and resource allocation.
- With increased communication between the office of the chancellor and the academic components, there is increased accountability and an atmosphere of transparency.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

Utilizing a review of the self-study and of other institutional documents, interviews with faculty, students, staff, and other stakeholders, the team reached the following conclusions regarding this standard:

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the UPR System and ultimately, UPR-RP are all facing significant challenges in the economic and fiscal areas. As of this review, the future of the Commonwealth's economic challenge remains unresolved and casts a shadow of uncertainty on the University's ability to continue to fulfill its mission. As pointed out in the self-study report, two facts are known that are of utmost importance to the University. These facts are:

The Commonwealth is facing its most severe economic recession in modern times;

The Commonwealth is confronting very serious and financial difficulties that have affected its source of revenues, its borrowing capacity and has eroded investors' confidence in the Commonwealth's ability to meet its obligations.

- Key facts that are of utmost concern, include:

- The economy of Puerto Rico has shown contraction in the last 10 years, with the economy showing signs of worsening in the last few years;
 - Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has remained negative since 2007;
 - Unemployment rates continue to increase, averaging a 13% unemployment rate and reaching a high of over 15% in 2014;
 - The Commonwealth relies on deficit financing, the practice of borrowing money to pay recurring expenses;
 - Rating agencies continue to downgrade general obligation and other debt instruments;
 - Lines of credit from the Government Development Bank are not available at this time.
- The University is very aware of the economic challenges, yet continues to approach planning and budget allocations in a manner that will allow it to continue fulfilling its mission to the citizens of Puerto Rico. The University, though faced with great fiscal adversity, is making the best of the situation by examining ways to reduce cost, become more efficient and continue to “guarantee” fulfillment of its mission.
 - Law 2, passed 50 years ago provides that 9.6% of the average of total government revenues for the last two years are allocated to UPR
 - This was a bold statement, emphasizing the commitment to higher education
 - UPR’s appropriations under the legislated formula represents approximately 61% of UPR’s total income;
 - The University has experienced significant reductions in funding due to the erosion of the base, by excluding certain taxes that were dedicated to special projects. The reductions occurred though the fixed 9.6% was not changed.
 - The base was reinstated in 2013-14, but the fixed 9.6% was not applied.
 - The funding level for the UPR was frozen at the 2013-14 level (\$833.9M for the system)
 - Funding for the UPR-RP is frozen at \$241.5M per year until 2018-19
 - Funding for instruction has remained fairly stable even with the budget reductions experienced in the last 5 years.
 - The University uses non-re-recurrent savings to fund Work Plans and Priority Projects, a very good strategy.
 - In 2012, the University developed a comprehensive manual for the development of the operating budget. This manual provides very detailed guidance and steps to be followed, including reviews and feedback from the administrative staff. Of utmost importance, the manual provides for the evaluation of the budget during the fiscal year to determine the use of funds, comparison of budget vs actual and use of FTEs.
 - The Commonwealth requires an annual audit of its financial statements only at the System level. Individual campuses submit their financial data to the central office where they are consolidated.
 - Concerns over internal controls are noted by the auditors, specifically:
 - Closing not done timely, resulting in post-closing adjustments;
 - Posting and reconciliation of financial data not performed on a timely basis;
 - Financial operations at certain campuses are not able to detect accounting errors, resulting in audit adjustments.

- The system office has taken steps, through Certification #135 to address these concerns. These corrective steps include:
 - Requiring campuses to convert their financial statements from a cash basis to an accrual basis every six months or possibly on a quarterly basis;
 - Hired a Director of Accounting who works on the annual financial statements and is responsible for the day-to-day accounting duties;
 - Requiring that the System CFO participate in the hiring process for the campus' Directors of Accounting;
 - Providing monthly reports to the Board of Governors;
 - Increasing contact with the campuses.

Recommendation:

Develop a comprehensive plan to address further budget reductions that may be implemented in the near future. In light of a possible reduction in the amount of \$50M per year to the System for the next 4 years (\$200M over the 4 year period), it would be prudent that the university, in consultation with all constituents, develop a plan that will, among other factors:

- Protects the funds that will allow it to continue to fulfill its mission of serving the citizens of the Commonwealth;
- Protect the academic offerings to the students;
- Protect its accredited programs;
- Protect its research mandate.

Suggestion:

The University should continue its efforts to attract external funds, not only through grants and contracts, but also through fund-raising activities and donations. The University has experienced small measures of success in the last year or so and should expand these efforts to develop a culture of giving among its graduates and supporters.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus operates as one of the eleven campuses of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) system. The Law of the University of Puerto Rico (Law No. 1, January 20, 1966 as amended) established the governance structure for both the UPR System and the eleven campuses. The Board of Governors is the governing body of the UPR System and was re-constituted in 2013 to include 13 members. The President of the UPR System, Dr. Uroyoan Walker Ramos was appointed in November of 2013 by the Board of Governors. The President of the UPR System serves as chair of The University Board which consists of 38 members including the chancellors of the 11 campuses. The Chancellor is the chief executive officer of the UPR-RP. The current Chancellor is Dr. Carlos Severino Valdez was appointed in December of 2013. The Self-Study provided evidence of the recent changes to the leadership and governance model of the UPR System to demonstrate the steps taken to ensure that individual

campuses have autonomy in decision-making and have improved communication in the following ways:

- The UPR public website provides information regarding the Governing Board including the membership, by-laws and responsibilities.
- The UPR public website includes an Annual Report of the UPR
- The President of the UPR-RP oversees the UPR- RP Administrative Board consisting of four executive Deans, the college deans, two senators elected from the non-*ex officio* members of the Academic Senate, and student elected annually.
- The UPR-RP Academic Senate meets monthly throughout the academic year. The work of the Academic Senate is detailed on its website.
- Students at UPR-RP have the opportunity to participate in governance through The General Student Council. Each college and school annually elects representation to the 53-member body.

Significant Accomplishments:

Changes to the composition, number of board members, and structure of the Board of Governors in 2013 have strengthened the board. Requirements as to the experience and background of the board members include expertise in finance, social and community leadership and achievements in an artistic, scientific or professional field. Reducing the size of the Board of Governors from 17 members to 13 and extending the terms of the board members is intended to provide efficiency and stability.

The current Chancellor is opening -up communication by visiting the various colleges and schools and meeting with student leaders and non-teaching staff.

The Chancellor, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dean of Student Affairs meet regularly with the UPR President and his staff.

The Governing Board of the UPR System posts information regarding board actions on its website.

The Governing Board of the UPR System has created standing committees (Finances and Retirement, Academic Affairs, Research, Student Affairs and Audits).

The Governing Board has made visits to UPR-RP to study and respond to campus needs.

Suggestions:

- UPR-RP's governance bodies such as the Academic Senate and the Administrative board should consider ways to communicate awareness of accomplishments to increase transparency.
- UPR-RP should consider working with the UPR President and the Governing Board to address the issue of frequent changes within the leadership of the UPR-RP and the UPR system.
- Given the current economic crisis it is clear that more frequent and accurate information from the System be communicated by the chancellor to the UPR-RP.

Commendation:

The re-structuring of the Board of Governors in 2013, will allow for continuity and defined roles of board membership and improved communication with the UPR-RP.

Standard 5: Administration

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

Dr. Carlos E. Severino Valdez was appointed Chancellor of UPR-PR by the Board of Governors on June 28th, 2014. Dr. Severino Valdez holds a master's degree and doctorate in Regional Urban Geography from Humboldt University in Berlin and a BA in Social Sciences from the UPR-RP. Dr. Severino Valdez is a researcher and has published widely on the solutions to geopolitical problems of Puerto Rico. He has held numerous administrative posts at various levels including both associate and acting Dean of the College of Social Sciences. As a public research institution granting doctoral degrees, UPR- RP has highly credentialed administrators committed to the institution's mission and system of shared governance.

- The administrative structure of UPR-RP is consistent with the fundamental elements of Administration as outlined in the Characteristics of Excellence. Dr. Severino Valdez supervises four executive deans who oversee the academic and administrative areas of the college. Each executive dean holds an earned doctorate and has more than 15 years of service at UPR-RP. The executive deans provide oversight for academic and administrative areas of the institution.
- The Chancellor meets on a regular basis with the Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Administration, and Dean of Graduate Studies and research. (This constitutes the Chancellor's "Cabinet").
- The Deans of the faculty are appointed by the Chancellor (as per the Law of the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Law Number 1, January 20, 1966, amended most recently in 2013).
- The Deans of Faculty (numbering eight deans) report directly to the Chancellor.
- The Chancellor has 25 direct reports including the Deans of the faculty.
- The Dean of Academic Affairs is considered the Chief Academic Officer.
- The campus has a qualified and committed non-teaching staff of approximately 1500 full time employees. The Human Resources Offices ensures compliance with the rules and regulations related to employee orientation, training and evaluation.
- The Office of Strategic Planning and budget (OPEP) has responsibility for three main areas, strategic planning and assessment of institutional effectiveness, budget projects and institutional research. The OPEP supports the work of the executive deans and college deans.
- The UPR-RP is audited by the Office of the comptroller of Puerto Rico (CPR). The Office of Internal auditors (OAI) reviews revenue, income, accounts and disbursements.

- The Division of Academic and Administrative Technologies (DTAA) reports directly to the Chancellor. The DTAA provides technology support for administrative functions such as Human Resources and email, and academic technology support including help desk, professional workshops on E-learning and programs for faculty and non-teaching staff, access to Blackboard and numerous support service functions.
- The self- study indicates that although the climate has changed for the better on campus with improved communication, frequent changes in the senior leadership of the institution continue to pose a challenge.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the University review the organizational structure so that it clearly indicates reporting responsibility to ensure that it is appropriately structured to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, such as reducing the number of individuals reporting directly to the chancellor.

Suggestion:

UPR-RP should consider a formal process of non-teaching staff evaluation focusing on training needs of the individual

UPR-RP should consider developing an institutional technology plan to set priorities given financial constraints

UPR-RP should review its current data management and collection to be more transparent and inform institutional effectiveness.

Commendation:

Dr. Carlos Severino Valdez is to be commended for his efforts in cultivating a friendly intimate atmosphere that permeates every corner of the campus.

Standard 6: Integrity

The team’s judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

Ethical comportment by members of the Campus community are stipulated in the *UPR General Regulations*, as well as by the *Government Ethics Law*, a regulation of the *Office of Government Ethics*. At the UPR-RP, the Office of Human Resources is charged with enforcing this law, which requires that public employees take 20 contact-hours of ethics workshops, lectures, seminars, or other comparable activities annually. The requirements of the law can also be fulfilled by workshops and lectures that take place on campus several times a semester. The self-study indicates that UPR employees can also fulfill ethics requirements through “supervised alternatives that link awareness about ethics to academic topics, film screenings, or discussion groups.”

The Chancellor, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Academic Senate, and the Administrative

Board hold primary responsibility for assuring that sound ethical practices characterize all campus affairs. These Campus leaders are tasked not only with ensuring that the educational mission of the institution is realized, but also that this is done with respect for the highest ethical standards and in a way that demonstrates honesty and integrity towards all constituencies, including students, full-and part-time faculty, and non-teaching staff.

One measure of the adherence to ethical standards in higher education is respect for academic and intellectual freedom. The MSCHE team observed that there appears to be agreement on the part of the various campus constituencies that UPR-RP leadership demonstrates and cultivates on campus a solid respect for academic and intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression.

Integrity can also be demonstrated in the fair and equitable treatment of all members of the campus community. One way the UPR-RP is doing this is through its commitment to diversity, reflected in its anti-discrimination policy. Another is the effort to protect student's rights, which is stipulated in the *UPR General Student Regulations*. The regulations guarantee respect for student beliefs and the right to express them. They also state that students are protected from and not to be subjected to discrimination, sexual harassment, or verbal, physical, or psychological abuse. In the case of a special need or disability, students are entitled to "reasonable accommodation." Many students spoke of the Campus's efforts on their behalf in making these accommodations available. However, the MSCHE evaluators were disheartened to find that some sections of the campus provide limited access to students with physical handicaps.

One of the characteristics that make the UPR-RP such a beloved institution is the friendly, intimate atmosphere that permeates almost every corner of the campus. It is perhaps for this reason that when conflicts arise, and do not represent a safety threat or other danger, they are often handled in an informal way, through the Dean of Students office, the Ombudsman, and in the last instance, the Chancellor. The institution does have an official process in place to address more serious student grievances and conflicts, about which students are informed as part of their general orientation to the campus. Students generally have a good rapport and a relationship of trust with the chancellor, deans, the ombudsman and especially the faculty. This atmosphere of mutual trust and communication, a vastly different reality from the clashes of 2010, is important in fostering respect for the ethical values that underlie the academic mission of the UPR-PR.

Suggestion:

UPR-PR should be especially vigilant to assure fairness and impartiality in all areas, including hiring, evaluation, promotion and dismissal of employees; allocation of resources, treatment of constituencies, truthfulness in public relations, and policies regarding academic and intellectual freedom. It should consider robustly enforcing its conflict of interest policy.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The UPR System and the UPR-RP campus have two separate but interlinked ten-year plans. The system-level plan, Ten for the Decade: 2006-16, was adopted in 2006 by the Board of Governors.

Upon approval of the plan a decade ago, the Board of Governors requested that all units of the UPR System develop campus-level plans aligned with the system-level plan. Additionally, it requested that the units develop and share the planning tools they established. There is evidence that the plan includes clearly defined indicators, instruments, and general protocols for assessment and evaluation. There is also evidence that the Plan has been evaluated in an organized and systematic way.

The Institution has demonstrated that there is an Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP), although the functional connection of the IEP with the Strategic Plan is not clear in the documents presented as evidence.

The Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting (**OPEP** in Spanish) coordinates the overall institutional assessment process, working at both the campus and unit level. The office is headed by the Budget Director and includes a Planning Coordinator and an Institutional Research Coordinator. The OPEP reports directly to the chancellor.

While important work in the area of institutional research has been completed, limitations still exist. Since 2010, for example, research that relies on student surveys and focus group sessions has not been entirely satisfactory. This is significant given that student feedback provides data important to the campus assessment plan. In the past few years OPEP has strengthened its efforts in this area, but major challenges, such as low response rates and staff attrition and reduction, have limited the collection of data.

Important student surveys have recently been conducted, including Senior Exit 2014 and the National Survey of Student Engagement 2015. There is some evidence that the institutional assessment data collection effort is organized but not sustained.

OPEP staff has completed the required assessment exercises required annually for VU 2016, including monitoring 9 strategic goals, 63 indicators, the 7 projects of the first operational plan, plus the other 39 projects of the second operational plan. The methods and techniques of data analysis could be improved for a more systematic acquisition of data that allows sound evaluation of institutional and strategic goals.

Given the length (10 years) of the current Strategic Plan, and the large number (9) of overarching goals, it is not clear in what sense this Plan has been “strategic” – there is not clear perception of priorities beyond the work done to assess and evaluate a very large number of indicators.

Through institutional surveys, students have expressed satisfaction with the academic excellence of the instruction and have described the faculty as extremely knowledgeable. They have also indicated that the UPR-RP has greatly contributed to their development in research, creative work, and other key skill areas.

The large proportion of academic programs and services that have been accredited by their relevant agencies shows that programs have demonstrated excellence and high quality as measured by the standards established by their respective disciplines and professions. Achievements in this area have contributed to stronger learning outcomes and inspired transformative actions that have enriched opportunities for successful learning and teaching. These findings are linked to the strategic goals of academic programs (Goal 2), faculty (Goal 3), and research (Goal 1).

The most challenging strategic goals are those relating to technology (Goal 7) and facilities (Goal 8). These two areas have been allocated \$17M from 2012 to 2015, but they still require diligence. The UPR-RP has undertaken major infrastructure projects such as asbestos identification and removal, implementation of the Security Plan, and transferring administrative systems from the Alpha server to Integrity, but the perception remains that additional progress needs to be made. These areas should have a central place in the UPR-RP's next strategic plan.

Suggestion:

Institutional Assessment at UPR Rio Piedras would benefit from a more thorough analysis of existing conditions and resources that enables the institution to focus on key priorities for the next five years. Rather than establishing a large number of comprehensive, overarching goals, the next Strategic Plan ought to be much more focused. Its metrics and indicators ought to also be much more intentional. An Implementation Plan showing exactly how the Strategic Plan will be implemented and evaluated will be a very helpful organizational tool for Rio Piedras.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The team reviewed the self-study document, institutional documents, met with and interviewed administrators, staff, and students to reach the following conclusions and observations. The University has clear admission procedures and seeks to admit students whose interests, goals and abilities are congruent with its mission. Admission and scholarship information is available to the students via on line, written brochures, various university locations and at high schools.

The Board of Governors Certification 25 and the University's Mission Statement VU2016 establish the admission criteria for undergraduate students. Every year the UPR System establishes a "general admissions index," or IGS (calculated by a formula that takes into account the high school GPA and the College Board or SAT scores in Verbal and Mathematical Reasoning), for each academic program. The IGS is set by the UPR System Office of Admissions in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs (DSA) of each of the system's 11 campuses. The minimum IGS scores for each academic program are published annually so that students may determine their likelihood of admission to any given campus and/or program. Applicants choose a department or academic program to which they wish to apply and, depending on the program's quota, they may be admitted, placed on a waiting list

offered another choice of program or denied admission. Admission and retention goals for the special-skills cohort are evaluated by the Registrar's Office and submitted to the Vice Presidency of Student Affairs. In 2015 the Board of Governors instructed the campus to improve its access, retention, and graduation rates, Board of Governors Certification 50, in order to strengthen support services for qualified students. In addition, there is also an extended admission process

used by applicants with disabilities or functional diversity. The criteria are in Board of Governors Certification 11.

Information on Financial Aid is readily available through the main page of the campus website and a link to the Financial Aid Department which has a page containing answers to frequently asked questions, downloadable forms, and useful, easy-to-access information. Prospective students can also review a comprehensive list of financial aid, including a list of scholarships sponsored by private entities. This list includes the Program of Formative Academic Experiences, one of the most important sources of economic support for many graduate students.

Applicants to the graduate programs must hold a bachelor's degree or the equivalent from a recognized college or university and have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. In addition, they should have knowledge of both English and Spanish and the capacity for critical analysis. Each of graduate programs has their own requirements for admission. These requirements are posted on line with other information that can assist applicants. Along with the application, most programs require recommendation letters, official academic transcripts, and an entrance exam (e.g., EXADEP, GMAT, GRE). Some programs require an example of a scholarly work or portfolio, a statement of purpose, a professional license, or a CV. The graduate program admission is coordinated by DEGI. Students apply on line through the "Apply Yourself" and each graduate program has an admission committee that evaluates applications and makes decisions.

The UPR-RP recognizes that improving the study skills of first-year students is essential. The Dean of Student Affairs (DSA) works with the campus's colleges and schools to offer multiple activities designed to ensure retention in programs. The colleges and schools, in turn, provide support services through guidance officials and academic advisors. Additional campus-wide services are offered through counselors, tutorials, social workers, psychologists, and the Office for Students with Disabilities. The campus compares favorably with similar institutions in the U.S. As presented in Table 6.6, data show that 85% or more of first-year students have continued on to their second year every year since 2005. There is also an Orientation Week to help students become familiar with the campus and services to help them succeed academically and socially. Students enroll in a course of studies and are given all requirements and classes to graduate at every level, undergraduate, masters, doctoral, and all professional schools.

The Office of Admission, Financial Aid, Registrar, and Student Affairs work on the recruitment, retention, and marketing analysis. Admission catalogs, view books, web sites and all relevant recruiting material is reviewed and updated. The accuracy and effectiveness of financial aid information, scholarship material, and academic advising material is reviewed annually and are used to review financial aid practices, which support admission and retention efforts. Policies for transferring credits are clearly defined on the main website.

Commendations:

UPR-RP is to be commended for its Certification 50 efforts of increasing the acceptance of low socioeconomic students, seeking to increase the enrollment of students from public high schools and male students. Developed by the colleges and schools, the campus plan was presented to the Academic Senate by the Dean of Academic Affairs and approved on April 23, 2015.

UPR-RP is to be commended for its retention efforts with first and second year students. The Division of Academic and Student Affairs work together in retention efforts and programs. The students are contacted to find out the cause of concern and then offered appropriate services such as: academic advising, tutoring, financial aid assistance, and personal counseling.

The University is also commended for a pilot project that facilitates access to the institution for students from lower socioeconomic levels. The project, University Collective for Access, began in August of 2014 and caters to select public schools from the San Juan metropolitan area, offering tutoring and academic support in subjects such as Spanish, English, and Math, as well as orientation about university life. It prepares students by encouraging them to apply and ensuring that they have the academic credentials and study skills needed to succeed.

The University is also commended for the following programs to ensure student retention. The Educational Initiatives Program (**PIE**) is linked to the Center for the Development of Linguistic Competencies, which offers tutoring in English and Spanish to undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, it helps strengthen student retention by addressing the educational needs of non-traditional students and those with special skill needs. It employs three specific programs: the Program of Continuing Education for Adults (**PECA**); the Academic Support Program for Special Skills Students (**PAAED**); and the Program to Recruit High-Performing Athletes (**PRAAR**). Additionally, the Academic Services Program (**PSAE**) aims to ensure the retention of first-generation university students who come from low-income backgrounds and/or have a learning disability. These undergraduates are offered counseling, financial aid, university housing, mentoring, tutoring, and cultural activities. The Department of Counseling for Student Development (**DCODE**) records the main factors that affect student academic performance by using Titanium Schedule, an electronic clinical filing system specially designed for counseling centers in university settings. The system aggregates common concerns expressed by students in individual counseling sessions to develop group events and programs that address factors interfering with academic progress. Its report informs University administrators about the most pervasive needs among students so that those needs can be addressed.

The University offers several recruitment programs. The Summer School Initiative familiarizes youth with the campus and university life. Participants take a pre-university class in English, Spanish, Science, or Math that combines classroom and online activities. This program exceeded expectations in 2015, generating over two hundred applicants to the UPR-RP. Another program first funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Bridge to Success has been offered since 2011. Through this program, students from neighboring high schools attend a two-week summer session on the Humanities. In many campus departments and colleges, faculty members committed to the wider community help recruit students for the campus by visiting high schools. Several of these faculty members are active in community-outreach programs in

the Río Piedras neighborhood and beyond.

In order to reach a wider range and larger number of prospective students, the Department of Graduate Students and Research (DEGI) promotes the campus's graduate academic offerings both locally and internationally. Key to this effort is the in-progress redesigning of the electronic support systems that have been used to disseminate information about the academic programs. In addition to accessing potential candidates for graduate programs through technological resources, the DEGI regularly takes part in graduate study fairs held on campus, in San Juan, and on other campuses of the UPR System. DEGI also encourages graduate programs to establish collaborative agreements with institutions of higher education in other countries as a way of fostering international academic mobility among students, faculty members, and researchers. For example, after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the UPR-RP brought a group of students from the State University of Haiti to study in the College of Natural Sciences. In July of 2015, the campus renewed its agreement between the School of Law and the University of Barcelona Law School that allows students to earn a joint degree and study at both institutions.

UPR-RP's should be acknowledged for its superior performance in overall retention and graduation rates. A 2012 report by the Center for Studies and Research on Puerto Rican Higher Education (CEDESP), titled "Strategies for Admission and Institutional Factors Related to Academic Success," examined most of the island's public and private institutions of higher learning. It found that in 2008 the overall college graduation rate was 20.7%. The UPR- RP's rate for the same year was 48%.

Suggestions:

Program descriptions are readily available on official webpages. Each program has an established set of learning outcomes and a student profile, available in a document approved by the Academic Senate when the program was approved or revised. Learning outcomes for specific courses are clearly indicated on syllabi, and most syllabi are online. However, this information does not uniformly appear on all departmental or program websites. The Institution should consider making this data more readily available to students.

The Institution should consider reviewing best practices in the recruitment and retention of students and implement a program that best meets the culture and needs of the University. The plan adopted should include a process to contact students who have left especially to determine whatever barriers prevented the student from continuing their education.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The institution provides student support services necessary to enable students to achieve the institution's mission and goals. Student support services are well organized, provide appropriate programs, supported by qualified staff, and a broad-based institutional commitment. Student support programs assist with the acquisition of basic skills, financial aid information, housing,

peer advising, medical and counseling services, differential learning resources, experiences and programs that dynamically engage students, athletic, artistic and cultural life programs, that enable students to develop personally and scholastically. The services promote the holistic

development of the student, and are an integral part of the educational process, helping to strengthen learning outcomes.

The Office of the Dean of Students (**DSA**) provides support services consistent with the University's mission to "foster the integrated education of students through programs of study which promote intellectual curiosity, the capacity for critical thinking, constant and ongoing learning, effective communication skills, an appreciation for and cultivation of ethical and aesthetic values, involvement in campus governance, and a sense of social awareness and responsibility." The office oversees several important programs that provide for students' on-campus needs and prepare them for long-term personal and professional development in the local and global society.

Financial Aid Program:

One fundamental service vital to students' success is help in securing the financial resources needed for study and graduation. The Financial Aid Program (**PAE**) provides financial assistance services at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The PAE offers a wide range of scholarship and funding options that can partially or totally cover tuition costs. The following are the financial aid programs coordinated by the PAE: Pell Grants; local legislative scholarships; federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants; student loans; the work-study program; and supplementary aid for graduate students.

The UPR-RP has an enrollment of approximately 12,500 active undergraduate students, of whom approximately 60%, or 7,400, benefit from the financial aid program. As shown in Appendix 6.4, 60% of the students pay tuition costs with Pell Grants. More than half the students who receive Pell Grants receive the maximum support established by federal guidelines. The work-study Program employs between 300 and 400 students each year. Appendix 6.4 also shows that the main sources of financial aid granted in 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 have been relatively stable.

With the majority of UPR-RP students receiving Pell Grants or other types of financial aid, including work-study and tuition waivers, the effective and timely functioning of financial aid services is crucial for students living on and off campus, so that they can afford the cost of study and materials. Tuition waivers, Appendix 6.4, are also an important source of financial support, with a large number of students in athletics, theater (Teatro Rodante), Honors Students, Student Peers, members of the choir and band, the children of veterans, the children of UPR employees, and the student representatives to the University's Board of Governors and Administrative Board receiving this aid.

The Department of Counseling for Student Development:

Important student support services are provided by the Department of Counseling for Student Development (**DCODE**), which assists students in overcoming personal and psychological difficulties that may negatively affect their academic, social, and work performance. Each year,

DCODE offers individual counseling services to an average of 1,100 students and group workshops and training sessions to approximately 1,020 students. Its services complement those of the Career Resource Room, which also provides counseling services.

Student Organizations

The DSA provides support to a growing number of official student organizations. Experiences in these organizations forge students' leadership skills, fomenting awareness of social change, environmental stewardship, advancement of the arts, and community services.

In the Natural Sciences, for example, student groups use cutting-edge scientific technology to help renew urban forests, while others help re-establish depleted coral reefs in Puerto Rico and abroad. Student organizations advocate for vulnerable populations such as the homeless, immigrant groups, medical patients, women, and children and current social services. Student groups in architecture and the fine arts are active on the local and international level, for example contributing to urban renewal not just in the Río Piedras neighborhood mural program, but also in Chiapas, India, and other destinations.

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OAPI):

The OAPI is committed to bettering the social and physical environment to meet the diverse needs and abilities of the student population. In 2003, the UPR Board of Governors issued Certification 143, which affirms the institution's commitment to providing services to meet the needs of all students. This document requires their "inclusion in all areas of social life [and their] equality before the law, which is a centerpiece for facilitating the process of inclusion." The 893 students who receive OAPI services might be considered a small percentage of the overall enrollment but their inclusion in campus activities is widely recognized as contributing substantially to student life and government. The OAPI works with all departments and schools on campus. Together with the Center for Academic Excellence, they designed a module titled "Bill of Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Law 238 of August 31, 2004" which is used to train and educate the University and wider community on issues related to disabilities, including relevant legislation, inclusiveness, and technological assistance. The College of Social Sciences, in coordination with OAPI, designated a multiple-use classroom equipped with technology for students with functional diversity for use as of January 2016. This initiative is the first of its kind in the UPR System.

The advocacy work of the OAPI has extended even into the legislative arena. Its most recent success is Law 250, the "Post-Secondary Passport for Reasonable Accommodation Act," which requires institutions of higher education to establish alternative admissions methods for students with differentiated learning.

Peer Orientation Program:

The Peer Orientation Program is a student-led program that actively supports campus retention and graduation rates. For close to 45 years, this program has welcomed incoming students, assisting them in the transition to university life. To qualify to serve as peer counselors and educators, student volunteers must fulfill their academic responsibilities with a grade-point average of 2.50 or more, be enrolled in classes for a total of 12 or more credits, attend training sessions during one semester, and stay informed about the services and activities on campus.

Each year, the program holds 650-800 group meetings and 1,000-3,000 individual meetings with first-year students.

Medical Services Department:

The program is housed at the heart of the campus in an easily accessible two-story building. It is the go-to health center for both students and faculty. The department not only services walk-ins and medical appointments but also emphasizes preventive medicine. To this end, it sponsors educational and early-disease-detection activities at health fairs; offers group services, workshops, and orientation sessions; provides support and information to student organizations; and holds individual meetings. Health services are available at little or no cost to students. One of its current projects is creating a vaccination center.

Housing Program:

The Housing Program has options for the general student population as well as for low-income and special-needs students, including three campus housing complexes. The North Tower is a 21-story residential building steps away from the main entrance. Next to it is the newest housing complex, University Plaza, with three housing buildings; it also contains an amphitheater and food establishments. Located within the campus gates is the Student Residence, which houses a large number of students and is surrounded by gardening projects. The North Tower and Student Residence are known for their affordability, which makes them accessible to even the lowest-income students. The number of students accommodated in campus housing has remained consistent during the last four years, with an average of 760 student residents each year.

Support Services for International Exchange

The campus has drafted an Internationalization Policy that responds to the prioritization of international students. The Office of the Assistant Dean of International Relations (**DARI**) offers academic support services for student and faculty exchange with institutions abroad. The office has instituted a process for expediting course-equivalency accrediting between universities, for students in formal or informal exchange programs. The process has been streamlined through an electronic authorization request form for taking courses abroad. This assures students that the courses they intend to take at the off-island institution will be transferable to the UPR-RP. In addition, DARI coordinates exchanges for about 300 students, some 225 going out and 80 coming in, per academic year. The office provides support services for international students, including welcoming activities, individualized orientations, and tutoring. In 2014-15, the campus hosted 78 international students at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Commendation:

The following areas of Student Affairs are to be commended for the excellent services they provide to students: Students Living with Disabilities (OAPI) and the Department of Counseling for Student Development (DCODE).

Suggestion:

Student Support Services should consider the use of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) for the development, implementation and assessment of its programs.

Standard 10: Faculty

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

UPR-PR is particularly distinguished for the world class quality of faculty, as evidenced in competitive peer reviewed academic publications, high level contributions to the academic field, key leadership positions in international academic organizations. A hallmark of UPR-PR faculty is research (including international research projects) and creative work, evidenced in peer-reviewed publications and academic presentations at local and international conferences.

The UPR-PR has a total of 1,234 faculty members with 60% tenured or on tenure track. There are delineated processes for hiring, appointment, promotion, tenure, evaluation, supervision and the reviewing of teaching effectiveness as outlined in the *Professor's Manual*. There are very specific selection criteria for faculty hires in particular areas, depending on the specialization and professional nature of the discipline. The doctoral degree or terminal degree in the discipline is required for tenure-track and tenured hiring.

Faculty diversity is promoted, as 70% of tenured and tenure-track faculty earned their highest degree outside of Puerto Rico. The *Política de Internacionalización* (2004-2005) serves to "enhance campus visibility within the international community"; this policy promotes international exchange and reinforces faculty involvement in internationalization. The consequence of this internationalization impacts exchange of ideas on campus and enhances the overall student experience.

The *Professor's Manual* addresses general faculty duties, responsibilities of faculty holding administrative positions, rights regarding students and the institution, and guidelines for relations with students in the classroom. The *Manual* references relevant policies in effect. The Faculty Senate has recently approved a position of ombudsman (*procurador*) for faculty needing assistance in navigating policies and procedures.

A 2015 policy regulating graduate programs requires that graduate-level professors present peer reviewed publications every three to five years. There has also been a change in the normal course load. These recent regulations have proven difficult to implement consistently in all disciplines.

Course release time to support faculty research, while available, may leave a program understaffed. The Institutional Fund for Research (FIPI) provides funding to support faculty research projects and this funding line thus far has been protected from cuts and has largely remained intact. While faculty sabbaticals are "on the books," none have been awarded since AY 2009-10 due to the commonwealth's serious financial crisis. Some colleges have been proactive in providing alternatives to leaves such as "mini-sabbaticals" or leaves for one semester in lieu of

the leaves for a full academic year. Other colleges have been proactive in ensuring time for faculty research by implementing flexible schedules so that faculty can spread out teaching loads. Experimental plans such as this have met with some success.

Faculty development is realized through the Teaching Improvement Program, which has documented participation of 749 faculty members between 2005 and 2009. The Center for Academic Excellence (CEA) has well attended activities, and faculty participation has increased steadily, with 2,446 participants in AY 2014-15. In addition, the Office of Student Assessment (OEAE) offers frequent workshops on assessment of student learning and design of rubrics, and attendance has steadily increased documenting the growing culture of assessment.

Criteria for recruitment are outlined in UPR General Regulations. Initial contract letters are standardized as outlined in *Certificación Núm 17* (2012-13). In these initial contract letters, expectations for new faculty hires are clearly articulated in areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Faculty evaluation for tenure candidates reflects adherence to those carefully articulated and mutually agreed-upon expectations. Evaluation measures faculty performance in terms of goals defined by the UPR-RP mission, the strategic plan, and individual programs, and is realized through peer review, student evaluations, and post-tenure review.

Faculty are clearly engaged in assessment of student learning; this was reported in meetings with faculty, and is reflected in data provided by OEAE (Oficina de Evaluación del Aprendizaje Estudiantil – Office of Evaluation of Student Learning). Data indicates that recently hired faculty participate in evaluation workshops; each year the overall percentage of faculty reporting and analyzing assessment results using OLAS (Online Learning Assessment System) increases.

Some inconsistency across colleges is noted in student evaluation of faculty. This was reported by faculty as well as students. Some deans require student evaluation of faculty every term, while other deans are less rigid in this requirement. The result is that faculty are aware of inconsistencies and students do not feel that they have input in the faculty evaluation processes. Faculty also indicate inconsistency in external evaluation of faculty. Discussions with faculty leadership indicate that the University recognizes this inconsistency in the evaluation process of faculty, and that recent regulations will address this issue. *Certificación 113* (2014-15) and *Certificación 141* (2013-14) present a roadmap for consistent faculty evaluation during the faculty member's entire career at the University. It is anticipated that these regulations will begin to have an impact in AY 2016-17.

Suggestions:

The Team suggests careful attention to faculty evaluation, as specified in *Certificación 113* and *Certificación 141*; when fully implemented in the near future, faculty evaluation should reflect consistency across colleges at UPR-RP.

The Team suggests that external evaluation of faculty be considered as a vehicle to validate faculty achievement.

The Team suggests a sharing of strategies across colleges to promote faculty development within the context of the current economic climate.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The process of assessment at the UPR-RP has been recognized by the formation of the necessary organizational structures (Office for the Evaluation of Student Learning) and a Student Learning Evaluation Plan endorsed by the Academic Senate.

The process of assessment via the written student learning outcomes to assure the quality of the academic offering at the program and course (syllabus) levels have been reviewed. There is a good description of the learning outcomes in the syllabi of the different disciplines that can assure the high quality of the offering, especially when it is combined with the rubrics used together with the outcomes in assessing each goal. The overall combination is considered acceptable.

The quality of the programs offered has been enhanced through the process of improvement and by seeking well-known certifications for such programs. Programs accredited recently include: Public Administration accredited by NASPAA (2010), The College of Business Administration was accredited by the AACSB (2013), the BBA in Information Systems was accredited by both the AACSB and ABET. ACS accreditation of the Chemistry program, ABET accreditation of the Computer Science Department programs and the ACEND accreditation of the Didactic Program in Dietetics were recently re-accredited in this year.

The BA in Office Systems Administration was accredited by ACBSP in 2009. The School of Communications was accredited by the ACEJMC in 2012. The Graduate School of Counseling and Rehabilitation received the CRE accreditation in 2013.

The Master in Planning has maintained the MPI accreditation by the U.S. Accreditation board since 1978. The Graduate School of Information Technology and Science has been accredited by the American Library Association since 1989. The School of Law has been accredited by the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools since the 1950's. The College of Education was accredited by NCATE in 1964.

Several other programs are also in process of getting ready or applying for accreditation and are in the process. It is estimated that more than 90% of all programs in the University are accredited by professional and disciplinary accrediting boards.

Commendation:

The University must be commended for its efforts of getting most of its programs accredited by

internationally recognized accrediting organizations and institutions. This is a clear indication of the high standards of the University and its academic offerings.

Suggestion:

It is suggested that the faculty use a taxonomy of learning objectives (such as Bloom’s modified taxonomy) in order to display levels of knowledge.

Standard 12: General Education

The team’s judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

The UPR-RP General Education program is articulated in *Certificación 46 (Año Académico 2005-2006)*, which implemented a new program approved by the Academic Senate and the President. Competencies are clearly aligned with those stated in MSCHE Standard 12 and are detailed and reinforced in the UPR graduating student profile:

- oral and written communication in English and Spanish
- information and technological literacy
- critical thinking
- social responsibility
- mathematical and logical thinking or quantitative analysis
- integration of knowledge
- leadership and teamwork
- aesthetic and ethical sensibility
- intellectual curiosity
- creative work and research
- disposition for life-long learning
- appreciation for the ideals and values of Puerto Rican society

Students take a minimum of 42 credits in GE which is more than the 30 credit minimum required by MSCHE. The coursework is grouped into two categories, Group A and Group B. Group A courses provide a foundation and common core, and are offered in the College of General Studies (CGS). Group B requirements also include a wide array of courses given outside of CGS. The implementation of the new GE program has resulted in an increase in the number of courses that CGS offers, and particularly serves to help the student link GE coursework with coursework in areas of specialization. Diversity and Ethics and Responsible Scholarship (including avoidance of plagiarism) are integrated into many GE courses. Since the implementation of the new plan, additional GE courses are offered outside of CGS; for example, there are numerous course offerings in literature to satisfy this component of the requirement (Spanish, English, and Comparative Literature).

The GE program is entirely consistent with the University mission. The first goal of the mission, “*foster integrated education of its students through programs of study which promote intellectual curiosity, the capacity for critical thinking, constant and ongoing learning, effective*

communication skills, an appreciation for and cultivation of ethical and aesthetic values, involvement in campus governance, and a sense of social awareness and responsibility,” is clearly echoed in the GE competencies which undergird the graduating student profile. Moreover, the third goal of mission, “*provide an undergraduate education of excellence which offers students a unified vision of knowledge that brings general education and specialization into harmony...*” is realized in the prominence of Group B courses within the GE context, and the greater course-selection flexibility in the new system.

Faculty engaged in GE course offerings have generally been positive about the new program, now entering its tenth year. They point to the diversification of academic offering presenting students with greater options, and to their perception that many departments seized the opportunity to improve GE courses.

Following the implementation of *Certificación 46*, there has been an attention to consistency in articulation of objectives; a rubric has been implemented to revise and create courses, *Certificación Núm. 72*, (2006-07), Rubric for Revising and Creating General Education Courses. Criteria include “incorporate diverse perspectives” related to the production, interpretation, and appreciation of the discipline, and “connect with knowledge of other disciplines.”

The common statements in syllabi also have included assessment practices, which are reaffirmed in the most recent assessment reviews. Moreover, the new GE program has inspired enhanced learning experiences such as practical application in laboratories and an impressive array of extracurricular activities.

Students are introduced to the GE program upon enrollment; CGS also offers advisors and counselors for student support, however GE faculty expressed a need for advisors rotating into the CGE areas of campus since in some cases these advisors lack visibility. Student-centered publications inform students of requirements but might be improved to point students to cross-disciplinary options which would lead to an overall more coherent academic experience.

Assessment of the GE program is managed through OEAE (Oficina de Evaluación del Aprendizaje Estudiantil – Office of Evaluation of Student Learning). This office is managed by a half-time faculty member. The Office publicizes and offers 4 to 5 workshops each semester on assessment processes and rubrics, and also offers hour-long webinars for professional development. The UPR-RP has supported the development of OLAS (Online Learning Assessment System) in which faculty input results of evaluation of GE courses. These inputs are then compiled electronically and can be reviewed across courses offered by the professor, across multiple courses for the targeted goal, across the program. Faculty report that OLAS is a useful tool to gather and analyze assessment data; assessment data is reviewed by the professor, at the department level, and provides an overview of the General Education program. The UPR-RP Mission Learning Outcomes Assessed Undergraduate Programs (2009-14) reports that some outcomes are given more frequent attention in assessment while others are infrequently assessed. OEAE is addressing this through a careful review of its assessment cycle.

Assessment of GE learning competencies is systematically cycled and documented in the *Three Year Assessment Plan for 2013-16*. This three year cycle includes a year in which to analyze

results and a following year to identify and implement actions. The assessment results are compiled in *Assessment Report on GE Competencies 2014-15*. Course sections taking part in formal assessment have steadily increased in the past three years, reflecting a culture of assessment and an assessment process with increasing momentum. Effective assessment practices have inspired some adjustments in GE courses to address documented weaknesses, leading to stronger learning outcomes and “transformative actions” which impulse positive change. Also, assessment results in some areas document improvement in student learning. It is clear that assessment practices and assessment results are being used to improve student learning in oral communication and writing, information literacy, scientific reasoning, and critical thinking. In some cases, such as the learning outcome of Social Responsibility, faculty have worked to design and implement a concise rubric which addresses multiple topics in a wide variety of courses. Faculty have embraced the challenge of designing and revising rubrics that will work to evaluate key criteria in areas considered difficult to evaluate.

In recent years, the CDLC (Centro para el Desarrollo de Competencias Lingüísticas – Center for the Development of Linguistic Competence) has had cutbacks in tutors who serve students needing support in this area. These cutbacks have impacted student success in meeting key GE goals and may particularly impact entering students from recently targeted areas for admission.

Commendation:

The Team commends the mission-driven design of the GE program, its implementation, as well as assessment processes in place to ensure the ongoing strength and effectiveness of GE at UPR-RP.

Suggestions:

Consider strengthening the staff of OEAE.

Initiate a rotation procedure for greater visibility of counselors for GE students.

Given the success of OLAS (Online Learning Assessment System), explore the possibility of marketing OLAS as a vehicle to both support assessment efforts of peer institutions and to generate funds for UPR-RP.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The team’s judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:

These offerings could include basic skills, certificate programs, evaluated experiential learning, non-credit offerings, branch campuses/additional locations/other instructional sites, distance education, distributed learning, correspondence education, and contractual relationships/affiliated providers, among others. Such programs or activities must adhere to the standards for accreditation.

Basic Skills:

There are several programs, besides tutoring, that provide developmental courses to help students that are below academic college standards of admissions. The following are run successfully by the University:

Pre-University Classes:

(Summer School Initiative) Familiarize youth with the campus and university life. Participants take a pre-university class in English, Spanish, Science or Mathematics that combine classroom and online activities. This program generated two hundred applications to the University last summer.

Bridge to Success: A program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the program is being offered yearly. Students from neighboring high schools attend two weeks of classes in the summer on the Humanities. This program has allowed the visit of over 10,000 students from 118 high schools since 2010.

TRIO Program: (Section TRIO of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (1965) modified in 2009. This program includes two pre-university programs of support and academic development to public school students with low economic resources and potentially first generation college graduates.

The program **Upper Bound** offers courses during 4 weeks during summer and then during the academic year. It also offer courses (**Program Bridged to Success**) to students of the 12th grade.

The program **Talent Search** (Part of the Trio program) offer courses of advanced mathematics during the academic year and during 2 to 4 weeks during the summer. This program offers tutoring and other academic services. The purpose of the program is to support the student to be better prepared to begin university level studies. This program conducts follow-up for 6 years from the student registration at the University.

PIE Programs – The Program of Educational Innovations is a structure inside the School (Facultad) of General Studies that supports a series or projects directed to non-traditional student populations. The Academic Support Program for Special Skills Students (**PAAED**) is a program of academic support for student with special or exceptional skills but that do not meet the general index of admission of the University. Some of the exceptional skills include the arts, theater, music and dance among others. The Recruitment Program for High Performing Athletes (**PRAAR**) is a program to recruit high performance athletes, graduates of high school with a minimum GPA of 2.0 and with special skills in athletics, basketball, judo, ping-pong, swimming, volleyball, baseball, tennis, weight lifting, soccer and other sports. The **PECA** is the Continuing Education Program for Adults to prepare them to enter college. In this program the students are prepared in English, Spanish, Mathematics and Study Habits. After completing the program, students who meet the standards are admitted to college courses. **C50** has as an objective to increase the enrollment of economically disadvantaged public school students into the Recinto Rio Piedras. Academic support and courses are available to these students as needed.

PSAE – The Program of Academic Educational Services is jointly financed by the Department of Education of the United States and the Universidad de Puerto Rico with the purpose of helping to define the professional goals of students accepted into the program and to enhance the

academic and personal opportunities until successful graduation. To be eligible in this program, students must be either a) belong to a family with scarce economic resources, b) be the child of parents that did not complete a college degree or c) be legally disabled.

This program provides support all the way through graduation and starts during the summer of the first year with reinforcement courses in English, Spanish and Mathematics. Typically around 100 students begin this program each year.

Professional Development, Continuing Education and Non-Credit Course Programs:

The Mission of the University under item (5) calls for the “Development of innovative, relevant programs and continuing education that will support and contribute to the academic and professional activity of the campus”.

At the Rio Piedras campus the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies are carrying on this calling of the Mission of the University. Every semester, this division offer courses for students of the campus as well as the community. Some courses lead to a professional certificate (Coaching, Alternative Education, Psycho-Geriatry, Proposal Writing and Web Development), some other courses improve skills (Spoken English, Spoken Spanish, Foreign Languages) and some other courses are ideal for stressed-out students taking high demand courses (Ceramic, Drawing, Painting Framing, Photography and Painting).

There is a complete series of courses of general interest offered every semester and new offerings appear frequently (Fashion Drawing, Peachtree). The courses favored by the community are Administration and Management, Computers and Technology, Accounting, Disaster Management, Philosophy, History, Swimming, Sign Language, Sailing, Urban Design, Winemaking and others.

This is a very active program that has an important outreach to the surrounding community that breaks down the concept of the University as an isolated tower!

Certificate Programs:

Fifteen certificate programs at the post-bachelor and post-master’s level are being offered as part of its academic offering, including a Library Teaching Certificate, Document and Archive Management Certificate and Applied Linguistics Certificate. A graduate Academic Library Manager Certificate is also being offered.

At a professional level, the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies offer some 12 Professional Certificates in different fields (from Coaching to Web Development), mostly in the evening for working professionals.

Evaluated Experiential Learning (Internship programs):

The different schools (facultades) are in charge of seeking internship opportunities for students to have the required number of hours of field practice required for their degree. For example, students of the School of Teacher Education can work in the Children’s Lab (LIM) who also doubles as a child-care center for students that are parents. This is a unique laboratory to observe infants and toddlers in Puerto Rico.

The Law School operates a Legal Aid Clinic, a two semester required course for advanced students of Law. In this clinic, students first are trained in interviewing, research, simulations and writing. A second course is dedicated to handling cases of civil law, immigration cases and discrimination cases.

The University Center for Psychology Services and Studies operates and allow students of counseling and social work to practice providing psychological services to adult, children, families and groups. The College of Social Sciences offer fieldwork experience in three programs amounting to 400 hours of field practice. There is a large advantage for students to have this amount of practice and allows them to complete a Master Degree faster because of this experience at the undergraduate level.

The College of Business operates a system of internships from government agencies and from NGO's. Students receive three credits for their work, and can be paid, typically by a partner institution or company. Co-operative programs are used early in the studies in an exploratory mode. Typical partners where students work are the travel industry, tourism and hospitality, and students learn to interact with others through teamwork.

Study Abroad Program:

The Rio Piedras campus has 26 agreements with institutions in the United States, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 40 international agreements that facilitate teaching and research as well as student exchanges. A large number of students of the campus study in Spain every year.

Distance Education, e-learning, distributed learning, correspondence education:

In Distance Education, the University has been offering one Online Library Teaching Certificate for several years. In late 2015 a complete policy was approved by the Academic Senate, which should catalyze the development of online courses by the faculty in the near future. An Online Master Degree in Information Science is being planned as one of the future offerings in the near future (after seeking approval from Middle States as per regulation).

Commendation:

The Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies is commended for their excellent effort in providing students and the community Professional Certificates, Language, Arts and Crafts, and General Interest Courses.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

Summary of Key Evidence and Developments

The UPR-RP has been engaged in a systematic process of student-learning assessment since approval of the Student Learning Evaluation Plan in April of 2006 and creation of the OEAE in 2007. Since that time the OEAE has prepared progress reports and analyses of assessment

findings and transformative actions that faculty members have proposed for strengthening teaching and student learning outcomes. These results have been shared with the campus community and over the last year OEAE has increased the number of analyses available online.

The Oficina de Avaluo works intensively to provide Academic Programs with the tools and information they need to develop their student learning assessment (SLA) work. Although SLA is not evenly practiced by most faculty in all academic programs, the progress since the last MSCHE review is remarkable. Assessment results also show progress. For example, a comparison of NSSE results in 2006 and 2009 clearly show significant improvement in learning and attitudes among Rio Piedras Students.

The Freshmen Profile Questionnaire has become an important tool for faculty to establish baseline data for assessment and improvement. The Graduating Student Profile, stated in terms of student learning outcomes, was created and has guided all of their educational offerings. It consists of 11 points of personal, social, and intellectual development that undergraduate students should have mastered by the time of their graduation from the institution.

Since the last MSCHE decennial review in 2005, the UPR-RP has strengthened campus-wide implementation of student-learning assessment by planning, organizing, systematizing, and sustaining the process at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The units and programs responsible for assessment are actively encouraging rapid development of effective assessment measures, and realistic timelines are in place. The institution is committed to expanding, intensifying, and improving the coordination of assessment projects at all levels and across all units.

Since 2009, the UPR-RP has increased support for workshops, meetings, training sessions, and conferences on the assessment of student learning. Evidence of this support is the allotment of release time for an assessment coordinator for each department, an active college-level assessment committee, and faculty participation in assessment workshops.

Commendation:

The Team commends the Faculty at the UPR –RP for their remarkable work on student learning assessment. The work completed and already underway shows active faculty involvement, clarity of purpose, methodological adequacy and a systematic use of results for change in student learning, teaching, and institutional improvement.

Suggestions:

The institution should look into further coordinating the work of the Office of Avaluo and the Institutional Research Office, and provide these with enough resources to develop their work in an efficient manner. This arrangement would benefit from continuing a close association with the Center for Academic Excellence.

The institution should develop a comprehensive and centralized data management process so that program data are closely monitored and yearly evaluation reports guaranteed. Annual review will help pinpoint both effective programs and those that require immediate attention. This would be a responsible way to demonstrate the effective use of public resources while also

ensuring that students have access to programs that are continuously renewed and updated.

VI. Summary of Compliance

Based on a review of the institution's self-study and appendices, interviews, and other documents reviewed during the visit, the team draws the following conclusions.

The team found that the Institution is in compliance of all 14 standards and the requirements of affiliation. There are a total of 2 recommendations, 14 suggestions, and 22 commendations.

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