

**Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students**

Of

The University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras

By

An Evaluation Team Representing the

Middle State Commission on Higher Education

And

The Puerto Rican Council on Higher Education

**Prepared after a study of the Institution's Self Study Report
And a visit to Campus February 27 to March 2, 2005**

The Members of the MSCHE Team:

Estela López, Chair	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Connecticut State University System
Fikru H. Boghossian	Professor and Chair, School of Business & Management, Morgan State University
Ofelia Garcia	Professor, Department of International & Transcultural Education, Teachers College
Gerald R. Miller	Professor of Chemistry, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry, University of Maryland
Karen L. Pennington	Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life, Montclair State University
Kristen Wenzel	Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Fordham University
Lawrence Wilt	Director of the Library, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)

Members of the CHE Team:

Juan Anibal Aponte, Chair	Chancellor, Inter American University Aguadilla
Ismael Avilés	Engineer, Private Sector
Alberto Castro	Board of Trustees Member, Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico
Jorge Crespo	Vice President, Planning and Research, Ana G. Méndez System
Javier Echevarría	Professor, Law School, Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico

This report represents the views of the Evaluation Team as interpreted by both Chairs; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its education objectives.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras is classified as a Doctoral/Research Intensive University.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Chancellor:	Gladys Escalona de Motta
Chief Academic Officer:	Sonia Balet
President and CEO:	Antonio García Padilla

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Date when instruction began:	1903
Institution Type:	Public
Degrees Offered:	five undergraduate degrees, eleven Master degrees, thirteen Ph.D.s and an Ed.D. as well as a Juris Doctor and a MBA/JD, a MPP/JD, a MD/JD, one graduate certificate three post-master's certificates and four post bachelor certificates.

Enrollment (As of Fall, 2003)

Total unduplicated for-credit headcount = 21,909

Total non-credit enrollment = 7,520

Affirmation of continued compliance with Eligibility Requirements: Based on review of the Self Study, other institutional documents and interviews, the Team affirms that the institution continues to meet eligibility requirements 1-7 as described in the *Characteristics of Excellence*.

Compliance with federal requirements: Issues relative to state regulatory or other accrediting agency requirements: The Team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate of 18.42% is within the federal limits.

INTRODUCTION

Members of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Evaluation Team visited the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras Campus from February 27 through March 2, 2005. This was a joint visit with the Puerto Rican Council on Higher Education (CHE).

During the visit, the Team made every effort to meet with members of different sectors of the University community, including trustees, faculty administrators, staff and students and conducted numerous individual interviews.

The members of the Team express their appreciation to the trustees, administration, faculty and students of UPR Río Piedras for their hospitality during our visit. We are pleased to report that all materials necessary for a fair and thorough evaluation were provided and that there was a sense of openness and collegiality that made the visit productive and pleasant.

We assert that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras is led, beginning with the Chancellor, by a committed group of individuals who want to move the University into the 21st Century while preserving the heritage of the Campus. The University community loves the institution and at the same time is concerned with fulfilling its mission while continuing to serve the needs of the external community and Puerto Rican society.

This report is formatted to address evidence of compliance with each of the fourteen standards in the *Characteristics of Excellence*. Each section begins with a short narrative summarizing observations, evidence and findings based on review of the Self Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others. Also, each section addresses the Fundamental Elements necessary for compliance with the *Characteristics of Excellence* and provides suggestions, recommendations, and, if necessary requirements. Commendations are noted to recognize campus accomplishments. Suggestions are made in a collegial sense and are designed to assist the institution in meeting its goals and objectives. The institution, on the other hand, must address recommendations and requirements, in order to maintain compliance with all fourteen *Characteristics of Excellence*.

All members of the Team have reviewed and concur with the statements contained in this report.

STANDARD 1: MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

General Observations:

The University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras has a clearly defined mission that has been in place since 1990. The goals of the Strategic Plan are derived from the Mission Statement. Although assessment of student learning is not mentioned in the Mission Statement, the Strategic Plan includes it as a key strategic area. The Self Study Report was guided by the goals of the mission statement.

Suggestion:

- The Team suggests that as part of the revision of the Strategic Plan, the University review its Mission Statement.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras meets Standard 1.

STANDARD 2: INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND RESOURCES

General Observations:

The review of the Self Study and meetings with a wide array of institutional representatives demonstrate evidence of campus-wide involvement in institutional planning activities, including overall strategic planning, needs assessment, and definition of priorities. Through interviews it was confirmed that a new culture of evaluation, planning, and assessment is being achieved gradually at all levels, although it has naturally advanced at a different pace in different schools or units. We commend this and encourage the institution to move from planning into implementation, and further into the assessment of the progress of those plans.

We also commend the University for the thorough and systematic work that has been developed in the conceptualization of the institutional effectiveness and assessment processes, in particular program evaluation, and the development of selected performance indicators. It seems that the areas of assessment and institutional effectiveness reflect a more structured approach, and a wider reception from the community than for the strategic planning process. In terms of planning activities, the institution is still using as its main reference the Strategic Action Plan (PLEA), approved in 1997, and extended through 2006 without revision. It is understood that recent changes in leadership (new Chancellor and President), as well as the beginning of the self-study process justified this decision. It should be noted that the PLEA does not include specific measure indicators, timeframes, or budget estimates.

Even though it was stated that the PLEA was under revision and that a new 5-year strategic plan should be in place by next year (2006), many expressed that they were not aware of the process and were not working on this revision. On the other hand, others expressed that their units are

actively involved in the program evaluation initiative fostered by the Office of Academic Planning (OPA) that would serve as basis for new planning projections. In addition, a new system-level planning initiative (*Agenda for Planning at UPR 2005-2015*) proposed by the President has recently been circulated for campus-level discussion (January, 2005).

We must stress the serious need to strengthen the articulation of the planning and resource (budget) allocation processes. It was clear that financial constraints are probably the major limitation for the advancement of the plans and for the fulfillment of an ambitious institutional vision that calls for the evolution toward an "intensive graduate research" university. The extremely high proportion of resources committed to fixed expenditures, the high ratio of staff personnel to faculty, and the enormous back-log in facilities maintenance and development are clear examples of financial constraints which will require both creative and tough managerial decisions. Moreover, due to these constraints since 2002 the System level Central Administration has not considered unit-level annual plans and budget petitions for final budget allocations.

Suggestions:

- The Office of Academic Planning under the Dean of Academic Affairs supports overall planning and assessment and the Dean of Academic Affairs coordinates both academic planning and institutional effectiveness activities. Although this is understandable due to the strong academic nature of the mission, it seems that other non-academic units throughout the institution are behind in these processes as compared to the academic units. The institution may consider coordinating overall, strategic/institutional planning at the Chancellor's level, thus providing an institutional-wide approach to both academic and non-academic priorities and plans. The OPA could then focus on the specific and broader planning and assessment needs of the academic areas.
- In order to reinforce institutional effectiveness and outcomes assessment throughout the institution, the PLEA revision may consider changing the name of its sixth "strategic area" from evaluation to "*institutional effectiveness and assessment.*" This will enforce such an approach through the planning process and the annual reporting of each area.

Recommendations:

- As one approach to gradually achieve a more direct relationship between plans and budget resources, we recommend that budget estimates be added to the 5-year PLEA goals and objectives (at least for those requiring new resources over the existing budget levels). A 5-year financial projection of general revenues and expenditures should also be prepared by financial officials and then compared and matched with the PLEA 5-year projected budget requirements. This would serve as basis for initial resource allocation decisions.

Requirement:

- By the end of year 2005-06 the institution must complete the revision and updating of the PLEA 5-year strategic plan through a collegial, participatory process. This new PLEA should include evaluation measurements or indicators, as well as time-frame indicators, and preliminary estimates of those additional budget resources needed to implement the plan, in order to serve as the basis for planning and budgeting integration analysis. The revised PLEA must serve as the basis for each unit to develop its individual development plans.

Campus-level plans and priorities must be reinstated as the basis for both annual and long-range budget and resource allocations.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras partially meets Standard 2.

STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Information Resources

General Observations:

There is wide recognition that investment in core campus resources has been deficient for several years. Key areas identified for remedial investment and then continuing commitment are: information resources (books, databases and journal subscriptions, hours open), information technology (annual equipment renewal for computer labs, smart classrooms and faculty computers, development of email and other core software systems), and facilities (preventive maintenance, sick building remediation, deferred maintenance, and construction of new buildings for additional space).

The cumulative effect of underinvestment in such core resources has begun to compromise the University's ability to fulfill its mission. If left unaddressed, the overall quality of education at Río Piedras, the campus' ability to compete with other quality institutions and its reputation as the highest quality institution in Puerto Rico will be damaged.

Reliable funding streams for these core campus needs must be identified, implemented and protected in the planning and budgeting for the campus.

Commendations:

- The talent, dedication, resourcefulness and loyalty of the campus faculty and administrators are superb and an asset to the campus.
- The University has embraced planning for improvement in institutional resources and has identified the needs.

Suggestions:

- **Information Resources:** in consultation with faculty, consider opportunities for improving efficiency, e.g. in consolidating small library collections and services points scattered throughout the campus, to fully exploit opportunities presented by the upcoming building project. Find ways to increase library hours, especially evening and weekend hours at selected facilities. Increase collaboration between library and faculties in establishing library priorities and resource allocation
- **Information Technology:** since the plan for information technology has been accepted and funding is committed, the University needs only to follow through with implementation and consider funding for equipment renewal and development to be a permanent addition to the

base. Strengthen computer labs in locations where hours of availability can be extended to evenings and weekends; consolidate labs where possible.

Recommendation:

- **Information Resources:** identify funding stream to support predictable cost increases in subscriptions and databases and enhance funding for books and other monographs to restore acquisitions level appropriate to campus mission.

Physical Facilities

General Observations:

The Self Study included limited information related to physical facilities. Although reference was made to a Master Plan 20-20, it is no longer taken into consideration. An actual process of evaluation and planning is considering an alternate plan.

The University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus is located in the middle of the metropolitan area and surrounded by a residential community. This represents an important role in the integration of the academic institution with the people in this community and the opportunity to create a model for the development of future technology and research opportunities.

This is a relatively large campus with an approximate total area of two hundred acres, with rich vegetation and a lot of trees all over the area. One of the objectives of the Administration is to keep it that way, and dedicate even more space to green areas. The Administration also has a well-organized plan for permanent improvements for buildings and general facilities.

This campus has been working toward solving the condition of several buildings that have been classified as "sick buildings", due to the existence of moisture, and the presence of bacteria and fungus growing in the air conditioning systems.

There are six buildings that contain friable asbestos, and it is necessary to remove said material, with the appropriate procedures for removal, according to EPA regulations. Some removal work has been completed in areas like the general library and the student center, but there is much work that remains to be done.

The Permanent Improvements Plan, includes all this work, plus the restoration of the "sick buildings", but there is still a long way to go, to finish with this process.

There is a general sense of lack of safety within the Campus, due to lack of adequate illumination especially in the walking paths between buildings and parking facilities.

Suggestion:

- Consider the possibility of contracting with outside providers to do all the maintenance work and services to keep up with buildings needs.

Recommendations:

- Establish a new office, inside the administrative organization, to centralize the record keeping of follow-up processes, for all type of permits related to buildings and facilities.
- Improve the maintenance services to all buildings and establish a more effective preventive maintenance program starting with the recently finished new buildings.
- Give special attention to laboratory exhaust systems maintenance to prevent accidents while dealing with chemicals and chemical fumes that may be harmful to the students and professors.

Requirements:

- Prepare a time frame schedule to finish with the necessary work to be done in the so-called "sick buildings," including asbestos removal from all the affected buildings, complying with all the requirements from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This schedule should be submitted and then revised every two years.
- Establish a priority plan to finish all construction work on routes and paths within the whole Campus needed to comply with the American with Disability Act.
- Submit a schedule plan to reduce the number of parking lots, relocating them to multistory buildings, with adequate illumination and protection provided by campus police.

Financial Resources**General Observations:**

The Campus continues to experience reduced proportion of the University revenue allocations, in spite of increased needs for operating and capital expenditures. In general, the needs exceed the financial resources available. In excess of 85% of the operating budget is allocated to salaries. A significant portion of other operating expenses remains fixed by nature. The ratio of administrative and supporting personnel to faculty seems too high. This situation presents the most significant constrain for growth leaving very limited resources to accommodate Campus improvement.

The financial resources do not provide support for the implementation of changes within the Campus.

The department chairpersons and department heads have little participation, if any, in the budgeting of financial resources to their programs and activities. Budgets are assigned at the University's central administration level in response to allotted resources disregarding the inputs from the Campus that are based on its priorities.

Even though there is consensus among many University administrators to increase tuition as an alternative to alleviate the financial constraints, there is no evidence that the system level will consider this increase.

Although there is a widespread willingness to seek improved approaches, there is not a financial effectiveness culture in place within the Campus. In the face of limited resources, cost efficiency is not a significant portion of financial planning and management.

Commendations:

- The professional profiles of administrative and faculty leaders are very impressive and assure the talents and experience the Campus needs.
- Recent efforts to generate external resources as an alternate source of financial resources are impressive and are providing the University with funding for research and other initiatives.
- The University has begun development efforts to attract donors.
- The initiatives for reengineering administrative processes initiated by the Dean of Administration are highly commended as a means to become a more cost effective institution.

Suggestions:

- Select and appoint an external advisory board to reengineer the Campus financial structure, identify alternate financial resources and develop and implement an organization wide personnel analysis to determine possibilities for effective and efficient use of resources.
- The reengineering activities initiated by the Dean of Administration should be extended throughout the Campus both for administrative and academic processes as well as required personnel.
- It may prove advantageous to the Campus that both faculty and administration evaluate and decide the operating and financial balance between undergraduate and graduate programs to examine alternatives and possibilities in view of the Campus mission as to graduate studies and research.
- The academic offerings could be examined to determine their relevance to the mission and to the adequacy of allocated resources. An alternative to downsize or proper sizing should be the restructuring of academic offerings elsewhere within the University's system.
- Review current tuition and fees structure to align them with campus realities.

Recommendation:

- The Campus must tie its strategic planning with the operating and capital improvement budgetary allocations process. Also, this planning should clearly state ongoing outcomes assessment elements and criteria.

Requirement:

- The Campus should present a progress report within two years on planning, resource enhancement and cost efficiency measures to meet its challenges to improve and maintain its institutional quality. The Campus plan should clearly state the decision-making process for allocating resources and program for capital expenditures with measures of efficiency and effectiveness. It is of paramount importance to reflect clearly the operating and capital budget attributable to each activity.

In view of these recommendations, the Team has found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras partially meets Standard 3.

STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

General Observations:

The Río Piedras Campus is one of the eleven institutional units of the University of Puerto Rico. A President under the Board of Trustees directs this complex system. By law, the Board of Trustees is composed of thirteen members, including one regular student in his second year or higher, two tenured professors and ten citizens, at least one of which is a University of Puerto Rico alumnus. The governor designates all the community members. Their peers elect the student and faculty members for one-year terms.

The Board of Trustees is committed to supporting the mission of the University.

The President is the chief executive officer of the System. He coordinates and supervises the University's operation. The President submits the plan for the integral development of the University, including the system budget. The staff of the Central Administration, which includes the following areas, aids the President: Academic Affairs, Research and Technology, Fiscal Affairs and Administration, Development of Infrastructure and Development and Alumni.

The University Board advises the President on matters pertaining to academic, administrative and financial matters. The Board is composed of the President, the Chancellors, Director of Finance, one representative elected by each academic senate, one student from each unit and three additional officers appointed by the President with the consent of the Board.

To guide the system, in 2002 the President proposed a *Blueprint for Institutional Planning*. This document addresses twelve basic areas of action.

Given the complexity of such a large system, the Self Study suggests some tension between the abundance of rules and regulations from the System and the Campus desire for innovation.

The President of the UPR System has acknowledged the need to align University's General Regulations to campuses and system development and has initiated a consultation process throughout the 11 institutional units to review these regulations.

Suggestions:

- Some system-level processes are perceived as slow, for example, academic planning and program review. System-level policies and regulations should be reviewed vis a vis campus needs.
- Continue to reexamine the relationship between campus and system to ensure institutional effectiveness.
- Continue to streamline processes to make the institution more nimble.

- Currently, there is no protocol to regulate the transition from one administration to the next. Such a process should be established.

Recommendations:

- The University of Puerto Rico System needs to make difficult decisions regarding how to provide the Río Piedras Campus with the necessary support to enable it to fulfill its mission as a doctoral granting institution. These decisions include the reallocation of resources, the alignment of the strategic plan and the budget, and the significant improvement of facilities, among others.

Student Governance

General Observations:

The student leaders care very much for their University. However, they are very concerned about its present state and its future. An overwhelming feeling is that they do not know what is going on. In the absence of good information and direct contact with the administration, they find other ways to gain information and their facts may be real or a part of urban legend. There is no clear path to anyone who serves as their overall "advisor" and they feel that they get put off with excuses, instead of answers. The level of frustration and the need to act in radical ways, e.g., a potential strike, may be reduced if they have more opportunities to reach the levels of administration that can actually respond to their concerns and issues, and they perceive that they are being heard.

Students expressed in their own words what they expect from the administration: "response", "respect", "reduce the chain of command", "receive better service", and "reduce the waste."

Commendations:

- There is great depth of caring and dedication to the institution.
- Students feel that they have a role to play in the organization and operation of the University.
- Students are bright and have a good grasp of the issues that are important to them.

Suggestions:

- Develop and institute appropriate vehicles to ensure that student leaders have factual information about resources and the reasons why decisions are made.
- Institute a regular series of meetings with administrative personnel that provide student leaders with ongoing opportunities to receive information about the workings of the University. At a minimum this should include at least one meeting per semester with the Chancellor and one meeting per year with the President.
- Designate an administrative advisor that all student leaders recognize as their "go-to" person. This person must be at a high enough level within the administrative structure to have significant and valid information at their disposal.
- Students suggested that the University explore the staffing of student services areas in the same way as U.S. institutions. That is, staff that comes with a student affairs background and education and are not faculty members who have been reassigned to those roles. This

suggestion has merit and has worked extremely well not only in the US, but also in other countries worldwide.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras meets Standard 4.

STANDARD 5: ADMINISTRATION

General Observations:

Chancellor Gladys Escalona de Motta is the head of the Río Piedras Campus. She reports to the President of the System. In addition to overseeing the Campus, the Chancellor presides over the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board, and faculty meetings. She also submits to the President the budget petition for the Campus. The Chancellor is evaluated by the President between her third and fifth year.

Río Piedras has a well-established governance system with a clearly delineated organizational structure. Faculty members actively participate in the Academic Senate. The Senate has 68 members including 18 "ex officio" members, 37 faculty members and 12 students.

This body approves new academic programs and recommends changes to existing ones; establishes guiding principles for faculty recruitment, permanency, promotion, and licenses. It also establishes the general requirements for student admission, promotion, and graduation.

A second deliberative body is the Administrative Board composed of the deans, two faculty senators, and one student senator. The Board approves sabbatical and other leaves as well as faculty and non-teaching personnel aid applications, and grants promotions and tenure.

The current administrative structure supports the Campus Mission. Faculty and students are included in almost all institution decision-making and advisory bodies. Colleges have a support staff, which includes an associate dean, assistant deans, department chairs, and other administrative directors. Each college has by-laws.

The Campus Action Plan sets the implementation of the Strategic Plan and ensures that the deans' individual action plans are congruent with the System's Plan.

The Chancellor has created the Division of Academic and Administrative Technologies that will oversee the implementation of the technology strategic plan recently approved.

The size of non-teaching personnel is one and half as large as the size of the faculty. There is limited performance evaluation of top and middle management. Support staff are only evaluated twice, halfway through the one-year probationary period and right before tenure is granted. There is no further evaluation after tenure is granted.

To promote an organizational culture committed to quality and service, the Dean of Administration began implementing a plan, the Administrative Update Project. This update includes a full administrative reorganization and reconfiguration in the following areas: 1) speeding up administrative procedures for issuing payments to suppliers, students and faculty; 2) decentralizing authority and specific function; 3) simplifying internal procedures. A pilot project to decentralize purchasing was just initiated.

Communications is one of the areas of concern identified in the Self Study. The Self Study indicated the need to improve inter-unit communication, especially on matters that concern the Campus as a whole. A communication expert was appointed by the Chancellor and charged with developing a plan.

Commendations:

- The Campus has a strong tradition of shared governance with broad participation from all sectors.
- The Chancellor and her leadership team are committed to the Campus.

Suggestions:

- In order to fulfill its mission and sustain its direction, the deans and other administrators need to provide leadership based on the good of the University rather than just the need of their colleges or particular area.
- As the Self Study mentions, the Campus needs faster, more flexible and responsive administrative procedures.
- Evaluation and assessment of services are essential to determine service quality.
- There is a need to improve communication within the University.

Recommendations:

- To ensure the sufficiency and effectiveness of administrators and support staff, a systematic evaluation plan should be established for all personnel.
- Based on personnel evaluation results, training plans for administrative personnel need to be developed.
- The Campus needs to reexamine and realign non-teaching personnel positions.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras meets Standard 5.

STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY

General Observations:

The Office of the Dean of the Graduate Studies and Research has worked actively to coordinate the many and varied documents and statutes required of an institution. The office has informed the campus community about its responsibilities and has developed training for individuals and departments.

Commendation:

- The University has developed a coordinated and concerted effort to ensure compliance with federal, commonwealth and university regulations and policies.

Suggestions:

- The role of the Student Ombudsman should be reviewed. The operation is functioning in a manner more consistent with legal review than with student support. The office is small and is not in the most "student friendly" location. It is not necessarily viewed as a viable resource for information and general advice. More publicity about how this office could benefit students would be advantageous.
- For the safety and protection of the campus community, continue to pursue an agreement about the implementation of the Non-Confrontational Policy.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras meets Standard 6.

STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

General Observations:

There is a written Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan. It is in the early stages of implementation. It does focus on the institution's mission, goals and objectives as written. It encompasses a broad range of educational offerings and services with significant involvement by the Academic Senate consisting primarily of faculty. The systematic use of evaluative measures involving databases is more issue focused (e.g., profile of incoming students, preparation of accreditation reports) than systemic. There is demonstration of using evaluation results for institutional planning and change but, to date, this is quite limited. Since the implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan is in its first cycle, there is no full evaluation yet of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of this plan. As part of this process and with the Campus commitment to assessment, the Mission Statement should be revisited and somewhat revised to reflect current efforts.

It should be noted that several of the professional schools are in the forefront of assessment on the Campus. Not only are they addressing student learning outcomes but also areas of curriculum and faculty development. In addition, they are generously sharing their experience and expertise with other academic programs. The School of Education is to be commended in particular. The use of external evaluators by the professional schools should be the norm for all program reviews. As a research-intensive institution, academic quality needs to be insured not only on the graduate but on the undergraduate level as well.

As a result of assessment findings, there has been some improvement in technology, student services, resources and resource allocation but more advances need to be made. It is difficult to measure any widespread impact on Campus structure, leadership, administrative services, institutional processes and planning as well as educational offerings because of the short time this plan has been in place.

The goals and timetable of the assessment plan seem reasonable. However, without a transparent investment of an institutional resources piece incorporated into the plan, it is difficult to know how realistic it is. Critical to the implementation of recommended changes is the timely coupling of budget.

Commendations:

- The fact that the Campus has a written Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan that encompasses all academic programs and academic-support units and that there is a time period laid out for implementation, for this the Chancellor and her Campus personnel are to be commended.
- The support and collaboration between faculty and administration in the institutional effectiveness assessment process is strong by virtue of how well the Academic Senate is involved.

Suggestions:

- The Campus needs to be assiduous in its implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan and monitor the impact of its assessment findings on its Strategic Plan. This is a process that, to date has focused on selective issues and now needs to become a more campus wide process.

Recommendations:

- The Campus should go back and review its Mission Statement to be sure that it is comprehensive in encompassing all that is occurring in the area of institutional assessment.
- The Self Study Report notes a lack of systematic assessment procedures. Some areas of the Campus have yet to implement any type of assessment plan. Consequently, needed improvements in a number of operations are not being addressed. Furthermore, there is widespread perception that where there are findings resulting from assessment procedures, these are not being used effectively to set priorities nor for budgeting. Difficult questions will arise from any effective assessment process. These need to surface publicly, be owned by the Campus and addressed and resolved accordingly.
- Progress on the implementation, evaluation and revision of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan should be addressed in the next Periodic Review Report.

In view of these recommendations, the Team has found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras partially meets Standard 7.

STANDARD 8: ADMISSIONS

Undergraduate

General Observations:

The University has effectively implemented appropriate Enrollment Management strategies for creating a viable and successful student body. They have utilized available research to develop and establish policies and procedures that are designed to assure student success.

Commendations:

- Development of a General Admissions Index to better serve the University and the community.
- Admission of students with handicaps as identified by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Suggestion:

- Continue to assess the admissions standards as outlined and benchmark against peer institutions so as to insure that the standards established are appropriate for the institution as it develops as a doctoral research intensive University.

Graduate

General Observations:

The University has also taken steps to ensure quality and standards for graduate enrollment. The efforts to implement the "Apply Yourself" software are commended, as they should provide students with an efficient and effective way to apply to the University. As described, this should also allow the office to better serve students by integrating academic, financial and housing need information. It will also allow the University to more successfully recruit students on the international level.

Suggestion:

- As the University moves forward, it is important that a review of the mission is conducted. Will the University have a large doctoral research profile or that of a highly selective undergraduate institution? It is difficult to do both. The University should determine whether one would take priority or how they will effectively balance both priorities.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras meets Standard 8.

STANDARD 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

General Observations:

It is clear that both students and student life staff share a love for the campus and for the University. The staff comments in many ways spoke clearly about "caring" for the students. The problems and concerns that have been expressed in other areas of the campus are the same for this area. These issues fall largely into five general categories:

1. **Lack of available resources**

The fiscal resource concerns are obvious and well documented. Student perception though is interesting and should be further explored. Clearly, students felt that they are getting an exceptional education for a bargain price. A number of students also shared that they see a number of redundancies on the campus that could be reduced in order to garner a change in resource allocations. The conversation regarding increasing tuition and applying fees fell into two categories:

- a. Those traditionalists who believe that a college education is a right and an investment in the future. These students felt that there should be no increases and that the government needed to invest more. They also shared the more cynical notions of poor administration, poor management and government corruption as the root of the problem.
- b. A number of students felt that an increase in tuition was justified and they would not object to an adjustment. These students also shared their feeling that it was a minority of students who were radical and prone to strike over this issue, although they admitted that the majority would be largely silent and take the opportunity to "go to the beach" rather than speak up in support.

Most interestingly was the comment by a student who stated that "striking" was their most viable alternative. While he initially stated that he would oppose an increase, after hearing students with a different viewpoint, he acknowledged that an increase might be necessary because "the lack of resources hinders the quality of education and the infrastructure. The University needs to give us back what we haven't been given before."

Finally, a student stated very poignantly that, "Life here is good. The education is excellent, but the contrast is that the {condition of} the buildings and the campus don't make you feel good about studying and about being here sometimes."

2. Lack of human resources .

Students talked about a lack of available classes and sections. Other areas that were often cited as needing additional human resources were security and counseling. The unavailability of summer school courses was also listed as a student concern. Faculty also stated a lack of human resources to teach the courses in the summer.

3. Lack of space

The lack of space was spoken of often. It was a concern expressed with regard to offices, but also by staff and students with regard to congregating and activity space. Students felt very strongly that the prevalence of deteriorating buildings, especially those that are "sick", had a large impact on the student body. They shared that the lack of the theater, the closing of the Faculty Center and part of the Student Center buildings inhibited the ability of the campus to serve as a community. They felt that this was a primary reason for students not remaining on the campus beyond their required class time.

4. Lack of technology

The millennial generation has a very different way of creating community than that experienced by their Baby Boomer and Gen Xer predecessors. These students use

technology as the major conduit of connectivity. The student groups cited the lack of available technology on the campus as a drawback to the creation of community and communication on the campus. They noted that there is not a web based e-mail system and not all students are on the e-mail distribution list. They stated that this was a hindrance to their ability to feel connected to the University as a whole. Students felt that within their own faculties and departments they knew what was going on, but they felt that this was severely lacking campus wide.

5. Campus safety

Campus safety and security were key issues for many students. While several students expressed concerns for safety of property during the day (i.e., books, laptops, wallets), most students felt that the Campus overall was very safe. All the student groups, particularly the one comprised of evening and graduate students however expressed great concern about the safety on the Campus after dark. Specific concerns included:

- a. The parking lots are not well lit.
- b. While the "Ruta Segura" is appreciated, students expressed that the visible presence of security at night was poor. Students also expressed that it does not lead to the parking lots. There were concerns about the need to be in buildings late and on the weekends, and there is no access control to the facilities during those times.

6. Additional observations

- a. Staff reports that a major concern expressed by students is getting a job in their chosen field when they complete their degree.
- b. Handicapped access to the campus is problematic. Students report problems with the uneven sidewalks, classes assigned to higher floors in buildings with broken elevators, and no wheelchair access to the sports complex.

Commendations:

- There are 65 student organizations and approximately 2,000 involved in these organizations. This is a smaller number of organizations than might be expected, so it seems clear the needs of students are being met by the organizations that do exist as the 10% involvement is the typical and expected level of participation for undergraduate students.
- Medical faculty provides most of the services in the medical services and the facility is open 12 hours a day 4 days a week.
- The residence halls have been able to provide good technology in the buildings, including wireless access, as well as computer labs. They have also been able to recoup some of the costs and provide better service by adding a \$7.00 a month Internet service fee.
- The residence halls are working to gain approval as emergency shelter locations for hurricanes and other emergency situations.
- The student services staff is actively working at applying for grants to assist with operations. They are the recipients of current Title 10 (Family Planning) and March of Dimes (Birth Defects) grants. They receive assistance from the grants office of the central administration to write and improve their grant proposals.
- The childcare program and the infant and toddler programs are largely serving single mothers (75%). These programs allow these students to come back to the University and complete their degrees.

- Athletics has recently joined the NCAA, which will help improve the opportunities available to student athletes.
- Peer Education programs are very active on campus and help to supplement the services that staff can provide to students. They provide a core of 50 students who serve first year students and help acclimate them to campus community.
- There is good cooperation and collaboration between departments, which allows them to support each other and to compensate for a lack of available resources.
- International Education and International Exchange programs are meeting students' needs and growing in a positive direction.

Suggestions:

- Explore the possibility for 3rd party billing (from insurance companies) for the medical center to help recoup the cost of the operation.
- Explore the addition of technology in departments. There is an abundance of software packages that could help many of the departments provide their services in a more cost efficient and effective manner, while enhancing (not compromising) the contact and impact on students.
- Inform and assess students about the true costs of their education. A number of students acknowledged that their opposition to tuition and fee increases was based on their lack of knowledge about where the money was currently being spent. If they are better informed they might be less resistant.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras meets Standard 9.

STANDARD 10: FACULTY

General Observations:

The mission of UPR explicitly and implicitly is centered on integrated undergraduate education, graduate education, research, and service to the Puerto Rican community. Faculty have been identified as a key strategic area in the University's Strategic Action Plan (PLEA) with the goal of having "... the best and most complete academic preparation ... recognized in their respective field, dedicated to critical study, creative research, and teaching."

The number of full-time teaching faculty has increased from 1,136 in the first semester of 1999-2000 to 1,144 in 2003-04 (Self Study, p. 107). Regular full-time faculty with the highest degree in their discipline (including Juris Doctor) increased from 637 to 717 during the same time period, indicating a modest improvement both in the number of faculty members and in the qualifications of the faculty.

There is solid evidence of productivity in research and scholarship by members of the faculty as evidenced by the publication record of articles in reputable journals, the authorship of books, and the production of other creative and scholarly work (Table 14, p. 109). These data reflect the

strides the University has made in improving faculty productivity and in moving forward in its goal of achieving excellence in scholarship and research. The representation of women on the faculty and the global nature of the diversity of the faculty are exemplary.

It is clear that despite the heavy official teaching load of 12 credits/semester, faculty members are dedicated and enthusiastic - and care deeply about the quality of their teaching. Undergraduate students recognize that they are obtaining a good education at UPR. Academic programs subject to external professional accreditation achieve or surpass the required standards.

There are also a number of areas of concern:

The Evaluation of Faculty Members and the Reward Structure for Faculty Performance

There is a heavy emphasis on the assessment of student learning and on the evaluation of academic programs within the University. But evaluation is stopped short of a meaningful annual evaluation of the significant professional accomplishments of each faculty member. Furthermore, except for the Law School, there is not a performance-based salary raise system for UPR faculty members. The Law School merit pay policy, based on faculty goals for each academic year followed by annual evaluation of goals accomplished and salary increases commensurate with professional accomplishments is a model the University should utilize throughout its academic units.

The University awards tenure to a high percentage of its assistant professors, which often reflects a heavy emphasis on classroom teaching. The evaluation for promotion and tenure varies from one college to another and there does not seem to be a set of general criteria for promotion and tenure for the University within which academic units can establish criteria appropriate to their disciplines. The institution of annual reviews within the Law School has resulted in better and more timely communication with junior faculty members about their progress in reaching the accomplishments necessary for promotion and tenure. It also has made the critical up-or-out evaluation of candidates by the senior faculty members easier.

The Faculty and Graduate Education

As the flagship public research-intensive university, UPR must continue to improve the visibility and attractiveness of its graduate programs to better serve the economic development of Puerto Rico, to improve the schools, colleges, and universities, and to increase the opportunities of the people. The appointment of a Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and the initiatives of that office are recognition of the increasing importance of graduate education at UPR. The resources, including faculty resources, necessary to achieve the excellence that the University's Mission requires, must accompany the emphasis placed on graduate education.

Teaching Load

The teaching load on the Campus is equivalent to a minimum of twelve credit hours per week, including the supervision of thesis, research, *etc.* Quality graduate programs require that the faculty members have classroom teaching loads significantly less than 12 credits/semester. At

the present time, the allocation of release time for scholarly work, usually equivalent to 3 credits or 6 credits, is very uneven across the campus with such release time common in some academic units and very uncommon in other units.

The teaching load issue is aggravated by the widespread utilization of overload teaching which has resulted in half of the faculty teaching more than 12 credits/semester - usually to augment a salary that does not now track the performance of the faculty member in their responsibilities in teaching, research, and service.

Working in concert, the faculty and academic administrators must develop a faculty workload policy that is clearly stated and recognizably fair - and implementable.

Faculty Support

Excellence in teaching and research requires that faculty members have computers, adequate office space, laboratories and studios in which to work, and funds to permit travel to workshops and conferences. Seed money for new faculty members, matching money for instrumentation, equipment, and adequate supplies for the academic programs of the University's departments and colleges must be found to achieve the University's Mission.

The Roles of Faculty Members in Governance and in Advancing the University

As noted already, the University is blessed with a dedicated, talented faculty, many of whom are quite accomplished and experienced. The University will benefit by increasing its reliance on faculty members to set priorities within their units and to make or help make the tough decisions necessary to fulfill the University's Mission in undergraduate education, in graduate education, and in its service to the greater Puerto Rican community.

Commendations:

- Increased productivity in research and scholarship by members of the faculty.
- Representation of women in proportion to men in the faculty and the global nature of the diversity of the faculty.
- Dedicated and talented faculty.

Recommendations:

- Institute a performance-based review and reward system for all faculty members based on the Law School model.
- Re-balance the faculty teaching efforts in accord with the University's Mission and its expectations for faculty productivity in scholarship and research. This requires a significant reduction in the classroom teaching from the 12 credits/semester common in many academic units and it requires the University to move away from its dependence on teaching overloads.
- Develop the necessary resources and budget them to the academic units so that the faculty support necessary for high quality undergraduate and graduate education programs is provided on an annual basis.

- **Involve faculty members more fully in the difficult process of improving the University's programs, both through their efforts within their academic units and through their collegial efforts within the greater academic community of the University.**

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras meets Standard 10.

STANDARD 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

General Observations:

The Team compliments the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras on its academic offerings. The breadth of its undergraduate and graduate degrees is impressive.

At the undergraduate level there are 74 majors. At the graduate level there are 46 majors and the broadest doctoral offerings in Puerto Rico. There is also an honors program, non-credit community service programs, and distant learning offerings. The educational offerings are consistent with the mission of the University. The quality of both faculty and students is high. The fact that 54 academic programs have received professional accreditation is also evidence of their strength.

In the last decade, the most expansion of academic offerings has taken place at the Ph.D. level. Although the campus has the faculty and student resources to support its graduate offerings, the Team notes the budgetary limitation that has led the Board of Trustees not to approve programs in the last three years. The Team questions whether the present budget can support the present breadth of academic offerings. The Team also notes that budget limitations may be, despite the best intentions and commitment of faculty, negatively impacting the delivery of instruction especially in areas of high-cost that require laboratory, equipment and physical space. As noted in the Self Study, budget limitations also impact support services that are important to enhance academic offerings – most notably, physical facilities for instruction, the library, technology, as well as co-curricular activities.

There is evidence of increased program review and revision in all units. We commend the Colleges of Social Sciences, Education, Humanities, Natural Sciences and others, in the process of self-examination, reflection and program revision that characterizes many of their programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As a result of their NCATE accreditation, the faculty of Education is in a unique position to lead campus efforts for authentic assessment.

Throughout the University, the faculty is increasingly involved in development activities, including pedagogical and assessment renewal. Yet, the Team notes that efforts to revise academic programs and ways of delivering instruction and services are often hampered by lack of collaboration and communication among the different components of the campus and the system. Furthermore, faculty point to the lack of flexibility of a system structure where curricular revisions could take a decade and where all changes in curriculum have to be approved by multiple bodies, including the Board of Trustees.

The evidence from the syllabi attests to the high quality of courses and high level of expectations in the academic programs. At the undergraduate level, both in the courses taken in the faculty of General Education, as well as in courses taken in the specialized faculties, learning goals and objectives are clearly articulated.

Individual courses and programs identify learning goals and objectives as evidenced by syllabi. Although this works well at the graduate level where students experience the programs as specializations, it fails at the undergraduate level. The Team notes that the campus has failed to clearly articulate and identify student learning goals and objectives for their general education component defined broadly, as seen in the discussion of Standard 12, which follows, although the process for this development has been initiated.

An outstanding issue seems to be the availability of courses for the completion of the degree. Short of trying to push students to take classes during the early afternoon through the creation of the Universal Hour, there has been little planning on how to make available more course offerings without increasing cost. The Team notes that there are many ways in which this could be accomplished – by requiring that administrators teach, by streamlining offerings that may be redundant, by building more flexibility in the undergraduate curriculum. The University should undertake a comprehensive analysis of its course needs and of its course offerings (including the number of seats, the times the courses are offered, and the availability of classrooms, labs, and studios) so that students can obtain the needed courses and graduate in the minimum amount of time.

Implementing a New Undergraduate Curriculum

The Team notes the urgency of revising the undergraduate degree. As presently structured, the undergraduate degree lacks the flexibility that the bright undergraduate students at the University and its qualified faculty, deserves. Although such a highly structured curriculum might have been important half a century ago, the team questions its validity for the 21st century and with students and faculty of such high caliber.

At present the implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum that was approved by the Senate on May 21, 2001 (Certification 146, 2000-2001) has been halted. Certification 11, passed on September 9, 2003, had charged the deans of the colleges and the directors of schools to generate within one calendar year (section 2) a consensus position on the curricular revision to send to the Academic Senate. To date, three components have been completed -- a vision of the bachelor's degree, the profile of the graduate, and a definition of general education for the campus. However, these three components have not been fully discussed with the faculty and there is no indication that there is consensus around the deans' vision. The Team also notes that there has been little progress with the elaboration of the components of the bachelor's degree itself. The Team notes that this process is already almost a year behind the original target date, and that not enough progress has been made to satisfy the Team's expectations that this will be accomplished in the near future. The Team notes that this had already been required of the last Middle States visit.

Commendations:

- The Team compliments the University of Puerto Rico on the breadth and quality of its academic offerings, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Increased program review and revision in all units.

Suggestions:

- The University must place a very high priority on carefully assessing the academic attainment of students, especially at the undergraduate level. To do so, we suggest that assessment efforts that are presently going on separately be coordinated by a specialized unit that would support faculty in developing assessment systems, and gathering data on student learning. At the same time, this unit could assist academic programs in the use of data to revise their educational offerings.
- The University should start assessing its present range of academic offerings, and evaluate the viability of academic programs with very low student enrollment, as well as the possibility of consolidating some academic offerings.
- The Team further suggests that all faculties of the University immediately engage with the work of the academic deans to create curricular flexibility and creative options in the delivery of the undergraduate degree. The revision of the undergraduate degree should not focus solely on the offerings of the faculty of General Education. Special attention must be paid to building a coherent, yet flexible and agile, academic experience for undergraduate students. This includes revising the requirements of the different faculties beyond those of their majors, as well as the major itself.
- A thorough analysis of course needs and course offerings should be undertaken – and then acted upon.
- To carry out the undergraduate degree revision, the Team suggests that the academic deans continue to work intensively and submit all phases of their report in such a way as to encourage intra- and inter-faculty dialogue and a vote in the Academic Senate as soon as possible.

Requirement:

- To ensure that the process of adoption and implementation of a new undergraduate curriculum moves forward, the Team requires that the University submit their schedule for full implementation. Such implementation must be scheduled to begin the 2007-2008 academic year.

The Team found that University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras meets Standard 11.

STANDARD 12: GENERAL EDUCATION**General Observations:**

The Team finds little evidence that the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras has identified the “core of general education that expresses the educational philosophy of the institution.” Despite

recent efforts by the Academic Deans to define General Education, the Team finds that there is little agreement among the faculty on what this means for the institution. There are two components to the Campus' present definition of general education – the one offered by the faculty of the College of General Studies and the one offered by the faculties of the other colleges. The Team notes that the philosophical underpinnings of these two components are often in tension with one another and do not present a coherent philosophy of general education.

The offerings of the General Education faculty, especially in the areas of Natural and Social Sciences, display an intellectual bent that favors multiple forms of discourses and cultural perspectives, as well as interdisciplinary. The General Education faculty pays attention to oral and written communication, both in English and Spanish, and scientific reasoning. Yet there is not a consistent and coherent emphasis on these skills throughout the curriculum, from matriculation at the University to graduation. Such an emphasis requires a degree of communication and collaboration between the related faculties that is often not present and it requires faculty and college leadership that ensures that students develop these competencies and skills. It is important to note that the faculty of General Education, because of historical reasons, does not offer quantitative reasoning and mathematical processes. Despite some discontent with the rigidity of the requirements of the Faculty of General Education, most units, and especially the professional schools, value the preparation that students receive in those initial courses.

Some faculties also define General Education as courses they or others offer in the academic disciplines in preparation for the specialization. But there is also some evidence that some faculties use these requirements to bolster their own offerings within departments or to extend the requirements of majors. The Self Study makes evident that there is little consensus across disciplines and faculties on how their required courses complement or extend the offerings of the General Education faculty. Generally, however, the impression remains that the requirements of the General Education faculty are inflexible, leading many specialized programs to make exceptions for their students.

Until recently, there has been little campus dialogue about how to enhance undergraduate students' intellectual growth by offering a coherent general education program. It is clear to the Team that there is now increased dialogue about the general education offerings and at least in some areas significant progress in resolving issues.

With the unresolved problems in general education, the University has not been able to address the role of mathematics in the bachelor's degree program. The lack of a University requirement in mathematics is not compatible with the University's status as the public flagship research-intensive university in Puerto Rico. While many academic concentrations do require mathematics as part of their curricula, the absence of a University requirement is not in accord with the needs of a first-rate undergraduate education in the 21st century.

Although the Team notes that progress has been made on the revision of the undergraduate curriculum, and especially the role of general education within such curriculum, we note that progress has been unusually slow. Ten years of discussion and reflection is just too long. The Middle States team of 1995 had already noted these same concerns. Such prolonged discussions

demonstrate to the Team an unwillingness to put the student needs at the center, and a political struggle over faculty turf that does not enhance academic offerings.

The University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras is in a unique position to fully meet this standard. The Faculty of General Education at the University puts this area at the center of campus life and at the beginning of the student academic experience. The separate character of this faculty is the source of its strength, but separation makes the collegial cooperation of faculty members teaching related courses more challenging. Strong links need to be formed between the General Studies faculty members (and their units) and their colleagues in intellectually related units in the rest of the campus academic community. The General Studies faculty members must work closely with colleagues in the specialized faculties in much more than just the teaching of extra courses. Building more flexibility in the administrative structure to enable joint appointments or hybrid teaching assignments that would permit faculty in General Education to teach courses in the specialized faculties and vice-versa would be a way of building such collaboration.

Overall, there must be more integration of general education and specialized education responsibilities, providing a more seamless way of preparing students.

As in much of the University, assessment of learning in the courses offered by the faculty of General Education has been wanting. A Center for Curricular Research and Assessment was created in 2000-2001, but to date, it has not produced evidence of learning outcomes. There is no overall assessment plan for the student experience with general education offerings both within the Faculty of General Education and within the specialized faculties.

The Team notes its impatience with the slowness with which a dedicated and qualified faculty has addressed the issues of general education at the campus. Issues of faculty turf should not guide the curriculum process.

Recommendations:

- The Campus needs to reach consensus on how to implement core competencies throughout all curricula, particularly competencies as outlined in Standard 12 in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.
- To build the coherence necessary, the Team recommends that the University provide the administrative mechanisms to ensure the collaboration and intellectual links between the faculties of General Education and the specialized faculties.

Requirement:

- Because in the case of the undergraduate programs, Standard 12 is linked to Standard 11, we repeat here the same requirement we previously made: The Team requires that the University submit their schedule for implementation of the undergraduate program. Such implementation must be scheduled to begin the 2007-2008 academic year.

The Team found that University of Puerto Rico Rfo Piedras has recently started to move toward meeting Standard 12. At present, however, the University of Puerto Rico at Rfo Piedras meets this standard only partially.

STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

General Observations:

There is a wide range of programs covered by this standard. The Campus is satisfied that the development of programs in these areas meets or exceeds the requirements of the campus mission. Several of the programs have been successful due in large part to the initiative and dedication of individuals and groups who have developed them. Several units are justifiably proud of what they have been able to accomplish with minimal campus support.

Commendations:

- Rfo Piedras has excelled in implementing assistive technology and support for disabled students. These are well coordinated with campus and community needs.
- There are several excellent Experiential Learning projects in several programs: Law, Social Work, Architecture, Natural Sciences, General Education, the Museum, Business Administration, Education, and Information Sciences & Technologies. There is much evidence of initiative and dedication despite resource scarcity.
- There is one successfully operating Distance Learning program, in Information Sciences and Technologies.
- Continuing Education programs are successful and growing. The Campus appears to be withdrawing support from this division as it becomes stronger and more self-supporting. There is a wide range of programs for both personal and professional development.

Suggestions:

- Remove bureaucratic impediments and disincentives to development of programs, especially those that are self-supporting or bring revenue to the Campus. Give sufficient autonomy and flexibility to respond to the community and to be competitive.
- Provide sufficient technological and administrative support for these activities. Offer incentives and financial support for additional program development.
- In developing resources and services for distance learning, consider giving priority to projects which serve campus learning as well as distance learning.
- Experiential learning is valuable to students as a life experience, as preparation for employment, and for the development of social consciousness. Therefore, students would benefit greatly from additional experiential learning opportunities, whether for academic credit, for pay or on a volunteer basis.

The Team found that the University of Puerto Rico Rfo Piedras meets Standard 13.

STANDARD 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

General Observations:

Expectations of student learning are clearly articulated in the Campus Mission Statement. The process for evaluating the mastery of these learning objectives is well defined in the Student Learning Assessment Plan (PAAE). The Plan covers the assessment of learning outcomes at the Campus and academic program levels. The Plan is broad in its conceptualization covering discipline-based goals, objectives and outcomes.

There is a plan (Student Learning Assessment Plan) in place with specific assessment methods to be identified for validating the achievement of student learning goals and objectives. The professionally-oriented programs (e.g., Graduate School of Information Sciences and Technology, College of Education, Social Work and Rehabilitation Counseling) have taken the lead in instituting assessment plans and in using a variety of assessment strategies. The findings generated from learning assessment activities are used in adjusting criteria for admitting students, in making curricular changes, and in enhancing academic support.

The Campus is taking seriously the need to develop direct and indirect indicators for measuring student achievement. Such development is evident in longitudinal studies on admissions profiles, on grade analysis, attrition and retention, graduation rates, student satisfaction with attainment of learning domains, jobs obtained upon graduation for some discipline areas and licensing information results.

A culture of learning assessment is evolving with the establishment of the Center of Academic Excellence, which provides the training of faculty in student learning assessment, and with the creation of the Office for the Assessment of Student Learning to assist academic programs with the development and eventual implementation of assessment plans. There is unevenness in where schools are at with implementation but, in general, the professional schools, the School of Communications, the College of Humanities, the College of Social Sciences, and the Chemistry program are ahead.

Commendation:

- The Campus is to be commended for the plan for assessment it has written on student learning. These plans are extensive, comprehensive and mission driven.

Suggestions:

- A Student Learning Assessment Plan has been written but is to be approved by the Academic Senate. The implementation stage is beginning with academic programs writing their own plans for the assessment of student learning. Now they need to be completed, approved and instituted in each of the undergraduate and graduate academic programs. Student learning assessment plan implementation does vary widely among academic programs. Adoption based on program goals and objectives, written indicators and incorporation by each faculty member is needed to assure a campus-wide learning assessment system.

- All academic programs need to be held accountable to as short a timetable as possible so that the first cycle of Academic Program Evaluation can be completed and discipline-based student learning outcomes can be formulated, indicators developed and implementation introduced.
- Where evidenced, course syllabi must be updated to include clearly articulated course goals, objectives, and measurable student learning outcomes that are consistent with program goals and objectives.

Recommendation:

Demonstrate significant progress made in

- Providing the necessary resources and educating and training for all faculty in the designing of assessment plans for their respective academic programs and courses
- Ensuring that all programs have systematically instituted student learning assessment
- Implementing the Student Learning Assessment Plan
- Utilizing the results of assessing student learning to bring about the changes necessary for enhancing the Mission of the Campus.

We commend the Campus for the very fine work that has been done on assessment of student learning. We encourage them to bring the implementation of their Student Learning Assessment Plan to completion and begin to make appropriate changes based on findings and recommendations.

Given what has been done, the Team finds the Campus in compliance with Standard 14.

CONCLUSION

The Team was impressed with the leadership as well as the many strengths present in the Río Piedras Campus, but the Team also believes the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras is at a crossroad. It is an institution facing a transition from the 20th Century to the 21st. To move ahead and strengthen its doctoral research-intensive status requires a collective will and the determination to make difficult decisions in a timely manner. The Team is disappointed that several of the findings and recommendations made five years ago and even ten years ago have not been acted upon.