Commission action which preceded this report:

**Status:** Member since 1946  
**Last Reaffirmed:** June 22, 2005  
**Brief History Since Last Comprehensive Evaluation:**  
June 22, 2005: To reaffirm accreditation.  
June 28, 2007: To accept the monitoring report  
June 26, 2008: To accept the progress letter  
June 25, 2009: To accept the progress letter  
**Next Self-Study Evaluation:** 2014 - 2015
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Dr. Ana R. Guadalupe Quiñones, Former Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Dr. Mayra Charriéz, Interim Dean of Student Affairs
Mr. José Juan Estrada, Dean of Administration
Dr. Astrid Cubano Iguina, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
Eng. Denisse Figueroa, Director of the Division of Academic and Administrative Technologies
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Pharm. D. Elisa Vega Martínez

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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of UPR Río Piedras Campus (UPR-RP)

During the five year period covered in this report, UPR-RP has been committed to accelerate its transformation into a research institution of international prestige, devoted to the creation of knowledge through research, scholarship and teaching, and dedicated to the integral formation of its students. UPR-RP is the only higher education institution in Puerto Rico classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a comprehensive doctoral and high level research university.

Founded in 1903, UPR-RP is the oldest and most complex of eleven (11) units within the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) System. As a public comprehensive doctoral institution, its academic offerings range from the baccalaureate to the doctoral degree, through 70 undergraduate and 80 graduate programs in the basic disciplines and professional fields. Research activities are enhanced by a variety of research centers and institutes, including the widely recognized Institute for Tropical Ecosystem Studies that conducts long term environmental research on Caribbean islands and similar tropical areas and is part of a global research network. The graduate offer includes 12 PhDs, one Doctorate in Education, and international programs in Law, at both LLM and JD levels. The Campus frontier of knowledge production has been expanded during this period with the creation of a Master in Cultural Management and Administration in the College of Humanities, and Masters and PhD programs in Environmental Science, the PhD currently under consideration by the licensing board in PR, to be initiated in August, 2010. Fifty five (55) academic programs are professionally accredited. In fact, during the period covered by this report accreditation became an institutional goal that prompted two recent accreditations and intense activity in pursuing new ones for various other programs.

The Campus serves close to 19,000 students, 20% graduate, and grants an average of over 3,000 degrees a year. From 2005 through 2010 doctorate degrees conferred have maintained an upward trend. UPR-RP counts upon a diverse faculty whose academic degrees have been awarded by world-class universities and a student body that represents the best academic profile in Puerto Rico. It is also custodian of artistic, documentary, cultural, environmental, and symbolic resources for, teaching, research, creation, and enjoyment of the citizenry. Our professors are distinguished with national prizes such as the "Andrew Gemant Award 2010" by the American Institute of Physics awarded to Dr. Daniel Altschuler and the Dr. Etta Z. Falconer Award for Mentoring and Commitment to Diversity to Math professor Dr. Ivelisse Rubio.

Since the last MSCHE self study, the Campus has embarked in the comprehensive development of a culture of assessment. Strategic planning has been adopted as the framework for resource allocation, and assessment is required for most institutional activities. As a result of this, the Campus has moved forward in the implementation of the Strategic Plan University Vision 2016, approved in 2006-07, supported by assessment of learning and institutional effectiveness and made operational in seven priority projects which compose Operational Plan 2011. The new emphasis on planning and assessment allowed for the alignment of Campus resources with its mission and vision statements. Simultaneously, the Campus integrated its planning agenda to that of the UPR, titled Ten for the Decade (Diez para la Década), which is a guide of principles and actions for renewal and continuous improvement. The institution recognizes that future scenarios require the Campus to continuously refocus its institutional planning.

Increasing fiscal constraints at the present time test the feasibility of the institution’s strategic goals in the coming years and constitute a major challenge that the institution will have to surpass. UPR-RP is bound to address this challenge and make the necessary adjustments to the upcoming operational plan and resource allocations. These modifications are expected to carry the Campus throughout the next five year period of the Strategic Plan Vision University 2016. The outstanding human and academic resources that have sustained the Campus as the premier higher education institution in Puerto Rico will undoubtedly mark the way through the present critical and decisive
period. Furthermore, the UPR is currently experiencing a major administrative leadership transition supported by legitimate appointment processes, which are still in progress. This adds new variables to the complex equations defining the state of affairs, which is currently aggravated by the close to 50 days student strike.

**MSCHE Accreditation process (five year period) 2005-10**

Member of MSCHE since 1946, UPR-RP received reaffirmation of accreditation from the Commission in June 2005 and rendered a monitoring report by November 1, 2006, documenting (1) progress made in the implementation of a comprehensive institutional strategic plan which links long-range planning to decision-making and budgeting processes, (2) implementation of a written plan for the assessment of institutional effectiveness, and (3) progress toward the implementation of a new undergraduate curriculum. Consequently, a team visit took place in April 2007. A progress letter on the implementation of the bachelors’ curricular revision and the new general education concept/definition was submitted in March 2008.

**Preparing the Periodic Review Report (PRR)**

The Periodic Review Report has been a participatory experience that included numerous faculty, staff, and administrators. In January 2008, the Dean of Academic Affairs organized a PRR Steering Committee and appointed a coordinator. The Committee composed of eight members with firsthand experience in the implementation of the strategic plan and the assessment system, chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs, was responsible for collecting all necessary information for the preparation of the PRR. The Committee worked closely with the Coordinator of the Office for the Assessment of Student Learning, the Institutional Assessment Coordinator, college deans and academic program chairs. Faculty participation was ensured in meetings with learning and institutional assessment coordinators, in which faculty and staff represented their peers in addressing related issues and providing key information. The purpose of these meetings was not only to follow up on the implementation of a first assessment cycle and to clarify roles, but also to underscore the importance of faculty engagement in the assessment process. Staff members of the Deanship of Academic Affairs (DAA) attended two MSCHE Periodic Review Report Preparation Workshops in April 2008 and 2009 to prepare the Campus to undertake the review in accordance with the new guidelines outlined in Handbook for Periodic Review Reports (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006).

**UPR-RP Major Changes and Developments**

In 2007 MSCHE commended UPR-RP on its impressive progress in planning and its notable progress in assessment of institutional effectiveness since the Middle States Team visit of March 2005. Maintaining and surpassing this level of accomplishment has required constant administrative and academic adjustments to deal with changing needs and attain continuous improvement. The transformation of former ways of thinking and doing frames *Vision University 2016*, and has been structured through changes that can be grouped under three general areas: (1) planning, resource allocation, and institutional assessment, (2) implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum and changes in the general education component, and (3) assessment of student learning. Section 2 of this report describes the design and establishment of these important processes and UPR-RP’s follow up of MSCHE requirements and recommendations.

In its self study report, UPR-RP expressed the need to restructure its planning process by assigning priorities, incorporating indicators of performance, periodically evaluating achievement of objectives, and feeding back these outcomes into the planning process. The MSCHE Evaluation Team reiterated this recommendation. The approval of the strategic plan *Vision University 2016* in 2006-2007, and the operational definition of seven priority projects gave way to a new approach for planning, resource allocation, and decision making. For the first time, actions, time lines, persons responsible for results, estimated budgets, and performance indicators were established at UPR-RP.
The strategic plan, developed in a participatory manner, set an overall direction, whereas the operational plan stimulated institutional renewal through actions undertaken at deanships, schools, and offices.

The PRR describes processes developed and strategic actions performed during 2005-2010 to attain the goals in Vision University 2016, a number of them aligned to MSCH recommendations. The report focuses on the seven priority projects that were given attention to during the 2007-2010 period, defined as follows: (1) Support for Research and Scholarship, (2) Implementation of the Revised Baccalaureate, (3) Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning, (4) Quality of Student University Experience and Services, (5) Internationalization of UPR-RP, (6) Technological Innovation, and (7) Quality of Campus Life and Community Outreach. The projects are presented throughout the PRR with emphasis on assessment findings, follow up actions and results. Budget allocations to support progress are also presented.

Thus, a campus wide network for systematic assessment tied to Vision University 2016 was put in place and enhanced. This entailed reorganizing responsibilities for implementation, and launching an intense training program for faculty and staff in the areas of planning and assessment. Through a periodical offer of workshops and related activities to empower administrators and faculty in the realization of Vision University 2016, units interacted and became part of the assessment efforts. Since 2006, DAA, through its Office of Academic Planning (OAP), has been responsible for developing unified performance indicators to measure progress in the attainment of strategic goals. At the same time, on-going evaluation of the assessment structure has been quite continuous.

Establishing an assessment system on Campus became Priority Project 3, so that assessment itself became a top concern in the Campus’ planning and budgeting processes. Systematic processes of learning assessment, program review and professional accreditation during this period opened new channels of communication and participation for faculty. Four main areas of institutional assessment were defined as necessary for the implementation of Vision University 2016, (1) institutional knowledge, (2) program review and professional accreditation, (3) assessment of student learning, and (4) assessment of administrative units. During the past five years these areas have improved in various ways. For example, the OAP redefined and redesigned the indicators system by creating a dashboard, subdivided by strategic goal and by priority project, as a Web-based application that can be accessed through the OAP portal (Strategic Indicators Dashboard). Benchmarking has been developed to establish standards for important indicators, such as faculty publications, graduation rates, and doctorates conferred. This is the case, for example, of tenured or tenure track instructional faculty with a doctorate degree (81%), with a standard of 85% based on the Carnegie Peer Group median, which positions UPR-RP on a solid path to more significant achievements in research and creation. Such achievements are part of Priority Project 1 described in Section 2, and account for an increase in external funds approved from $7.5M in 2007 to $15.7M in 2009, a 40% increase in publications cited in Web of Science since 2005, and 30% in total research expenditures.

Simultaneously, a high level of faculty engagement has been instrumental in achieving the Campus most comprehensive curricular revision in decades. In January 2006 Academic Senate Certification Num. 46 established a new concept-definition of General Education and a revised structure for the bachelor’s degree. The bachelors’ revision became Priority Project 2 and a special budget was assigned to its implementation for 2007-2010. A rigorous and fast paced process was put in place giving way to results that surpassed Campus expectations. Thus, as of December 2009, 67 of the 74 active programs in 2006 had been revised following the revision guidelines, four were declared inactive and three are being considered by the Academic Senate this year.

Implementation of a new general education definition was a key element in the revision process. Courses in art and literature were created or modified and are continuously made known through colleges, schools, and registrars’ office Web pages. The bachelor’s revision has achieved a more flexible academic environment, reducing credit requirements and increasing student choice, which should also contribute to better student satisfaction. Although not necessarily related, the most recent graduation rate, 49% (2003 cohort), an increase from 46% (2002 cohort), is a definite step in that direction.

The curricular revision described above required that all undergraduate programs develop and put into action learning assessment in 2008-2009, thus interlacing in a coherent process all institutional learning assessment
efforts. In doing so, program learning assessment became a main driver to achieve a more integrative approach to teaching and learning and a vital component of every program. Section 2 includes learning assessment of competencies tied to general education and the curricular revision institutional agenda, and as follow up to MSCHE recommendations. Section 5, in turn, details how assessment is being carried out in each program and administrative unit on Campus. With regards to graduate programs, the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research (DEGI, by its Spanish acronym) began the implementation of UPR-RP Student Learning Assessment Plan in 2005-2006. In the following academic year, the DAA assumed responsibility for organizing and coordinating the process at the undergraduate level. For such a task, in 2007 it created the Office of Student Learning Evaluation (OEAIE by its Spanish acronym) for support and coordination of the undergraduate process and for promoting and sustaining a campus wide culture of assessment. College Assessment Coordinators became the movers of this process.

Learning assessment was, thus, institutionalized. Evaluation of communication skills and other competencies underscored in the campus expected learning outcomes (Academic Senate Certification 46) became a priority of the First Cycle of Assessment for undergraduate programs. Of the 66 academic programs engaged in learning assessment, 94% evaluated communication skills. At the institutional level, emphasis was placed on the assessment of competencies in the general education context in natural sciences, communication in Spanish and English as a second language, and social responsibility. Also, the Library System took charge of coordinating assessment of information competencies in a joint project with colleges and schools, and a time table has been followed to ensure progress.

Graduate programs put emphasis on assessment of critical thinking and research skills. Learning assessment has induced graduate programs to evaluate their structures and decision making processes and revamp the assessment of their different components. It has moved its members to consider program operations in an organic manner, with the aim of improving the genuine program goal: learning outcomes.

In turn, staff has being particularly engaged in structuring the effectiveness assessment system. Beginning in 2008 the coordination of Institutional Effectiveness Assessment carried out up to that time in the DAA, was moved to the Office of the Chancellor, as more administrative units advanced in the implementation of their plans. A Coordinator was appointed to provide key leadership. During the 2009-2010, all schools, deanships, and offices reporting to the Office of the Chancellor prepared an electronic version of their institutional effectiveness assessment plan, inventory of strategic projects and progress, and assessment indicators. The process has brought about transforming actions and results that are detailed in Section 5.

The UPR System faces the most serious fiscal situation in decades as a result of Puerto Rico’s dire economic scenario. However, UPR-RP is now empowered through its strategic planning and assessment structures to adjust priorities and resource allocation, at the same time that it continues to examine new ways of doing. Section 3 looks at the challenges and opportunities ahead. Sections 4 addresses possible fiscal scenarios for the next two years based on present data and projections, while Section 6 presents a wider picture related to budget and precautionary measures that have supported the advancement of the strategic plan during the five year period here reported.

In sum, this PRR portrays processes designed and put in place and actions carried out during 2005-2010 that gave way to the major accomplishments highlighted below.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PRR**

- Approval of campus Strategic Plan Vision University 2016 in 2006
- New approach to planning and resource allocation: an operational plan with Seven Priority Projects
- New assessment mechanisms: indicators system by strategic goal and by priority project, as a web-based application. Benchmarking established
- Increase of 40% in publications cited in Web of Science since 2005
- Increase in approved external funds from $ 7.5M in 2007 to $15.7M in 2009
• A 30% increase in total research expenditures
• New technology student fee established in 2005 provided for a recurrent funding stream of around $1M a year, 92% of the Campus is wireless and a revamped technology infrastructure.
• Two new professional accreditations in 2009
• Three graduate programs approved, one in process, and four undergraduate programs inactivated
• Intensified Campus-outside community relationship and interdisciplinary spaces for practice
• Almost 100% increase in the number of participants in the Division of Continuing Educational and Professional Studies
• Inauguration of a new building for the College of General Studies and Phase 1 of the remodeling of the original building; Chemistry Labs revamped; three graduate schools in new facilities; improvements to the School of Public Administration underway. The UPR-RP Theater was remodeled and attracts a variety of internal and external audiences.
• A new multistory parking building inaugurated with substantial illumination and security.
• New operations and maintenance software for punctual compliance with regulations at the Office of Conservation of University Facilities
• 54% increase in the number of faculty members that travelled outside PR for academic presentations since 2005-06, and a two-fold increase in the number of visiting professors.
• New concept of general education and implementation of undergraduate curricular revision surpassing expectations.
• A required evaluation period and mid-term grade reports for undergraduates approved by the Academic Senate and included in the academic calendar since the spring semester of 2007-08.
• Notable advancement in implementation of the first cycle of learning assessment, 79% of undergraduate programs are in their second cycle.
• Evidence of learning at expected levels in various competencies and program objectives, and implementation of transforming actions across units based on assessment findings
• Rise in graduation rates from 46% (cohort 2002) to 49% (cohort 2003)
• An upward trend in doctorate and masters degrees conferred since 2004
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Certification Statement:
Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and
Federal Title IV Requirements
(Effective October 1, 2009)

An institution seeking initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation must affirm by completing
this certification statement that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE requirements of
affiliation and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant
requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance education
and transfer of credit.

The signed statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution's self-study report.
If it is not possible to certify compliance with all such requirements, the institution must attach specific
details in a separate memorandum.

University of Puerto Rico - Rio Piedras Campus
is seeking (Check one):  
Initial Accreditation  
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established requirements of affiliation of
the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV
program participation, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of
2008 such as those on distance education and transfer of credit, and that it has complied with the
MSCHE policy, “Related Entities.”

 Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (Check if applicable)

[Signature]
José Ramón de la Torre, President UPR
(Chief Executive Officer)  14/junio/2010
(Date)

[Signature]
[Signature]
(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)  14/junio/2010
(Date)

J:\Procedures & Process\CertificationStatementEffectiveOct09
SECTION 2: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FROM MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Requirements and recommendations by MSCHE following the 2005 and 2007 visits can be grouped under three general areas: 1) planning, resource allocation, and institutional assessment, 2) implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum and changes in the general education component, and 3) assessment of student learning. All three areas inform one another on critical components of the institution. In fact, these areas are of major importance to the UPR-RP fulfillment of its mission.

The UPR-RP has acted promptly and effectively in responding to MSCHE concerns by linking financial, technological, and human resources with strategic planning and systematic assessment. Particular attention has been given to concrete actions related to standards 2, 3, 7, 12 and 14 in response to MSCHE recommendations and requirements (Appendix 2.1 Summary of Recommendations: Self-Study and MSCHE Evaluation Report). These have been reported to MSCHE in follow-up reports and letters submitted by UPR-RP in April 2005, October 2006, May 2007, and March 2008.

This Section targets institutional progress in response to MSCHE’s recommendations. Regarding assessment of student learning, this section focuses on the integration and assessment of competencies within the general education component, which is part of the bachelor’s revision and thus fulfills one of MSCHE’s main recommendations. A comprehensive discussion of assessment of learning at the program level is presented in Section 5.

Institutional Response: Planning, Resource Allocation and Assessment (Standards 2, 3 and 7)

Many developments and significant events in the areas of institutional effectiveness, strategic planning and assessment have occurred since the UPR-RP 2005 self study. Details of these changes were presented and submitted to MSCHE in progress report of October 30, 2006 and in the follow-up visit in April of 2007. The exit report of the visit team evidenced UPR-RP compliance with Standards 2, 3, 7 as stated by MSCHE Standards of Excellence. In fact, the MSCHE evaluation team report of 2007 “strongly commended” institutional efforts that prompted this achievement. UPR-RP is not only proud to have created and implemented substantive operational efforts to enhance its institutional effectiveness, but also continues to move forward in the development of a culture of institutional assessment.

Strategic Planning and Institutional Renewal: Vision University 2016

As reported on the October 30, 2006 progress report, the implementation of a new comprehensive institutional strategic plan began in 2006 when the UPR-RP Academic Senate approved the new plan, Vision University 2016 (Academic Senate Certification Num. 26, 2006-07). The approved plan outlines the new institutional vision, strategic goals, and objectives that guide and delineate the route for institutional development in the next 10 years (2006-2016). It is aligned with the UPR system-wide institutional planning initiatives comprised in the document Ten for the Decade. As noted by the MSCHE 2007 visiting team exit report, UPR-RP has demonstrated outstanding work in the strategic planning process by making it an effective and participatory activity. In fact, combined with financial support, Vision University 2016 proved to be a positive turning point and a sound groundwork for institutional renewal.

In alignment with its Mission, the new strategic plan conceives our Campus as one that privileges research, creation, and the dissemination of knowledge; is committed to life-long learning and the formation of the students; and contributes to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development of the Puerto Rican as well as the international society. This Plan has guided the participative elaboration of strategic and development...
plans by UPR-RP colleges and units. These have been subject to systematic, on-going assessment in order to uphold institutional effectiveness, as described in Section 5 of this PRR. It should be noted that the plan structures nine strategic goals that were developed through dialogue, discussion and participation of all institutional constituents during the 2005-2006 academic year. A consolidated budget with allocations organized by the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, *Vision University 2016*, was also submitted to MSCHE in 2006 (see Appendix 6.1 Budgetary Model by Strategic Goal).

The October 2006 progress report also informed about a campus-wide operational plan, *Universidad 2011*, a five year plan that includes specific objectives and actions currently in place. It as well included significant information regarding action-calendars, persons in charge, strategic indicators, necessary resources and infrastructure, main challenges, and budgetary strategies. The implementation of Operational Plan *Universidad 2011* has rested on seven strategies. These are the concrete mechanisms that have enabled the Campus’ renewal as it moves toward the attainment of its strategic goals. The seven strategies are:

- **Project Management:** the formulation and implementation of seven priority projects at the Campus level and at the deanships, schools, and offices to coherently advance key institutional objectives. The seven projects listed below conform the Portfolio of Campus Priority Projects, (Appendix 2.2 Priority Projects Inventory and Budget) undertaken at each deanship, school, and office with project coordinators and gathered in an Inventory with projected actions, calendar, indicators, other detailed information (see Section 5 below for Inventory of individual units).
  1. Support for Research and Scholarship
  2. Implementation of the Revised Baccalaureate
  3. Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness and Students Learning
  4. Quality of Student University Experience and Services
  5. Internationalization of UPR-RP
  6. Technological Innovation
  7. Quality of Campus Life and Community Outreach

- **Strategic Budget:** budget aligned with the priority projects and strategic plan. Section 6 of this PRR describes the process to develop the five year strategic budget (2006-2011). Strategic budgets have proven effective now that the UPR System confronts significant reductions in public funding. The reduction, however, did not impact strategic actions already in place related to maintenance of physical areas and completion of major permanent improvement projects in process. Section 4 discusses financial projections in this new economic scenario and the set of assumptions on which these projections are based.

- **Integrated Assessment and Strategic Indicator System:** UPR-RP has developed an integrated assessment and strategic indicator system that consists of a dashboard of strategic indicators for each of the nine goals of the strategic plan. Also, an alternate dashboard for the Seven Priority Projects is in place. All units have established indicators and assessment of institutional effectiveness for priority objectives in what is called Inventory of Priority Activities. Both, the Dashboard and the Units’ inventories are discussed in Section 5 of this PRR.

- **Leadership and Skill Development:** The Office of the Chancellor, the deanships, the offices, and the colleges and schools are conducting workshops on strategic management, assessment, and plan implementation promoting an effective communication network. (Appendix 5.7 Report on the Status of Implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan).

- **Structure of Coordinators:** Each unit’s strategic project has a coordinator that serves as a liaison with both Campus Coordinators of *Vision University 2016* and Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness (Appendix 5.7 Report on the Status of Implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan).

- **Technology:** Use of technology for data collection, sharing, and continuous project tracking, follow-up, and accountability.
• **Assessment for Institutional Renewal**: Actions are taken as a result of assessment and inter-office teams are appointed to implement transforming actions. A more detailed description of examples of these actions and the objectives advanced is presented below and in Section 5 of this PRR.

In summary, the ten year strategic plan *Vision University 2016* and the five year operational plan *Universidad 2011*, as well as the seven priority projects provide a framework for ongoing institutional development, self-evaluation, and renewal. The plan, developed in a participatory manner, provides an overall direction and focus for the campus whereas the operational plan encourages institutional renewal through actions that are taken as a result of systematic assessments undertaken at deanships, schools, and offices.

**New Developments on Priority Projects**

In its March 2006 letter of affirmation of reaccreditation to UPR-RP, MSCHE argued that the institution partially met Standard 7 and requested this PRR to document the institutional efforts in the areas of assessment of institutional effectiveness, with emphasis in operational and strategic budgets, enrollment projections and staffing management. However, the April 26-27 MSCHE follow up visit to the UPR-RP reported the campus to fulfill Standard 7. The statement was based on a review of three key documents: a. the Middle States Team Report of March 2005; b. the *April 6, 2005 Reply of UPRRP* to the *March 2005 Middle States Team Report*; c. the UPRRP 2006-2016 Strategic Plan; and d. the October 2006 UPRRP progress report on Progress in Implementation of the Plan for the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness. In fact, the team reported that the Campus made notable progress in its institutional assessment efforts since the Middle States Team visit of March 2005. As suggested by MSCHE, the Campus developed strategic indicators for the seven priority projects. The following section of this report presents a summary of the current state of Projects 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Indicators of several dimensions of each project can be accessed through the *Priority Project Dashboard*. Project 2-implementation of the revised bachelors’ degree will be discussed at the end of this section, and Priority Project 3- Assessment is the main topic of Section 5.

*Priority Project 1 Support for Research and Scholarship*

The first priority project is directed to institutional support for research. Goal 1 of Strategic Plan *University Vision 2016* establishes that the campus will advance its position as a research institution with a marked doctoral character, in which research, creation, and scholarship are the essential foundations of academic work. Faculty research, and research activity in general, is supported by multiple academic, administrative and technological structures, such as research centers, institutes and seminars, administrative units responsible for assisting with external funds and grants applications, and IT applications such as Web of Science. In particular, the Deanship for Graduate Studies and Research (DEGI, by its Spanish acronym) leads this important agenda. Assessment results evidencing advances on the research objectives of the Institution are presented in Section 5, and in the Priority Project Dashboard introduced above.

Faculty plays a crucial role in UPR-RP ability to fulfill its mission as a research institution. To help advance this goal, UPR-RP incorporated in 2004 the requirement of contract letters in the recruitment process of tenure track faculty. Contract letters, signed by the recruited professor and the faculty dean with the approval of DAA, establish clear institutional expectations regarding new faculty productivity in scholarship and research prior to consideration for tenure. Contract letters also state the support the institution will provide to the recruit’s research projects, such as teaching release time of 3 to 6 credits in most cases, and even more in special cases, such as in the College of Natural Sciences. At present, tenure track and tenured faculty with doctorate degrees is 81%, an increase of 5 percentage points from 2006. This enriches the potential for research on Campus.

To foster research and creation by faculty and students, UPR-RP implemented a strategic approach linked to seven components, as follows:
1) Research incentives by DEGI: Concrete and systematic efforts have enhanced the institutional support to research and scholarship particularly through the Institutional Fund for Research (FIPI by its Spanish acronym). Institutional funds for research have been assigned through calls for proposals in connection with 2 strategic criteria: incentives for inter and transdisciplinary collaborations, and support for the research of newly recruited professors. Newly recruited professors account for the largest part of the proposals approved, and proposals for summer mini-grants and inter/multidisciplinary projects have increased since their creation in 2007. Funds assigned and new categories created since 2007 appear in the paragraphs below.

FIPI is a seed funding initiative that supports junior scholar’s research projects. Since its inception in 1988-89, FIPI has experienced a series of changes in response to the needs of professors/researchers and the interests of the campus in fostering research development. Some of the most noteworthy changes include: establishing new project sponsorship as a priority and enacting a clearly defined policy on the awarding of funds; increasing the number of funding categories and the use of external evaluators; and adding the categories of summer mini-grants, pilot projects by newly recruited professors, and inter/multidisciplinary projects. From 2007 to 2010 a total of 163 research projects were approved.

Since 2007 the institutional and non-recurring funds assigned to the new categories are: $65,000.00 for summer mini-grants, $386,373.00 for pilot projects, $600,332.00 for proposals of newly recruited professors, and $267,607.00 for inter/multidisciplinary projects. These figures include funds allotted for graduate research assistantships.

2) Facilitate External Fund-Seeking, Alliances, and Consortia: The search for external funds to complement institutional funding corresponds particularly to the Assistant Deanship of External Funding (DAFE, by its Spanish acronym), ascribed to DEGI. DAFE not only compiles lists of external funding opportunities for faculty research, it also offers assistance in preparing grant proposals, ranging from online guides and guidance workshops, to writing and submitting funding proposals. The total of external funds approved increased from $7.5M in 2007, to $9.9M in 2008, and $15.7 in 2009.

Technology has been a core factor to increase external funds. DAFE is constantly overlooking for funds with the support of Grant.gov system. It allows researchers to access available information of grants offered by 26 federal agencies, guidance in the process of proposal submissions, and more specific search for available funds for research and instrumentation, traveling expenses, the hiring of collaborators, and successful recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students. Meanwhile, the NIH Commons system allows the submission of reports, evaluations, and documents for the approval of funds. The NSF Fastlane system allows submitting proposals, obtaining proposal evaluations, and the final document for the approval and assignment of funds.

UPR-RP percentage of approved proposals is 23.1%. It is important to point out that the success rate in the National Institute of Health was 21% in 2007. At the present time the number of professors subscribed to the information search system of external funding opportunities increased to 115. Table 1, proposals by type, shows the increase in the number submitted by type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Submitted Proposals</th>
<th>Types of Proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eight workshops were offered for the development of external funds proposals in 2007. In 2008, there were 11 workshops, while in 2009 the number was only 5. The low levels of participation from faculty and students prompted a change in the workshop strategy for 2010. Now, a training plan to offer specific information adapted to the researcher’s needs is in place. For example, in February 2010 the Social Policy Institute from the Graduate School of Social Work received a workshop on the purpose and needs of the Institute. Additional strategies were also incorporated, such as updating the websites, having federal agency personnel provide workshops, among others.

3) Dissemination Incentive: Prompted allocation of funds to travel and dissemination activities, such as academic conferences. Funds increased 13.4% from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010. Moreover, since 2005 there has been an increase of 40% in academic publications cited in Web of Science, a highly recognized peer review reference database.

4) Sabbaticals: Increase in funding for sabbaticals was achieved, from $400,000 in 2006-2007 to $450,000 in 2008-2009, and $500,000 in 2009-2010. The increase in institutional funding opened up new opportunities for faculty from all disciplines.

5) Graduate Assistantships: Legislative funds were slightly reduced, yet were supplemented by the Graduate Students Fellowship Fund established by DEGi in 2008 to support graduate assistantships (see Table 2 below).

6) Release Time for Research: A 33% increase in the percentage of professors with release time since 2005; 24% of tenured and tenure-track instructional faculty in 2005 to 32% in 2009. Table 2, below, summarizes expenditures in initiatives to promote research since 2007.

Table 2 Expenditures in initiatives to promote research (institutional funds unless otherwise noted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Incentives</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$400,682.60</td>
<td>$367,671.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate External Funding Seeking, Alliances and Consortia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$264,460.08</td>
<td>$319,070.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and conferences funding</td>
<td>$625,750</td>
<td>$625,750</td>
<td>$710,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticals</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistantships plus 2009-10 fellowships resulting from fund raising activities and the creation of a graduate studies fund.</td>
<td>Institutional funds $1,767,500 + PR Legislative Assembly Funds: $831,500 = $2.6M</td>
<td>Institutional funds $1,767,500 + PR Legislative Assembly Funds: $918,454 = $2.7M</td>
<td>Institutional funds $1,767,500 + PR Legislative Assembly Funds: $699,500 + new fellowships = $2.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release time for Research</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
<td>$620,000</td>
<td>$610,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) Expansion of graduate programs offer and research potential: The introduction to Vision University 2016 addresses the importance of increasing the Campus graduate offer in key areas for the economic and social development of Puerto Rico, in order to increase options for specialized studies and research in academic as well as in professional areas. To this end, the College of Natural Sciences submitted a proposal for the creation of a PhD program in Environmental Sciences, approved by the Board of Trustees. It is presently under consideration of the PR licensing board. This project has received $3 million in funding for 5 years (2008-2013) from NSF for Integrative Graduate and Research Training. This has boosted the potential for new topics for research, both in the areas of environmental sciences and in interdisciplinary approaches to related themes developed in the School of Planning, Architecture and the College of Social Sciences. Also, three other graduate degrees were created: Master in Environmental Sciences and Master in Cultural Management and Administration, and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Applied Linguistics, these last two in the College of Humanities. It must be noted that UPR-RP’s upward trend in doctorate degrees conferred has provided new openings to increase and diversify research activity.
**Priority Project 4 Quality of Students University Experience and Services**

A student university experience based on quality of services and academic excellence has been a goal of UPR-RP for decades. Institutional research identified challenges related to student support services and academic advising. This prompted in 2006 the development and implementation of Priority Project 4 to achieve effectiveness in this area. Goal 4 of Vision University 2016 states that, “Student recruitment and the quality of the university experience will promote the student’s continuous academic advancement, intellectual and cultural enrichment.” Priority Project 4 thus, focused on recruiting undergraduate and graduate students from Puerto Rico and abroad with outstanding talents and abilities. To this end, a more dynamic and watchful undergraduate admissions process was defined by DAA in conjunction with UPR System Central Administration, viable with the new Oracle technology integrated in 2008. Improvements in the academic potential measures of the new cohorts have been achieved, as is corroborated in the Campus performance indicators of freshmen academic profile. ([Strategic Indicators Dashboard - Goal 4](#))

In 2005 student surveys showed dissatisfaction with academic advising and prompt feedback from professors. This finding prompted crucial actions regarding the introduction of a compulsory undergraduate mid-term evaluation further discussed in Section 5, and enhanced advising structures at the college level. A successful example is the College of Humanities ([Humanities Advising Project](#)).

Furthermore, since 2006, several services and programs are experiencing transformation: students counseling and guidance, athletic programs and medical services. Other offices have also been involved in improving physical resources in attention to students with disabilities and to other health issues. The 2006 student profile survey showed that students lacked knowledge about the services provided by the Department of Student Counseling and Guidance (DCODE, by its Spanish acronym). The goal of achieving professional accreditation by the International Association of Counseling Services presented DCODE the opportunity to enhance services. Accreditation was achieved in December of 2009 for five (5) years. This process brought about important changes: the recruitment of specialized personnel in the areas of Psychology and Psychiatry; relocation of in-campus offices for students’ easy access, including students with disabilities, and remodeling physical facilities; assurance of confidentiality during one-on-one counseling sessions with sound-proofed offices; areas for group sessions and occupational resources; and an area to safeguard students’ records.

Workshops and guidance sessions have been developed during the past few years aiming at increasing the impact of DCODE services in students. Research projects have also been developed to inform academic advisors on possible models of intervention. As a result, various psycho-educational groups by thematic areas have been developed. Also five prevention groups have been started with students who have not demonstrated academic progress. Assessment of services is structured with the systematic evaluation of both workshops and individual services. Data analysis of these evaluations reflects that 98% of the students report to be highly satisfied with services received at DCODE. Other evaluation methods used to measure the effectiveness of different services offered at DCODE come from individual interviews, group activities and workshops.

Enrichment of students’ experiences also accounts for expanding options regarding talented students in sports. The Athletic Department has been increasing the exposure of its student athletes in Puerto Rico who competed against 20 universities at the local scene during 2009-10. This represents a 55% increase from activities reported in 2005-2006 (only 11 universities). Also, during the last five years, sports such as female soccer, female wrestling, bowling, and Tae-Kwan-do have been incorporated into the Athletic Program. Student participation has increased among those who attend Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championships due to their excellent performance. Concurrently, an academic reinforcement system has been devised (twice per semester) in coordination with different colleges to offer tutoring and refer athletes to different offices that offer services and professional assistance according to their particular needs. Athlete’s graduation rates increased from 42% for the 2001 cohort to 52% for 2002.
The Medical and Health Services Department (SM by its Spanish acronym) has improved its current services of primary health care and medical assistance with the implementation of the Planned Parenthood Proposal (PPP) to provide students with needed and highly requested birth control services and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases for both genders. This is a project funded by a proposal to the U.S. Department of Health and an extension of the Planned Parenthood, Title X Program that provides island-wide services since 2002. In-campus services were not offered during the 2006-2007 academic year because University Clinics were merged with Rio Piedras Public Clinics located off campus. Assessment of services resulted in 82% of serviced students requesting that the clinic be located inside Campus. Services began to be offered again in-campus on 2007-2008 resulting in the service to 8,448 students. The PPP includes tests for chlamydia, gonorrhea, PAP tests and other laboratory and physical tests repeated annually. In a related development, 89% of students surveyed in 2008-09 expressed interest in receiving Dental Care Services. These services will be available through collaboration with the UPR Medical Sciences Campus School of Dentistry, scheduled to begin in July 1, 2010.

Priority Project 5 Internationalization

As one of the seven priority projects of the UPR-RP Operational Plan, internationalization is promoted through efforts guided by a specific set of goals and actions performed by assigned personnel, sustained by a three year (2006-10) budget. (Appendix 5.7 Project 5 section)

Institutional efforts to enhance the Campus visibility within the international community led to naming an interfaculty Committee that generated a Campus International policy in 2007. Efforts continued with the creation of the Office of the Assistant Dean of International Affairs under DAA and the strengthening of both, the Program of International Visitors and Academic Experiences (at the Deanship of Academic Affairs) and the Office of Study Abroad and Exchange Programs (at the Deanship of Students Affairs).The use of WEB based tools enhanced students’ access to critical information regarding study abroad programs and exchange processes.

The revised bachelor degree included the international perspective in its statement of intended student learning outcomes (Academic Senate Certification 46, 2005-06). Curricular revision proposals were bound to include options to integrate the international component. In 2009 the Campus launched a new 12 credit course sequence on topics of international breadth in a foreign university chosen by the student. At the present time, one curricular sequence on a topic linked to an international experience, The Muslim World, is in place, on account of an agreement with the University of Granada, Spain. During 2009, 22 new institutional agreements were reached with academic programs abroad (International Agreements).

Between 2005-06 and 2009-10, undergraduate participation in exchange and study abroad programs registered a 10% increase, which does not meet Campus expectations. Consequently, this area is under evaluation. Meanwhile, UPR-RP has made measurable progress in fostering the exposure of students to cross-cultural perspectives and international experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom, through alternative means. Emphasis has been given to increase the international diversity of UPR-RP faculty. For example, in order to diversify new faculty recruitment, in 2006 the Administrative Board approved (Administrative Board Certification 87 of 2005-06) defining faculty diversity with respect to the institution granting the candidates’ highest degree. Also, over the last five years (2005-09) UPR-RP has hosted about 478 visiting scholars from over 30 countries around the globe (Strategic Indicators Dashboard – Faculty Profile). Overlooking this process is the International Visitors and Academic Experience Program, under the DAA, which generates accurate information and guidance in the recruitment of foreign faculty.

Regarding the effectiveness of services provided by the International Visitors and Academic Experience Program, internal administrative procedures related to visiting professors were clarified, facilitating departments’ compliance with norms while keeping in-track with recent changes to federal regulations and immigration law. Tenure track recruitments of international faculty have been possible because in 2005-06 the Campus instituted a
comprehensive policy that clarified Campus role in procedures related to the attainment of permanent residence by foreign professors (Chancellor’s Circular 13 2005-06 - Policy for the Recruitment of Foreigners).

DAA supports faculty presentations at scholarly international events through the Faculty Development Fund. For example, 749 UPR-RP faculty members participated in international experiences during 2005-09. The Deanship also administers a stable fund to support colleges’ and schools’ projects to invite visiting professors.

Results of a 2006 survey on students’ satisfaction with Campus services related to exchange and study abroad programs resulted in the design of a unified system of courses equivalencies known as the Electronic Archive of Courses Equivalencies (ACOI) that started to operate in August 2007. The ACOI provides students with equivalency options for around 3,400 courses from other universities to satisfy courses at the UPR System. This tool is available online at http://www.uprrp.edu/acoi/equivalencias/ and is managed by the Office of the Assistant Dean for International Affairs with the help of the Division of Academic and Administrative Technologies (DTAA by its Spanish acronym).

Having achieved the goals initially set for the internationalization project, assessment has identified several challenges to its further development. One of the main limitations is funding to support students’ experiences abroad. Due to the financial situation at the present time, efforts must intensify to identify available external sources of funding. The institutional funding for faculty travel and visiting professors is expected to continue stable, while the electronic ACOI has been recently enhanced and is expected that DTAA will continue to assign staff to periodically review and update the course data base and equivalences and maintain its operations.

Priority Project 6 Technological Innovations

UPR-RP has invested considerable efforts and funding to enhance information technology infrastructure for academic and administrative purposes. A new technology student fee established in 2005 brought a recurrent funding stream of around 1 million a year, in response to repeated requests of technological improvements from the academic community. On account of these funds, the Campus has launched a project for wireless infrastructure in buildings, achieving 92% coverage. Also, funds were allocated to special projects in colleges and schools to enhance classrooms and other facilities. (Appendix 2.3 Student Technology Fee: Use of Collected Funds) Assessment studies, such as the Senior Exit Survey, registered a satisfaction increase regarding technology availability from 44% in 2005-6 to 49% in 2009-10. Results surpassed expectations in the November 2008 Noel Levitz Survey, which classified accessibility and adequacy of computer labs as a Campus “strength” in comparison to the 2005 survey, where it was listed as an item not meeting students’ expectations.

The financial system was recently replaced with the University Financial Information System (UFIS), new software that enhances its technological capabilities. The Campus also integrated the use of technology in order to achieve a systematic scheduling of maintenance of equipments. This has been achieved with the implementation of Data Stream, software that offers administrative units throughout the campus the ability to schedule and monitor the completion of maintenance works.

To integrate all student related processes and replace the legacy student information system, the Office of the Chancellor is carrying on negotiations with different providers to acquire a new student information system and Campus portal. Meanwhile, a new student portal (UPR-RP Portal MIUPI option) was inaugurated in 2009 to facilitate enrollment and communication with students, among other processes. Since 2007 graduate programs applications are channeled through a web based admissions system “Apply-yourself.”
**Priority Project 7 Quality of Campus Life and Community Outreach**

Priority Project 7 has advanced actions to attain Goal 9 of Vision University 2016, which encourage the Campus to strengthen the quality of life of its constituents, its surrounding urban communities, and the Puerto Rican society at large. Consistent with this, several programs and projects are currently underway.

Since 2006 areas of administrative professional development and aspects related to employee’s quality of life are being evaluated and improved. UPR-RP Office of Human Resources coordinates the Program for Personnel Training, and the Program for Personnel Support to promote professional development and personnel management. In 2007, the Office prepared a Manual to facilitate access to information on procedures and personnel norms. Workshops were offered during 2009-10 for the training of administrative and non-teaching personnel in areas such as, usage of campus property, personnel disciplinary measures and, guidelines and institutional policies on granting salary compensations. In addition, training and support on the usage of the new University Financial Information System (UFIS) started in August 2008 and continue. In 2009 the Dean of Administration, who is responsible for communicating and implementing the campus strategic actions for administrative effectiveness and assessment of outcomes, appointed an Associate Dean to supervise this training.

Since 2008, and based on administrators’ analysis and employee’s input, as well as workshops’ evaluations, UPR-RP has structured personnel training for professional development in areas such as strategic planning, management skills, handling of new technologies, management of stress and conflict in the workplace and retirement plans. Appendix 2.4 Staff Training Workshops

Regarding the Campus’s community outreach goals, the Chancellor’s Center for Urban, Community, and Entrepreneurial Action (CAUCE, by its Spanish acronym), created in 2004 under the Commonwealth Special Law 75, 1995, for the Rehabilitation of Rio Piedras has intensified the Campus-community relationship and provided an interdisciplinary space for the practices of Social Work, Law, Psychology, Architecture, and Library Science students. CAUCE has been successful in acquiring funding for its projects, for example, the project to create an urban vegetable garden in the neighboring underprivileged community of Capetillo funded by the Toyota Foundation and the Department of Natural Resources. CAUCE also sponsors activities to promote commercial, social, and cultural rehabilitation of the Rio Piedras downtown area ([http://cauce.uprrp.edu](http://cauce.uprrp.edu)). In addition, joint applied research with the private and public sectors, such as XPLORAH, a spatial decision support system developed at the Graduate School of Planning, funded and implemented by the PR Planning Board, has strengthened UPR-RP’s contribution to the analysis of key issues in Puerto Rican society.

Also, UPR-RP Museum of Anthropology, History and Art (MAHA) has promoted campus community outreach actions. Since 2007, Sunday programming has been welcomed by the public with 16,274 registered visitors. Numerous families attend the MAHA to enjoy the variety of workshops offered from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., prompting that in 2009 MAHA Sunday’s hours were extended from 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Graduate students from the College of Humanities Translation Program have developed information materials for international visitors. MAHA space has been increasingly used to host Campus and community activities mostly on Wednesday and Thursday nights, when the Museum is open to the public until 9:00 p.m. In December 2008, MAHA was considered for accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM). In January 2009, the Museum received a positive response and began preparing for the accreditation process, a visit due in 2011.

UPR-RP has self-imposed eco friendly strategies in the maintenance of installations and natural spaces to promote intellectual and creative production, and enriching the quality of life of university members. Some of these strategies are the acquisition of environmentally friendly products, including office paper and photocopy machine usage, with a minimum of 30% of recovered paper as well as cleaning products. In addition, the Campus promotes the return and recycling of ink and toner cartridges which supposes up to 60% in savings.

Ongoing maintenance of physical resources has also improved quality of life on Campus. The recent inauguration of the new College of General Studies building that welcomes newly admitted students has been followed by Phase 1 of the remodeling of the older one. Similarly, the restoration of the Graduate School of Public
Administration physical resources is on the way, while funds have been allocated for the renewal of classrooms in the Business Administration College. Renovation of laboratories in the Natural Science College during the present academic year creates a competitive environment that revitalizes learning and research.

Substantial progress has been achieved in the completion of construction works on routes and sidewalks, comprising approximately 50,000 sq.ft. of renewed spaces, to be continued in the coming academic year. Appendix 2.5 Permanent Infrastructure Improvements, Table 1, includes status of removal of architectural barriers classified in three categories with 53%, 48% and 42% completion rates. In addition, measures were taken for the renovation of existing facilities identified as sick buildings. Appendix 2.5 Permanent Infrastructure Improvements, Table 2 presents progress since 2005, and plans for 2010 for Asbestos Interventions. Since 2005, seven main campus buildings have been impacted for asbestos removal. The Campus submitted its response to the Evaluation Team Report on April 5, 2005 with details regarding the role played by the Campus Environmental Protection and Occupational Safety Office (OPASO, by its Spanish acronym) in overseeing environmental issues affecting campus buildings, particularly those that present asbestos-containing materials (ACM). The Campus informed MSCHE of OPASO Operations and Maintenance Program regarding ACM, including the list of the areas and general scope of the work. In addition, any campus building with reported indoors poor air-quality problems are quickly serviced by OPASO. Appendix 2.5 Permanent Infrastructure Improvements also includes the Physical Improvements Plan for 2010 to 2012 related to these issues.

**Institutional Response to Academic Requirements and Recommendations from Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Standard 12)**

This section addresses actions taken by UPR-RP in response to requirements and recommendations made by MSCHE on standards 11 and 12 on its February 2005 accreditation visit, and to Standard 12 in the follow up visit of April 2007 (Response to MSCHE May 2007). It has to be noted, however, that the institution addressed some of these concerns in both, the UPR-RP Progress Report of October 2006 and the UPR-RP Progress Letter of March 2008.

In the follow up visit of 2007, the Commission recommended that the Campus 1) clarify and articulate the baccalaureate revision and implementation process, 2) prepare a publication including all general education courses and make it widely available, and 3) provide support with necessary budget allocation, administrative oversight, and incentives for faculty participation in the revised curriculum.

**Implementation of the Revised Undergraduate Curriculum**

UPR-RP compliance with the above recommendations is evidenced in the successful implementation of the revised undergraduate curriculum and general education concept as scheduled. The process progressed through three phases.

**Phase 1: Adoption and implementation of a modified General Education definition, and approval of a new structure for the bachelor’s degree**

In January 2006 Academic Senate Certification Num. 46 established a new concept/definition of General Education (GE) and a revised structure for the bachelor’s degree with its three course components: general education, major and prerequisites, and increased free electives to provide flexibility. Phase 1 has been detailed in Progress Report of October of 2006 and Progress Letter of March 2008.

As of August 2007 all incoming students are admitted to the new GE component, which has been further enhanced. Core courses to satisfy GE component are posted in the Registrar’s Office Course Schedule and DAA Web Page (General Education Courses Inventory – Cursos de Educación General desde 2007 Section) during each registration period, as well as in schools and colleges Web pages to enable student choice and academic advising.
Revision in process of the Campus Catalogs includes links to college web pages to allow for up to date information. New courses have been created and existing ones modified according to the General Education Rubric designed by a multidisciplinary group, approved by the Academic Senate, and administered by the Deanship of Academic Affairs to ensure compliance with revision guidelines. This rubric has been shared with other UPR Campuses to ease transfers. The College of General Studies has established the groundwork for the creation of an international network of Colleges of General Education with representatives from Peru, Costa Rica, US, Dominican Republic, Colombia, among others, as a space for reflection and sharing best teaching and learning practices (General Education Colleges Network).

The bachelors’ revision became Priority Project 2 and a special budget was assigned to the implementation for the 2007-2010 period. Additional funding was also allocated to support competencies development structures such as the Summer Math and Language Institutes and the Center for the Development of Linguistic Competencies (Appendix 2.2 Priority Projects Inventory and Budget).

**Phase 2: Evaluation and revision of all majors: major and prerequisite courses and electives**

The second phase prompted broad faculty involvement in the revision of academic programs with respect to majors and prerequisite courses. Phase 2 was rigorous and fast paced, surpassing Campus expectations. Monthly meetings were programmed by the Implementation Committee, presided by DAA and composed of college deans, school directors, and student and faculty representatives. Major Evaluation Guidelines were prepared and posted in the DAA Portal and Academic Senate (Academic Senate Bachelor’s revisions certifications) web pages to ensure compliance with the underlying principles and structure and to guarantee that the fundamentals of learning assessment were in place. Revision proposals were evaluated by an Academic Senate Subcommittee and finally presented to the Senate according to a schedule detailed in Table 4. As of December 2009, the status of the revision process: sixty-seven (67) programs have been revised, while three (3) are under Senate consideration. Four (4) programs were declared inactive.

**Table 4 Scheduled Program Revisions 2006-2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The most important achievements are summarized in Table 5 below.
Table 5 Primary achievements of the bachelor’s curricular revision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Intended Student Learning Outcomes - ISLO</td>
<td>For the first time the Campus approved intended learning outcomes to be met by graduating students of all programs. These guide Student Learning Assessment Plans (Certification 46, 2005-2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced student choice</td>
<td>Areas of emphasis within majors created in Humanities, Business, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences increased options. Course requirements allow for options to expand student choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Name modified according to curricular modifications</td>
<td>Ten programs modified the name of the program degree granted on graduation to reflect curricular changes and transformations more adequately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended integration of quantitative skills</td>
<td>All revised programs include mathematical reasoning or mathematics within the general education component. The colleges of Natural Sciences, Business, Social Sciences and General Studies contribute to these offerings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with Professional Accreditation Standards</td>
<td>Programs susceptible to professional accreditation ensured curricular compliance with standards. As of 2010, the Bachelor’s in Administration of Office Systems has been granted accreditation by ACBSP and Computer Sciences received its accreditation visit by ABET, final report pending. Journalism, Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication, as well as Business Administration and Music, were revised to comply with accreditation standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross curricular integration</td>
<td>Curricular sequences were created in Business Communication and in International Experience (Islamic World) open to students of all programs. These sequences constitute a coherent set of courses related to a topic that can fulfill the 18 credit elective component in the new structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2 also put in place groundwork for Phase 3, which addresses learning assessment and competencies across the curriculum. In summary, groundwork for Phase 3 consisted of: 1) inclusion in the revision proposals of the program’s student learning objectives aligned with the new Campus Intended Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO), including those related to essential skills and competencies; 2) requirement to include in the proposals the basis for the program Student Learning Assessment Plan. Faculty identified courses geared to meeting and assessing learning objectives and enumerated specific activities to develop and assess competencies; 3) creation of a Learning Assessment Office (OEAE by its Spanish acronym) by DAA to guarantee continuity and support.

**Phase 3: First cycle of learning assessment: and integration of essential competencies (Standard 12)**

Phase 3, still in progress, focuses on MSCHE requirements stated in the 2005 exit report that the Campus needed to implement core competencies throughout the 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...” MSCHE also stated that the Campus provide necessary resources and educate all faculty in the designing of assessment plans for their respective academic programs and courses and ensured “that all programs have systematically instituted student learning assessment. Utilizing the results of assessing student learning to bring about the changes necessary for enhancing the Mission of the Campus.”

UPR-RP Campus was already committed to a comprehensive revision process in Certification 46 (2005-06), which states that, “Upon developing or reviewing curricular schemes, faculties must ensure that the elements of the graduate profile are considered, incorporating them in academic courses and experiences of the undergraduate program components. This is an essential point in establishing the parameters for the evaluation of student learning at the Campus level.”

To accomplish the above objectives, Phase 3 defined a cohesive interlaced process. All undergraduate programs developed and implemented a program Student Learning Assessment Plan during 2008-2009 with the bachelor’s revision. In doing so, program assessment became a main driver to achieve a more integrative approach to teaching and learning. As a result, Campus and program objectives are increasingly translated into course objectives across programs [OEAE Blog – Section Sample of Courses’ Syllabi with Statements of Expected Learning](#)
Outcomes). Circular Letter 5, 2009-2010 of the Dean of Academic Affairs to the Campus community emphasized this objective and set due dates for the process for both graduate and undergraduate offerings (Dean of Academic Affairs - Circular 5 2009-10).

Assessment of Student Learning at the Institutional level with respect to Core Competencies

Top priority has been assigned in the first assessment cycle to the systematic assessment of competencies both from the perspective of general education (institutional level) and across the disciplines (program level). Emphasis during the first cycle is as follows:

- Core Competencies as selected by and assessed at the program level
- Communication competencies – at the program and institutional levels
- Science research skills – institutional level
- Information literacy competencies – program and institutional levels
- Other competencies, such as social responsibility – program and institutional level

Assessment of competencies is twofold: at program level to ensure development of competencies across the curriculum (disciplines), and at the institutional level within the General Education context across colleges and schools. With respect to program level, each academic program included communication competencies and chose two out of the following to evaluate from the perspective of their disciplines: social responsibility, creation and research, and critical thinking. All programs but one (the Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy) completed this part to make sure that the campus ISLO is being addressed. Table 6 presents the competencies chosen by the programs as of March, 2010, with communication skills being assessed from the perspective of the discipline by 93%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains being assessed</th>
<th>Number of academic programs assessing it (of 66)</th>
<th>Percentage of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Creation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implementation of the assessment process at the program level, major findings, and transforming actions are detailed in Section 5. In turn, the following sections of Section 2 address assessment of competencies at the institutional level - either through specific course embedded assessment in the College of General Studies (GS) or through campus coordinated initiatives with colleges and schools, such as integration of Information competencies led by the Library System. Thus, for the purpose of this PRR learning assessment is described in Sections 2 and 5. Various elements of the campus domains in General Education are being measured at the institutional level at GS. These are: elements of effective communication in Spanish and English as a second language, and scientific research skills. Pending for completion are assessment of social responsibility and critical thinking (refer to Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report for a detailed description of General Education assessment process).

Communication competencies

Assessment of linguistic competencies in English and Spanish at the institutional level is being put into action by a combined effort of the DAA and the OEA working closely with the English and Spanish Departments of the GS. Initially, specific skills to be assessed in a particular course were identified; however, the process has evolved into a more encompassing one covering aspects, such as, course placement criteria, exit competencies by tracks,
alternative course and support structures. A more integrated view of the teaching-learning process is probably one of the main achievements brought about.

Since 2004, institutional research carried out by the OAP has consistently shown students’ dissatisfaction with their communication competencies in English at the time of admission. Several tracks are available to fulfill the English general education core course requirement. These tracks depend on students admission scores: lower level ENGL 3003-3004 (with a one hour a week lab), a Regular Level course, ENGL 3101-3102, an Intermediate Level course, ENGL 3103-3104, and Honors English, ENGL 3011-3012. On average, 32% (851) are assigned to the regular course and 20% (529) to the lower level, 39% (1,026) to the Intermediate Level and 9% (253) to the Honors course. Assessment efforts gave way to a project to assess learning after completing the Regular and Lower Level courses (Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report p. 39). As a result, during 2008 a new course, ENGL 3161-3162 with lab contact increased to 3 hours a week, ENGL3163-3164, was registered to substitute ENGL 3003-3004. This course was offered for the first time in August 2009 and is subject to evaluation at the end of this academic year. Also, these assessment efforts allow for comparisons between lower and regular level results.

In a similar fashion, the Spanish Department of the GS organizes its courses in three tracks: Superior, Average and Low, with three hours a week of lab work without credit for the latter, each corresponding to a pre-determined scale of points in the Spanish Achievement Test of the College Board Entrance Examination for admission. This organization by levels had not changed in the last fifty years. In addition, up to 2007, exit competencies by level were not explicitly stated. Given this situation, assessment of student learning with regards to communication competencies in Spanish has been implemented along five projects (Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report). A unifying theme of these projects is the revision of course placement criteria as well as of approaches and materials to enhance the lower level course.

The Center for the Development of Linguistic Competencies (CDLC by its Spanish acronyms) expanded its scope of services to become a Campus Center via Academic Senate Certification 46 of 2006 in support of communication skills both in English and Spanish. The CDLC offers both, one-on-one tutorial sessions and group workshops to all UPR-RP students. The Center emphasizes on services to support students in their development of general education skills such as academic writing, critical reading, oral presentations, and foreign or second language development in both Spanish and English. The CDCL has promoted its services and has reached networking agreements with various academic colleges and departments, particularly the College of Education and the Department of Social Work. In route to 2016, the CDLC will expand its services and is expected to create more connections with the other academic colleges.

New projects have been developed with support from the Colleges of Education and Humanities. GS has provided faculty for administrative and coordinating functions, and staff for clerical support. In addition, the Campus has assigned graduate assistants from those allotted to GS until 2007, when the center received its own budget for graduate assistants, work-study students, and supplies. The recurrent budget of the center was originally seventy-five thousand dollars ($75,000), but presently it is ninety-thousand ($90,000). GS continues to provide the director and the assistant or coordinator.

Communication competencies in English

Regarding English communication competencies, the Campus has not yet fully made operational the graduating student profile or Campus expected outcomes. During the first semester of 2009-2010 the Academic Senate created a team, coordinated by the Dean of DAA, to develop exit learning goals in English competencies. This group should be submitting a first report during 2011. In the same manner, the English department is refining its definition of expectations by levels and tracks and the learning objectives to be achieved after completing a first year of English. The basic underlying assumption at present is that learning goals of the regular level course ENGL 3101-3102, if substantially achieved, represent a satisfactory learning outcome. A detailed description of the process and findings can be accessed at Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report p. 39. Assessment results showed that 12.5% scored non satisfactory scores between 60% - 69% after taking ENGL 3101-3102. Based on the results of the study, a profile of students completing this track was developed (Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report).
Findings and results for the lower level course showed that the average student that takes ENGL 3003-3004 does not accomplish a comparable level of learning as students in ENGL 3101-3102. After taking ENGL 3003-3004 (one hour of lab) the majority of students achieved a low intermediate level according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines. The need to work in developing communication skills at this level is evident.

The 2008 English project emphasized grammar and syntax elements of communication. In May 2009 it was expanded to cover reading and listening comprehension and indirect writing measured by the College Board English Language Assessment System for Hispanics Exam (ELASH II) in both courses. Based on test results, the majority of students at the end of ENGL 3004 did not show changes in terms of the levels and domains established by the rubric designed for ELASH II, although there were significant changes in statistical terms in two categories: indirect writing (9.125) and reading comprehension (16.958). In addition to the standardized test (ELASH II), students enrolled in ENGL 3003-3004 took a direct writing exercise evaluated using the ESL Composition Profile.

The study showed that students in the ENGL 3102 achieved satisfactory levels in four of the five dimensions whereas students in ENGL 3004 did so in one. Results of the ELASH II exam revealed that ENGL 3004 students did not show academic progress with respect to level, while ENGL 3102 students showed academic progress with respect to level in the categories for Language Use and Reading Comprehension. Thus, the study confirmed what the department had concluded from various observational studies, that is, graduating students who only take ENGL 3003-3004, on average, do not show as high a level of competency as those who take the regular course, as measured by the ELASH II test and the writing test. The major value added has being that evidence was gathered about specific areas for improvement.

Actions have been taken consequently. Materials are being produced by professors to be included in the new three hour Lab sessions, ENGL 3163-3164 that started in August 2009. Teaching strategies have been implemented to address the areas in need of improvement. Several workshops have been offered to professors, the first of which gives way to an action plan and a questionnaire administered to refine the definition of communication competencies. The syllabi of all English courses have been revised (College of General Studies - English Department Web Page / Courses).

Another research project in 2009-10 to assess the academic progress of students enrolled in the lower level revised course with a three hour lab is being conducted under the premise that more exposure to the target language will provide students additional opportunities to achieve the goals established by the department. Students enrolled in regular ENGL 3101-3102 courses were also included. The final exam will be used as a post-test at the end of the academic year, May 2010. Also students took the ELASH II standardized test to assess reading and listening comprehension competencies. The goal is to determine the effectiveness of the laboratory.

GS embarked on a research project of academic progress in English communication competencies among participants of the 2009 Summer Institute (The English Summer Institute Report - 2009). This became part of the English Department assessment plan. The Summer Institute created by Certification 46 to support new admissions with lower levels of English competencies (20% of admissions), offers support to students with entrance exam scores of 469 or lower on the English College Board Entrance exam (Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report). In summary, participants achieved significant increase on the scores on the two instruments used for measuring academic progress in linguistic competencies, the ELASH and an essay writing test. This increase was greater for the essay writing test.

Specific areas and/or skills were identified for improvement, such as reading, vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Materials that focus on learning objectives signaled by the findings are being gathered or produced to be included in the next session of the Summer Institute. A longitudinal study to follow up on students who participated in the Summer Institute and their performance on the English course assigned in their first semester is under way. A major objective is to increase the number of students that follow the regular track starting in their first semester at the university.
Communication Competencies in Spanish

The lower level course, ESPA 3003-3004, includes three hours of lab and is given to students with scores less than 499 in the College Board Entrance Exam (close to 17% of newly admitted students). An average of 40% are placed in the regular Spanish course ESPA 3101-3102, students with scores of 500 to 599, and some 24% take the superior level course. Another 18% are exempt due to high scores, 4 or 5 in the Advance Placement Exam of the College Board. A detailed presentation of assessment projects is available at (Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report p. 46).

Project 1: Up to 2007, students with scores of 3 or more in the Advance Placement Exam were given credit for the first year of Spanish (6 credits). They were not required to take an additional course. In 2007 the Department, based on internal institutional research, increased the qualifications to a score of 4 or 5. Of the 2009 new admissions (2,800), 550 students achieved these scores.

Project 2: Students with scores of 3 in the Advance Placement exam and with achievement scores of 487 to 500, about 160 students, are traditionally placed in the lower level Spanish course during their first semester at the institution. They were placed in special sections of ESPA 3101-3102, the regular level course, in August 2009. Achievement and level of competency of this group at the end of the course, May 2010, will be compared to that of students with regular scores of 500 to 599. The objective is to determine level of learning and probability of success and to organize student placement more efficiently. The results will be compared to those of students that took the Summer Intensive Institute of 2009.

Project 3: Summer Intensive Institute: Incoming students with scores less than 500 were invited to participate in a Summer Institute in 2008 and 2009. A test of 9 competencies was administered as pre and post to the 49 students who took the Summer Institute in 2009. The total score comparison between post and pre test show an increment in all categories except Syntax. In three categories the change was not statistically significant: Punctuation, Syntax and Sentence agreement. However, of the 42 students that finished the Spanish Summer Institute, 27 went to ESPA 3101, a higher level, as a result of their performance in the Institute. Twenty three (85%) approved this course with A (9), B (9) or C (5). Thus, more than half of the students participating in the summer institute were able to commence their university experience in the mainstream curriculum in Spanish. At the present time, the campus is analyzing comparisons of learning outcomes at the end of their first year of Spanish vs. that of students assigned directly to ESPA 3101-3102, and to those in ESPA 3003-3004 with lab.

Project 4: This project focused on special areas of difficulty in the writing component for students in the lower level Spanish course. Findings have led to a restructuring of the lab component and a new Working Manual for ESPA 3003 elaborated by a group of faculty.

Project 5: This stage is underway and consists of a joint research project with the College Board with the objective of revising the placement criteria. The College Board has a wide range of data that is being analyzed.

Actions Taken: The Spanish Department continues to design curriculum and establish a learning assessment system that fosters the development of language competency attributes, abilities that develop gradually and accumulatively along one’s life span. The latest effort in this direction is the publication of a text book, Teachers’ Guide for the Lower Level Courses: ¡A escribir se ha dicho! This book is a joint effort of a group of professors who are in charge of the lower level course workshops. It incorporates departmental research findings. Also, the summer institute experience is being strengthened to increase the number of students that join the regular course, rather than the low level one, in their first semester on Campus.

Scientific Research Skills – Physical and Biological Science Departments of GS

Research skills at all levels is a distinctive component in the UPR-RP’s graduating student expected learning outcomes (ISLO). All students take six credits in the Natural Sciences as part of the revised General Education component, a large number take 3 credits in each of Physical and Biological Science. These courses constitute the sole experience with natural sciences for all students except Natural Science majors and Education in Science.
The departments of Biological and Physical Sciences developed rubrics to assess investigative concepts, processes and skills in a laboratory setting. Various aspects intrinsic to research were included. Results are based on a random sample of sections, 154 students from physical science and 265 from biological sciences. Of these, 72.1% in the physical sciences achieved overall levels of good or excellent, a slightly higher percentage than anticipated, while 90% did so in the biological science experience. With respect to the three different categories included in the test, the lower percents in both areas refer to the percentage of students that obtained good or excellent in formulating the hypothesis, 58.6% in the physical science experiment and 64.8% in biological sciences. Appendix 2.6

Actions Taken: Rubrics are being evaluated and two new experiments are being included for assessment in the physical sciences. Faculty training on the use of the rubric continues in both areas. Courses syllabi are being revised and the teaching learning process has been enhanced with the findings. Areas of emphasis are being reevaluated to draw attention to areas for improvement as a result of the assessment. Major difficulties were identified in each of the categories studied and these are being addressed in the course and lab revision

Social Responsibility
The measure to assess social responsibility was composed of a number of case studies administered to a sample of students of the Social Sciences courses offered by GS. Two hundred and twenty nine students participated in the study. These case studies addressed ethical perceptions pertaining environmental, gender, and national heritage issues, and student’s ethical behaviors. The findings revealed that in the first three issues assessed, the students surpassed the expected outcome. Nonetheless, it also revealed that students performed less than expected when assessing their perceptions regarding ethics issues. (Appendix 2.6 General Education Learning Assessment Report p. 24)

Information Competencies
The Library System, in collaborative efforts with the colleges, has implemented an innovative project to develop and assess information competencies skills as part of the general education component of the bachelors’ degree. The long term goal is to integrate the development and assessment of information competencies to the curriculum of both graduate and undergraduate students while servicing programs’ needs. Teams composed of professors and librarians participate in customizing materials and course integration. The Office of Student Learning Evaluation (OEAE) and the Center of Academic Excellence of the DAA are instrumental in offering workshops and training. Several colleges participate in the project and two will formalize their efforts in 2010: College of Business (2007-2008 undergraduate, 2010-11 graduate), Education (2007-2008 graduate, 2008-2009 undergraduate), General Studies (2009-10), Social Sciences (2010-11 undergraduate, 2011-12 graduate) and Humanities (initial Pilot Project 2010). It must be emphasized, that implementation of this project at the College of General Studies (GS) ensures that all undergraduate students be exposed to a first learning experience that will be later reinforced in their chosen academic programs.

Main findings at Campus level are summarized below:

- Problems in defining information needs
- Deficiency in critical thinking (how to use a model and apply it to a similar situation).
- Synthesis
- Difficulty in identifying alternate sources of information
- Difficulties in using the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual
- Insufficient time to focus on details regarding ethical and legal use of information and reinforce what was learned.

Table 7 describes transforming actions based on the assessment of project effectiveness, number of sections, courses, professors and students involved up to this date.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Business Administration</th>
<th>College of Education</th>
<th>College of General Studies</th>
<th>College of Social Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The College focused on five competencies:  
  • information literacy skills  
  • information access  
  • critical assessment of searched information and incorporation of knowledge  
  • effective use of information  
  • ethical and legal use of information  
| Nine courses (undergraduate and graduate) and 17 sections were reinforced.  
The following undergraduate courses were reinforced: EDFU 3001 (4 sections), EDFU 3002 (11 sections), ECDO 3007 (2 sections). This is the first semester the pilot project is being implemented in undergraduate courses, therefore the summative evaluation and the adjustments to the project have yet to be completed.  
Based on the evaluation, graduate students’ work was modified regarding the use of a determined style in citing and referencing (APA, in this case). The assessment instrument was modified to include a pre- and post-test to enhance effectiveness in measuring levels of dominance of the APA Style. It was determined that the following is necessary:  
  1. active use of technology,  
  2. creating virtual spaces to provide student support,  
  3. incorporate content and additional competencies  
| Five competencies were selected the Work Plan was developed.  
Thirteen professors (2 per department and 1 from the Bachelor’s) are:  
  • actively participating in professional development workshops  
  • implementation of activities to guide the development of the selected competencies  
  • syllabi revisions and simultaneous implementation during the first semester of the academic year 2010-2011.  
| Two meetings were held with department chairs and professors chosen to participate in the project to present goals, proposed activities, expected outcomes and results of ongoing experiences at other programs.  

These five competencies were incorporated into five courses: FINA 3006, MERC 3115, CONT 3006, COEM 3002, ADMI 4416. These courses were added to other 20 courses and 126 sections during academic year 2008-2009.  
Based on the findings of formative and summative evaluation, assessment instruments (the rubric) were revised and teaching strategies improved achieving the incorporation of required sources of information in the learning process for expedited searches. It was determined to reinforce all sections in the courses FINA 3006, COEM 3002, and ADMI 4416 with the 5 planned competencies. New courses in need of reinforcement were identified: MERC 3115, INCO 4006, and ADMI 4005.  
Also, the College identified the need to select alternate teaching methods in order to respond to the College’s demand in terms of this area (preparation for all professors and interactive instructional modules).
SECTION 3 THE INSTITUTION’S MAJOR CHALLENGES AND/OR CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past decades, the UPR-RP has provided higher educational opportunities of proved excellence and affordability to the Puerto Rican community. To this end, the Campus has strategically developed areas of expertise in teaching and research scholarship, reaching out to new knowledge and rendering its members access to the global community. Students have taken advantage of UPR-RP academic opportunities, while interacting with particular intensity with the complex social, political and cultural dynamics that characterize the highly vibrant and politically mobilized Puerto Rican society.

The UPR System is dealing now with a student strike called three weeks before classes end. The strike has interrupted institutional progress in the areas of research, academic programs and institutional accountability, though a few of the most basic administrative and academic operations have continued in our new facilities at Plaza Universitaria outside the Campus perimeter. Past events suggest that such critical situations, though having a negative impact on the short term, have not significantly affected admissions and overall performance. Institutional research shows UPR-RP has a high level of resilience. Admissions with a no-show increase of 2% in 2006, after the 2005 crises that brought intense student protests due to an increase in enrollment fees, were quickly overcome in the following year. Freshmen academic profile by CEEB average scores (verbal, math, GPA) showed a marked improvement during the five year period covered in this report. Most key indicators have kept a similarly rising trend during the reported years (PRR Section 5 Table 2). Based on these past events it is possible to argue that the Campus is well prepared to overcome the negative effects of the current crisis and adjust to the resulting conditions so to continue on the track marked by its strategic plan.

The principal challenges facing UPR-RP, and the opportunities for improvement, are thus framed by the principles and commitments established in the ten year strategic plan Vision University 2016 with the participation of the entire Campus community. They can be summarized as follows:

- Support for research and scholarship must remain as an unwavering commitment for UPR-RP, along with continuing efforts to diversify and increment the funding portfolio. The main challenge is being able to remain competitive in terms of the financial support necessary to keep up the rate of proposal presentations amongst the faculty. Alternative means of institutional economic support for research will have to be backed by rigorous corroboration of results, so that publications in peer reviewed and high standing professional venues are achieved.

- The recently established institutional assessment structure that will be described in detail on Section 5 is providing an accountability framework that must be strengthened. Assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness is developing strongly campus wide. This momentum must not be wasted. The main challenge facing the Campus with respect to this process is to be able to keep the tight communication network that has made it possible as a coherent, systematic, and accountable process and to be able to strengthen the operational structures currently in place.

- Similarly, UPR-RP’s technological capacities have to be further developed, for they will be instrumental in the Campus’s path to effective administration and academic performance. There is no more effective way to achieve low cost academic and administrative processes than a sound and reliable technological structure. This stronger technological base will be a key resource to expand international connections for studies and research. A case in point is the recently earned Title V grant to adapt four Master programs to a distance education format (Notification of Title V Distance Education Project Grant Award).

- Improving graduation rates is a feasible goal for UPR-RP. Maintaining the outstanding academic profile of its incoming students will certainly move the institution towards this goal. The high performing students that have enhanced the scholarly production at the graduate level in the past years and our excellent undergraduate student body are assets that UPR-RP is highly capable of retaining. It should be noted that we reached a 49% six year undergraduate graduation rate in 2009 (2003 cohort), a 3 percentage points
increase from the previous year and a move in the direction of achieving our goal of 51% undergraduate graduation rate by 2012 with an aspiration to continued increases. As far as graduate time to degree is concerned, the Campus faces the challenge of revising Academic Senate Certification 72 (1991-1992) that rules graduate studies, in order to provide the proper institutional framework to promote reduction of current times to degree. The DEGI already counts on a proposal approved by the Campus Graduate Council and sent to all graduate programs for feedback and exposition of concerns. Concerns have been expressed and the proposal is currently under consideration by the Senate’s Academic Affairs Committee.

- The Campus’s quality of life projects that will be presented throughout this report will be given special attention, though the pace of advancement might slow down in the face of the present fiscal constraints. Similarly, the goal to improve student services and to continue working in strengthening students’ sense of belonging will be maintained as a priority.

- The uncertain economic context that frames the next five years is a challenge to institutional planning. The UPR System faces the most serious fiscal situation in decades due to the economic downturn worldwide and in particular in PR. UPR-RP must increase and diversify its funding portfolio to lessen the impact of budgetary constraints such as the current fiscal decline. As the agenda for research increases and the proper support structures are put in place, faculty participation to compete for more external funding is expected to increase, adding to the campus budget base thru indirect costs and for the support of research projects. The approval or increase on tuition and fees should provide UPR system and UPR-RP with additional funds projected to close to $60M annually system wide. Fundraising must be strengthened and the campus must take advantage of PR Government Act 113, July 16, 2008 that provides a tax deduction incentive to donors to UPR. UPR-RP must take strong actions with respect to those university enterprises that are currently subsidized or that operate primarily with institutional funds and are not producing the expected revenues. Finally, UPR-RP must create new ways to attract external funding and leverage resources together with much needed institutional administrative and structural changes to operate more efficiently.

- Moreover, UPR-RP will have to work on restoring the level of confidence somewhat eroded by the present strike.

The past five years of UPR-RP represent the unfolding of an intense process of collective learning and doing. The context of this process has been characterized by institutional debate, social concerns and fiscal constraints. However, the Campus is now empowered with effective tools of planning and assessment that constitute a solid platform from which to take up the challenges ahead. Above all, this PRR provides decisive evidence that shared institutional knowledge and goals combined with effective leadership at all levels ensure progress in advancing Vision University 2016. Adjustments will have to be made given new constraints of significant magnitude, and innovative ways will have to be reinforced, yet aspirations are firm and commitment is strong for the next five year period.
SECTION 4 ENROLLMENT AND FINANCE TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

For the coming academic year 2010-11, the UPR System projects budget cutbacks of $166M (UPR Central Administration Document on Financial Resources). UPR-RP’s share in this cutback is estimated around $30M. This UPR-RP reduction, though present since the 2009-10 budget, had not represented a notable impact, since nonrecurring ARRA1 funds of $27,349,110 covered recurrent operational expenditures. Additional cuts totaling $5.5M had to be made towards the end of the present academic year. Section 6 expands on this process. Section 6 also discusses in more detail the institutional budget procedures employed during the past five years up to 2010, and the precautionary measures that were put in place to address the projected fiscal decline. This section presents UPR-RP budget projections for 2010 to 2012, based on the 2009-2010 operational recurrent budget ($269,596,691) minus ARRA funds.

Appendix 4.1, Budget Projections, presents cuts aligned for a total 2010 projected budget of $245,415,250, which include projected ARRA funds of $3.8M. For 2011-12 the budget is similar but does not include the ARRA projection, to achieve a projected total budget of $241,615,250M. As is revealed, major reductions result from the reorganization of full time and part time teaching contracts, which in turn liberate funds assigned to marginal benefits, i.e. health insurance and retirement. Most vacant positions will remain unfilled for 2010-11, and sabbatical leaves as well as funds for professional development are reduced 100% for the same year. On the other hand, visiting professors and funding for faculty travel to present research work will remain slightly reduced. Precautionary measures introduced during the previous two years resulted in reductions in recurrent operational allocations at the end of fiscal 2009-2010 and prepared the way to the cuts in 2010.

For analytical purposes the UPR-RP budget was divided in five major categories: 1) salaries and wages and marginal benefits, 2) utilities, water, electricity and equipment maintenance, 3) physical facilities development and maintenance, 4) schools, colleges, and administrative units special projects, and 5) institutional strategic plan development. In addition, Interim Chancellor Dr. Ana Guadalupe appointed a team to reorganize the campus budget around seven priorities: 1) research and creation, 2) internationalization, 3) student services, 4) information and technological resources, 5) physical facilities development, 6) institutional strategic planning (learning assessment and institutional assessment composed of program review, institutional research, assessment of administrative units and knowledge and data bases), and 7) units’ special projects. Deans and school’s directors followed general guidelines and presented their budget petition to the Chancellor.

Regarding enrollment projections, the Campus has the opportunity to further efforts on graduate recruitment while pushing down numbers of undergraduates to an intended balance. The proportion of undergraduate and graduate students has fluctuated in the past five years between 80-81% for undergraduates and 19-20% for graduates, while a slight total enrollment downward trend has to be intentionally undertaken to preserve the numbers that keep the desired incoming student profile and are adjusted to the new budget scenario. Enrollment projections are thus as follows:

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<td>15,299</td>
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<td>3,451</td>
<td>3,496</td>
<td>3,516</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,840</td>
<td>18,699</td>
<td>18,795</td>
<td>18,291</td>
<td>18,100</td>
</tr>
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1 ARRA – American Reinvestment and Reconstruction Act
SECTION 5 ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING

During 2005-2010 UPR-RP has reaffirmed its commitment to quality, excellence, and ongoing improvement. Such commitment has guided institutional assessment efforts and produced a more effective organization that is generating valuable results. Since 2006 the Deanship of Academic Affairs (DAA), through its Office of Academic Planning (OAP), has been responsible for developing unified performance indicators to measure progress in the attainment of the goals set by the strategic plan Vision University 2016. In addition, learning assessment is now under the direct responsibility of the DAA and the Deanship for Graduate Studies and Research (DEGI by its Spanish acronym) at the undergraduate and graduate levels respectively. As was presented in Section 2, in 2007 DAA created the Office of Student Learning Evaluation (OEAE by its Spanish acronym) to support and coordinate assessment of undergraduate learning outcomes and to sustain a Campus wide culture of assessment. Assessment of administrative and support units was placed under the direct responsibility of the Office of the Chancellor with continuous communication with the DAA. On-going evaluation of the assessment structure during this period has been in place to facilitate campus wide implementation and follow-up.

A campus wide network is now in place to support a dynamic culture of assessment. Collaboration between the Center for Academic Excellence and the OEAE has permitted a continuous offer of workshops and related activities to administrators and faculty. A total of 882 faculty members participated in 38 workshops or activities and 269 faculty participations in 6 assessment cycles since 2006. The OEAE also offers statistical support to the programs. DEGI and the Institutional Assessment Coordinator have organized and customized activities. DAA and OAP feature presentations of institutional research findings and results to key constituents of the academic and administrative community. OAP makes sure that databases and files in the Campus information systems (SAGA, Factum, FACTBOOK) are up-to-date and easily accessible for faculty use, program review, assessment, proposal writing, and institutional research, among other uses (OAP Portal). It has also intensified the institutional research agenda and the communication of assessment findings. Faculty participation has increased through a systematic process of program evaluation and learning assessment.

UPR-RP aimed at closing the assessment loop and linking assessment to planning. To this end, Priority Project 3 and assessment itself received high priority in the Campus’ planning and budgeting processes. With the appropriate resources assigned, Project 3 (Appendix 2.2 Priority Projects Inventory and Budget) provided for improvements in infrastructure such as additional technological equipment and software. This section will discuss the four main elements of institutional assessment:

- Institutional Knowledge
- Program Review and professional accreditation- graduate and undergraduate
- Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes – all levels
- Assessment of Administrative Units

Institutional Knowledge

OPA generates information based on different sources. Resulting information is disseminated through reports, oral presentations, a Web-based Fact Book (UPR-RP Fact Book), a Web-based indicators dashboard (Strategic Indicators Dashboard), and the institutional profile available on-line as a pdf.

Databases

Data is obtained from databases created and maintained by the OAP. SAGA is a data warehouse that integrates data primarily from the Rio Piedras Campus legacy information systems, namely the Student Information System (SIS) and the Human Resources System (HRS), as well as other sources such as Factum and surveys. Relevant campus data is continuously added to the data warehouse. Factum is a Web-based system for gathering data on faculty publications, presentations and other achievements. Each faculty member can enter, edit and display data concerning their tasks and achievements such as: academic degrees, publications, creative work, service activities, professional improvement, external funds proposals, research and thesis advising. The data collected through
Factum becomes part of SAGA and thus can be used to generate summary and statistical reports. Faculty is required to keep their information on Factum up-to-date for promotion and tenure purposes.

Institutional Research
The OAP developed an Institutional Research Plan in 2004 (OAP Institutional Research Web Page). In 2007 assessment revealed that several stages were taking too much time, which in turn, delayed the dissemination of findings. Results led to the use of funds allocated to Priority Project 3 for the acquisition of equipment and software, personnel training, and participation in national surveys. Changes notably reduced the amount of time required to process survey data, which in turn helped to make findings available to decision makers in a timely fashion.

Following up on the 2004 Institutional Research Plan, the OAP has carried out a busy schedule of 23 institutional surveys and studies related to freshmen, alumni, exit interviews, students and faculty. The OAP has made two types of benchmarking studies, one on retention and graduation rates, and another on research indicators (Appendix 5.1 Institutional Research Inventory). A new kind of report is being generated that compares findings over time and between surveys. As a result, the Campus has identified challenges in the areas of campus security, research support, student academic feedback and services, curricular needs, and physical plant as indicated by students or faculty. Table 1 presents some examples of key findings based on institutional research, major actions generated and some results.

Table 1 Institutional Surveys – Key Findings and Actions Taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Actions Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and transportation</strong></td>
<td>To address these issues, a new security protocol was developed with the participation of diverse sectors of the campus community and an advertising campaign was requested to the School of Communication during 2007. There were new hires in the Security Office and training of personnel. Parking lights were evaluated and improved. The inauguration of Plaza Universitaria entailed a second multistory parking available to students and personnel with substantial illumination, security guards and cameras. The Campus made an agreement with Tren Urbano, San Juan’s automated transit system, for a reduced 56 cents a day fare for students and staff. Promotion is continuous in the Campus Web page to keep potential users informed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost 18% of new admissions from high school do not enroll at the UPR-RP. This percent has not changed since 2001-02. Security issues and transportation are mentioned as key reasons [Admitted No–show Survey - Spring 2006]. Similar findings concerning the importance of security and transportation were derived from other studies, pointing to these issues as priorities for action. In both administrations of the Noel Levitz student satisfaction inventory (SSI), 2005 and 2008, the four items in the Safety and Security factor were among the ones with greater dissatisfaction, but high importance. Thus, they came up as “challenges”. The Safety and Security factor showed a 6.63 importance and 2.93 satisfaction averages, on 7-point scale. In addition, in the Campus Student Profile of 2006 66% of respondents gave a negative evaluation to Security in general.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English communication skills and information literacy</strong></td>
<td>Reinforcing English and information competencies was adopted as a major general education assessment project. Actions taken are detailed in Section 2, Institutional Response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 75% of freshmen students considered that they master computer skills, while 60% has poor information literacy and English communications skills [Freshmen profile Fall 2005].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course scheduling</strong></td>
<td>Changes in course enrollment process have been implemented. The DAA emitted guidelines for spreading out class schedules and implemented a follow up procedure. Distribution of courses has improved, among others; classes on Fridays have increased from 5% to close to 12% of the offerings. In the 2008 Noel-Levitz survey, satisfaction with the premise I am able to register for the classes I need with few conflicts had a satisfaction of only 2.87 (3.96 gap between importance and satisfaction) in a 7-point scale. In the study on reasons for requiring more than 4 years for a degree, a similar question showed that 54% of respondents evaluated it as a major factor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the student profile survey of 2006, the three services best evaluated by students were: quality of the academic offer (81.2%), cultural activities (80.1%) and academic activities (79.5%). On the other hand, among the services with the lowest evaluation was the amount of available sections per course (76%). The difficulty in obtaining the courses they need showed up also in the Noel-Levitz SSI of 2005: the premise: I am able to register for the classes I need with few conflicts had a satisfaction of only 2.87 (3.96 gap between importance and satisfaction) in a 7-point scale. In the study on reasons for requiring more than 4 years for a degree, a similar question showed that 54% of respondents evaluated it as a major factor.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### Key Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt and early feedback to students by professors</th>
<th>Actions Taken</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In several satisfaction surveys, students expressed that professors were not giving prompt and early feedback regarding their performance (listed as a “challenge” in the Noel Levitz SSI of 2005 and as an item with a large negative effect size when compared to Carnegie institutions in the NSSE).</td>
<td>The DAA presented a project to establish a required evaluation period and mid-term grade reports for undergraduates, approved by the Academic Senate and included in the academic calendar since the spring semester of 2007-08. An evaluation of results is due in 2011. Nevertheless, in the Noel-Levitz 2008 survey, the premise on professors giving prompt and early feedback showed improvement and did not come out as a “challenge”.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical facilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the student profile survey 81% gave negative evaluations to the physical facilities. Among the challenges identified in the Noel-Levitz SSI 2005 and 2008, are items related to campus maintenance, and parking lots. When asked what could the institution do to retain them, some non-returning students, mentioned improvements and maintenance of physical facilities. Faculty also expressed being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with physical facilities [Faculty Survey 2007]: Faculty offices (54%), and Teaching facilities (59%)</td>
<td>A new building for the College of General Studies was recently inaugurated, and the old building is being remodeled to house new offices for faculty members and classrooms. The Permanent Improvement Plan and the Campus Development Plan includes renovation of the Student Center due in 2011, Chemistry labs in 2010, and Business School offices in 2010, among other facilities. Several graduate schools were moved to the new buildings of Plaza Universitaria: Business Administration, Planning, and Rehabilitation Counseling. The Accounting Department is being remodeled.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the Faculty Survey of 2007, dissatisfaction with items related to research support, such as: time for research, physical facilities, research assistants, equipment and materials, support for submission of proposal for external funds, and support for finding research funds ranged from 68% to 44%.</td>
<td>The percent of tenured and tenure-track faculty with release time for research increased from 24% in 2005-06 to 32% in 2009-10. This aspect needs improvement. DEGI has incorporated several technological tools for identification of potential funding and submission of proposals. Section 2 expands on Priority Project 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Benchmarking

OAP generates benchmarking analysis based on information from local, peer, and top US institutions. For example, benchmarking on retention and graduation rates is based on other campuses of the UPR System, public and private Puerto Rico four-year universities, a group of universities with the same Carnegie classification (hereafter referred as Carnegie Peer Group) and the top ten US national universities. On aspects related to research, the Carnegie Peer Group and the UPR Mayagüez Campus are useful sources for comparison (Appendix 5.2 Benchmarking at UPR-RRP).

Benchmarking is used as reference values to establish standards for several of the UPR-RP strategic indicators, such as faculty publications, graduation rates, and doctorates conferred. The target was selected depending on the campus present value with respect to the minimum, median and maximum values of the comparison group. In some issues the median values provide the adequate standard, while in others the maximum or minimum values prove appropriate. This is the case for tenured or tenure track instructional faculty with a doctorate degree (81%), with a standard of 85% based on the Carnegie Peer Group minimum, median, and maximum values, respectively: 74%, 85%, and 98%. The median was selected in this case as the standard for this indicator. In other cases, such as retention rate, the maximum value is the standard. Since the 1997 cohort, UPR-RP Campus graduation rate began to show a declining tendency, plunging to 46% for the 2002 cohort, while Carnegie Peers average 50%. Our high retention rate of over 90% (Carnegie Peers average 78%), and excellent incoming student profiles predict better results. In consequence, DAA prioritized the enhancement of graduation rates towards the 2012 time horizon. With graduation rates in mind, in 2006-2007 Colleges reviewed and restructured their academic advising services and strengthened communication channels with students. Analysis of institutional studies led to Priority Project 4 described in Section 2, some actions summarized in Table 1 above.

In view of students reporting course scheduling difficulties, and considering this an influential factor in graduation rates, interim Chancellor, Dr. Ana R. Guadalupe created a team in charge of revising the enrollment process. This group is presently working on selecting new technological approaches to replace the 20 year old student information system. As a first step, an in-house web application miupi (www.uprrp.edu option MIUPI) began in Fall 2009, unifying several on-line services such as course registration, electronic payment of tuition and fees, access to
grades, and printing registration certification. This initiative has received enthusiastic reports from the student body.

Also, institutional research showed that dropped out students reported not having received needed counseling, nor needed academic and career advice. Besides, in some instances, students were not aware that these services were available. Accordingly, the Department of Student Counseling Services was included in the institutional accreditation schedule, achieved in 2009 as detailed in Section 2.

The bachelor’s revision has contributed to a flexible academic environment, a reduction in credit requirements and an orientation to increased student choice which should also contribute to improve six-year graduation rates and student satisfaction. UPR-RP has set the goal of a 51% six-year graduation rate for 2012 and continues to incorporate assessment activities in the planning of actions geared to achieve and surpass this goal. The most recent six-year graduation rate (2003 cohort) showed an increase to 49% as compared to 46% for the 2002 cohort even though they exhibited similar retention profiles in the first two years.

Development of Strategic Plan Indicators and Dashboard
During the past three years the OAP redefined and redesigned the indicators system. A dashboard, subdivided by strategic goal, was developed from the new set of indicators and runs as a web-based application that can be accessed through the OAP portal (Strategic Indicators Dashboard). Each section starts with the goal statement and a gauge of its assessment as a percent. This assessment is calculated as the average of the individual indicators.

Located below the goal statement and assessment are its indicators. Indicators include: indicator number and description; history (indicator values, usually for the last five (5) years); annotations (legend, source of the data, benchmark data, and notes); assessment (gauge for progress towards the standard stated as a percent); standard (desired indicator values for the years 2011 and 2016); supporting documentation (files that can be downloaded which contain more detailed information on the indicator values). Files are usually available in PDF and the original file format such as Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Word.

A second abridged dashboard version was created to facilitate follow-up to the Seven Priority Projects (Priority projects dashboard). Table 2 below summarizes indicator data, target values and performance as compared to 2005-06 grouped by Priority Project. Highlights in Table 2 are associated with UPR-RP emphasis on incentives for research under Priority Project 1. Indicators show an increasing proportion of professors with a doctoral degree, more release time for research, technology integrated for external fund identification and proposal tracking. They also point to an increment in sabbaticals which might account for the 100% increase in approved external funds since 2007, 40% in publications since 2005, and 30% in total research expenditures. Meanwhile, increase in the graduate assistants per faculty member remains a challenge. The classification of the bachelors’ revision as Priority Project 2 channeled resources and energy into the process. Thus, close to 100% of the undergraduate programs (94%) completed the implementation of the revised bachelor’s degree and the few remaining are in the last stages. Moreover, implementation of assessment of institutional effectiveness via program review and learning assessment, as well as via assessment of effectiveness of administrative units, Priority Project 3, has been completed by more than 90% of programs/units, similarly for learning assessment. Incoming student profiles, already excellent, have shown some improvement, as well as 3 percentage point increase in graduation rates. However, satisfaction with services still needs a significant turnaround in certain aspects and Priority Project 4 must be reviewed. Progress in the attainment of Internationalization, Priority Project 5, is demonstrated by the 54% increase in the number of faculty members that travelled outside PR for academic presentations since 2005-06, and the two-fold increase in the number of visiting professors. However, the number of UPR-RP students participating in exchange programs increased 10%, less than expected. In terms of technology, Priority Project 6, 92% of interior and exterior areas have wireless coverage and student satisfaction with technological equipment increased by 5% points. Institutional relations with the external community, Priority Project 7, showed a large improvement in terms of the participants in continuing education offerings which increased more than 80% since 2005-06. On the other hand, removal of architec tonic barriers identified in the last self-study report is 42% complete on average, and needed overall fund raising did not fulfill expectations. As a closing point related to the
quality of students’ university experience, 90% or more of graduating students have consistently expressed satisfaction with the quality of their education at UPR-RP.

Table 2 Selection of Strategic Indicators and their behavior by Priority Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Most Recent Value</th>
<th>Desired 2011 Value</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Change from 2005-06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incentives for Research and Creative Output</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Research Expenditures (External, Institutional, Total)</td>
<td>($19.0M, $10.8M, $29.8)</td>
<td>External: $25M</td>
<td>Min: $10.7M; Med: $48.3M; Max: $77.4M</td>
<td>(+$4.6M, +$4.7M, +$6.9M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of approved external funds proposals</td>
<td>$15.7M</td>
<td>$20M</td>
<td></td>
<td>+8.2M (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications cited in Web of Sciences</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Min: 265; Med: 591; Max: 718</td>
<td>+67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIP proposals funded</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorates conferred (Soc. Sci., STEM, Human., Others)</td>
<td>(14, 21, 20, 34)</td>
<td>(7, 23, 5, 31)</td>
<td>Med: (7, 23, 5, 31)</td>
<td>(-10, NC, +5, +6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of instructional faculty with release time for research</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td>+8 % pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticals for research and creative output</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate assistantships per instructional faculty</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>Min: 0.80; Med: 1.37; Max: 1.69</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of instructional faculty with doctoral degrees</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Min: 74%; Med:85%; Max: 98%</td>
<td>+5 % pts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementation of the Revised Bachelor’s Degree**

| % of undergraduate programs with revision proposals | 94%              | 100%                |           |                     |

**Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness**

| % Completion of undergraduate program review       | 96%              | 100%                |           |                     |
| % Completion of graduate program review           | 73%; 17% close to completion | 100%             |           |                     |
| % Completion 1st cycle learning assessment–bachelor’s | 97% (87% with actions) | 100%                |           |                     |
| % Completion 1st cycle learning assessment-graduate | 96% (75% with actions) | 100%                |           |                     |
| % of Admin. units 1st cycle of assessment completed | 100%             | 100%                |           |                     |

**Quality of the students’ university experience – Student profile and quality and diversity of services**

| % of graduating students satisfied with the quality of their education | 91% | 90% | (+8, +5, +.04) |
| Freshmen academic profile - CEEB ave. scores (verbal, math, GPA) | (598, 616, 3.71) | (580,600, 3.60) | Ave: 78% | +4 % pts. |
| Undergraduate retention rate | 91% | 90% | Ave: 78% | +4 % pts. |
| Degree of students’ satisfaction with support services and service excellence - Noel-Levitz (Importance/Satisfaction) | (4.6/4.70, 6.35/4.09) | Satisf. >= 4.5 | 5.97/5.14, 5.93/4.67 | (-0.07/+0.10) |
| Participation of students in enriching educational experiences –NSSE (Freshmen, Seniors) | 25.3, 37.0 Effect size: (.20, -.17) | Effect size: >= .20 | 28.1, 40.1 Effect size: (+.21, NC) | (+3.7, +3.7) |
| Undergraduate graduation rate | 49% | 51% | Min : 34%; Ave: 50%; Max : 66% | +1 % pt. |
| % of Campus’ graduates employed and/or pursuing further studies six months after graduation | 93% | 95% | -1 % pt. (from previous year) |

**Internationalization of the Río Piedras Campus**

| Number of faculty members who travel outside PR for academic presentations | 125 | 150 | +44 |
| Number of visiting teaching and research faculty | 82 | 80 | +40 |
| Number of students participating in exchange programs | 184 | 225 | +18 |
| Wireless coverage | 92% | 100% | +5 %pts. |
| % of faculty expressing a positive opinion about technological resources for teaching | 35% | 60% | +5 %pts. |
| % of graduating students satisfied with technological equipment available for their use | 49% | 60% | +5 %pts. |

**Quality of Campus life and institutional relations with the external community**

| % of faculty satisfied with working conditions | 56% | 60% |                     |
| Campus Life and Campus Climate – Noel-Levitz (Importance/Satisfaction) | (6.04/4.47, 6.43/4.53) | Satisf. >= 4.5 | 5.55/4.71, 6.01/4.77 | (NC/-0.06, -0.04/-0.04) |
Program Review: Undergraduate Programs

The strengthening of academic programs through program review and professional accreditation is a major component of the assessment system both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The Campus completed a first cycle of program evaluation and a second cycle is underway. A large number of programs had not made revisions in many years. Therefore, program review generated an in-depth reflection process that resulted in new/revised definitions of each program’s mission, vision and intended student learning outcomes, product of consensus among faculty and student representatives. These new/revised definitions, paved the way for the bachelor’s curricular revision, as well as for the development of program student learning plans. In the case of programs professionally accredited, this process would substitute institutional program review.

The programs’ final report includes nine areas: program’s mission (includes goals and objectives), teaching curriculum, students (includes the intended student learning outcomes definition), faculty, service to the community, physical facilities and equipment, administration of the program, budget, and planning. In addition, programs generated a development/action plan that summarized key findings and proposed actions. It also contained a timetable for their implementation.

Initially, participation in the Program Review Project was voluntary. In 2004-05 the Dean of Academic Affairs institutionalized the evaluation process making it mandatory for all undergraduate programs with a cycle of seven years. In 2006-07, the Board of Trustees of the University of Puerto Rico established a new procedure and guidelines for the periodic evaluation of all academic programs, undergraduate and graduate at the system level. This new procedure is stated in Certification 43 (2006-07) which specifies an evaluation cycle of five years and completing the evaluation process in one academic year. As a result, data by program was published since 2006 in a Program Factbook in the OPA Web page (Academic Program Factbook) and the guidelines for program evaluation were revised. The new materials are being used in the second cycle of undergraduate program revision starting in 2009.

In summary, of the 74 active undergraduate programs during the first cycle, 24 programs have professional accreditation which encompasses a systematic and periodic program review process and thus they comply with the Campus’ and Certification 43 program review requirements. Therefore, the remaining 50 undergraduate programs were under the Undergraduate Program Review Project. Of these, 39 (78%) completed the process and 11 (18%) integrated review with the parallel process of curricular revision of the Bachelor degree, thus encompassing the major aspects of program evaluation. A summary of the implementation results is included in Appendix 5.3 – Undergraduate Academic Program Review Summary.

The review process has become an important part of the Campus academic dynamics. Many faculty members have expressed that they see the evaluation process as an empowering instrument that prompts democratic participation and channels the demands and needs of the departments. Valid and reliable statistical information has been provided via OAP’s Web page to each program, which allows them to integrate it into their academic planning and facilitates the use of assessment. Furthermore, a process has been institutionalized that promotes intra program interactions; a new sense of shared ownership for program learning objectives is growing among faculty. A sample of findings and actions taken appears in Table 3.
The second program review cycle, starting in 2009, comprises a five year period that culminates in 2013-14 with 70 programs. A schedule is accessible in Appendix 5.3 – Undergraduate Academic Program Review Summary. Also, all programs susceptible to professional accreditation have presented a timetable for completing this process. A recent accomplishment in this area is the accreditation of the Bachelors’ in Office Systems Administration of the College of Business in 2009 by ACBSP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Evaluation Key Findings</th>
<th>Actions Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>College of Social Sciences - Geography</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curriculum needed revision. Also, the student intended learning outcomes statement had to be aligned with core discipline competencies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical facilities needed improvement and students needed access to necessary equipment and software to support the curriculum.</td>
<td>The technology of the Cartography and Spatial Analysis Lab was upgraded, and it’s being used for courses on Cartography, GIS and Remote Sensing. Also, operating hours were extended. A proposal of $21,488 was submitted and approved to acquire 20 Global Positioning Systems handheld receivers with software to transfer data to the computers at the Cartography and Spatial Analysis Lab, new licenses of Geospatial Analysis and other Arc GIS modules, 25 laboratory licenses for the Envi software for remote sensing or teledetection and Adobe Acrobat licenses. Also, the public domain bibliography software Jab Ref was installed for students’ use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Studies Undergraduate Major</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for additional teaching and counseling faculty.</td>
<td>One teaching faculty and one counselor were hired on tenure-track positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to promote the program</td>
<td>The program is being promoted through a new brochure, University Radio, and orientation sessions were given to Metropolitan Area high school counselors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College of Social Sciences – Labor relations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum needed revision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for more opportunities of student exchange with different entities outside of PR.</td>
<td>A course of 3 to 6 credit-hours was created to facilitate student interaction with labor entities outside Puerto Rico during summers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College of Business Administration - Accounting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting Department physical facilities and faculty offices needed improvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College of Natural Sciences – Computer Science</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to recruit more faculty members and an administrative assistant.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Program Review: Graduate Programs

In 2003, DEGI began implementing program review at the graduate level with the participation of external evaluators. All programs were to produce a self study following a uniform set of 9 criteria, including learning assessment. At present, 99% of all graduate programs have gone through program review. Completion of the process is expected by September 2010. In 2005, after 4 programs completed their review, DEGI temporarily halted program evaluation and reoriented the assigned funds to support the strategic projects identified by these 14 programs. It also created a fund, “Fund for Renovation, Innovation and Transformation” that would be used in support of programs initiatives as a result of the evaluation. Some key results of this process have been: the reduction in masters’ degree credit requirements, the acquisition of new equipment, the curricular revision of various programs and the identification of new areas for faculty recruitment. Findings from the program review process were analyzed and were presented and discussed with program members. Important curricular and structural aspects of graduate studies were identified, resulting in a proposal for revision of Academic Senate Certification Num. 72, 1991-1992, which constitutes the ruling framework for graduate studies. The proposal is now being considered by the Academic Senate. This is one of the major contributions of the first cycle of program
review. In 2007-08 DEGI initiated the integration of learning assessment and institutional program review. This has led to substantial progresses in terms of improving time and cost effectiveness. ([Appendix 5.4](#) Graduate Academic Program Review Summary)

**Assessment of Student Learning: Undergraduate Academic Programs**

The assessment model implemented consists of an institutional level with two components and a program level. The institutional level consists of 1) an initial diagnostic project to assess newly admitted students strengths and weaknesses in writing skills by OEAE; and, 2) assessment of competencies within the general education context in a collaborative effort with the College of General Studies (GS), other Colleges and the Library System. As was stated in Section 2 of this PRR, the general education projects and results are presented in Section 2 related to follow up of Standard 12. At the program level, assessment coordinators facilitate assessment of competencies and other elements from the perspective of the disciplines. The process is coordinated by OEAE, and a complete description is found in [Appendix 5.5](#) - Report on Undergraduate Student Learning Assessment 2006-2010. The present section focuses on major aspects of program level assessment.

In 2007, nine faculty members were appointed as Assessment Coordinators. They were given release time or compensation equivalent to 3 credits-hours for this effort. Budget was reoriented for this task as a fundamental component of Priority Project 3. As of 2008, an additional 43 faculty members from eight colleges and schools were appointed. All Assessment Coordinators have been trained by the OEAE. The OEAE has been strengthened by appointing a coordinator in 2006, followed by an associate coordinator and an assessment technician in 2008 to coordinate assessment at the program level. A thorough research of the assessment and evaluation literature was made for a simple, user friendly but suitable format for the assessment plan and the annual report to be used by each academic program. The formats, designed by the OEAE were discussed and approved by the assessment coordinators.

At the program level an assessment cycle was defined in stages: 1. selection of competencies or learning outcomes to be assessed (each program selected at least one of Research and Creativity, Social Responsibility and Critical Thinking, and one content knowledge, skill or disposition related to the particular program, and all would assess effective communication), 2. establishment of learning objectives related to the learning outcomes, 3. identification of educational activities, 4. design of instruments and metrics, 5. selection of different check points for data collection, 6. analysis of data and, 7. proposal of transforming actions. In the next cycle the implemented transforming actions will be evaluated and new domains added. The time frame established for each cycle is one year. The academic program directors are to be responsible for informing the learning outcomes to faculty members, academic advisors, and the student body, promoting discussion among members and sponsoring transforming actions. The website [OEAE Web Blog](#) includes assessment plans for each program, the competencies and learning objectives, the assessment rubrics and activities, and the annual reports, among others.

As of May 2010, 52 (79%) programs are in their second assessment cycle and will begin their third cycle in 2010-11. Faculty finds support and stimulus for their collective efforts and commitment at the same time that the ongoing process is publicized. Figure 4 shows implementation status as of May 2010.
Assessing Student Learning at the Institutional Level

Communication in Spanish and English
Evaluating communication skills became a priority of the First Cycle of Assessment. Two main strategies were used. The first one is addressed through the General Education Component as discussed in Section 2. The second one was developed by the OEAE with the Office of the College Board for Puerto Rico and Latin America. The project evaluates the writing competencies of the incoming class, a milestone campus-wide effort. During the 2007-08 academic year, a writing test was administered to students from the first nine academic programs that started the revised curriculum. (Physics, Mathematics, General Science, Biology, three programs from the School of Communication, and two programs from Humanities: Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies). Four hundred and nine (409) students or 58% of total admissions to those programs participated. The areas evaluated were: theme and structure, lexical competency, domain of syntactical structures and grammatical correctness. The College Board was in charge of the rubric and of grading the essays produced. The results indicated that 21% of the students showed limited writing skills, such as lack of domain on basic essay structure and poor vocabulary. Results were presented and discussed among the deans, associate deans and student learning assessment coordinators for the corresponding actions. The students were referred to the Center for Linguistics Competencies. It should be noted that the Center for Linguistics Competencies was a major transforming action approved during the bachelors’ revision in support of the development of communication skills.

Collaborative efforts with the College Board continued during the 2008-2009 academic year. A writing test was administered to a sample of 1,604 newly admitted students, 82% of total admissions in the revised programs. Results indicated that 88% of students evidenced poor writing skills. Problematic areas were similar to the ones during the first year of the Project, although a higher incidence of limited skills resulted possibly due to a more diverse group of participating students. In light of these findings the following actions were implemented since then: 1) coordination of writing workshops with the Center for Linguistics Competencies; 2) development of a writing program called Writing Zones in the College of Education, for Education students with mandatory attendance to the workshops; 3) offerings of writing skills workshops in Spanish and English at the College of Business Administration; 4) creation of a writing seminar in the School of Communications. Students identified
with writing difficulties are now assigned to one of the above institutional initiatives. According to the student’s academic needs, programs have integrated activities in their curriculum in a consistent and systematic way. These actions boosted efforts to implement a model for the development of writing skills across the curriculum, within the context of the disciplines, and with important opportunities for practice and feedback.

As part of the institutional efforts to evaluate writing skills in English, and in coordination with the College Board, an English Language Assessment Test (ELASH II- English Language Assessment System for Hispanics II) was administered to a sample of 819 newly admitted students in 2008-2009. The ELASH-II test evaluates the following skills: listening comprehension, writing comprehension and language use. The scores were categorized by the CEEB in four levels: Advanced, High intermediate, Low intermediate and Novice. Scores on the Low intermediate and Novice indicate low performance in the skills measured by the test. A 10.4% of the students performed in the Low intermediate and Novice category in Listening. Forty two percent scored Low intermediate and Novice in Language use; and 43% in Reading Comprehension. The English Department from the College of General Studies designed a pilot project within the context of General Education, in order to study the skills that have to be enforced in the core English courses taken in the first year of studies. In August 2009 OEAE administered a post test on Writing Skills in Spanish to a sample of 201 students who obtained low scores on the previous Spanish pre-test offered on October 2007 and August 2008. Results revealed that 68% of the students (136) continued to show difficulty in syntactical structures, lexical competency and grammatical correctness. At the same time, the English Department of the College of Humanities started an evaluation process in Oral Communication Competencies for students who were taking English as a Second Language (ESL). Rubrics have been developed for the evaluation process to be administered during the second semester of the 2009-10 academic year. Again, findings evidenced the importance of skills development and assessment across the curriculum and within the specific disciplines. As will be presented below, in Findings at the Program Level, evaluation of these skills at the program level revealed notable improvements when students were tested within advanced major courses.

Since January 2008, numerous meetings and activities have been coordinated with diverse groups. More information about these activities can be found at the OEAE Blog (Student Learning Assessment Meetings and in Student Learning Assessment-related Activities). Representatives of the Student Council have been included, as well as assessment coordinators and administrators. Also, the Dean of Academic Affairs has met with all undergraduate program directors to gauge progress, emphasize the need to integrate assessment into the departmental culture, and to bring the Campus perspective into the process.

Assessment Findings and Transforming Actions at the Program Level

Communication Competencies

As stated in Table 4 of Section 2 of this PRR, competencies were also assessed at the program level. Of the 66 academic programs engaged in the assessment of student learning, 62 (94%) assessed effective communication defined as the ability to express oneself effectively in oral and written language that ensures a clear, coherent and accurate communication.

Of those 62 programs, 55 (89%) reported positive learning outcomes according to expected results established by the programs. For example, in the Physics Department communication skills were assessed in two courses (PHYS 3174 and PHYS 4077). The expected outcome was that all students would demonstrate effective written communication skills in laboratory reports according to the standard of achieving 70% or more in the rubric. In PHYS 3174 only 67.5% of the students achieved the expected outcome. In PHYS 4077, a more advanced course, 85% of the students achieved the expected outcome. As a transforming action the department communicated with students that did not meet the criteria and persuaded them to go for tutoring sessions to the Center for Linguistic Competencies. (For other examples on the competencies, learning outcomes and transforming actions see Student Learning Inventory of Findings and Actions).

Forty-one programs (66%) used at least two different activities to collect data. All programs used direct measures to collect data on this learning outcome. Currently, reported assessment methods for competency in written and
oral communication are embedded in the discipline courses throughout the curriculum. Evidence of student ability to communicate effectively was assessed through the following activities and techniques: the College Board Writing Skills test, laboratory reports, design projects, research article reviews, critiques, research papers and projects, essays and oral presentations, persuasive arguments, oral presentations, and supervised practicum, among others (see List of domains assessed by academic programs). Fifty six percent (56%) of the academic programs have implemented transforming actions as a result of the assessment process. All academic programs proposed transforming actions, which will be implemented in August 2010, in view of the fact that they started their assessment of student learning process during the academic year 2009-2010. As a starting point, all programs modified syllabi to include objectives centered in student learning. The Student Learning Inventory of Findings and Actions presents a list of actions implemented or to be implemented in August 2010.

Critical Thinking Competencies

Of the 66 programs, 48 (72%) decided to assess critical thinking skills, having defined these competencies as a thinking skill that enables the student to analyze and interpret the object of study, through judging, criticizing and analyzing the diverse perspectives in a thorough and constructive way, aiming for the development of their own criteria. All programs used direct measures of learning. Currently, reported assessment methods for competency in critical analysis and reasoning are embedded in the courses. Evidence of student ability to think analytically was gathered for evaluation through: laboratory exercises and exams, higher thinking skills questions in exams, electronic discussion forums, e-portfolios, design projects in architecture, research articles, critiques, research papers and projects, essays and oral presentations, persuasive arguments, oral presentations, and supervised practicum, among others (see List of domains assessed by academic programs).

Forty two of the 48 programs (88%) measuring critical thinking met the expected outcomes. Thirty-five programs (73%) used at least two different activities to collect data. All of them proposed transforming actions to be implemented in August 2010. For example, the Psychology program utilized an analytic rubric on two courses (PSYC 3003 and PSYC 4001) to gather data in relation to student’s critical thinking skills. Findings revealed that students on the lower level course (PSYC 3003) could not meet the expected 70% outcome on the rubric. Only 2.9% of the students achieved the expected outcome. Nevertheless, when rubric was used to measure the same learning outcome on an upper level course (PSYC 4001), 86.7% of the students achieved the expected goal. The analysis of these results showed that the incoming students enrolled on the lower level courses have not developed the required critical thinking skills. However, by the end of their baccalaureate degree, the acquired academic experiences through previous courses enabled them to develop the necessary critical thinking skills as stated in the Psychology Program baccalaureate student profile. As a transforming action to be implemented in August 2010, they propose to include a workshop in PSYC 3003 with exercises that requires the use of critical thinking skills. A pre and post test will be given before and after the workshop to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy.

Research and Creation Competencies

Of the 66 academic programs, 26 (39%) chose to assess research and creation skills, defined as the mastery of skills needed to design and conduct a systematic, qualitative or quantitative, objective, and critical investigation of a scientific or social problem or issue; or the ability to create, develop, and present a literary piece or a work of art. In general, all 26 programs used both direct and indirect measures. Six of those 26 programs (23%) used at least two different activities. Currently, the reported assessment methods for research skill competencies are embedded in the discipline courses. Evidence of student ability to do research and demonstrate creativity is evidenced through: poster presentations, research article reviews, design of a recreational program, essays, reflections, presentations and critiques, research proposals, papers and projects, surveys for drama presentations, case studies, literature reviews, architectural designs and works of art and literary pieces. (See List of domains assessed by academic programs).

Twenty programs (80%) that assessed research and creativity met the expected outcomes according to the benchmarks proposed. For example, in the Biology Program at the College of Natural Sciences a rubric was used to gather date related to research skills in the laboratory reports. Findings showed that only 51% of the students on
the lower level course (BIOL 3101) met the expected outcome on the rubric. Nevertheless, when the same rubric was applied in BIOL 3112 to measure the same learning outcome 98% of the students achieved the expected goal of 70% or more. The analysis of the results indicated that the students enrolled on the lower level courses have not developed the required research skills. However, by the end of their baccalaureate degree, the acquired academic experiences through previous courses enabled them to develop the necessary research skills as stated in the program’s profile. The College of Education, as part of the Baccalaureate revision, included a three-credit course in Educational Research as part of the requirements for graduation. The research skills are measured at the institutional level, as part of the General Education component, in the Biological and Physical Sciences courses. This will guarantee that natural science research skills are assessed in all incoming students. Details of these projects in the general education context are included in Section 2.

Seventy percent of the programs that measured research skills already implemented various transforming actions. For example some programs took advantage of the curricular revision to integrate research into the required courses. For a list of implemented actions or to be implemented in August 2010 access Student Learning Inventory of Findings and Actions.

Social Responsibility Competencies

Of the 66 academic programs, 41 (61%) chose to assess social responsibility competencies, defined as the capacity to apply knowledge and skills gained through the undergraduate experience toward the development of abilities and attitudes that promote ethics and civic responsibility for the advancement of society. Overall, all 41 programs used direct or indirect measures. Currently, reported assessment methods for competencies in social responsibility are embedded in the courses through their inclusion on the syllabus. Evidence of student competencies was assessed through group discussions, study cases, College Board teacher candidate disposition test, field experiences, Practicum, research papers, written papers, exercises and assignments, oral presentations, reflections, and community work (see List of domains assessed by academic programs).

Eight academic programs (20%) that measured social responsibility met the expected outcomes according to the benchmarks proposed. To improve this outcome, the academic programs proposed different activities. For example, the faculty of the Information and Journalism program of the School of Communication approved a new course, Introduction to Journalism that will emphasize ethical values of the profession among other related themes. Also, the faculty of the Computer Science program of the College of Natural Science took immediate action after finding that the students showed poor attitudes towards academic ethics in group discussion in the course CCOM 3982. They moved the discussion of ethics to the second week of the first semester of the seminar in order to promote on students a positive attitude towards ethics as they enter the university. Transforming actions are very varied, for example courses have been revised to include this topic, and case studies have been integrated in some colleges like the Business School.

Social responsibility skills were also assessed at the institutional level in the social sciences courses at the College of General Studies, as presented in Section 2. For further details in how these skills were assessed in the College of General Studies (Appendix 2.6 - General Education Learning Assessment Report).

Content Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes within the Major

Graduating students will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the content they learned as part of their academic experience. They show their knowledge through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis of the subject. They also demonstrate the necessary skills that support the content knowledge acquired in their disciplines.

Of all 66 academic programs that engaged in the assessment of student learning process, 43 (65%) assessed content knowledge, skills or dispositions. Since there are different competencies and different activities used by the academic programs, it is more accurate to present the percentage of learning activities in which the expected outcomes were met. Of all 140 activities assessed, 103 (74%) met the expected outcomes; 129 of them (92%) were assessed using direct measures. The learning activities and their corresponding assessment methods are embedded in the course syllabus. An example of learning activities selected to assess these competencies were: partial and final exams, licensure/certification examinations, case studies, design projects, oral presentations,
video recordings of students acting performances, group discussions on electronic forums, practicum, written papers, exercises and assignments, among others.

Academic programs used different approaches to assess these competencies. For example, in the Performing Arts Program students’ performance on a theatrical play was filmed in order for them to make a self-evaluation of their acting abilities. This filming process was extended to other program courses, such as Illumination (TEAT 4201), for the students to be able to reflect on their performances. On the Business Administration Accounting core course (CONT 3105), when the ratio analysis concept was assessed using a rubric, only 44% of the students met the expected outcome. It was decided by the faculty members that this concept should be taught on a previous course, Quantitative Methods (MECU 3031), in order for the students to have a basic knowledge before they enroll on an accounting course. The Environmental Design Program of the School of Architecture evaluated student’s skills on a design project; the expected outcome was met in three out of five criteria as stated in the rubric. The professors involved proposed that, instead of the actual three credit-hour conferences, the technology and structure courses should consist of a two credit-hour conference and a one credit-hour laboratory in order for students to strengthen the integration of the course content with design exercises. This proposal is under consideration.

The strength of our academic programs is also reflected in outcomes such as: 1) the passing rate of our teacher candidates primarily from the College of Education, on the Puerto Rico certification exams (on the 2007-2008 year, 92% approved the content part and 88% the professional knowledge; more information is available on PRTCE Pass rates), 2) that 100% of the Chemistry majors pass the professional revalidation exam (the program is ranked 10th nationally in Ph.D. degrees granting universities in that field), 3) that 91% of the Chemistry students and 84% of Biology students graduate from their bachelor’s degree with at least one research experience, and 4) that in the last five years, an average of 83% of Nutritional and Dietetics Program’s students approved the professional revalidation exam on their first attempt.

Some programs proposed the following transforming actions to begin in August 2010:

- **Chemistry** – Increase the number of higher lever cognitive problems on the partial and final exams.
- **Physics** – Increase skills, techniques and management of laboratory equipment.
- **Computer Science** – Increase the amount of time allotted to the teaching of algorithms on the CCOM 3033 in the course description.
- **Economics** – Establish online working modules on the Blackboard platform for students that showed limited knowledge for economics databases and resources.
- **Anthropology** – Strengthen the research component skills in all Anthropology courses, such as ethnographic and archeological techniques, in order to enhance the comprehension of the human process researched.
- **Nutrition and Dietetics** – Revise the practice guide in the course HOEC 4085 in order to clarify the evaluation criteria.
- **Accounting** – Increase the time allotted to discuss the topic of governance.

Table 4 below summarizes, as of April 2010, the overall results of the undergraduate assessment process.
Table 4  Results Undergraduate Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcome assessed</th>
<th>Percentage of programs that met the expected outcome</th>
<th>Number of programs that have implemented transforming actions</th>
<th>Number of transforming actions already implemented</th>
<th>Number of transforming actions to be implemented in August 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication</td>
<td>Fifty eight of 62 academic programs (94%) reported positive learning outcomes in this competency.</td>
<td>Thirty four of 62 academic programs (55%)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Forty one of the 48 academic programs (85%) that measured critical thinking competencies met the expected outcomes.</td>
<td>Twenty eight of 48 academic programs (58%)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Creation</td>
<td>Twenty of the 26 academic programs (77%) that assessed Research and Creativity reported positive learning outcomes in this competency.</td>
<td>Thirteen of 26 academic programs (50%)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Fifteen of 41 academic programs (35%) that measured social responsibility met the expected outcomes.</td>
<td>Twenty eight of 41 academic programs (68%)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions in the Academic Programs</td>
<td>Thirty five of 43 academic programs (81%) reported positive learning outcomes in this competency.</td>
<td>Thirty two of 43 academic programs (74%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prospective Plans

To support and promote an ongoing culture of assessment, prospective plans include, among others, that all academic programs will: follow up on proposed actions; review their assessment plans and instruments; incorporate at least two additional domains to assess on each cycle; develop a five year assessment plan; schedule an assessment day in each college or school; engage more faculty members and students in the assessments process; continue assessing content knowledge, skills or dispositions through the curriculum. DAA has assigned the department chairs the task of leading ongoing assessment in the academic programs and to follow up on results. To this effect, program directors have scheduled periodical faculty meetings.

Assessment of Student Learning: Graduate Academic Programs

In 2005, the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research (DEGI, by its Spanish acronym) began the implementation of UPR-RP Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLEP). DEGI produced a guide for graduate programs to write their own plans. Nearly 14 out of a total of 25 programs produced their plans, which were presented to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) during their accreditation visit in 2005. On the MSCHE 2005 visit report to UPR-RP, a recommendation was made regarding the need to demonstrate significant progress in implementing student Student Learning Assessment Plans at both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The 2005 guide provided parameters for data collection aligned with those of the UPR-RP Plan of Student Assessment. To expedite implementation, DEGI revised the guide in 2007 reducing the number of competencies to be evaluated to two: critical thinking and research skills. These competencies were measured by implementing two activities: one in which student written works were evaluated to measure critical thinking, and a second one in which focus groups were organized to measure research skills. This approach complied with the institutional plan.
expectation of programs to include at least one direct and one indirect measure to assess the competencies under scrutiny.

DEGI provided all graduate programs with a rubric for the assessment of critical thinking competencies to be applied to student written works developed before thesis stage. This allowed DEGI to complete a comprehensive assessment of the critical thinking skills that graduate students possessed prior to beginning a formal research project. The definition of critical thinking that was applied to the rubric build on the idea of high level of reasoning directed toward research. In other words, the activities provided factual evidence based on direct observation for both critical thinking and research skills.

The focus groups were used as an exit assessment experience. The goal was to record the research experiences of students who were concluding their thesis or research projects. The combination of written work evaluation (as described earlier) and the focus group allowed DEGI to assess students in critical thinking and research skills before and after completing an academic research project. After some initial experiences and attempts by several programs to define the type and number of competencies to be evaluated, the implementation of the Student Learning Assessment Plan of graduate programs has thus been divided into three stages: a diagnosis of the performed assessment; changes based on the diagnosed situations, and the results of the implemented changes. The data analysis is representative of the total number of M.A.s and Ph.D.s offered during the time period of this report (36). The different specialties of each discipline were not accounted towards this total, nor were the MA in Law.

As of today, 97% of all graduate programs have submitted their diagnostic reports, see figure above. As requested by DEGI, over two thirds of the total number of programs that offer M.A.’s and Ph.D. assessed each academic-level separately. The remaining programs submitted one report for both levels. Thirty-two programs organized focus groups (DEGI sponsored twenty-eight of those) to measure their students’ research experience. Twenty-seven programs evaluated critical thinking (twenty-four with the rubric provided by DEGI) with the use of the above mentioned activities (evaluation of a written work and a focus group). Variations in the plans responded mostly to the way in which certain programs took charge of the assessment process and adapted it to their particular needs. Figure 4 presents progress in the implementation of graduate learning assessment.

Analysis of Critical Thinking Skills as Applied to Research (Data from Direct Observation)

Nineteen (19) of the 25 programs used the rubric provided by DEGI to measure critical thinking. Implementation was not uniform across programs. Some were more demanding than others when interpreting the rubric criteria for scoring students’ work. Also, each program used different types of student written works and different sampling methods (sample size average=7). Given this situation, it would not be appropriate to average the scores of the different programs nor compare the raw measurements among each other. However, the analysis of the
patterns created by the maximum and minimum scores of each program provides valuable information (See Appendix 5.6 Report on Assessment of Graduate Academic Programs).

The rubric established a performance indicator of 5 points for masters and 6 points for doctorate programs in a scale of 1 to 6. Based on these indicators it could be inferred that seventeen out of nineteen programs did not reach the expected outcome. Nonetheless, it is necessary to clarify that these performance indicators were extremely rigorous when developed. Based on a careful reassessment of these indicators DEGI lowered the score for the expected outcome indicator. Based on this, it would be possible to locate them around the 4.6 for the masters’ and 5.6 for the doctorate programs. In this case, eleven programs (58%) would partially reach the performance indicator, that is, fulfill at least one of the seven rubric criteria. The criteria that most frequently received the lowest scores were 1) “presents, develops, and communicates own perspective, hypothesis or position”, 2) “elaborates the argument using other (disciplinary) perspectives and positions”, 3) “presents, evaluates, analyzes and uses data/evidence appropriately” and, 4) “evaluates and elaborates conclusions, their implications and consequences”

Low scores in the criterion related to the elaboration of conclusions in a number of exercises that did not required evidencing this skill. The scores for the other criteria were evidenced by programs’ report comments. For example, the Master’s Program in Business Administration identified students’ difficulty to: evaluate information and sources in a critical manner, perform according to what he/she learned and develop solid arguments. The report by the Master’s Program in Social Work 2009, illustrates with the following comment the lack of depth that characterized an analyzed sample of students’ work regarding to information management:

“Generally, the student body built their proposal in a linear and progressive fashion opening with a definition or statement of a problem, taking into consideration, and in a superficial manner, the analysis of published literature (four to five studies), and the application of a theoretical and conceptual framework to conclude in two or three investigation purposes. Very few students recognize the complexity of the problems, analyze biased perspectives in the described studies, consider conflicting points of view, or recognize the consequences of their theoretical selections. In occasions, they do not recognize their own biased opinions and repeat information without elaborating sustainable arguments.”

Students’ comments during the focus groups exposed more clearly their issues with information literacy skills: problems with limiting the quantity and pertinence of researched sources (even in descriptive projects), and the lack of skills and computer programs to facilitate organizing information for the analysis of academic literature. English students mentioned that keeping a journal of each reading they made was a great strategy when revising academic references and in the writing process itself. Even so, little is known about what caused the lack of depth and the effective integration of information into the students’ arguments.

The programs in Communication, Rehabilitation Counseling, and Psychology employed different strategies, and used different rubrics to measure critical thinking. The first two programs had positive results in terms of the acquisition of this competency. On the other hand, the Program of Psychology could not identify a significant result in the acquirement of this skill. This topic should be investigated in depth to corroborate the results of the studies.

Assessment of the Research Experience (Indirect Information)

Although the guide for the focus groups posed questions related to the learning process, the majority of aspects that students perceived as obstacles to develop their research projects were not directly linked with their preparation or aptitude for learning, but with environmental factors related to the program and the institution. The following factors were mentioned in most groups: the need for financial aid adjusted to the cost of living; aspects related to library use (scarcity of updated bibliographical resources, especially books); lack of adequate spaces in which to conduct research (comfortable, silent) and spaces to hold meetings; lack of extended scheduling for the libraries; limited amount of specialized personnel to manage archives and technical difficulties when accessing databases from non-Campus locations; and, lack of basic equipment such as computers, printers and software (especially for students from the College of Humanities).
In about 30% of the focus groups, students expressed that the methodology course did not prepare them in a satisfactory manner for the completion of a research project. Also, the lack of uniformity of this course created great disparity among their writing experiences while developing research proposals. These observations relate to students concerns regarding lack of dominance of statistical and methodological competencies that would have been beneficial while writing their thesis. Also, students' perceptions regarding needs on methodological skills in quantitative and qualitative research correlated inversely with the methodological orientation traditionally followed by their academic programs.

Another aspect that directly affects research is the difficulty to write in Spanish (stylistic elements), fact that was mentioned in at least 25% of the focus groups and that some students point out as the cause of their delay during this stage of research. Even though difficulties with the English language were mentioned less frequently, the poor fluency demonstrated by the Natural Sciences focus group evidenced the need to reinforce conversational English skills. Also, due to the lack of studying areas, students suggested making wireless Internet more accessible and to increase the outlets available to connect their laptops in the hallways and classrooms.

In about 40% of the focus groups, students mentioned issues related to the absence of specifications for the thesis format, and regulations to structure its supervision and expedite the feedback process of committee members. On the other hand, students are not aware of the logistic and technical complexities that are inherent to each stage of their research. In consequence, they are not able to prepare in advance for the possible inconveniences. Inexperience hinders the effective planning of tasks like finding reliable transportation to the field, gathering and organizing considerable amounts of data (i.e. Biology and Linguistics) and obtaining needed authorizations to access statistical information in government agencies (i.e. Social Work and Economy). Also, students expressed dissatisfaction with the time it took to submit research projects to the Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Beings in Research (CIPSHI by its Spanish acronym), whose norms are perceived as very strict.

Finally, students put research into perspective while talking about their future plans. Students from professional programs such as the Master in Business Administration and Communication, who entered the programs with an expectation of achieving professional and financial success, are concerned with employability and with business community perception of the program. For these students, research requirements are useful if they were to assist them in qualifying for a better work position. In contrast, students from doctoral programs such as English, Spanish, and Social Work are delighted to do research. They are usually interested in developing a career in research within the educational system because they have great passion for the subject and because they value quality of life over financial positioning. Their main aspiration is to work for the UPR.

Results of Implemented Interventions

Seventeen percent (17%) of the programs made a second round of assessment or evaluated at least one of the changes that were implemented. The majority gathered data from evaluation forms used in orientation activities or other indirect sources like surveys, approval rates of exams, field work or thesis, and time to degree rates.

Learning assessment has induced graduate programs to reflect about their review and decision making processes and revamp the assessment of their different components. It has moved its members to consider program operations in an organic manner, with the aim of improving the genuine program goal: learning outcomes. Among the most distinctive achievements in the acquisition process of this new culture of assessment, we could mention: the adoption of technical vocabulary used in individual meetings, presentations, and progress reports; coordinators and program directors' commitment to assessment as evidenced by their busy attendance to follow-up meetings; the empowering experience of programs when adapting the assessment plan to their interests and circumstances; verbal and written feedback offered by programs concerning implementation tools and processes; and, in some cases, the systematization of assessment. These exemplify our true accomplishment.

Likewise, as was previously described, the information received from the programs' learning assessment and self-evaluations has served to revise DEGI's administrative and support services and propose amendments to Certification 72 (91-92, Academic Senate), policy that regulates graduate studies. Consequently, units have
performed and analysis of their curriculum design. Refer to Appendix 5.6 - Report on Assessment of Graduate Academic Programs for examples of strategies to evidence student learning.

Diagnosis of the Performed Graduate Program Assessment
Despite the great variety of programs and reports, the resulting data allowed DEGI to identify certain congruencies and tendencies that are used to make informed decisions in regards to future assessment, the implementation of changes and adjustments to graduate programs, institutional policies, and support services. Table 5 describes results.

Table 5 Evaluation of general components of Graduate Students assessment plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Design</th>
<th>Excellent or Acceptable</th>
<th>Needs revision</th>
<th>Does not have one</th>
<th>Insufficient or inaccessible info</th>
<th>Was not included in this report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Profile</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incoming Student Profile</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Requirements</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of learning assessment at the undergraduate and graduate levels, faculty is increasingly aware of their role in achieving a graduating student profile as a shared responsibility. Current assessment processes have yielded results that have impacted planning, policy and decision making with regard to education offerings, General Education and student learning.

Institutional Effectiveness of Administrative Units
A campus wide assessment structure to measure effectiveness is in place. Each of the four executive deanships, 15 offices reporting to the Chancellor, and 11 colleges and schools has a plan for the assessment of institutional effectiveness. A complete report on this topic is found in Appendix 5.7 - Report on the Status of Implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan. Assessment efforts are oriented towards the advancement of the Seven Priority Projects set for the 2006-2011 horizon. Although each unit has its own specific focus, all are interrelated. The Seven Priority Projects provide a unifying framework for units to plan, to measure results and inform actions. The responsibility for the administration of the instruments is generally assigned to the division most responsible for the project. Particularly important is the fact that, beginning on 2008, the coordination of the implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan carried out up to that time at the DAA, was moved to the Office of the Chancellor as more administrative units advanced on the implementation of their plans and analysis of results. A Coordinator for Institutional Effectiveness Assessment was appointed to provide key leadership in developing and advancing this model. The Coordinator has been organizing and conducting workshops, meetings, and other activities to inform and train personnel on the dynamics of assessment and on the Campus goals and priorities, and responds directly to the Chancellor (Appendix 5.7 Report on the Status of Implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan).

Preparation of Computer Versions of Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard and Tables
During the 2009-2010, all units prepared an Academic Year electronic version of the assessment tables. All of the, units, deanships, and offices reporting to the Office of the Chancellor have an electronic version of their
institutional effectiveness assessment plan, an inventory of strategic projects, and progress and assessment indicators for each of them. The plans and inventory of results have been integrated in an electronic format using Google Documents. The units have been assigned a Google Documents account where they can access and periodically update their assessment tables and data. All Assessment Coordinators participated in workshops, individualized mentorship sessions, and special meetings on the use of the electronic version of the Institutional Effectiveness Tables. The electronic version of these important documents allow for a more efficient data entry and data reporting process and facilitates access to the data for academic and administrative decision making in our campus (see the Inventory of Strategic Projects of Executive Deanships, Inventory of Strategic Projects of Colleges and Schools, and Inventory of Strategic Projects of Units Reporting to the Office of the Chancellor).

All academic and administrative units fill in a template and send the Annual Report format (Inventarios) to the Office of the Chancellor. The level of compliance on the diverse assessment of institutional effectiveness activities of the deanships, schools, and offices reporting to the Chancellor ranges from 75%-100% depending on the activity, and the type of unit. However, all units have completed the cycle which includes implementation of transforming actions. All of the assessment tables for each unit present actions taken and/or actions to be taken based on assessment results. For example, 100% of the Schools have a Plan of Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness, have collected and reported institutional effectiveness assessment data, have informed actions taken as a result of assessment and actions that contribute to the implementation of the Institutional Strategic Plan and 100% have provided a complete assessment report (in the Google Documents Table Format) as of March-May 2010.

Closing the Assessment Cycle: Transforming Actions Taken as a Result of Assessment

Some key findings and actions are presented below in Table 6 as examples of the types of approaches that this process has brought about. It is to be noted that all colleges offering undergraduate degrees went through the bachelor’s curricular revision, which in turn generated supporting actions, such as recruitment, revamping of web pages and documents, creation of courses, up to date labs and equipment, among other actions. Details appear in the complete Report (Appendix 5.7 Report on the Status of Implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan).

Table 6 Examples of Transforming Actions Implemented — Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Transforming Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Social Sciences</td>
<td>Established a program for funding short research projects as a result of feedback from faculty members, developed research proposals for attracting more external funds, made improvements to infrastructure (e.g. new hall for Faculty Members, remodeling of labs and auditoriums)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Natural Sciences</td>
<td>Remodeling and the acquisition of up to date equipment for Chemistry labs, new recruitments in Computer Science to address professional accreditation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td>Continued professional accreditation efforts and was accepted as candidate for 2011. Faculty publications have increased notably, especially by new hires. Created an alumni association which is very active.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of General Studies</td>
<td>Has advanced internationalization through the Office of INIM and created an international forum for discussion of General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deanships of Administration, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and DEGI</td>
<td><strong>Deanship of Administration</strong>: conducted project progress monitoring and follow-up activities, decentralized the purchasing process for purchases less than $3,000, implementation of new financial information system (UFIS) which leads to increased effectiveness, implemented system that allowed electronic payments by students, intensified personnel training. <strong>Deanship of Academic Affairs</strong> led the bachelor’s revision process with college’s deans, led and organized assessment of student learning and program review at the undergraduate level, established strategies for increasing retention and graduation rates, detailed in Sections 2 and 5, Priority Project 4, proposed and got approved the undergraduate mid term evaluation period, reviewed admission process. <strong>Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research</strong> strengthened incentives for research as discussed in Section 2, Priority Project 1. Implemented Apply Yourself for graduate students’ admissions, led and coordinated program review and assessment of learning at the graduate level. Was instrumental in advancing the research agenda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion processes and transformative actions have closed the assessment cycle on several key issues. The **Strategic Indicators Dashboard** shows indicators that measure progress as well as areas to be improved. The Committee for the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness holds periodical meetings with Assessment Coordinators and administrative personnel to discuss transformative actions. The assessment results are available on-line through the Web link to the Chancellor and Deans. The results are also presented to the Chancellor and Deans who make decisions based on the results of these processes.
SECTION 6 INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING LINKED TO BUDGET

General Information

Annually, the UPR system receives 9.6% of state funds as established in the Legislative Act 2 of 1969, as amended. The state revenues considered for this allocation result from the average of state annual revenues of the two years prior to the assignment. UPR consolidated budget includes contributions from its General Fund (mainly the state allocation, tuition plus fees, and university businesses), Restricted Funds (federal funding, private donations, and legislative appropriations), and the Capital Improvement Plan and Endowment Funds. The Capital Improvement Plan is financed by bond emissions and is earmarked for the construction of new facilities or the renovation of existing ones. Restricted Funds are subject to the restrictions and conditions imposed by donors and grantees.

The UPR budget regulations require that the chancellors of the eleven UPR units submit their budget proposals aligned to the campus strategic plan and priorities. In the case of UPR-RP, Ten for the Decade and Vision University 2016, with its operational component University 2011, established a new model for budgetary processes. Through the Seven Priority Projects defined in 2007-08, the UPR-RP took concrete measures to tie its operational plan to resources and to align indicators to measure progress. The guidelines and formats to use in the assembling of the UPR-RP budget are established in Circular Letters 18 (2005-06), 11 (2006-07), and 25 (2007-08) issued by the Office of the Chancellor. Appendix 6.1 – Budgetary Model by Vision 2016 Strategic Goals Years 2006-2011 shows the budget assigned by goal, and Appendix 2.2 by priority project. Section 5 presents performance indicators for all priority projects and the assessment of their effectiveness.

In March 2009, UPR-RP received $65,855,123 from the Capital Improvement Plan. In keeping with the difficult economic situation, the Board of Trustees postponed all projects that were in the planning stage. Nonetheless, the Board authorized the continuation of the following projects for the Río Piedras campus: the renovation of the Felipe Janer Building (FJB, 2012), the Chemistry Labs (2010), Domingo Marrero Navarro (DMN, phase 1, 2010), the School of Public Administration (2010), and the construction of the Jaime Benitez Rexach Building (JBRB, already finished and in use). The renovation of the FJB will add a much desired space for professors’ offices in the College of Humanities, while the renovation of DMN and the construction of JBRB has significantly improved and expanded the facilities for students and faculty in the College of General Studies. The creation of a Graduate Students Professional Development Center and Learning Commons will be possible through a grant from US-Department of Education (Title V) by the end of 2010. The campus Student Center construction work will begin in 2010 once the Board of Trustees certifies the additional funding needed to complete the total cost of rehabilitation according to the bid.

Fiscal year 2006-2007 budget

During 2006-07, the Budget Office, along with the Deanship of Academic Affairs, held meetings with all the deans and directors of schools and colleges to harmonize their respective unit priorities with the priority projects. The information gathered from these meetings was the basis for the distribution of the operational budget.

The campus budget for operating expenses increased to $264,644,075, an increment of 4.95% or $12,095,890 in comparison to the recurring budget approved for the previous fiscal year. (Appendix 6.2 – Budget Distribution 2006-2007). The increase was essentially for salary increases and employee benefits, and the projected increase in the cost of utilities. The 2007 Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education underlined the need to increase baseline faculty salaries in support of the institution’s goals and objectives. To achieve the goal of recruiting faculty members with the highest qualifications, high priority was assigned to salary increases as a strategic action. These increases were granted in 2006 at a rate of 5.3%.
Fiscal year 2007-2008 budget

From this year on, the seven priority projects presented in Section 2 guided the budget distribution in alignment with the strategic plan. Budget allocations for the next three years were assigned to each of these priority projects as is presented in Appendix 2.2. The necessary funds were provided through mechanisms such as adjusting the basic scale of open positions for both teaching and nonteaching personnel, reducing the allocation to nonprofessional contracts and other areas, and savings from other sources. Budget was added to priority projects as needed each fiscal year to support continuance and enhancements. The yearly budget modifications to strengthen these projects are described in Appendix 6.3 Additional Funds for Priority Projects. New items were funded in line with the projects.

The $264,611,758 operating expenses budget for fiscal year 2007-08 allocated 2.3% to salary increases. This action continued with the strategy of increasing base line salaries as an incentive for recruitment of highly competitive faculty. All full-time faculty members with tenured appointment received a perquisite of $475, approved by Certification 78, 2007-08 of the Board of Trustees, to cover the cost of educational resources and equipment. To support Priority Projects 1 and 2, research and creation and bachelors’ revision, funds allocated to salaries, professional accreditations of academic programs, and library resources were increased.

The priorities to allocate funds were: 1) Payroll and employer contributions, 2) Utilities, 3) Accreditation, 4) Bibliographical resources, 5) Maintenance of the physical facilities, 6) Services and materials, 7) Travels, and 8) Equipment (purchasing and replacement). These criteria reinforced incentives for research and encouraged curricular revision, and quality of Campus life.

Fiscal year 2008-2009 budget

From 2001 thru 2009-2010, UPR-RP budget has been either reduced or the increment received allocated to cover personnel payroll increases and fringe benefits according to union negotiations and Board of Trustees’ recommendations for faculty salaries. Thus, in 2008-2009, the campus re-allocated $3,280,237 to partially cover for the $8,891,347 required for these increases, while central administration provided $5,611,110.

To prepare the budget, workshops on strategic management and budgeting were offered at school, college, and departmental levels. The budget limitations required more efficient use of available resources, which led to the implementation of fiscal precautionary measures and to request that units generate mechanisms to identify other sources of funding. Some of these measures were:

- Freezing vacant nonteaching positions
- Freezing of salary increases for faculty and non-teaching personnel
- Freezing faculty promotions
- Three credit ad honorem courses to faculty in administrative positions
- Faculty service contracts subscribed for only 10 months
- Reduced scale for retired faculty to regular compensation scale

Meanwhile, non-recurring funds in the amount of $400,153 were received from the UPR Central Administration to cover activities related to professional accreditation processes. Altogether, additional funds were reallocated to ensure continuance of the priority projects.

Fiscal year 2009-2010 budget

Due to the global economic downturn and the island’s economic conditions with a projected recovery (2009-2010) of less than 0.5%, the Government of Puerto Rico took actions to balance its budget and decrease a deficit that
surpasses $1B. Accordingly, UPR system shared a budget cut (2009-2010) equal to $111M that would be
temporarily compensated by the assignment of ARRA Funds.

UPR system will have a projected insufficiency of $166M, but will receive $14.8M from ARRA funds for a net
insufficiency of $151.2M for fiscal year 2010-2011. For UPR-RP, this represents an additional budget cut close to
$25M which can be reduced, at least for a year, if $3.8M is assigned from the ARRA funds. To address this situation
several new measurements have been put in place together with the continuation of measurements described
above:

Additional measurements for 2009-2010:

- Decrease the number of executive personnel
- Increase to 30 the number of students per section in lecture courses and assign them accordingly to
  available classrooms in/outside the respective colleges
- Complete academic load to permanent faculty with teaching and research assignments as applicable.
  Other activities will be compensated by the scale of additional compensation.
- Complete teaching assignments to faculty with courses from other colleges when necessary and
  appropriate (e.g. academic preparation and expertise) to complete their academic load
- Subscribe faculty service contracts only for 10 months and 9 credits per semester
- Freeze sabbaticals to faculty
- Freeze new study licenses for faculty and non-teaching personnel

Additional long-term measurements

- Reorganize administrative offices, executives deanships, chancellor, and dean’s offices
- Fuse or put in hold academic programs with little or no-demand
- Incorporate more technology into academic and administrative processes
- Increase and diversify portfolio of external funding
- Implement new ways to attract funding and revise administrative policies and mechanisms to support
  them

On the other hand, funds were allocated to cover the gap in library subscriptions expenditures in response to an
observation from the Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) related to the appropriate library
budget share. This allocation also addresses the results of two of the metrics or strategic indicators that relate to
student’s satisfaction with library resources and subscriptions to electronic databases. The breakdown of fund
assignments added per year to strengthen priority projects is in Appendix 6.3. Budget Projection June 30, 2010,
shows the Rio Piedras Campus Budget for 2009-10 fiscal year, of which $27,349,110 were covered with
nonrecurring ARRA funds. Appendix 6.4.

The UPR system and the RRP campus experience the worse fiscal situation in many decades. The role of strategic
planning and assessment becomes even more relevant given the very tight budget which must be wisely
administered to advance Campus goals. At the present time, interim Chancellor Guadalupe is meeting with deans
and school directors to receive their budget proposals prior to submitting a budget to the Administrative Board for
academic year 2010-2011.
Addendum 1

DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM: TEACHER LIBRARIAN CERTIFICATE

The University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras (UPR RP), in partnership with the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) of the Dominican Republic, offers the Teacher Librarian Certificate in the modality of distance learning education. The UPR RP is the institution that grants the Certificate.

UPR RP has processes in place to ensure that students who register in the distance education program are the same students who participate in, complete the program and receive the academic credit. These processes are described below:

a. All students who enroll in the electronically delivered courses are registered using their UPR-RP student’s identification number and social security number. Attendance to class sessions is also verified by the instructor by means of security codes that students need to input to gain access to the instructional platform used.

b. All electronically delivered courses provide for synchronous or asynchronous interaction between faculty and students, and among students. Interaction is assured by student’s participation in class discussions using the tools of video conferences, discussion boards, and chat rooms supported by the instructional platform of Blackboard, blogging, and emailing with the application Google Buzz, and the commercial platform Skype. All these tools assure students’ identity and keep record of their class performance in both oral and written works. Also, students are obligated to participate in three face-to-face traditional class meetings that account for 4.5 credit hours of the total 45 credit hours per course, and that take place during the semester.

c. Electronically delivered courses use methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

The integrity of the educational process in electronically delivered courses offered by the Certificate includes assurance that the work submitted for credit by students is submitted by students actually enrolled in the course.

The Certificate identifies and addresses specific student’s needs, related to technological competence and skills through workshops offered to students at the beginning of their experience. Pre-testing and post-testing is also used to assess learning outcomes.

Students receive clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, as well as assumptions about technological competence and skills and technical equipment requirements.
Addendum 2

UPR RP TRANSFER OF ACADEMIC CREDITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Transfer students are students that initiated course work (12 credits or more) in any accredited institution of higher education that is not part of the University of Puerto Rico System and request admission to UPR-RP.

Course work taken prior to enrollment at UPR-RP may be eligible for transfer credits. In case of transfer of academic credits, UPR RP reserves the right to accept and validate the transfer of these credits based on the following guidelines:

1. Students who, after detailed evaluation, receive approval to enroll in any academic program offered by UPR RP will have to complete 12 credit hours at UPR RP prior to request for, and be granted of, the transfer of credits of course work taken prior to enrollment at UPR RP.

2. Only transfer credits will be granted for course work whose final grade is “C” (2.00) or higher. Student’s academic programs are responsible to assess credits accepted for transfer in terms of level, content, quality, comparability, and degree program relevance.

3. Transfer credits will not account for more than half of the total of academic credits need to complete an academic grade in UPR RP academic programs. Students enrolled in BA programs at the UPR RP are required to complete 36 of the last 48 credit hours in their academic programs in order to be granted a degree.

4. Flexibility on the management of these guidelines can happen in exceptional cases and those will be evaluated by a committee composed of the dean of the student’s academic college, the Dean of Academic Affairs and the UPR RP Registrar.

5. Guidelines for transfer credits are publicly display in all UPR RP Undergraduate Catalogs, the Deanship of Academic Affairs web page and the UPR RP Register’s Office web page.

6. Colleges, schools and programs might establish additional guidelines to allow the approval of transfer credits.