

Vision University 2016

Strategic Plan University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras Campus

Document Approved by:

Academic Senate, Río Piedras Campus, University of Puerto Rico
Certification Number 26, Academic Year 2006-2007, October 19, 2006

Administrative Board, Río Piedras Campus, University of Puerto Rico
Certification Number 41, Academic Year 2006-2007, February 23, 2007

Contents

Message from the Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus	5
Vision University 2016 Strategic Plan	
Introduction.	9
Legal and regulatory context for Vision University 2016	9
The planning process	10
Phases of the drafting process and modes of participation	12
Mission of the University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras Campus.	15
Río Piedras Campus profile and internal and external contexts	16
Profile and internal context	17
External context	22
Vision University 2016 Strategic Plan -	
Vision, goals, and objectives	28
Vision of the UPR Río Piedras Campus.	28
Goals and objectives.	28

Message from the Chancellor of the Río Piedras Campus

Moving Forward on Solid Ground: A New Strategic Plan for the Río Piedras Campus

Today we present the **Vision University 2016 Plan** to the university community. This Plan facilitates our institutional commitment to teaching, research, and creation, making us a source of new learning, a repository of knowledge, and a space for the study and questioning of this knowledge, at a time when the University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras Campus is at a crucial stage of its institutional development. The Plan also enables compliance with the Campus mission, which makes us look toward the future and focuses our efforts on "Transmitting and enhancing knowledge through the sciences and the arts, and placing this knowledge at the service of the community through our professors, researchers, university staff, students, and graduates."

In the context of this institutional mission, the self-study conducted for the reaffirmation of our accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education encouraged us to assess our strengths and challenges, and to initiate a new stage in our work guided by a strategic plan and by priorities that would faithfully represent the aspirations of the diverse members of our university community. Achieving this reaffirmation established categorically that we are a solid institution, whose core values are the quality and the institutional commitment of our faculty, the richness, complexity, and excellence of the academic offering, and the high performance level of our students.

Ensuring that we are fully able to take on the possible future scenarios continuously put forth by our complex society

requires that we accelerate the processes for a refocusing of our mission, a reorganization of our academic offering and our institutional planning. It also demands that we work towards a transformation of our way of thinking and our way of doing things at our Campus. Bringing about such a substantial change in the assumptions that guide our traditional way of thinking and functioning administratively is, perhaps, the greatest challenge facing the institution's academic-administrative management.

The Río Piedras Campus is the oldest and largest of the UPR System units. It is an extremely complex institution, whose age and great size are at once facilitators and obstacles, for both the achievement of today's objectives and the advancement toward a greater goal: that of setting the course for the university's future. Our long life is proof of our ability to transform ourselves over time. Our great size holds the treasure that is our diversity. Both, nevertheless, contribute to the institution's sluggishness, slowness in assimilating change that must be constantly put in question.

It is our collective responsibility to remain at the forefront of learning and university practice, immersed in a profound and constructive dialog, inhabitants of a space for coexistence that allows us to make the leap from the individual to the collective, and from the present toward the future. For this, not only must we circulate knowledge in order to enhance it, but we must become a model for the community at large in terms of the relevance of our approach, of our intellectual development and of our ability to promote the growth of all members of our university community. It is through this creative and investigative work that we shape the community and help Puerto Rico to grow and develop so as to face up to tomorrow.

The future, that of the Campus and that of Puerto Rico, rests on wise decisions taken now regarding the university's management, its structure, its academic offering and its contextual relevance. Therein lies the complexity of the challenge and the difficulty of the task. Therein, the importance of ensuring that each member of the university community

takes an active role in making the university of the future possible—an indispensable prerequisite for changing the way matters are conducted at the university. Therein, the utility of an action plan such as this one, resulting from the consonance among the goals and objectives of all sectors of our community.

In general terms, the **Vision University 2016** Strategic Plan establishes the following as areas of institutional efforts: (1) The strengthening of academic programs through the activation and support of program assessment and accreditation processes; (2) The development of more fluid and up-to-date administrative structures that effectively address existing functional needs and bring about required paradigm changes; (3) The strengthening and growth of research, creation and teaching activities, and the obtaining of external funds to sustain them, as well as service and community outreach activities; and (4) The planning and implementation of initiatives and projects for the maintenance and development of Campus infrastructure, physical facilities and services.

One of the major challenges for pursuing these objectives and their corresponding actions lies in establishing, in all areas and levels, true practices of planning and sound management, of shared responsibilities and of measurable compliance for each of these institutional functions, whether administrative, academic, or student-related. To address these challenges, the new Strategic Plan will allow the university community to take the reins of its own innovation and transformation process for the next ten years, based on a new vision and on strategic goals and objectives for the years 2007-2016, that have been defined in a participatory manner on the basis of the contributions of each sector of the university community and with the collaboration of the Academic Senate and its Academic Affairs Committee, which gave the Plan its final touches and worked actively for its final approval in October 2006.

The Plan as approved is fueled by the achievements of the Action Strategy Guidelines Plan (PLEA, by its Spanish acronym) developed in 1996-1997, and it provides the tools

we need to take on our new challenges. It is, therefore, a more complete and detailed document than the PLEA, since it adds to the strategic component an operational component under the responsibility of the different Campus units. This operational component will include, for the first time, actions, schedule, persons responsible for results, estimated budgets and performance indicators for each strategic goal and objective of the **Vision University 2016 Plan**, and it will be the blueprint for the Plan's effective implementation.

We, as the university community, are fully aware of our role as major partners in the most important civil undertaking for the advancement of our society, which is education. We know that it is our duty to perform this task with integrity, through rigorous planning and the soundest use of available resources. We recognize that, in order to restructure our institutional vision, we must create links among all university sectors and take the pulse of the entire university community so that we can harmonize all our resources with their needs. The University, with all it entails, is in our hands. Let us then implement the Strategic Plan we have built together to overcome the uncertainties that surround us and to hold our course toward excellence. This is what is required of us as the premier institution of higher learning in Puerto Rico.



Gladys Escalona de Motta, Ph.D.

Chancellor

Introduction

The Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico begins its second century of contribution to the country guided by an action plan compatible with the aspirations of the members of the university community. The Plan, titled **Vision University 2016**, articulates an innovation and transformation process for next ten years with the concurrence of the different sectors of our community. **Vision University 2016** builds on the foundation laid by the Strategic Action Plan (PLEA, for its Spanish acronym), developed more than a decade ago, and prioritizes several institutional areas. Also, the new Plan has been developed in harmony with the system-wide institutional planning initiatives.

Vision University 2016 constitutes a decision-making blueprint that conceives our campus as privileging research, creation, and the dissemination of knowledge; committed to life-long learning and the integral formation of the students; and contributing to the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development of the Puerto Rican as well as the international society. This Plan will guide the participative elaboration of strategic action plans, as well as of development plans, by the different colleges and units in the campus. These will be the product of collective discussion, analysis, and constant review in terms of their strategies and objectives aimed at the achievement of our aspirations.

Legal and Regulatory Context

Vision University 2016 follows the rules, policies, and recommendations adopted by the pertinent institutional bodies, as noted in several documents, among which are the following:

- University of Puerto Rico Law (Act No. 1, 1966)
- Mission of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras

Campus (1989-1990)

- Chancellor's Academic-Administrative Project (2002)
- Certification No. 123, Board of Trustees (2005-2006) that approves and includes the document titled **Diez para la Década: Agenda para la Planificación de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (University of Puerto Rico Ten Challenges 2006-2016: An Agenda for Planning)**
- Certification No. 100, Board of Trustees (2005-2006), on the budgetary process
- Certification No. 46, Río Piedras Campus Academic Senate (2005-2006) on the revision of the bachelor's degree program

Planning Process

Vision University 2016 is the product of discussions on many committees and focus groups that benefited from the participation of hundreds of members of the campus community, including students, professors, unit directors, student representatives, student associations, non-teaching personnel, and members of the external community. Throughout this process, the members of the different components of the university community and of the Puerto Rican community in general reaffirmed their commitment to the future of our institution.

The Strategic Plan was prepared by an *Executive Steering Committee* composed by the Chancellor, the Deans Steering Committee and the Strategic Plan Coordinator. The structure also benefited from an Internal Steering Committee, an External Steering Committee, and several Special Advisory Committees.

- As already mentioned, the *Executive Steering Committee* was composed by the Chancellor, Gladys Escalona de Motta, the Deans and the Strategic Plan Coordinator. Its task was to develop the vision statement, to point out the priority areas, and the strategic goals and objectives of the Plan.

- The *Internal Steering Committee* was constituted by two committees (A and B). *Committee A* was composed of administrative and academic personnel that worked with the process and contents of the strategic plan in areas such as the critical analysis of the Mission and Vision statements as elaborated in the 1997 PLEA; an analysis of the present situation of the Campus based on the Self Study report; the discussion of the general aspirations of the Campus, by subject area; the drafting of goals, objectives, and strategic activities per subject area, taking into account the Self Study findings. *Committee B* was composed of representatives of the Special Committees (e.g., internationalization, organizational change, and communications) and by members of the teaching and the non-teaching staff, as well as by students. This committee made recommendations for the Vision University 2016 in terms of its contents, and it collaborated in the drafting, revision, and validation of the contents of the vision and mission statements, as well as of the goals, objectives, and general perspectives of the strategic plan.
- The *External Steering Committee* was composed of distinguished citizens who excel in diverse fields, and it offered advice on external trends, opportunities for the university, and on its role as provider of educational and intellectual services in Puerto Rico.
- Several other committees were constituted on specific subjects or areas of the strategic plan, among them, the *Committee of Writing and Style*, the *Communications Committee*, the *Internationalization Committee*, the *Validation Committee*, the *Committee of Student Representatives and Student Associations*, the *Infrastructure Committee*, the *Technology Committee*, the *Resources & Budget Committee*, and the *Organizational Change Committee*.

Stages of the planning process and forms of participation

Vision University 2016 was structured in ten stages between September 2005¹ and October 2006. The stages were the following:

Stage No. 1: Revision of documents and performance of a Benchmarking project of the strategic plans of universities abroad: Review of internal documents (Self-Study Report, PLEA, **Diez para la Década (Ten Challenges 2006-2016)**, Reports from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, certifications, and internal regulations), external documents (**Puerto Rico 2025 Commission Report**) and a Benchmarking study of 110 strategic plans of the main campuses of public and private universities in the United States and other countries.

Stage No. 2: Meetings and work sessions of the committees: meetings and work sessions of different project committees. Identification of the main problems and challenges in the Campus, general aspirations, vision, goals and objectives for the university we wish to be and for each one of the plan's thematic areas. All the committees, except the External Steering Committee, were composed of members of our university community. The Campus community and our alumni were invited to visit our web page and to send their commentaries and suggestions on the plan's contents.

Stage No. 3: University community participation through focus groups and essays prior to the preliminary draft: creation of focus groups and essays. The focus group participants and those

¹ These dates do not include all of the prior preparatory processes conducted by the Río Piedras Campus for the development of the UPR System's Strategic Plan, the revision of the Campus Strategic Plan of 1997 (PLEA), and the preparatory meetings related to the Project University 2011 (Operational Component of the Strategic Plan), and the Strategic Plan **Vision University 2016**.

who collaborated with essays analyzed the present situation of the UPR and shared their aspirations and recommendations for the goals, objectives, and strategies for the Río Piedras Campus.

Stage No. 4: Work sessions and meetings of the special committees, speakers and internal and external experts: work sessions of the project's special committees for elaborating and reviewing the plans content, and with internal and external experts on subjects such as the redefinition of the universities in a global economy context, the experience of universities that have undergone transformation processes, the role of universities in the Era of Knowledge, universities and public policy, participation in the workshops on strategic management and on the relationship between strategic plans and the budget.

Stage No. 5: Preliminary draft: preparation of the preliminary draft of the vision, goals, and objectives of the strategic plan.

Stage No. 6: Revision of the contents by the steering committees and focus groups with members of the Academic Senate: revision and editing of the contents by the project's steering committee and by focus groups with members of the Academic Senate.

Stage No. 7: Participation of the university community through conversations in the colleges, focus groups, public hearings and the strategic plan's web page: discussion with the university community of the preliminary draft of the strategic plan through different focus groups, essays, conversations, public hearings, written and oral statements, and contributions submitted electronically through the plan's web page.

Stage No. 8: Evaluation and revision of the plan: Evaluation and approval of the plan by the Academic Senate and by the Campus's Administrative Board. The Senate created a subcommittee dedicated to the revision of the plan,

which made comments on the structure of the document and on the contents of the introduction, the goals and the objectives. The subcommittee also reviewed the text of the new vision. It also took into account the work done by the Subcommittee on Doctoral Vision of the Senate's Committee on Academic Affairs. In a meeting with the drafters of the plan at the Chancellor's Office, a consensus document was prepared that was evaluated by the subcommittee and was submitted to the Senate for its approval. The Senate approved the document in principle, providing that their recommendations were incorporated therein. The Subcommittee incorporated the suggestions made by the Academic Senate, which meant that the document had been approved by the Senate. The **Vision University 2016** plan was approved by the Campus Administrative Board in compliance with the official requisite of the University of Puerto Rico.

Stage No. 9: Publication: Preparation and implementation of a publication plan in order to generate enthusiasm in the Campus's community and the community in general, with the new strategic plan.

Stage No. 10: Implementation and operational follow-up of the strategic plan: Preparation of a document with specific recommendations in order to ensure the effective implementation of the new strategic plan by means of a five-year operational plan titled **Project University 2011**.

Members of the university community participated in all these stages in the following manners: participation in the committees and subcommittees representing the community; discussion in the schools; submission of comments to the strategic plan web page; focus groups; public hearings; e-mails and online chats; and meetings with the project coordinator.

Mission of the Río Piedras Campus, University of Puerto Rico

(Academic Senate, Certification Number 67, 1989-90)

The Río Piedras Campus, founded in 1903 as the Insular Normal School, is the oldest, most heterogeneous, and complex unit in the Island's public system of higher education. By law, the Campus must seek to attain the general mission of the University as set out in Article 2.b of the University of Puerto Rico Act of January 20, 1966, but within that framework the Campus, like the other units in the University of Puerto Rico System, is given the greatest possible autonomy, academic freedom, and freedom to pursue research goals. In addition to this general mission, the campus has a particular mission which emerges from and is based upon the peculiar historical and cultural circumstances which distinguish it from the other campuses and units of the System. The mission is as follows:

1. To foster the integrated education of its students through programs of study which promote intellectual curiosity, the capacity for critical thinking, constant and ongoing learning, effective communication skills, an appreciation for and cultivation of ethical and aesthetic values, involvement in Campus governance, and a sense of social awareness and responsibility.
2. To provide graduate education of the highest quality, whose key elements are research and creative activity and which strengthens undergraduate education, and to provide post-baccalaureate programs for the education and training of professionals of the highest caliber, committed to the ideals and values of Puerto Rican society.
3. To provide an undergraduate education of excellence which offers students a unified vision of knowledge that brings general education and specialization into harmony, and to foster in students a capacity for independent study and research.
4. To develop teaching and research skills; to promote

participation in the life of the community as well as service to that community; to promote respect for the historical and social conditions of Puerto Rico, taking into account its Caribbean and Latin American surroundings yet reaching out into the international community; to enrich and strengthen the storehouse of knowledge associated with the consolidation of Puerto Rican nationality, history, language, and culture; and simultaneously to foster the growth and dissemination of knowledge at an international level.

5. To develop innovative, relevant programs of research, community service, and continuing education which will support and contribute to the Campus's academic and professional activity and contribute to the transformation and continuing progress of Puerto Rican society, to the analysis of the Island's socioeconomic and political problems, to the formulation of solutions to those problems, and to the improvement of the quality of life.

Profile, and External and Internal Contexts of the Río Piedras Campus

The future of the Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico is based on the legacy of past and present generations of professors, students and university personnel. The Vision University 2016 Strategic Plan takes into account this diversity of collaborations and projects them into a promising future. The Plan defines, in an inclusive manner, terms such as professors, students and university personnel, representative of the academic, professional, cultural, and individual diversity of the members of our campus community. The Plan also takes into account the internal and external challenges faced by our institution, and invites us to build upon our strengths.

Profile and Internal Context

The Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico is a comprehensive institution² with an academic offer that goes from the BA to doctorate degrees in the basic disciplines and professional fields of knowledge. It is also custodian of myriad artistic, documentary, cultural, environmental, and symbolic resources for the study, teaching, research, creation, and enjoyment of the citizenry. It counts upon a diverse faculty whose academic degrees have been granted by world-class universities. Its student body presents the best academic characteristics in our island.

On the threshold of the 21st century, our Río Piedras Campus wants to accelerate its transformation into a research institution of international prestige, devoted to the creation of new knowledge through research and scholarship in order to: (1) advance knowledge; (2) understand changing reality and update our interpretation of the human and social condition, its history and culture; (3) find solutions to the pressing problems related to our historical and cultural legacy, the quality of life, the natural and human environment; and (4) to create new offers in all the disciplines and professional studies it promotes in order to endow the country with first-rate professionals. The Río Piedras Campus, as intellectual leader and promoter of change, must undertake tasks that will promote sustainable development in harmony with our natural surroundings, its resources and ecology.

The mission statement of the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras Campus is defined in a document approved in 1990, and endorsed by the Board of Trustees of the University of Puerto Rico. The Campus has recently started developing a culture of assessment. We have also begun to acknowledge that strategic planning is necessary for all institutional activities. As a result of this, the Campus has moved toward the implementation of a

² According to the most recent classification of the Carnegie Foundation, see *infra*.

strategic plan based on learning and institutional effectiveness assessment, which define areas of institutional development in proposing the lineup of resources with the mission and vision statements. Thus, the Campus integrates the planning agenda of the University of Puerto Rico, titled **Diez para la Década³ (Ten Challenges 2006-2016: An Agenda for Planning)**, which is a guide of principles and actions for the renewal and continuous improvement of our academic offerings, research, and services throughout the University of Puerto Rico system.

Presently, the Campus offers 78 BA majors, and 52 graduate majors, which represent the most complete academic offer on the island, especially at the doctoral level. It works actively in the revision of its BA programs as per the guidelines set by the Academic Senate. Its commitment to self evaluation and accreditation has been confirmed by several accreditation agencies. Fifty-four academic programs have already been accredited by either academic or professional agencies. It also has an Honors Program, several continuing education programs, as well as community service opportunities for the external community, as well as distance learning opportunities.

Our institution acknowledges the importance of research and believes it is its preferred tool for contributing to the social, cultural, scientific-technological and economic development of the society that sustains it and which it serves. The new Carnegie Foundation classification system (2006) defines the Río Piedras Campus as a high level comprehensive doctoral research institution because of its complexity and the diversity of its academic and professional offerings. In fact, recent studies show that the research and development activity in our country concentrates to a great degree on the Río Piedras Campus.⁴

³ Approved through Certification Number 123 of the Board of Trustees of the University of Puerto Rico from May 20, 2006. This document constitutes the agenda for strategic planning for the units of the UPR System.

⁴ Development of Post-Graduate Studies in Puerto Rico and their research scope, Council of Higher Education of Puerto Rico, December 2006.

This constant contribution requires the Campus to strengthen its working environments, buttress its equipment infrastructures and its research spaces, and emphasize on its research activities and creative work when assigning teaching loads. The urgency to deal with crucial matters such as academic load and better incentives for research have been pointed out in the self studies and external evaluations of graduate programs up to now throughout the Campus.

The Campus has a little more than 1000 full-time teaching faculty members, almost 80% of which hold a doctoral degree. Research and teaching activity of these professors is widely evinced by peer-reviewed publications and other dissemination activities of the result of their scholarly research, and has been acknowledged by the accreditation agencies. Also to be noted is the substantial representation of women among the faculty, as well as the ample and inclusive diversity of the teaching personnel. We must still develop processes of evaluation for these professors that account for the growing diversity of their academic preparation and activities, so that the process is really able to measure the results of their teaching, research, and creative activities.

Our student body is diverse and academically competent. Most students come from local educational institutions. We are concentrating our efforts in strengthening their diversity and new strategies are being set in place for increasing the number of international students. Likewise, new points of view are being promoted in order to open up options for student exchange and studies abroad. Also, students show intelligence and understanding of those matters that concern them, and they believe that they have a role to play in the organization and operation of the institution. In order to ensure this continuing interest, it is necessary to frequently survey their level of satisfaction with regard to program and administrative aspects of the Campus.

The Campus provides students with a wide-ranging general education, experiences that aim to foster a sense of civic and ethical responsibility, and opportunities to develop those skills

required in their chosen field of studies, so that they may creatively contribute to their future work scenarios. We work towards creating an academic offer that will strengthen interdisciplinary studies as an academic practice that will promote intellectual development and the creation of new knowledge that will transcend disciplinary careers, as is contemplated in the guidelines for the revision of the BA programs. In general, the student body feels that it receives an excellent education for a very reasonable price. According to recent satisfaction surveys,⁵ nearly 75% of the students surveyed show a high degree of general satisfaction with the institution, and say that they will enroll again in the institution because they believe that their teachers are excellent as are their major studies and the academic curriculum in general. Likewise, institutional research indicates there is a need to improve student services as well as strengthen the sense of community as an essential element in the Campus experience.

The revision of BA programs approved by the Academic Senate proposes a graduating student profile as guide for the formative student experience, and sets up that the curriculum, co-curricular activities, the physical facilities, and the teaching-learning strategies, the support for research and creation, professional counseling and academic advise, information resources and the access to international exchange must have an integrated character. The profile integrates research as a fundamental element of the learning environment and establishes that the graduated students will sate committed research, creation, and life-long learning. We work toward implementing strategies to make this aspirations come true.

In order to give consequence to the collaboration between professors and students, the Campus has developed and begun to implement student learning assessment plans, for both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, and has become involved

⁵ Office of Academic Planning, Deanship of Academic Affairs, UPR Rio Piedras Campus, Inventory of Student Satisfaction, 2001 Population Cohort, September 29, 2006.

in an active process of evaluation of its academic programs and its research centers, for which high caliber external evaluators are being used. Several professional schools use the resource of the assessment of student learning to make decisions on several areas of the curriculum and faculty development. As part of our drive towards a culture of student learning assessment, the Campus has established a Center for Academic Excellence that provides faculty training for this type of assessment. An Office for the assessment of student learning has also been opened in order to help programs to develop and eventually implement individual assessment plans. The success of the external evaluation processes and of learning assessments will depend on the Campus commitment to setting them up as systematic and continuing concepts whose results, as envisioned by the university 2016 Plan, will be used for guiding action plans and budget allocations.

In terms of inter faculty relations as well as relations with other institutions, we are a Campus in the process of development for interaction, collaboration, and establishment of alliances between disciplines that should lead to productive convergences with other institutions of higher education and research centers for dealing with groundbreaking themes with international relevance and bearing a great impact on global society, as witnessed by the enormous amount of collaboration agreements and covenants with local and international institutions with different purposes. It is necessary to strengthen our community relations and to “make community” within the Campus and in the larger sphere of the country through inter-institutional effort. It is also necessary to improve the complementary services that will support these initiatives from different perspectives.

External Context

The Río Piedras Campus is a leading intellectual institution that contributes to the productive sector and to the social institutions, and that fosters the valuation of things intellectual and cultural as well as of the sustainable growth for Puerto Rico. The Campus will be able to comply with its mission as developer of the country's human assets if it continuously brings to bear the needs and aspirations of Puerto Rico in this new century and asks itself what are the nature and the scope of the knowledge on which they must be based. Likewise, it must restate how to better serve our society and the world in a context of excellence and competitiveness. The Campus keeps a dynamic relationship with the social, economic, and cultural context of our country. On the one hand, this context affects in direct and indirect manner our endeavor as a university community as well as the contributions we make to Puerto Rico, to our disciplines of study, and to the corpus of knowledge and creative work. On the other hand, we create offers that have an impact on that context, and that open new avenues for knowledge and for its productive application and social changes.

In order to enable this dynamic relationship, **Vision University 2016** analyzed both the important factors of the Campus internal context, as well as local and global trends on higher education, the constant technological changes, the competition for the best academic and research talent and for the financial resources, the need to prepare a labor force capable of adapting to change and to update its skills, the emphasis on an institutional culture of evaluation based on results, and the claim that we should become fully integrated into national, regional, and international development. The plan defined the need to meditate on our social and environmental responsibility, and to the social value added that universities represent for the social, cultural and economic development of all countries in this Era of Knowledge.

The report submitted by the Puerto Rico 2025 Commission helped define, analyze and summarize some of the most

important challenges faced by our country. According to this report, Puerto Rico and its institutions are also affected by five fundamental forces that impact the whole world: accelerated demographic changes, the global location of markets and of the offer and demand of products and services and a stepping up of global competition, technological innovation, changes in political empowerment and social activism, and the changes that impact natural resources and environmental policies.

Globalization presents different challenges and opportunities for universities throughout the world, and for our university, and commits ours to an intellectual production and active contribution to Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and the world. Demographic changes, including population growth, increasing levels of schooling and income, migration, urbanization, the needs of the young population and those of the senior population, and the evolution of social rules, affect the profile of our incoming students and that of the members of the community we serve. We are also living the era of knowledge and of the discoveries brought about by technological advancement and innovations in the information and communication systems, biotechnology, biological and life sciences, and development of new materials.

Recent studies conclude that the impact upon society of graduate programs and research activities is insufficient.⁶ Thus, the Campus has a fundamental roll in the solution of our country's most pressing problems and in its public administration. The Río Piedras Campus—insofar as it has unique programs and knowledge that enable it to contribute guidelines for the adequate management of our natural, human, economic, and the cultural resources—has the responsibility to continue contributing to the development of new knowledge and discovery in Puerto Rico as well as in the rest of the world by developing new economic, social, and resource management

⁶ Development of Post-Graduate Studies in Puerto Rico and their research scope, Council of Higher Education of Puerto Rico, December 2006.

models. It is important that the Campus increases its graduate offer in key areas for economic and social development of Puerto Rico, in order to accommodate for the new needs for specialized studies and research in academic as well as in professional areas.

An analysis of the present situation of higher education in Puerto Rico reveals that 18% of the population has a college education. It is necessary to train more people in research and development to attract to the university more professors with diverse interests and preparations, and to propitiate a greater number of joint projects between our university and the productive sectors of our country. Studies have also questioned the relevance of some specialized university programs vis a vis the present requirements of the labor force and of Puerto Rican society. In fact, the creation of innovative academic programs has not gone hand in hand with present demand, whereas there are some academic fields the number of whose graduating students exceeds the employment market demand. The number of MA professional programs has increased, whereas the number of Ph.D.s has had a smaller growth.⁷ However, we cannot forget that the university is committed to maintaining the development of its disciplines, regardless of how imminently practical they can be for society at a given time. The responsibility of the University is multiple. It must answer to society and also to the search knowledge for knowledge's sake, which will also redound in the benefit of society. Of course, a University committed to the development of research and the graduate studies needs to strengthen its financial status in elaborating strategies and actions to increase the fiscal autonomy of the public higher education sectors. Thus, there is an urgent need to define the course to be taken by the Campus and its role as a graduate studies and research center within the university system.

⁷ Development of Post-Graduate Studies in Puerto Rico and their research scope, Council of Higher Education of Puerto Rico, December 2006.

In the world scenario, the creation of the European Union and its emphasis on the mobility of human resources, have produced important changes in the characteristics of higher education that could serve as a model in our will to become more competitive by enlarging our capacity for international collaboration. Research universities must review the academic offerings as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the academic-administrative practices by integrating research and creative experiences as essential components of the learning process.⁸ On the other hand, the high cost of an excellent higher education, together with the population growth sustained in developing countries dramatized the enormous challenges we must face when producing those human assets that are indispensable for leading the different social and economic activities of our country. That is why it is urgent to procure new ways of financial support in order to sustain this university endeavor, and it is necessary to devise strategies and actions toward increasing the financial autonomy for an institution like ours.

A comparative study⁹ of the strategic plans of more than 100 universities shows that those with the best student services frequently survey their satisfaction level as well as that of the other members of the university community. These universities foster a sense of belonging in the student body, offering them co-curricular activities, optimize the use of technology, and train the personnel to give quality services. Universities that have a greater international presence bring international subjects and personalities to their curriculum, offer diverse international opportunities and experiences to professors and students, have structures for international services that respond to their academic and administrative needs, and maximize the collaborations and agreements with foreign institutions closely following international trends.

⁸ Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities, 1998, The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University.

⁹ Main conclusions of the Benchmarking Study conducted for the Strategic Plan Vision University 2016 (Galarza, 2006).

An examination of the administrative practices of different institutions shows that the universities with the best administrative effectiveness carry out deliberate projects for organizational change, develop a results-oriented evaluation culture, strengthen the use of technology for facilitating administrative processes, manage human resources talent through recruitment, training, evaluation, and motivation systems in agreement with the best practices principles, train their academic managers, and ensure an allocation of resources that will take care of the priorities established. This type of university that maintains an infrastructure that promotes high intellectual productivity levels, invests a large percent of its budget in capital improvement, designate space for intellectual concourse, reflect their academic priorities in their capital improvement plans, and implement effective maintenance schedules in agreement with the use of their physical facilities. Our Campus is committed to following these models, and that is the reason why our Vision University 2016 Strategic Plan integrates these best practices and strategies to our new vision, as well as to our strategic goals and objectives.

Public universities fulfill their duty to contribute to their community and country and to create relationships among its members by carrying out high impact activities in the community and society, publishing and disseminating its contribution to science, art and intellectual endeavor, carrying out joint projects between students, teachers, and community members, offering continuing education programs and launching fund raising campaigns among alumni and members of the general community.

Taking into account our institutional profile and our external context, the vision of the Río Piedras Campus must lead us to the maximum development of our capacities in order to continue being a key player towards the progress of Puerto Rican society. With the Vision University 2016, the Campus reaffirms its commitment to research, creation, and the dissemination of knowledge as tools for the advancement of the disciplines, the integral development of the students and

all the members of the university community, and the development of our country. Likewise, it identifies our strengths and defines areas we must improve, for which it assigns priorities, redirects efforts and resources, and points the routes for the next decade.

Strategic Plan Vision University 2016

Vision, Goals & Objectives

VISION OF THE RÍO PIEDRAS CAMPUS

A university community, with a marked doctoral character and endowed with first-rate resources, dedicated to research, creation, and the dissemination of knowledge; committed to the integral formation of the student and lifelong learning; and recognized for the excellence of its contribution to the development and intellectual enrichment of the Puerto Rican, Caribbean and world society.

The Vision Explained:

The **Vision of the Río Piedras Campus** formulated in this Strategic Plan establishes how this university community will be when it thoroughly fulfills its mission as the flagship public university in Puerto Rico. This vision implies a commitment to fully developing ourselves as a graduate and undergraduate studies center because of the diversity of our academic offerings, lines of research and opportunities for creative action, maintaining the highest levels of productivity and participation in the community.

Goal 1

The research, creation, and scholarship, as foundations of the academic endeavor of the Campus, will lead to the production and dissemination of knowledge, will contribute to the development of the disciplines and interdisciplinary work, and will contribute to the sustainable development of Puerto Rican and international society.

Objectives:

- I.1. Increase the research and high level creation that will contribute to the development of the disciplines and interdisciplinary work, and the international recognition

of our campus.

- 1.2. Promote an institutional culture that will position research and creation as the foundation of the academic endeavor and learning, and that will stimulate intellectual production.
- 1.3. Develop research lines and projects and discussion groups for topics that will position us at the forefront of the evolution of knowledge and contribute to the development of Puerto Rican and international society.
- 1.4. Increase and diversify the internal and external dissemination of the results of research and creative endeavors on campus with emphasis on the publication in internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals.
- 1.5. Integrate research as foundation of undergraduate and graduate learning on the Campus, strengthening the research competencies of students and including research experiences in revision of the curriculum and the revision of the Bachelor's degree.
- 1.6. Promote the high-level research and creative productivity of the campus faculty through incentive programs, support, and alliances and exchanges with universities and research centers abroad.
- 1.7. Plan and assign resources for the allocation of academic load to professors that integrate the teaching, service, research, and publication functions.
- 1.8. Provide a diverse collection of informational resources from primary sources in printed and electronic formats.
- 1.9. Provide needed resources for the strengthening of research and creation on campus such as effective administrative supports, adequate equipment and work environment conducive to greater research productivity.
- 1.10. Promote and improve the needed infrastructure for the search, attainment, and administration of external funds and support research project susceptible of attaining competitive funds.

Goal 1 Explained:

To develop the doctoral character of the Campus, we will place research, creation, and scholarship as foundations of the academic endeavor that leads to the production and dissemination of knowledge, contributes to the growth of the disciplines and interdisciplinary work, and contributes to the sustainable development of Puerto Rican and international society. The Campus should promote an institutional culture that will privilege high level intellectual and research productivity that will take advantage of the richness of the contact areas between the disciplines to nourish the creation of knowledge and the development of knowledge, thereby contributing to the social and cultural growth of Puerto Rico, and our Caribbean and world environment.

Goal 2

The academic and service programs will be characterized for their excellence, leadership, relevance, and dynamism, and will respond to the highest standards and developments of knowledge.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Implement the revision of the Bachelor's degree at the Schools of the campus.
- 2.2 Systematize the evaluation and revision of the undergraduate and graduate programs, developing an academic culture of evaluation and actualization accompanied by agile mechanisms and the facilitation of processes that will encourage renovation and alternative forms of teaching.
- 2.3 Use the results of systematic evaluations to determine the development of the programs.
- 2.4 Promote and accomplish attainment of the accreditation of programs of study and service susceptible to accreditation on Campus.
- 2.5 Promote and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and

projects between faculty, departments, and programs.

- 2.6 Strengthen and disseminate the variety of academic experiences through the incorporation of research, practice, information technology, and congruent/compatible cocurricular activities in the undergraduate and graduate programs.
- 2.7 Update and increase the quantity and availability of needed resources for teaching and for the curricular enrichment such as effective administrative supports, adequate equipments, and work climate conducive to learning.

Goal 2 Explained:

The new vision of the Campus is sustained by academic and service programs characterized by their excellence, leadership, relevance, and dynamism, and that will respond to the highest standards. For this, it will maintain its curriculum, materials, support resources for teaching, and will enrich the cocurricular offer and the recreational and cultural activities, returning to the country individuals with a solid general education and prepared to undertake with success a career in the work scenarios in which they perform work. We will promote a culture of actualization, experimentation, and renovation, based on systematic processes of evaluation for the development of academic programs as well as to maintain accreditation and obtain it for programs susceptible to it.

Goal 3

The recruitment, support services and institutional incentives will bestow the Campus with a competent and productive faculty at the forefront of knowledge.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Recruit an academically, professionally, and culturally diverse faculty, selected for its competencies and intellectual and research productivity through a recruitment plan and innovative strategies including special

professorships.

- 3.2 Provide the faculty body with increased opportunities for professional recognition by offering competitive working conditions and incentives for high level teaching and research.
- 3.3 Offer faculty opportunities to update knowledge in their areas of specialty and in teaching-learning skills at the national and international scenarios and stimulate the acquisition of the doctoral degree to professors who have not attained it.
- 3.4 Expand the opportunities of dialogue and exchange between members of the faculty and students of different disciplines and institutions of national and international prestige.
- 3.5 Propitiate an institutional climate that will promote quality of life, a feeling of belonging and identification and the commitment to active participation of the faculty with the institution.

Goal 3 Explained:

To reach excellence in institutional performance, the Campus will be endowed with a faculty selected by its diversity, competencies, and intellectual and research productivity, which will be provided with the opportunities and incentives needed to remain at the forefront of knowledge and prepared to established a rich exchange with other disciplines, with the community and with other countries and cultures.

Goal 4

The high quality of student recruitment and the university experience will promote the student's continuous academic advancement, intellectual and cultural enrichment, and integral development.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Recruit undergraduate and graduate students from Puerto

- Rico and abroad with outstanding talents, abilities and achievements.
- 4.2 Promote the participation of our students in university expositions, university consortia and conferences.
 - 4.3 Increase student retention and graduation rate to a high level, and proactively offer high quality services to facilitate their academic advancement and their transition and productive integration to the labor market and graduate studies.
 - 4.4 Promote an institutional climate that promotes the quality of life, the sense of belonging and identification and the commitment to active participation of the students with the institution.
 - 4.5 Improve the quality, diversity, and internal dissemination of services, cocurricular activities, and recreational, sport, and cultural activities that contribute to the integral/comprehensive formation/development and academic advancement of a diverse student body.
 - 4.6 Expand the opportunities that the university offers students for dialogue and interaction with intellectual and professional leaders from Puerto Rico and the world.
 - 4.7 Improve the effectiveness of communication with and between students and faculty by diversifying and expediting communication processes and ensuring opportunities for student participation.

Goal 4 Explained:

The institution of marked doctoral character that we want to intellectually enrich the country requires a recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students with talents, abilities and academic achievements of great potential that will identify with the institutional objectives and mission, and will take advantage of the quality of the university experience for the benefit of their continuous academic advancement and their integral formation as students. The institution will provide cocurricular, recreational, and cultural experiences and opportunities to

converse and interact with intellectual and professional, local and international leaders, along with a diversity of services and programs that recognize the changing profile of the student to promote the feeling of belonging and identification of students with the institution, increase student retention and graduation and facilitate their productive integration to the world of work.

Goal 5

The Campus will be characterized by the exchange and collaboration with academic and professional institutions on the world scenario, envisioning the development of an international academic perspective.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Integrate international subjects and experiences to the curriculum and research.
- 5.2 Expand opportunities for study and research abroad for our faculty and students and on Campus for student and faculty from abroad.
- 5.3 Strengthen and diversify international alliances and international and intercultural collaboration programs.
- 5.4 Strengthen, diversify, and intensify the international projection of the intellectual and academic production of the Campus.
- 5.5 Create structures to organize and speed up the diverse institutional initiatives related to internationalization.

Goal 5 Explained:

To attain the Vision, the Campus will be characterized by the strengthening of the exchange and collaboration with academic and professional institutions on the World scenario, envisioning the development of an international academic perspective. It will be necessary to integrate to the curriculum international topics and experiences, expend the opportunities for study and research abroad, as well as to strengthen, diversify, and intensify the international projection of the intellectual

and academic production. In this manner, the Campus will be converted into a university of international character with a diverse faculty and student body, great amplitude and richness in its offerings, and numerous programs of international and intercultural collaboration and research.

Goal 6

The Campus will increase institutional effectiveness through the transformation of its structures, management practices, and processes in which the academic priorities guide the administrative undertakings of the Campus.

Objectives:

- 6.1 Develop innovative projects to eliminate redundancy in processes and reduce the transaction time.
- 6.2 Implement systematic evaluations, professional development, and human resource management practices to optimize performance.
- 6.3 Improve communication between schools and administrative units on Campus.
- 6.4 Develop a culture of evaluation, self-study, institutional research and implementation of plans of action based on results.
- 6.5 Ensure that the assignment of resources responds to the new vision, goals, and objectives of Campus and address the established priorities and promote the expected results.
- 6.6 Promote activities of leadership development in the academic and administrative processes of transformation.

Goal 6 Explained:

The new Vision of the Campus will require the transformation of its structures, processes, and management practices to attain the maximum institutional effectiveness. This transformation, supported by a culture of evaluation, action plans, development

plans, and leadership in the processes of academic and administrative change, will require the optimization of the efficiency of processes, performance, resource assignment, and communication. In the institution of excellence we aspire, the academic priorities will guide these administrative processes.

Goal 7

The integration of information and communication technology and systems will characterize the academic and administrative development of the Campus.

Objectives:

- 7.1 Provide the infrastructure needed to integrate technology to the processes of teaching-learning and the support services for students.
- 7.2 Improve the availability and access to library resources through electronic media.
- 7.3 Redesign administrative, academic, and service processes for students and for the entire university community utilizing digital technology.
- 7.4 Optimize the use of technology that serves special needs and reasonable accommodations.
- 7.5 Develop and maintain up to date, integrated, and relevant databases to support diverse institutional functions.
- 7.6 Use our system of educational radio station (Radio Universidad WRTU 89.7 FM), the Diálogo newspaper, and other information technologies as official media and resources for communication in all of its facets and for the benefit of the university community and the external community.
- 7.7 Use information technologies as official communication method for written communication and transfer of documents and information in the university community.

Goal 7 Explained:

For the new vision, the academic and administrative develop-

ment of the Campus will be characterized by the integration of the technologies and information and communication systems. We contemplate the strengthening and actualization of the infrastructure to integrate the technology to the teaching-learning process and the support services for the student; increase the availability of electronic bibliographic resources; digitize/automate academic and administrative processes; create and maintain databases usable for the university endeavor; and utilize with increased frequency electronic media for the communication and transference of information in the university community.

Goal 8

The Campus will develop and maintain installations and natural spaces that will promote intellectual and creative production/labor, and will enrich the quality of life of the university community.

Objectives:

- 8.1 Promote resources, regulations, and administrative processes needed to convert the Campus into a model of sustainable development for Puerto Rico.
- 8.2 Promote environmental policies of design, construction, use, and maintenance of the natural and architectural landscape of the Campus that will promote its enjoyment and conservation.
- 8.3 Update the structures and buildings of the Campus to improve their habitability, optimize their utility, and promote the performance of the university.
- 8.4 Design and implement an effective plan for the preventive maintenance of installations and green areas of the Campus.
- 8.5 Ensure compliance with the laws and regulations that govern access to the installations for persons with special needs.
- 8.6 Designate spaces that promote intellectual concourse,

artistic creativity, and the university spirit.

- 8.7 Propose a capital improvements plan that will communicate Campus priorities.

Goal 8 Explained:

To attain the new Vision, the Campus will develop and maintain installations and natural spaces that promote the intellectual and creative endeavor, and that enrich the quality of life of the university community. In that manner it will upgrade and offer maintenance to structures and natural spaces; will ensure compliance with laws and regulations that rule the access to people with special needs; it will promote environmental policies of sustainability, design, construction, and maintenance of installations and natural spaces; it will design spaces for the promotion of intellectual exchange, artistic creativity and the university spirit; and will propose a plan of permanent works and improvements that will communicate Campus priorities.

Goal 9

The Campus will contribute to the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social enrichment of Puerto Rico, strengthening our relationships of service and collaboration with its alumni and with the diverse sectors of the community.

Objectives:

- 9.1 Strengthen the relationship of the Campus and each of its academic programs with the alumni incorporating them as collaborators and sponsors and nurturing their commitment of support to the institution.
- 9.2 Actively participate on the generation of ideas and establish alliances and collaborative projects with the public, private and community sectors, demonstrating the university commitment from our urban Río Piedras setting to the country as a whole.
- 9.3 Create opportunities for joint service and work with the diverse components of the community.

- 9.4 Expand the offering of continuing education to alumni and to professional, community, and non-traditional groups.
- 9.5 Disseminate the artistic, intellectual, and research contributions of the Campus to the intellectual, cultural, economic and social progress of Puerto Rico and the world.
- 9.6 Attract to the Campus diverse sectors of the external community to share the university holdings.
- 9.7 Promote in the university community the sense of belonging of the university to the Puerto Rican community that nourishes it.

Goal 9 Explained:

The new Vision requires that the Campus strengthens its relationships of service and collaboration with its alumni and with diverse sectors of the community to contribute in this manner to the intellectual, cultural, economic and social enrichment of Puerto Rico and the world. To attain this, it will incorporate the public, private and community sectors, especially the surrounding community of Río Piedras as sponsors in support of the institutional mission; it will create opportunity of joint service and work with these sectors; it will expand the offerings of continuous education for professional, community, and non traditional groups; it will promote the intellectual, artistic, and research production of the Campus to strengthen the cultural, economic and social progress of Puerto Rico and the world; it will create occasions and events to attract to Campus diverse sectors of the external community to share the university holdings.