

**REPORT TO THE
FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION, TRUSTEES, STUDENTS
OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO—CAYEY
BY
AN EVALUATION TEAM REPRESENTING
THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

May 12, 2005

**Prepared after study of the institution's
Self-Study Report and a visit to
the campus on April 4-6, 2005**

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

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

May 13, 2005

Corrected

Dr. Rafael Aragunde
Office of the Chancellor
University of Puerto Rico—Cayey
Antonio R. Barcelo Avenue
Cayey, PR 00736

Dear Chancellor Aragunde:

Enclosed is a hard copy of the final report to the University of Puerto Rico—Cayey. This is the same document that was sent to you as an email attachment yesterday.

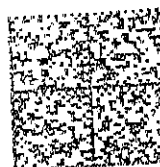
Let me say once more that the Evaluation Team's experience at UPR—Cayey was a very positive one. Thank you again for your hospitality and best wishes for success in all your endeavors.

Cordially,

Dolores M. Fernández, Team Leader

Enclosures

C: Dr. Luis G. Pedraja



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Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Eligibility Certification Statement

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO AT CAYEY

is seeking:

(Name of Institution)

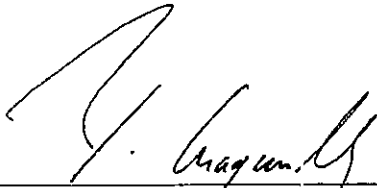
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Reaffirmation of Accreditation

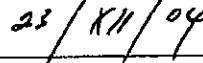
Initial Accreditation

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established eligibility requirements of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.


If applicable, exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum.



(Chief Executive Officer)



(Date)



(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)



(Date)

Executive Summary

The *University of Puerto Rico at Cayey* (UPRC), formerly known as *Cayey University College*, is located on a former military base with 167 acres of land nestled in the green hills of Puerto Rico's "Cordillera Central." It is the only liberal arts college on the island and offers quality undergraduate education to a population of 3,747 students, as of fall 2004. Established in 1967, UPRC is one of the eleven units of the UPR system and is licensed by the Council of Higher Education of Puerto Rico and accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

The Mission and Goals statement, as approved in 1993, guides all UPRC academic programs, administrative activities, planning processes, and organizational structures characterized by clear lines of authority. A Board of Trustees oversees the general functioning of the UPR system without interfering in local governance matters. UPRC has a well-defined collegial and participative governance structure, which allows academic issues to prevail within the institutional agenda. Students, faculty, and the administrative staff have ample opportunity to participate in governance and decision making at UPRC. The Institution's assessment model is mission-driven and addresses all educational offerings, services, and restructuring and renovation processes, allowing for periodic evaluation of their effectiveness. Recent years have witnessed an improved use of assessment results for guiding decisions related to teaching and to overall institutional effectiveness.

The information included in this document results from many years of intense effort, hard work, and dedication to institutional initiatives in all areas. Most information is based on current data related to each of the standards defined by MSCHE.

UPRC offers 31 bachelors and one associate degree program. The student body is 99% Hispanic and 72% female; 75% are Pell Grant recipients. The average graduation time is approximately five years. In Fall 2004, 90% of the students matriculated full-time and were evenly distributed in the four academic areas: natural sciences/mathematics, business administration, social sciences/humanities, and education. The Honors Program, the Athletic Program, Student Support Services, Upward Bound, Research Initiative Scientific Enhancement Program (RISE), Research Infrastructure for Minority Institutions (RIMI), Howard Hughes, and MBRS SCORE, among others, are additional opportunities that UPRC offers its students and that reflect the institution's holistic commitment to student learning. The institution continues to emphasize interdisciplinary activities, research, and community service as means to strengthen teaching and learning.

The average student-faculty ratio (in FTE) is 23:1. The full time faculty teaching load is twelve (12) credit hours per semester. The average salary for teaching faculty is \$ 41,535. About 75% of the entering student population comes from the public school system. The cost per student per annum at UPRC is \$ 8,071.

The institution has 195 full-time faculty members, 108 males and 87 females, distributed in 3 areas: Arts, Natural Sciences, and Professional Schools. They are highly qualified (53% hold

doctoral degrees) and maintain high standards in teaching, research, creative projects, and service. They are strongly committed to professional development and scholarly activities that complement the academic agenda and offer quality learning experiences to students. UPRC sponsors six *Professional Development Days* each academic year (three per semester) to promote the continued professional growth of its faculty and is the only higher education institution in Puerto Rico to establish this practice. In addition, the knowledge and experience of UPRC librarians play an important role in student development as well as other academic endeavors. These combined efforts have resulted in a well-prepared student body of adequate size and composition and with high achievement and retention rates (85%). The students' achievements and retention are not accidental, but are due to effective services provided by a team of qualified professionals, including 420 non-faculty personnel who help students attain their educational goals in a supportive and sensitive way.

Over the past four years, UPRC has dramatically increased its external funds and donations: by 242% (from \$5.2 to \$17.8 million), which includes a 1680% increase (from ~\$0.2 to \$3.1 million) in the area of research. Technological infrastructure has taken another quantum leap: from 0 to 33 courses that take advantage of online technologies such as Blackboard and Macromedia Breeze to improve student learning experiences. Last year, approximately \$750,000 was spent to strengthen the institution's cutting-edge technological environments. As a result, 45 public schools will directly benefit in revamping their instructional technologies through a Digital School project. Such initiatives, efforts, and outcomes have led UPRC to declare teacher preparation and training as one of its niches. Another dramatic increase in the last year has occurred in the Early Admission Option for talented incoming students, which has seen an increase of 480% (from 20 to 116).

The UPRC administrative structure consists of a Chancellor, Deans and Associate Deans of Academic, Administrative, and Student Affairs, and a number of other key offices (Library, Guidance-Counseling, Student Exchange and International Studies Program, and the Division of Extension and Continuing Education, among others). The Institution's small, first-rate museum houses important collections and hosts special exhibitions that enrich the academic and cultural life of our students and the community at large.

UPRC is in the middle of a carefully planned and profound transformation of its general education component, which represents a responsible first-rate option for students. The General Education renovation process is well-entrenched and has developed a sound conceptual framework, including abilities, contents, and methodologies that have resulted from a consensus process in recent years. Course offerings at UPRC are aligned with the established academic agenda and incorporate research experiences, community service, interdisciplinary studies, and the use of technology. UPRC's catalog has current information and is available at the Institution's web site as well as in hard copies for the Puerto Rican community. The admission requirements and procedures, academic calendar, rules and regulations affecting students, and grievance procedures are readily available to the community..

The human, financial, and technical resources, as well as the physical facilities at UPRC show that priorities are aligned to the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution. Budget allocation in the past five years is evidence that the academic area is a priority; the institution

offers nearly 800 sections of courses per semester. UPRC adheres to ethical standards in the conduct of all programs and activities that involve the public and the constituencies it serves. Academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression are central to UPRC's academic enterprise.

This self-study process has been an effort of the whole university community and is available at the UPRC web site: <http://www.cayey.upr.edu>. After completing this important task, UPRC feels proud of its achievements and has a clear sense of what needs to be done to continue on this successful path. The recommendations drawn from this self study will form part of the institutional agenda for the next five years, so that UPRC can continue to improve the curriculum, assessment of learning, evaluation of student achievement, the quality and rigor of the academic offerings, and institutional research, as well as expand the breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry.

Introduction

An evaluation team representing the Commission of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools conducted a site visit on April 4-6, 2005 at the Cayey Campus of the University of Puerto Rico for the purpose of evaluating the institution for continued accreditation in relation to the institution meeting the “Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education”.

I. Context and nature of the visit

The University of Puerto Rico at Cayey (UPRC), formerly known as Cayey University College, is located on a former military base with 167 acres of land nestled in the green hills of Puerto Rico’s “Cordillera Central”. It is the only liberal arts college on the island and offers quality undergraduate education to a population of 3,747 students as of fall 2004. Established in 1967, UPRC is one of the eleven units of the UPR system and is licensed by the Council of Higher Education of Puerto Rico and accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

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The institution has 195 full time faculty members, 108 males and 87 females, distributed in 3 areas: Arts, Natural Sciences, and Professional Schools. The average student faculty ratio is 23:1 FTE. The full time faculty-teaching load is twelve (12) credit hours per semester.

The Chancellor promotes an academic environment of respect toward different ideas and points of view and the Campus’ organizational structure facilitates the involvement of the campus community in the decision making process.

II. Affirmation of continued compliance with Eligibility Requirements

Based on the institution’s Eligibility Certification Statement, the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews, the team affirms, with recommendations as found in the analysis of each standard, that the institution continues to meet eligibility requirements.

**III. Compliance with federal requirements;
issues relative to state regulatory or other accrediting agency requirements**

See report prepared by Co-Chair Ismael Suárez, PRCHE with regard to specific compliance recommendations.

IV. Evaluation Overview

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, standards and others, the team affirms that the institution meets all accreditation standards, some with recommendations; the only standard not met was standard 3.

Standard 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The institution meets this standard with a recommendation.

Based on review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team affirms that the institution meets this standard, with the following recommendation:

Recommendation

That the institution ensure that the UPR-Cayey mission statement, its the mission, goals, and objectives guide all institutional programmatic and budgetary decision making processes.

Standard 2 - Planning, Resource Allocation, And Institutional Renewal

The institution meets this standard with recommendations.

◆ **Summary of evidence and findings**

There is evidence that UPRC units and departments generally possess written goals and objectives. The University itself has four key plans: a strategic plan, an operational plan, a facilities master plan, and a institutional assessment plan. The operational plan describes budget allocations; however, the extent to which these allocations follow the strategic and facilities master plans is unclear.

- There is also concern about imbalances between the allocation of faculty lines and student enrollments.
- In terms of resource allocation, there is grave concern about the large percentage of the University's budget devoted to salaries and benefits: an inadequate amount remains for general operational needs.

- The University's success in obtaining external funding, particularly large Federal grants, is impressive and laudable; however, there is some evidence that UPRC may attempt to rely too heavily on grants to offset its operational deficit.
- There is evidence of broad faculty participation in developing and approving key UPRC plans: the Academic Senate's departmental representatives take initiatives to their departments; following debate and discussion with their colleagues, the senators vote. The participation of other staff is less clear.
- The University has made great progress in improving the state of public access computers and in upgrading its network infrastructure, which can be considered state-of-the-art. Wireless is prevalent across the campus. These achievements are largely owing to grant funding, creating concern about their continuity.
- Because to a great extent equipment has been grant-funded, UPRC also lacks policies that describe approaches to computer replacement cycles, software acquisition, and so on.
- The University has implemented the Enterprise version of Blackboard. As yet, UPRC has not formulated a clear way forward for teaching with technology.
- UPRC does not as yet have a technology master plan.
- The university has no clear rationale for the management of technology which is split between two units, one reporting to the chancellor, the other to the dean for academic affairs. As a result, UPRC may not be making optimum use of the human resources available to support and advance technology.

◆ **Recommendations**

- The operational plan should make more explicit the relationship between the strategic plan and budget allocations.
- The University must bring salaries and benefits into a more acceptable/typical proportion with the operating budget.
- UPRC should develop a plan for funding from its own budget the continuation of all operational activities supported by grants/soft money.
- The University must develop a strategic plan for technology.
- The University must develop goals and objectives for teaching with technology, goals that recognize the serious equipment and infrastructure issues related to course sites--faculty who build media-rich courses need first-rate equipment, as do the students who access these courses.
- UPRC should develop an array of technology-related policies, including those related to replacement cycles and software support and acquisition.
- The University should form a faculty advisory committee for computing. Such a committee might have representatives from each academic department.
- The University should re-examine the reporting lines for academic and administrative computing with an eye to merging the two units under a chief information officer reporting at the chancellor level and achieving better utilization of human resources.

Standard 3 – Institutional Resources

The institution **does not** meet this standard.

UPRC has a clearly defined mission, “Excellence in Undergraduate Programs,” and consultation with various campus constituencies confirms that there is a perception that the mission is being carried out. The visiting team found it difficult to establish that resource priorities are aligned to the mission, goals and objectives of the institution.

The Academic Senate has stated the need to update the mission in order to focus on recent developments in educational principles that respond to changes occurring in higher education. The most significant change in higher education has been the emphasis on measurable assessment outcomes. The UPRC’s Institutional Assessment Plan identifies as a purpose to use the results obtained from assessment evaluation for improvement of institutional effectiveness.

The relationship between assessment practices and resource allocation is not well defined or documented. The lack of definition appears to be two fold: 1) discussions of assessment activities indicate the University is in the early formative stages and results have yet to be achieved which can be related to resource allocation. 2) The fiscal constraints of the recent past years have impeded the ability to link assessment with resource allocation.

1) Assessment

The self study points out in Section 2.3, “A clearer picture of institutional renewal would require a new format for reporting annual accomplishments based on sound assessment practices.” It is critical to planning and resource allocation that institutional assessment indicators of effectiveness be developed. The indicators of effectiveness must be quantitative and qualitative so that benchmarks can be established to measure the alignment of resource priorities to mission, goals and objectives of the institution. The significance of the relationship of assessment and resources allocation and planning is fully explored in Standard 7.

2) Fiscal Constraints and Budgeting

Consultation and discussion with finance and budget officials in the UPR Central Office and with the Chief Financial Officer and associates on the UPRC campus indicates that for the past four years there has not been review and preparation of budget petitions or a determination of budgetary outcomes. While the total budget assignments have increased, UPRC has experienced significant annual budget decreases in its operational expenditures. Currently less than 7% of the total budget is assigned for operational expenditures. The budget allocation for the past four years has remained fixed with additions only for negotiated salary and benefit increases. The personnel related expenditures have been greater than the net annual budget increases resulting in significant negative proportion between the fixed budget and operational budget.

The 2004-05 budget proportions are 65% salaries, 28% benefits and 7% Operations. The UPR-Cayey operational budget is \$4,099 less than five years ago. In response to budgetary questions UPR-Cayey points out that of the total budget of thirty two million dollars only two million dollars are available for operational costs.

The University should be commended for its efforts in procuring external funds from five million dollars in 2000-2001 to seventeen million dollars in 2003 -2004. The increase represents an increase of two hundred and forty two percent. The University must continue and reinforce these efforts as a viable alternative to government funding.

◆ **Recommendations**

- An in-depth analysis of the fixed budget be undertaken to identify areas where reductions can be made in the fixed budget allowing for a shift of resources to the operating budget. Areas that appear to have potential for shifting funds are overload and released time.
- UPRC needs to develop policies and procedures in which decisions on resource allocation are made in relation to planning and assessment. Academic and personnel decisions should be supported with documented evidence of the relationship to the mission, goals and objectives of the university.
- The proposed new UPRC strategic plan be developed and implemented utilizing a new format for reporting annual accomplishments based on sound assessment practices.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

The institution meets this standard with a recommendation.

- The governance infrastructure at UPRC is well in place, functioning, and its hierarchy usual, please see diagrams 6 and 7. The Senate is a democratic body that takes care of basically academic matters while the administrative board takes care of financial affairs. For details of the membership in these two governing bodies, including election methods, duration of terms, etc., please see pp. 28 - 30 of the self study report. These two governing bodies have subcommittees that are in charge of specific areas, such as the curriculum committee.
- At the departmental level there are also committees that are used to liaison with these governing bodies such as the departmental curriculum and personnel committees (I am using the Mathematics-Physics Department as a representative case). These departmental committees take charge from faculty at the departmental level. Once they approve the case they bring it back to the department for approval and once approved, the case is brought up to the appropriate committee or appropriate governing body for institutional approval.
- In addition, there are localized departmental committees such as the committee of Professional Development. And, ad hoc committees also exist as well as student council under the Dean of Students office. While there is efficient action by these governing groups, there are times in which there is a slower pace of action.

- The leadership is the usual with the Chancellor, Dean, Associate Dean, Director of Department hierarchy. The individuals that fill these posts come from the faculty and seem to be a group dedicated to the well-being and advancement of the students and institution as a whole (and with some problems as probably related by other members of our team). And, even though there are many institutional assessment programs ongoing at UPRC, assessment of the higher administration members does not seem to be in place. Based on team member reports from the '95 visit, it was expected that this evaluation process would take place. Therefore it is *RECOMMENDED* that UPRC puts in place a procedure for evaluating administrators.

The UPRC campus meets the fundamental elements of leadership and governance in that:

they have a well-defined governance system with written policies readily acknowledged by the campus community,

they provide clearly for the selection process of members, they assign responsibility for policy development and decision making,

there is ample opportunity for student input in all decisions, not just in cases affecting students,

the governing bodies are structured to be responsive to constituent and public and academic interest,

the governing body is chaired on a rotating basis among the members.

it has a governing body that certifies to the Commission that the institution is in compliance with illegibility requirements, etc., and is taking care of other aspects such as generating resources.

Standard 5: Administration

. The institution meets this standard with recommendations.

The university's administrative structure and services facilitate learning, research and scholarship. There is a great deal of support that illustrates a commitment to quality improvement through the very involved campus system of government. The campus community has grown accustomed to a great deal of involvement in decision-making processes and in dealing with institutional problems. While planning and assessment have been a major initiative since the last Middle States visit, there is a genuine commitment to utilizing data in the decision-making process. The Chief Executive Officer is a vital part of the campus's organization and participates in all aspects of the highly involved governing structure.

◆ **Summary of evidence and findings**

- There is a highly organized structure in place with outlined roles and responsibilities for faculty concerns, student concerns, budgetary matters and curricular reviews. Within the last two years, the university has recently appointed a new Chancellor, chief academic, administrative and student affairs officers. All of the officers were in other positions at the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey at the time of the appointment.
- The University has developed a strategic plan and is in the process of developing other planning documents to support it.
- The University has clearly defined diversity objectives for all of its members.
- The University has a high percentage of faculty engaged in alternate assignments and compensates them with released time.
- The Chancellor has the qualifications required for the position.
- There have been annual reviews of each administrative area, either completed or underway.
- Fifty-three percent of the faculty has terminal degrees and a greater emphasis has been placed on this goal.
- The campus governing groups consist of the Academic Senate representatives from the faculty, non-teaching faculty, students and administration, an Administrative Board reviews the budget, a University Board reports to the President of the System of the University of Puerto Rico, and a Board of Trustees designates the President.
- Three associate deans have been appointed to assist the Dean of Academic Affairs and are assigned very specific areas of responsibility.
- The campus has demonstrated a great deal of confidence in its governing structure. Its administrative structure is governed by Rules and Regulations of the University of Puerto Rico.
- The University has responded to the UPR system requirements for assessing the President and the Chancellor, administrative units, and both internal and external audits by sponsoring agencies.

▪ **Significant accomplishments**

- The evaluation processes of administrative offices both completed and projected have been a positive aspect of campus planning and a significant contributor to the University administrative effectiveness.
- The Chief Executive Officer has reviewed the administrative structure of the University and has made significant changes to the organizational structure of the University. He has identified well-qualified individuals for the positions and has communicated the changes to the campus community.

Standard 6: Integrity

The institution meets this standard.

◆ Summary of evidence and findings

- Through a review of the institutional self-study, additional documents provided by the UPR Cayey, and numerous interviews with faculty, staff, and students, the Middle States external team is confident that the institution has clear policies and procedures in place for all major issues likely to arise and have an impact on faculty and staff members as well as students. Adherence to legal and ethical standards is monitored by an Institutional Ethics Committee, which also provides ten hours of programming per year that faculty are required to attend. Personnel policies and criteria are the same for faculty members in all programs, maximizing the probability that faculty members will be evaluated according to the same standards regardless of their particular program.
- It was also confirmed in multiple sessions with the external team that faculty perceive the campus climate as being quite open to and tolerant of different viewpoints. This perspective was not echoed by several non-teaching professionals, some of whom reported that the campus climate is not necessarily accepting of women and gay and lesbian students. This difference, however, may reflect the fact that students feel more comfortable confiding in non-teaching professionals compared to faculty members.

◆ Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The existence of a Student Ombudsperson position with responsibilities for addressing student complaints such as academic grievances, sexual harassment, and discrimination on the basis of factors such as national origin, religion, and sexual orientation
- Clear policies and procedures for faculty reappointment, promotion, and tenure, with opportunities for appeal at each level of decision-making
- Clear policies and procedures for part-time faculty evaluation, with opportunities for appeal at each level of decision-making

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution meets this standard with recommendations.

◆ Summary of evidence and findings

- At present UPR Cayey is engaged in multiple, diverse activities that fall under the category of institutional assessment. In addition, numerous individuals across the university have committed significant time and effort to this endeavor and, especially in recent years, several different committees have been formed to

provide guidance to the institution in this area. There seems to be a clear awareness of the importance of institutional assessment and, among the individuals and groups with whom the Steering Committee met, a sincere commitment to developing and implementing sound outcomes-based assessment, especially for academic programs. Further, the university's leadership is supportive of this objective, and is perceived by faculty and staff members as such.

- Like many institutions, UPR Cayey is still in the beginning stages of developing and implementing an effective and efficient institutional assessment program that links planning and assessment across institutional levels in a coordinated, non-redundant fashion. As such, it is very important that the existing momentum toward these objectives be maintained and strengthened in the next two to three years. In other words, during this time period UPR Cayey will have the opportunity to demonstrate that outcomes assessment is not an end in itself, but truly a “means by which an institution” uses assessment to improve its effectiveness.

◆ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The presence of a significant cadre of faculty and staff members who understand and value assessment as a process for improving institutional effectiveness
- Support on the part of the administration for utilizing assessment as a strategy for improving educational quality
- The existence of a relatively comprehensive institutional assessment plan that is founded on the university's mission, goals, and objectives and that has the potential for providing institutional data for improving programs and services
- The periodic administration of numerous surveys to faculty, staff, and students evaluating satisfaction with various programs and services

◆ **Suggestions for improvement**

- Consider assigning responsibility for assessment to one individual – using a compensation structure consistent with the institution's values for allocating resources – who would then serve to coordinate assessment activities and provide support to programs and units in conducting these activities

◆ **Recommendations**

- Complete new Strategic Plan, using widespread faculty, staff, and student participation and input
- Make explicit relationships among the Strategic Plan, Institutional Assessment Plan, and operational plans and take steps to ensure that the community at large understands these relationships

- Strengthen and make explicit linkages between planning, assessment, and the budget and take steps to ensure that the community at large understands these linkages and their implications, especially for decision-making and resource allocation
- Begin process through which non-academic units develop outcomes-based assessment plans that include direct performance measures, develop a time schedule for the submission of these plans, and adhere to that schedule (Discussion of and recommendations for student learning outcomes for academic programs are presented in the report on Chapter 14.)

Standard 8: Student Admissions

The university meets this standard with recommendations.

The university's mission is to admit students with interests, goals and abilities that lead to graduation. The University of Puerto Rico at Cayey has established very high standards for admission in an effort to retain and limit class size while maintaining enrollment at levels appropriate to the size of the institution. The University has made every effort to understand the type of student that will persist at Cayey and will graduate. A great deal of emphasis is placed upon maintaining high academic standards for admission so that the instructional resources of the university will not be overextended.

◆ Summary of evidence and findings

- The University has made an informed decision to limit enrollments by academic area after carefully studying its capacity. The faculty was actively involved in this decision making process through the Academic Senate.
- Every academic department is actively involved in the admission process. The faculty is committed to maintaining high academic standards for admission to academic programs.
- The admissions office works with each academic department to monitor the selection of students qualified for admission.
- The office is completely automated to accommodate the demands on its staff.
- The admissions office works with the registrar's office to maintain records of admission information in conjunction with established guidelines.
- The financial aid office assists students and their families with published information about the award process.
- The University has attempted to monitor its first year retention rates in an effort to verify its assessment of student success. The University continues to evaluate its graduation rates.
- Appropriate record keeping is maintained by the admissions office.
- Compliance with the centralized admissions process established by the University of Puerto Rico is being followed.

◆ **Recommendations**

- The Academic Senate's 2003 review of carrying capacity has resulted in a planned reduction in enrollment to approximately 3,700 students in 2004-2005. It is recommended that further study be conducted to examine the graduation requirements of all academic majors and determine if one standard total can be agreed upon. Currently, the number of credits required for graduation varies by nearly thirty [30] credits.
- Further analysis will determine whether or not the University has been successful in its retention efforts.
- There has not been an evaluation of the admissions office operations by the campus.
- Further examination of attrition data needs to be undertaken. While studies have been focused primarily on first year persistence and the composition of the freshman class, additional study is warranted to comprehend the true impact of the University on its students.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The university meets this standard with recommendations.

The University of Puerto Rico at Cayey does provide student support services as outlined in its vision statement. Student services focus on the total development of the student and address diverse student populations.

The campus is largely a commuter institution with students from the nearby area. The student support services support the academic mission in its delivery of services and focuses on supplying a quality of life initiative in almost all areas. Its leadership is under the direction of the Dean of Students.

• **Summary of evidence and findings**

- The Dean of Students was appointed to the position in August 2004 and has experienced the challenges of organizing the administrative area while being evaluated. The Dean's academic qualifications and prior experience are appropriate.
- The University's enrollment is 69% female and 31% male.
- An Ombudsperson position has been created to receive and review student grievances.
- The University does not offer any on-campus housing except to student athletes.
- The athletic program is a NCAA division II competitor and was developed in 1997. It has limited development of opportunities for athletic competition but does meet Title IX guidelines in terms of participation. The University also competes in the Inter-University Athletics League.
- The Director of Athletics was appointed three months ago.
- There is a very limited intramural program due to a lack of facilities.

- Academic advising has been organized under the Interdisciplinary Center for Student Development [CEDE] that offers personal, occupational and academic advising to all students.
- The structure of the student services includes the following areas: Cultural Activities, International Studies and Exchange Programs [OISEP], Quality of Life [disabilities services], Health Services, Veterans and Lodging Office, day care program for students, student organizations [13 in total], Interdisciplinary Center for Student Development [CEDE], athletics, and the Proyecto de las Mujeres.
- In compliance with the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.
- A student handbook has been published for all first year students attending UPRC.
- Approval for the creation of a student newspaper has been granted in 2002 by the Academic Senate, which also included funding.
- Psychological services are available to students on the campus as well as psychiatric services are offered in the outside community.
- Several studies have been conducted to determine student needs and the quality of services offered.
- Both the Bookstore and the student cafeteria are staffed with contracted services.

◆ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The Dean of Students is to be commended for initiating a planning process for all areas of student services. The Dean has also created significant interest in developing additional student organizations.
- The area of student services has been most supportive of the academic mission of the university and is becoming an integral part of students' academic success.

● **Recommendations**

- The evaluation of the student services area within the first year of Dean's appointment may be very ambitious. Findings should take this into account once the review has been completed.
- The creation of a student newspaper will have a tremendous impact on communication and will generate student interest in activities on the campus.
- The student handbook needs to be reviewed and up-dated to include information for all students.
- It needs to incorporate all university policies and procedures, service offerings and directory information so that students are able to use this important resource tool. Completion of the review of athletics will be very important to determine what additional resources must be applied to make it a viable part of the University's offerings to students. Recreational programs are limited based upon facilities and need to be expanded if funding were to be identified. In order to generate funding for recreational and intercollegiate athletics, external fundraising may need to be developed.

- Recognition of the importance of student services has begun with the appointment of a new Dean. The University's governing bodies must recognize the importance of continued improvements to student services.
- The Bookstore and Cafeteria must be cited as being inadequate to meet student needs and fail to support student academic experiences. Review of the contracts governing the services should be exercised as soon as possible.
- Improvements need to be addressed in the Student Center facility. When compared to other campus buildings, it has basic needs that leave the impression that students are not as important as other members of the university community.
- New students need to have additional support through the orientation process in identifying housing within the community. If at some point in time the University was to determine it could support on-campus housing, it may need to explore commercial partners.

Standard 10: Faculty

The standard is met with recommendations.

◆ Summary of evidence and findings

- Recruiting standards have been raised, as a consequence the number of faculty with terminal degrees will increase.
- The faculty design the curriculum; at present significant sections of the curriculum are undergoing renovation.
- By many standards, class size at Cayey is small, at an average of around 23 students.
- The released time available to faculty is significant; in addition to the traditional purposes (administration; research) faculty also receive either released time or compensation for service on the Academic Senate. In some cases they receive released time for participation in curriculum renovation.
- In many departments, the number of faculty overloads is high, with 20%, 50%, or more of the faculty accepting overloads ranging from three to nine credits. This level of faculty overload works against both the institution's commitment to educational excellence and its goal of strengthening faculty research and creative work.
- Cayey funds faculty development in several areas, including travel to conferences, tuition for advanced study, and its unique three-per-semester faculty development days. There is a solid faculty development program for teaching with technology.
- There is a faculty evaluation plan which should be approved shortly by the academic senate. Components include self-assessment, classroom visits, peer review, portfolio review by the departmental personnel committee, chair's report on faculty member's administrative responsibilities. Policy is still in review by academic senate.

◆ **Recommendations**

- UPRC should take immediate steps to reduce the number of faculty overloads.
- UPRC should re-examine the issue of class size with an eye to increasing class size without impairing the educational experience.
- The faculty evaluation plan should be completed and implemented.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The institution meets this standard with recommendations.

Educational offerings at UPRC are congruent with the institution's mission as the only Liberal Arts college on the island. UPRC offers undergraduate academic programs in the fields of Natural and Social Sciences, the Arts and Humanities, Education, and Business Administration.

UPRC currently offers 31 bachelor's degrees and one associate degree through ten academic departments. Academic programs include three components: general education, concentration courses, and electives.

During the past two years UPRC's academic agenda has been redirected to foster courses and programs that integrate research, community service, the use of technology, and interdisciplinary approaches. All UPRC students are mandated to participate in undergraduate research or community service in their academic careers.

◆ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on review of the self-study, documents provided, and interviews with faculty, staff and students, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The educational offerings at UPRC are congruent with the institution's mission
- Educational offerings include sufficient content, breath and length and are conducted at levels of rigor appropriate to the degrees offered
- There are no off-campus programs nor programs or courses delivered exclusively on-line or through other technologies
- Most course syllabi incorporate expected learning outcomes
- The Honors program allows academically exceptional students to enrich, enhance and successfully integrate their learning experiences at UPRC
- Several projects sponsored by external funds foster scientific research skills among students. Through some of these programs students have been able to travel to universities in the United States
- There have been efforts to integrate technology into the course offerings. This has been accomplished principally through external grants
- A plan exists to conduct evaluation of programs. To date, ten of the 31 programs have undergone this process of self-assessment
- Collaboration between library staff and faculty is evident
- There are published and implemented policies regarding transfer credit

- Most programs have not yet stated their goals in terms of student learning outcomes
- Most programs have not assessed student learning nor used results to improve program effectiveness
- Some programs have low enrollments [under 50 students in all four years], making it difficult to insure that course offerings are adequate in quantity for students to complete the requirements of these degree programs in a timely manner
- The University's library services and professional library staff are in a good state of order. The library faculty-to-student ratio is exceptionally strong and there is general satisfaction on the part of students and faculty with library services.
- The library faculty and staff's service ethic is a strong one, characterized by a commitment to providing information, information literacies, and culture for all members of the campus community. A flat organizational structure enables librarians to devote the bulk of their time to working directly with faculty and students.
- At 84.5 hours of service per week, the library's service program is generous. Librarians have studied library use patterns and developed hours of service that complement not only usage but also the University's schedule of classes.
- The budget for library collections (20%) is sound and in an appropriate proportion to spending for staff (80%). Spending for monographs, serials, and e-resources are in appropriate proportion. Economies achieved through an efficient and effective interlibrary loan program have enabled subscriptions to new electronic resources.
- The level of library staffing and the library budget is indicative of a strong institutional recognition of the critical nature of the library's role and the library's quality.
- Librarians and faculty collaborate in many ways. With regard information literacy, efforts are exceptional and laudable: there is evidence of strong commitment. For general education courses and courses undergoing renovation, librarians are working with faculty to build information literacy skills and training into courses; all information literacy modules include assessment elements. Librarians are also actively working with classroom faculty to analyze course syllabi for the presence of information literacy elements, and to develop methods of integrating such elements where they do not already exist. Two librarians are devoted to information literacy initiatives and all librarians teach in the program.
- In some disciplines, librarians and faculty team-teach classes.
- Some academic departments have resource development committees; faculty who serve on these committees work with librarians to build collections that support their disciplines.
- Librarians promote student use of information and learning resources in many ways: the library Web site is an important tool here. In all workshops and training programs, librarians promote their services and solicit student input about library services and collections. In August the Library will conduct a survey of student satisfaction.
- Classrooms are departmental (versus University) resources. While some academic departments noted insufficient classroom space, others reported that the spaces available to them for teaching were adequate. Overall, the University has

a 70% rate of classroom usage, and it seems that the schedule of classes is a factor in the cases where departments report insufficient space.

- The maintenance and replacement of instructional equipment are serious issues for UPRC. Most equipment has been purchased using grants and plans for its upkeep and upgrade have yet to be developed.

Exemplary Practices

- The Honors Program
- National Accreditation efforts by the Education, Chemistry, and Business Administration Departments
- Efforts to provide undergraduates with research experiences

◆ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- High pass rates of education students in the teacher certification exams [Pecemas],

Suggestions for improvement

- Consider suspending those programs that have a total enrollment of less than 50 majors spread over four years, following the example of Economics. Students in low-enrolled programs are having difficulty completing the degree requirements in a timely manner due to the fact that not enough courses are offered on a regular basis, or those courses that are offered are cancelled because of low registration. Students indicated that in some programs it could take five to six years to graduate.
- Some students mentioned their desire for longer library hours. Since the library's hours are generous by any standard, librarians may wish to poll students about whether different patterns of service (as opposed to additional hours) would better suit their needs.
- Neither the town of Cayey nor the local high school has a library. Cayey's library opens its doors to the town and the school whose citizens and pupils consume resources designed for UPRC's students. The University may wish to approach the school system and the municipality of Cayey for resources to support these services.
- The library may wish to add an e-suggestion box to its Web site, enabling students to click and leave their comments about library services. Announcements about library services and programs can also be sent to both students and faculty via mass emails.
- In the interest of further strengthening librarian/faculty collaboration, the library and the campus may wish to consider a model in which each librarian assumes responsibility for one or more academic departments' instructional requirements, collection development, and other information needs.

- The new science building will bring some new classroom space. However, in the interest of maximizing both efficiency and classroom use, UPRC may wish to revisit its policy of allocating classrooms to academic departments, centrally scheduling rooms centrally instead. The University may also wish to revisit its current schedule of classes, in order to make fuller use of its classroom capacity.

Recommendations

- All programs should state their goals and objectives in terms of student learning outcomes
- All programs should assess student learning relative to their goals and use the results of those assessments to improve student learning as well as the effectiveness of the academic programs
- UPRC should take steps immediately to develop and implement a plan for the maintenance and replacement/updating of all campus computers.
- Each academic department should appoint a faculty member its number to work directly with the library to develop the collections, design instruction, and keep the department's faculty and students abreast of all library developments.

Standard 12: General Education

The institution meets this standard with a specific recommendation.

At the UPR Cayey there are three components of the education program of the students: the general education courses, the area of concentration or specialty courses, and the elective courses. The first two categories will be discussed in some detail below.

The general education courses serve as the common unifying basis of education of all the students at Cayey. The students are required to take about 55 credits of these courses in the disciplines of mathematics, language, literature and biological and physical sciences, history, languages and general culture. Each student, according to his/her area of concentration will take a specified sequence of these courses.

The breadth and depth of these courses, as judged by course descriptions, final exams, interviews with faculty and students, are good. The variety of courses and the requirements are commensurate with a solid foundation for a liberal arts college education.

The program has considerably more than the expected number of courses.

Even though the general education courses are not usually applied to the area of concentration courses at the present time, they have begun to institute a reform to the general education courses since 2002. They have run two pilot projects and they are embarked in a "project for the transformation of general education" in which they are in the process of complying with this requirement.

Recommendations

- that the “project for the transformation of general education” be expanded and applied to all areas of concentration, not just the few in which it has been tried so far.
- This recommendation overlooks the fact that we explicitly described those few as pilot projects with the intention of expanding them.
- The general education program also does not incorporate diverse perspectives in their courses; however, if the previous *RECOMMENDATION* is followed, it will be in full compliance.
- Diversity is precisely what we are doing in our General Education Programs. Examples of Interdisciplinary and Crossovers among the disciplines were provided. The courses in the general education program will meet the stipulations of literacy and critical analysis and reasoning if the previous *RECOMMENDATION* is followed.
- The general education courses are clearly and accurately described in official publications of UPRC. The current requirements vary according to area of concentration and are expected to vary somewhat to a lesser degree after the implementation of the previous *RECOMMENDATION*.
- If the above *RECOMMENDATION* is followed and assessment of the general education program is conducted utilizing outcomes that result in curricular improvement, this standard will be satisfied.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The institution meets this standard.

UPRC ‘s student body is diverse in its educational backgrounds. The institution attracts and enrolls students with a high admission index, however, while some students excel at academic work, others are not well prepared for college. UPRC meets the diverse academic needs of students by offering non-credit developmental coursework as well as an Honors Program.

UPRC has no certificate programs, branch campuses, off-campus courses, distance or distributed learning programs.

Summary of evidence and findings

Basic Skills--Non-Credit Preparatory Courses

- There is an academic rationale for the non-credit preparatory courses offered to newly admitted first year students during the summer semester
- Non-credit preparatory courses are designed to provide incoming students with the knowledge and skills in English, Spanish and Mathematics needed to succeed academically in college

- Full-time faculty are involved in the coordination, design, and delivery of the non-credit preparatory courses offered at UPRC
- The non-credit preparatory courses are coordinated by the Division of Continuing Education under the Dean of Academic Affairs
- The non-credit preparatory courses have high passing rates and are evaluated regularly

Student Support Services—TRIO Programs

- The TRIO- Student Support Services program provides quality support services to UPRC students who meet any of the following criteria: academic need, economic need, first generation college status or physical or mental impairment
- The TRIO program offers activities designed to increase retention of first year students and encourage them to complete their college degrees
- A second TRIO program [Upward Bound] at UPRC serves high school students in the region, preparing them for entering college

Other Non-Credit Offerings

- The Division of Continuing Education at UPRC provides continuing education workshops and short courses to the community at large
- Non-credit workshops and short courses offered through Continuing Education serve needs in the community and are assessed regularly
- The Division of Continuing Education has been successful in obtaining external funds which have benefited high school students as well as public school teachers in the surrounding area

Suggestions for Improvement

- Continue to assess non-credit preparatory courses in Mathematics, English, and Spanish to insure that all students are successful in acquiring the knowledge and skills in those areas needed to succeed at UPRC

Recommendations: None

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The institution meets this standard with recommendations.

♦ Summary of evidence and findings

In the past four to five years, UPR Cayey has sponsored and participated in many activities designed to bring about a campus culture founded on student learning outcomes assessment as a primary strategy for improving teaching, learning, and curricular programs. They have been particularly successful at the individual course level, where much of their attention has been focused. In addition, while on campus the evaluation team met with many individuals – most of whom served on committees with assessment-

related responsibilities – who were highly knowledgeable and enthusiastic about student learning outcomes assessment. A complement of such persons is critical to the creation of a “culture of assessment” on a college campus.

Although several academic programs have undergone program review, most programmatic assessment activity has been directed towards UPR Cayey’s General Education Program, with much of this activity taking place through the administration of surveys and interviews. There is an effective process in place for ensuring that new courses have explicitly delineated student learning outcomes that align with programmatic objectives, as well as one for making sure that new programs include student learning outcomes that align with the institution’s mission and goal statements. Similarly, all new courses must include expected learning outcomes in their syllabi. In terms of the types of assessment procedures being utilized, both quantitative and qualitative assignments are being administered, primarily in a course-embedded fashion.

As is true at many colleges and universities, UPR Cayey has yet to implement outcomes assessment at the program and institutional levels in a systematic, institution-wide way. Nor is it clear at this point if or how the university will aggregate course-level data on student learning outcomes to reach conclusions about programmatic or institutional effectiveness. An equally important observation is that, to this point, there has been an emphasis on using indirect measures of student learning in programmatic assessment, with limited information derived from direct measures. Finally, as UPR Cayey begins to implement effective and coordinated outcomes assessment at all three levels of the institution, there will be a need to document and demonstrate that assessment-based results are being used on a routine basis to improve teaching, learning, and curricular programs as well as in the overall assessment of the institution.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The existence of processes and procedures for ensuring alignment among institutional, programmatic, and course objectives when new programs and courses are proposed
- The existence of processes and procedures for ensuring that all new courses submitted for approval have specific statements of student learning outcomes
- Many “grass roots” assessment activities that have been widespread across the institution, including the use of faculty mentors and “swap shops” (i.e., informal meetings to discuss assessment)
- Model departments (e.g., English) that can serve as assessment “champions” and provide assistance to other departments and programs
- The existence of regularly conducted assessments of student learning using indirect measures (e.g., graduation rates)

Recommendations

- Develop time schedule for academic programs to submit student learning outcomes-based assessment that include direct measures of student learning outcomes, and adhere to that schedule
- Develop and implement a program review schedule for all academic programs, coordinating this schedule with required external certification or accreditation reviews as appropriate
- Develop and implement a programmatic assessment plan for General Education that includes direct measures of student learning,
- Consider bringing in an external consultant that can provide training workshops and expertise in the area of programmatic assessment (Should be placed under next section of recommendations).

Summary of team recommendations and requirements

Overall the team felt that this was a positive evaluation visit. The one area of concern dealt with budget and how the institution utilizes the budget allocated to it from the central offices. The operational plan describes budget allocations; however, the extent to which these allocations follow the strategic and facilities master plans is unclear. The institution must ensure that its budget planning process be driven by the UPR-Cayey mission statement by having the mission, goals, and objectives guide all institutional budgetary decision making processes. While the total budget assignments have increased, UPRC has experienced significant annual budget decreases in its operational expenditures. Currently less than 7% of the total budget is assigned for operational expenditures. The budget allocation for the past four years has remained fixed with additions only for negotiated salary and benefit increases. The personnel related expenditures have been greater than the net annual budget increases resulting in significant negative proportion between the fixed budget and operational budget. There is a concern about imbalances between the allocation of faculty lines and student enrollments. In terms of resource allocation, there is grave concern about the large percentage of the University's budget devoted to salaries and benefits: an inadequate amount remains for general operational needs. The team noted that there is an excessive amount of money allocated for faculty release time and overloads.

The recommendations made for each Standard are things that the team feels that the administration, faculty and staff of UPR-Cayey can meet without any problems.

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