

**Report to the**  
**Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students**  
**Of**  
**The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamon**  
**By**  
**An Evaluation Team representing the**  
**Middle States Commission on Higher Education**  
**Prepared after the study of the institution's Self Study Report**  
**And a visit to the campus on March 13-16, 2011**

**Dr. William L. Pollard**, President, Medgar Evers College, The City University of New York

**Dr. German Bermúdez**, Associate Executive Officer for Academic Affairs, Connecticut State University System

**Dr. Antonio Gutierruez-Márquez**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research & Evaluation, City College of Chicago

**Dr. Anthony G. Picciano**, Professor and Executive Officer, Ph.D. Program, in Urban Education, Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York

**Dr. David Prensky**, Associate Professor and Director of Leadership Programs for the Public Good, The College of New Jersey, NJ

**Dr. A. Jacqueline Swansinger**, Professor, History Department, State University of New York College at Fredonia, NY

**Dr. Marcela Armoza**, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Affairs, New York City College of Technology of The City University of New York

**Dr. Ron Sarnier**, Distinguished Service Professor, School of Information Systems and Engineering Technology, Stated University of New York Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome

## **AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón Chancellor: Dr. Arturo Avilés

University of Puerto Rico, Bayamon Board of Trustees Representative: N/A

University of Puerto Rico at Bayamon Dean of Academic Affairs: Dr. Edna Miranda

## **I. Context and Nature of the Visit**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón (UPRB) is a forty year old branch of the University of Puerto Rico system. The academic program offers students opportunities to pursue both associate and bachelor degrees. Students are for the most part, full time and pursue degrees in several different fields including Business, Education, Science and Technology. UPR also provides a variety for non-degree students through its Extended University.

The Middle States Evaluation Team conducted its visit to UPRB from March 13th to March 16th, 2011. The team found the visit to be extremely warm and inspirational. It was truly a rewarding experience to watch the team grow in its understanding of this University that took tremendous pride in itself as a Puerto Rican University serving a predominantly Puerto Rican Population. Both the self study document and the process that produced it reflected the input of a cross section of the University community. The large crowd that filled the auditorium on the last of the visit for the oral report reflected the wide-spread interest and concern felt by the team.

The evaluation team conducted extensive interviews. Among the many respondents were students, faculty, staff, deans, department chairs, alumni, members of the steering committee and a host of stake holders in the self study process. The team also toured the campus facilities and met with System President Dr. Miguel Muñoz at his office. The team also reviewed financial statements, the monitoring report and several other documents made available by the Office of President and Chancellor.

The team commends the University for the quality of its self-study and the organization of the visit. The candid responses of faculty, staff, students and System officials offer evidence of a tremendous amount of work acheived. The team acknowledges this in the report and believes that the self-study process has enabled the University to address its current and some future issues. Under the leadership of its Chancellor, Arturo Aviles Gonzalez, the University is poised to continue to strengthen its service to both its students and the community.

## **II. Affirmative of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

The University meets all eligibility requirements of the Middle States Commission in Higher Education.

## **III. Compliance with Federal Requirements, Issues Relative to State Regulatory or to other Accrediting Agency Requirements**

The team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default role is within federal limits.

## **IV. Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

### **At the Time of the Visit:**

Chancellor  
Dean of Academic Affairs

Dr. Arturo Aviles  
Dr. Edna Miranda

Board of Trustees  
Systems Head

N/A  
Dr. Miguel Muñoz

### **Standard 1- Mission and Goals**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón (UPRB) is a member of the University of Puerto Rico System. The University has emerged from its beginning as a community college in 1971 to an autonomous campus of the UPR System, located in the northeastern part of Puerto Rico, UPRB serves students from several municipalities including Bayamón and San Juan.

The UPR mission is to “facilitate significant continuous and long lasting learning with the ultimate goal of having students become responsible citizens who will help transform their world with a heightened sense of ethics, esthetics and actions that will contribute to change”. (Monitoring report). The University’s mission was well articulated verbally and further reinforced in descriptions of activities of faculty, students, staff and graduates of the University. In addition, several evening and part-time programs reflect UPRB’s emphasis on continuous learning.

Extensive conversation with major internal stakeholders and a review of self study materials reveal a campus with a deep and rich Puerto Rican legacy. The team was extremely pleased to observe this University’s grasp of its very important role of the University as a “family”. Students and faculty alike were not shy about the important role played by the faculty in advising and mentoring. It is clear that the idea of advocacy and the establishment of the University as an essential support system with Puerto Rican society was paramount.

### **Standard 2 – Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

UPRB shows evidence that it has been engaged in strategic planning processes that have guided its evolution in the past decade. The UPRB Strategic Plan was designed for the ten year period between 2006-2016. In addition, the UPRB Strategic Plan is aligned with the UPR System plan (Diez para la Decada 2006-2016). The UPRB Strategic Plan was developed under the guidance of the previous Chancellor and her senior staff. An Office of Institutional Planning and Research monitors the implementation of the Strategic Plan on an on-going basis. It needs to be mentioned that UPRB as part of the UPR follows system-wide guidelines and formats for its planning activities. The President of the UPR reiterated that he and all of the chancellors are expected to be totally committed to Diez para la Decada 2006-2016. SS. Appendices P3-5.

## **Accomplishments**

The UPRB administration appears to understand the importance of institutional planning and also recognizes that the existing strategic plan has become compromised because of severe fiscal austerity. The self study states that “the Strategic Plan has been the institutional guide which has let us know where we will be heading in the next few years”. However, the limitations in the fiscal resources observed during the past two years have not allowed the UPRB to address a “reasonable quantity” of the goals and objectives of the UPRB Strategic Plan. SS p. 26

In addition, the UPRB Strategic Plan was developed by the previous Chancellor and her administration and the new Chancellor and his administration rightfully should be able to adjust this plan to meet current and newly evolving issues. Financial exigency has pretty much guided of UPRB’s planning activities for the past two years. This is to be expected given the extent of the fiscal problems at UPRB, the UPR System and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

## **Concerns**

There are several concerns:

1. Strategic planning has to become integrated with budget realities and priorities. The self study comments that this has been difficult (see SS. p. 27). As limited as budgets might be, planning can aid in allocating resources even in difficult budgetary times.
2. There is concern about how inclusive planning is at the UPRB. On p. 25 of the self study, the comment was made that the UPRB Strategic Plan “was created by a committee named by the former chancellor in 2006 and had the participation of the University community”. However, as reported in a recent survey, UPRB respondents “claim their participation had been reduced since they merely received the information and were just spectators in the development of the plan (Appendix P-2)”.
3. The self study comments in several sections on the need for new physical facilities. However, there is no mention of a master plan that is typically developed in most colleges and universities for guiding new construction, major renovations and large equipment purchases. In reviewing documentation, it appears that the last formal update of the UPRB Master Plan was in 2006. The faculty and students at UPRB are committed to the important mission of providing access to a quality higher education. They deserve first-rate physical facilities to teach, learn, study, do research, and prepare for rewarding careers.

## **Recommendations:**

1. Planning for physical facilities is a critical aspect of strategic planning. There has to be a major commitment to master planning for capital improvements throughout the UPRB campus. A priority should be given to comprehensive campus planning that looks at the needs of the entire campus and documents those needs for academic programs and administrative services.

2. UPRB should establish planning processes that insure all constituents can participate and understand its future direction.
3. Integrate planning with operational and budgetary operations.

### **Standard 3 – Institutional Resources**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

UPRB has experienced severe fiscal challenges in the past year that have tested its ability to pursue its mission to provide a quality higher education for its students. Economic conditions for Puerto Rico have been in decline since 2006 and have resulted in a 14 percent decline in tax revenues. (SS. p. 26). The state budget appropriation reduction of approximately ten percent for the past fiscal year will not be re-established in the coming fiscal years. The fiscal situation is serious enough that the MSCHE put UPRB on probation in 2010 because of a lack of evidence of compliance with several MSCHE standards including Standard 3 – Institutional Resources. MSCHE requested a second monitoring report for March 1, 2011, which has been completed and was included in the documentation provided to this Visiting Team.

#### **Accomplishments**

It appears that the administration at UPRB understands the seriousness of its fiscal situation. It has imposed a number of cost-savings policies including redeployment of administrative personnel, controls on purchases, limited new hiring, etc. (SS p. 33) and has identified several strategies to increase revenue including:

1. Increase student enrollment. This growth is projected especially for non-traditional evening populations to be served by the Extended University of the UPRB. The evening population is presently at 500 plus students but expectations are that UPRB can double or triple this enrollment. This is a major thrust of the UPRB's Chancellor and his senior staff that has the potential of adding upwards of \$1-2 million in new revenue.
2. The UPRB has also developed a plan to reduce the use of energy and is working with an approved proposal that will allow the integration of prototype solar photocells in the Institution. The project was finished in January 2011, and should result in a \$4,800 annual reduction in energy costs. This is a modest savings but in times of fiscal austerity, every savings helps.
3. The Administration is intensifying efforts to increase and diversify sources of additional funding. Federal and state grants and other sources, such as alumni, parents, students, and private donors, provide the institution with resources to supplement revenues coming from state and tuition sources. It is of great importance for the UPRB administration to continuously search for external funds through projects and research. A federal grant which at the time of this writing was ninety-five percent complete may yield in excess of \$9 million in July 2011, in recovery funds that can surely help UPRB weather its current

fiscal crisis. The administrative leadership at UPRB is commended for initiating and moving this project to completion (NOTE: SS denotes Self Study Reference; MR – Monitoring Report Reference).

4. The UPRB is also working towards the development of an intramural practice for the professors. Through this, the faculty members could work on projects, research, and carry out consultant work, among other activities within the Institution. The success of this initiative remains to be seen.

These strategies especially the federal grant recovery funds have the potential to alleviate anticipated state budget reductions for the next several years. It needs to be mentioned that much of the fiscal situation stems not from UPRB itself but from the larger economic problems in Puerto Rico and the UPR System as a whole. The UPR System has established several responses to the decline in state funding in the upcoming years including:

1. Implementation of a Stabilization Fee of \$800 per academic year, effective on year 2010-2011.
2. Lines of credit from the Government Development Bank. Specifically, \$100 million for operational expenses; \$30 million for technology infrastructure; and \$75 million for capital improvements.
3. Additional student aid funding and expansion of existing programs to help needy students tackle the stabilization Fee.
4. Special Scholarship Fund of the University of Puerto Rico. By Law No. 176 of November 2010, the Senate of Puerto Rico committed to transfer to the University 10% of the of the Additional Lottery net yearly income for not less than \$30 M per year, for the creation of a Special Scholarship Fund for graduate and undergraduate student aids.
5. Reactivation of the Supplementary Institutional Assistance Program. On December, 2010, the Board of Trustees assigned \$1,662,256 from the profits of the University Endowment Fund to reactivate the PASI to provide aid to graduate students
6. Increase Funding for the Federal Work Study Program. The State Government assigned an additional \$1.7 M to the Federal Work Study Program funding of the UPR from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds of the State.
7. Fundraising Activities - As part of the President and the Board of Trustees' efforts to assist in generating resources for the endowment fund. MR p. 22.

At the time of this visit, UPR was also in negotiations for additional lines of credit from the Government Development that would be used for capital and infrastructure projects.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the above strategies will resolve all of UPR's fiscal problems. New state income and business tax impositions will raise the UPR budget allocation based on (9.6%) percentage of tax revenues and begin movement to a more stable fiscal environment.

However, an improved economy in Puerto Rico may be what is really needed for long-term stability.

## **Concerns**

The Middle States Team has identified several areas of concern as to compliance with Standard 3 including:

1. The inability of the UPRB or the UPR System to provide an audited financial statement for FY 2010 is highly problematic for conducting a review of the fiscal strength or lack thereof of this institution. Furthermore the UPRB monitoring report indicates that the failure to do so stems from a centralized UPR financial accounting system that has had operational problems in the past in generating such reports in a timely manner. The UPRB monitoring report indicates that an audited financial statement should be available on May 1, 2011. (MR pp. 17-19). Regardless, a sound financial accounting system is a basic need for the fiscal effectiveness of an institution even in times of stability. Not to have such a system in place during serious fiscal instability leaves all aspects of the institution's financial life in jeopardy. Regardless, the financial directors provided enough evidence that the UPRB's fiscal house is in order.
2. The dire fiscal situation of UPRB has upset much of its strategic planning and has resulted in a situation where there is a "lack of correlation between the operational and strategic plan". Furthermore, there is "a lack of integration among planning, budgeting, and resource allocation". SS. p 27.
3. The UPR System is funding part of its operating budget by way of a \$100 million line of credit from the Government Development Bank. (MR. p. 22). This line of credit is based on a five –year payback period at six percent interest. At the time of this visit, UPR financial officials were negotiating a ten-year payback. Approximately half of this line of credit was used for taking care of an inherited deficit to the UPR. The remaining half is being used to cover basic operating costs such as salaries, contracts and supplies. While major borrowing is common in higher education finance to fund capital projects, it is rarely done to fund basic operational costs.

## **Recommendations**

1. A complete and thorough audited financial statement be issued for UPRB for FY 2010 as soon as possible.
2. Substantial investment in improving the UPR central financial system.

3. A careful review of UPR fiscal policies on the utilization of lines of credit to fund basic operational expenditures.
4. Evidence that UPRB is able to integrate sound financial planning with its overall institutional planning procedures. A good place to start this would be with the \$9 million in recovery funds from a federal grant.
5. Careful monitoring of proposed fiscal strategies to assure that they will be sufficient to put UPR Bayamon on a stable fiscal footing.

### **Suggestions**

1. The UPRB recognizes that its fiscal problems are not necessarily a temporary aberration that will be alleviated without some sacrifice. UPRB administrators should continue to examine all means of tightening spending and at the same time find ways to increase revenue.
2. UPRB has had some success in the past several years in securing external funds and it needs to build on this success in the future.
3. As UPRB considers attracting more non-traditional evening session, adult and distance learning students, it should maintain concern for the educational needs of these students and see them as a means to increase revenue.

### **Standard 4 - Leadership and Governance**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

#### **Evidence**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón has a typical academic leadership and governance model—academic and administrative leadership positions and a governing body—that has many of the attributes of other multi-unit state systems of public higher education. The University of Puerto Rico System Board of Trustees is the governing body for the UPR System and each of its autonomous parts; there is no independent governing body for UPRB. The UPR Board of Trustees is appointed by the Governor, but they serve fixed terms of six years. The Board also includes elected faculty and student representation. The UPR System, which is a related entity for UPRB, is led by a President that is appointed by the Board and the set of senior System administrators. In addition to administrators in the Central Administration, there is a University

Board composed of UPR administrators, the campus Chancellors, and faculty representatives that addresses policy issues.

The leader at UPRB is the Chancellor, who is appointed by the UPR President and approved by the UPR Board of Trustees after input from a wide variety of formal and informal campus organizations. The Chancellor's senior administrators include the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Administrative Affairs, and the Dean of Student Affairs. As discussed in the section on Standard 2, the Strategic Plan is a UPR system document; UPRB's planning focus is on operational planning. Many policies and processes are System-wide and total campus budgets are determined by the Central Administration, as are faculty and staff headcounts. In addition, and perhaps more important, there are policies at both the UPR System and UPRB that clearly define the relationships both within and among the units at the two levels.

UPRB, as do all UPR campuses, also has an Administrative Board that addresses program, budget, and personnel issues and an Academic Senate that addresses academic, admissions, and student policy issues. These two bodies are main channels for faculty, staff, and student input into administrative decisions. Finally, formal student input occurs through the elected Student Council.

But UPRB's leadership and governance model is complicated by a particular aspect of Puerto Rican political culture and traditions. There is a tradition that UPR System Presidents change with changes in state government. Additionally, Chancellors of the individual campuses change; as do some campus Deans. Members of the Board of Trustees, as noted above, do not change because they serve on staggered fixed terms. The stakeholders at UPRB—and across the UPR System—recognize that these leadership transitions will occur. Indeed, there appears to be widespread recognition that this is a senior leadership phenomenon and that policies and processes are in place to assure continuity in organizational function. First, new Presidents are expected to follow the Strategic Plan of the UPR System; change in the incumbent of the office does not result in a change in strategy. Chancellors and their senior administrators are expected to continue to advance operations in support of the ongoing strategy. Second, there are elaborate policies and processes to ensure continuity in the work of the senior administrators. Examples include transition reports and meetings; these tools are facilitated by the fact that the displaced administrators usually remain in the System and often at the same individual institution. The result is that faculty and staff see their own work in the direct delivery and support of educational offerings as largely unaffected by the leadership changes among senior administrators.

UPRB and nine of the other UPR campuses were placed on probation in June 2010 for lack of compliance with Standard 4 on leadership and governance. After a September 2010 Monitoring Report and onsite visit, the Visiting Team noted that there was progress in addressing some of the Commission's concerns but that there was not sufficient evidence of compliance. As a result, the Commission requested evidence of compliance with seven specific leadership and governance issues through an additional Monitoring Report. UPRB has submitted that report, which explicitly addresses those issues. Here are the seven issues that UPRB and the UPR System have been working on during the past nine months:

1. Evidence of implementation of clear institutional policies specifying the respective authority of the different governance bodies and their respective roles and responsibilities in shared governance

2. Evidence that the Board of Trustees assists in generating resources needed to sustain and improve the institution
3. Evidence of a procedure in place for the periodic objective assessment of the Board of Trustees in meeting stated governing body objectives and responsibilities
4. Evidence that steps have been taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional leadership, particularly in times of governmental transition
5. Evidence that the UPR Action Plan is implemented, that it is assessed, and the data are used for continuous improvement of the institution's processes
6. Evidence that steps have been taken to improve shared governance, especially in documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at the system level
7. Evidence that communication between the Central Administration and the institution and within the institution, is clear, timely, and accurate, and that the sources of such communications are clearly defined and made available to all constituents

As the September Evaluation Team noted at that point, there was evidence of progress; but it was not sufficient progress to move UPRB into compliance. The March Monitoring Report, confirmed by the Self-Study Evaluation Team visit, shows ample evidence of the seriousness with which UPRB now regards the probation and also evidence of significant progress toward compliance with Standard 4. As has been noted in the section on Standard 2, the insights gained during the March visit are often more powerful in demonstrating compliance with the array of accreditation Standards than the Self-Study or Monitoring Reports. In many areas the institution has clearly achieved compliance. In others, such as the third and seventh issues above, they have planned and implemented new initiatives, policies, or processes; but the work is not yet finished. For example, the Board evaluation process is not yet complete, but rubrics for Board evaluations are in development.

UPRB is to be commended for its recent response to its probationary status with a realistic and comprehensive approach to regaining leadership and governance compliance. Probation is a serious issue, and UPRB has responded admirably through actions during the past six months. Examples include the development of its comprehensive Communications Plan 2011 and the implementation of an electronic student voting mechanism for the Student Council that will make voting easier for students with the broader goal of increasing student engagement in the organization's governance structure.

### **Recommendations**

- Strive relentlessly to create full, open access for all stakeholders to the decision making process and the decision makers.
- Develop a schedule for open meetings between the UPR System President and student and faculty groups on the individual campuses. The President plays a role in the administrative leadership of every individual campus in the centralized UPR System, so regular—perhaps every semester or

year—contact should be built into the communication process to supplement electronic communication channels.

- Ensure the openness and transparency of the appointment process for senior administrators to the greatest extent possible.

## **Standard 5 – Administration**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

### **Summary and observation:**

UPRB has a standard administrative structure led by a Chancellor with three senior deans (Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs, Student Affairs). SS Appendix L 16. In recent years, there have been significant changes in the senior personnel at the UPRB. Five of eight senior administrative positions are new appointments including the Chancellor, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dean of Administrative Affairs. The self study does not provide detail on the effectiveness of the administrative units that provide essential services to the students and faculty at UPRB except for the need for additional training and personnel development. Reference is made to a “training plan” that needs “to offer activities more often...to improve the skills of administrative personnel and support personnel.” SS p. 39

### **Accomplishments**

UPRB has replaced most of its senior administrators in the past two years. The self study indicates that the majority of these new appointments have more than “15 years of experience at the institution.” Because of their experience, “their contribution is very valuable and allows for an effective planning and successful decision making. SS. p. 38

A new training coordinator was appointed in the Human Resources Office to coordinate and to add more substance to UPRB’s professional development needs. A Training Committee for Non-Faculty Personnel was formed to assist the new coordinator. The Training Committee revised the guidelines on professional development and issued a professional improvement plan for the UPRB community.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the administration is the staff of directors and departmental personnel who are completely dedicated to UPRB’s mission, its faculty and most importantly, its students. Personnel in a number of areas spoke with great pride about their years of service and the dedication with which they carry out their responsibilities.

### **Concerns**

There are several concerns.

1. The arrival of new leadership resulting in a change in several senior level positions is

not unusual. At many institutions when a chief executive officer (chancellor, president) is appointed, it is not uncommon for him/her to appoint their own senior staff. However, the timing at UPRB might have been problematic. Given the severe fiscal issues, it might have been easier for seasoned and experienced administrators to provide the right leadership, to make decisions and to provide the administrative support to weather the situation. The “new” senior administrators have had to deal with a fiscal crisis not of their own making and are still establishing their credibility with the UPRB community in all aspects of its operations.

2. The self-study alludes to concerns about the administrative leaders and personnel having “the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their duties”. SS p. 31. It is not at all clear what this means and few details have been provided. (note: we don’t find the information in the SS, but on page 38 it supports the contrary). There is no evidence to support this statement during interviews, meetings and other documentation.

## **Recommendations**

1. The senior administration should strive to improve lines of communication with all constituencies (faculty, students, and staff and department personnel).
2. Develop more inclusive planning and administrative processes and procedures.

## **Suggestions**

1. Build on and continue initiatives for professional development across administrative departments.

## **Standard 6- Integrity**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

### **Summary and observation:**

The university provides a wide array of information regarding student admissions, student regulations, academic policies and curriculum on both the website and in the appendices. Details regarding the admission process and dates for general orientation are listed on the web. The course catalog, curriculum requirements and curriculum revisions are all available on the web and in departments. Any changes to existing web information must be approved by the Information System Office, while changes to publications require departmental and dean approval.

General public information regarding personnel policies, hiring, human resources actions are not available on the web, but can be obtained through the university human resources office. The basic requirements for hiring are public and easily accessible. Many of these functions are defined in the university’s General By-laws. These By-laws also cover the process of

recruitment and are publicly disseminated. Hiring for non-teaching positions is also a public announcement, but allows union members who are interested to have the first opportunity.

The issue of integrity and ethics is addressed in the University's By-laws and require both the governing and administrative bodies to lead and develop policies and procedures to ensure the effective follow through. This vision extends to a number of agencies and includes: Board of Trustees, UPR University Board, the UPRB Administrative Board, and the UPRB Academic Senate.

The student handbook, internal handbook and faculty handbook are in compliance with all ethical standards and guidelines.

Student information was easily available on line, but faculty documents, and university personnel information were not as readily accessible.

**Suggestion:**

The web site could be more inclusive by accommodating more faculty information regarding hiring, promotion and tenure process, contact information, and human resources details. All of these are available in print, but not on line.

**Standard 7- Institutional Assessment**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

**Summary and observation:**

The Institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Evidence provided in the self-study and additional documentation indicates that the UPRB has:

- Developed clearly articulated written goals statements at the institutional level and at the departmental level;
- Designed objectives and strategies related to those goals;
- Assessed and evaluated the achievement of such goals and
- Used the results and findings generated from institutional assessment to improve educational programs and student support services.

The UPRB's Institutional Assessment Plan includes a process for aligning the University of Puerto Rico System's Mission and Vision and Planning Agenda (Diez para la Decada) to the University of Bayamon's Mission and Vision, institutional Strategic Plan and work plans from the UPRB's department and offices.

The Institutional Assessment Plan guides the UPRB offices and departments in the measurement of their effectiveness in terms of achievements and fulfillment or non fulfillment of institutional goals and activities.

All of the offices under the leadership of the Chancellor and three Deans (Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Administration) produced a system of effectiveness indicators to monitor and document the attainment of institutional and departmental goals using annual reports.

**Recommendation:**

Produce a simple, attractive, and user-friendly analytical report oriented to internal and external publics documenting the achievement of the UPRB's institutional goals and improvement of programs and services.

**Standard 8 - Student Admissions and Retention**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

**Summary and observation:**

A meeting was held at the Dean's Office on Monday at 14:00. All Directors came well prepared and were open and forthcoming with information when responding to open ended questions. There was a general atmosphere of camaraderie and support for each other's role and performance. As the questions were posted, the directors provided clear and comprehensive information on the services, processes and students they served. There was a general feeling of pride in the task, the institution and the students.

The admissions office has a relatively limited role since most of the process is controlled by the central administration. The office has little responsibility over recruitment efforts for the general student body. Some initiatives of limited scope are segmented into the Office of Continuing Education and the Counseling Office. Such an approach reflects the existing reliance of the campus on central allocation of students through a university-wide recruitment /admission processes. According to the information gathered at the meeting the office of admissions processes a limited number of appeals from students whose applications were declined due to the existing university standards. The university will waive some of those requirements under certain circumstances, if the enrollment does not meet the expected target.

The existing recruitment efforts are spearheaded by the Extended University (UNEX) and Continuing Education and Professional Studies Division (DECEP) with the goal of diversifying and expanding the sources of revenue. The University seems to place high expectations on the potential yield of these activities that would attract non-traditional students that are not the typical audience of the university-wide recruitment targets. An independent and stable earmarked budget might be worthwhile as past experience has demonstrated the high financial return of these programs along with the development of a new niche not yet tapped in a consistent and coordinated way.

Transfer requirements and articulations are clearly and thoroughly stated on the website and students are fully aware of the course transferability.

### **Standard 9 - Student Support Services**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

**The Office of Financial Aid** is still and seemingly quite successfully attempting to adjust to the relatively recent devolution of student aid programs from the central processing center to the individual campuses. The local office seems to have the necessary competencies- skills and knowledge- to respond to the needs of a large group of students. During the interview, it was interesting to observe that, while the transition central-to-local management of student aid programs has not interfered with the ability of the office to provide services to the students, the process is yet to be independently established. Some of the data critical to the planning of an effective operation has not been transmitted by the central administration yet (loan college default rates). It is understandable that an operation of this magnitude presents substantial challenges and that migration of data might be completed in stages.

**The Job Placement Office** appears to be a well orchestrated operation that offers a full range of services from resume writing to job seeking strategies and interviewing. As per request, they presented well organized and thorough records of student employment. The director was well aware of the portfolio of skills that the market requires and expects students to offer. The office seems to maintain a strong and interactive partnership with the academic departments.

**Office of Services for Students With Disabilities:** The Office provides accommodations for nearly 200 students with documented disabilities every semester. The office initiates outreach efforts through a general communication and responds to the individual requests for special accommodations that range between note takers, sign language and technology- based resources. The office works closely with other offices such as job placement and admissions to serve the students with special needs.

While the office appeared to play an active role and make a concerted effort in identifying the students with special needs, securing access to accommodations and services and sustaining a visible presence on campus, it was clear to the team and also expressed by students that the campus is not wheelchair accessible, which would make it non compliant with ADA regulations. (note: Please be advised that our facilities comply with most ADA requirements; mechanical doors, ramps, elevators and restrooms. We are concerned about a fact of a particular student whose needs exceed ADA requirements, and we are making the arrangements to provide assistance to these special needs). That would not only put the university at risk of federal citations disallowances but also conveys a message of indifference to students with special needs. That does not seem to be consistent with the pervasive atmosphere of respect that pervades the institution.

**Counseling:** The office is staffed by seven licensed counselors and one psychologist. The director enthusiastically expounded on the wide array of activities that the office performs from

information and orientation to crisis prevention and early intervention. The Office works with campus security, academic departments and other student service offices in academic and personal counseling as well as campus education programs.

### **Standard 10 - Faculty**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

“The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.”

#### **Strength:**

The faculty and academic professionals of UPRB are a dedicated, caring, and passionate group with an extraordinary commitment to the institution and its students; they are the treasure of the institution. The faculty concern for the academic and personal welfare of the student body is very evident to the team.

Faculty repeatedly characterized their relationship with the student body as an “extended family”, a characterization echoed by students with whom the team met. Both students and faculty volunteered poignant examples of faculty and staff extending themselves in service to students and the team was repeatedly told that this behavior is characteristic of Puerto Rican culture.

#### **Commendation:**

The UPRB faculty are to be commended for the quality of teaching.

#### **Suggestion:**

The passion of the faculty and their commitment to excellence in teaching has been noted. Strategies including mentorship of junior faculty by their senior colleagues should be developed to insure perpetuation of the culture and commitment to teaching excellence.

This past year, a large faculty committee made a Herculean effort to create an assessment plan. Each course and program was aligned to the institutional education mission. An end of year report shows the aligning and identification of student learning outcomes for all programs, including general education. A couple of pilot projects have collected data at the student entry level, mid-program moment, and at the exit point. This collection is then aligned with student

grades, GPA's and national assessment instruments. Further, the information is correlated with indicators obtained from national accreditation institutions such as: NCATE, ABET, and ACBSP. Although this is only the first year of their effort, it is a tremendously useful endeavor, likely to define their student learning outcomes for all programs, including general education, and applicable to the initiative for continuing online education.

UPRB was established as a community college in 1971. In the late 1990s the mission of the UPRB changed from an institution that exclusively offered associate degree programs to one offering primarily bachelor's degrees. The change in mission resulted in a change in the credentials expected of faculty and changes in scholarship expectations. The University has adapted in a manner that is appropriate. At present approximately 36% of the full-time faculty have doctoral degrees and a terminal degree is expected for new appointees – an expectation that is clearly communicated and well understood. There are constraints that limit the rate at which the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees can increase. Over 90% of the full-time faculty is currently tenured; under the present fiscal constraints the few vacancies that result (primarily from retirement) are often maintained. Nonetheless, there is a sizable cohort who have been at the University for thirty or more years, and who are approaching retirement. As these people retire, and with the hoped improvement in the fiscal climate, opportunities to make new hires should increase. The combination of the retirement of master's prepared faculty and their replacement with doctoral prepared faculty will gradually increase the percentage of faculty with appropriate terminal degrees.

**Suggestion:**

In order to complete its transition from a community college it is important that UPRB vigorously execute its plans to increase the percentage of doctoral prepared faculty.

The nominal teaching load of 12 semester hours is appropriate for the mission of the institution. Faculty are often offered opportunities to teach an additional course or courses for extra compensation. The institution is advantaged by having additional sections taught by full-time faculty; faculty have an opportunity to earn extra income. It appears that overload teaching for extra compensation is prevalent.

The team is concerned that excessive teaching loads may impede the ability of junior faculty to meet the scholarship expectations. Maintaining any sort of a research program with a teaching load of fifteen or more hours is an unrealistic expectation.

**Suggestion:**

The workload of faculty should be closely monitored, particularly for non-tenured faculty, so that there are opportunities to expand scholarship to a level appropriate to the mission of UPRB.

The use of part-time/adjunct faculty ranges from none (Counseling and Orientation) to 57.7% of faculty (Social Sciences). The contemporary fiscal realities will necessitate increasing use of such faculty. At present retirees are precluded from teaching until two years after retirement. Whether the restriction against re-employment is a matter of law or local policy is not clear to

the team. Nonetheless, retirees represent a pool of talent that should be appropriately used.

**Suggestion:**

UPRB should investigate whether it may be possible to re-employ retirees earlier than two years subsequent to retirement.

A process exists for the regular evaluation of faculty and it is being used. There is a heavy use of adjunct faculty and their performance is regularly monitored. Guarantees of academic freedom and freedom of expression are evident and published in the faculty handbook.

**Standard 11- Educational Offerings**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

**Summary and observation:**

The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón is an undergraduate institution that offers traditional Associate's and Bachelor's Degree programs—overwhelmingly serving full-time students—in a variety of professional fields, including Business, Education, Science, and Technology; and degree and professional programs for non-traditional students through its Extended University (UNEX). It is widely seen by potential students in Puerto Rico as one of the most appealing higher education institutions. Students are offered opportunities to participate in research courses and an Honor Studies Program, internships, professional practicum's, and other experiential learning experiences. Like many other aspects of UPRB, traditional academic programs must be approved by the Central Administration. Unlike the traditional programs, the programs for non-traditional students are designed and controlled by Bayamon, and the revenues from such programs remains with UPRB. This provides an incentive for the institution to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to program development, and there are plans to do that through significant expansion of UNEX.

UPRB business programs are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). The two education programs are accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), others still are certified or seeking certification from such specialized organizations as the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). The engineering and computer science programs are seeking accreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The Library Resource Center is certified by the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries (ACRL).

UPRB is to be commended for its efforts to obtain specialized professional accreditation or certifications for all of its programs. UPRB is also to be commended for its work to supplement

its traditional undergraduate day programs with programs for non-traditional students that meet the varied needs of adult learners in its geographic region while offering the institution the opportunity to gain additional revenue to help meet its financial challenges in this inhospitable economic environment.

### **Suggestions**

Students in some programs that are offered as articulated programs spend two years at Bayamón and two at other campuses of the UPR System to complete their degrees. Many of these students are quite committed to UPRB and would like to complete their degrees at Bayamon. We suggest that UPRB investigate the demand for such majors to determine if there is enough demand to warrant creating four-year programs at Bayamón.

### **Standard 12 - General Education**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

### **Summary and observation:**

“The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.”

Historically, UPRB began as a community college with specific technology or business oriented programs. As a response to student need, each program developed courses in basic skills: oral and written communication, quantitative skills, information literacy, socio-humanistic knowledge, aesthetics, and critical thinking. The decision in 2006 to transform the school from a community college to a four-year institution has also changed the approach to general education.

During this transition, the departments have offered “service” courses to their colleagues by adapting their core courses, such as for example, quantitative reasoning, to each program. Thus, business majors take a business math course offered by the physics professors, but the electronics majors take a math course suited to their field through the same physics department. Each department “services” others. Exceptions exist in the social sciences and arts where no degree program exists.

This past year, the alignment of programs to the institutional education goals has led to identification of student learning outcomes for the general studies program. The faculty at UPRB have now defined the student outcomes they wish to measure, and are bringing a revised general education program to the senate for approval. This revised general education will assess seven specific areas of student learning, publicize those learning objectives to students, and organize their curriculum and its assessment on those lines. This is a wonderfully well-structured and intellectually rich use of faculty scholarship for the purpose of teaching. The UPRB faculty is to be commended for this effort, and we hope to see its results in the next visit.

The general education requirements are embedded into the program requirements for each major. Faculty within each department determine which general education courses within a given area are most appropriate for students in that major and those choices are embedded into the curriculum plan for the major.

**Strength:**

The alignment of general education courses and academic majors is a strength of this program achieving intellectual breadth while providing students with appropriate choices.

The Mission Statement for UPRB states in part:

“To facilitate significant, continuous and long-lasting learning with the ultimate goal of having students become responsible citizens who will help transform their world with a heightened sense of ethics, esthetics and actions that will contribute to change.”

**Commendation:**

UPRB is commended for the progress in developing general education goals at the course, program, and institutional levels, aligning the goals with the mission statement, and developing a comprehensive plan for the assessment of general education.

**Commendation:**

UPRB is commended for the integration of general education into the academic majors.

The Assessment Committee has been especially productive over the past year. Working with departments, comprehensive assessment plans have been developed, and data gathering has begun, for the assessment of student outcomes in general education. It is evident that information literacy and ethics have been integrated into the academic majors.

In addition, the General Education Committee has forwarded to the Academic Senate a new general education plan.

**Suggestion:**

The Academic Senate and its committees should work diligently to ensure that the new general education proposal is reviewed and acted upon in a timely fashion.

Incoming students are given a flier detailing the goals of general education. The team is concerned, however, that the official print publication of UPRB – the catalog - lacks information regarding the goals of general education and the details of the general education requirements. We note, however, that the individual program illustrations in the catalog do incorporate the general education requirements applicable to that program.

**Recommendation:**

The next print edition of the college catalog incorporates a section on general education, specifically including the goals of general education and a description of the general education

requirements. Additionally, this information should be easily available on the college website

### **Standard 13- Related Educational Activities**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

#### **Summary and observation:**

For over 15 years UPRB has been offering its regular programs as evening programs for nontraditional students. UPRB has also grown non-credit offerings for the community. Moreover, the university has shown its ability to create effective, revenue-generating professional development programs. Since 2006, the university has also offered online versions of general courses and some courses in the professions and a report on the status of the program is being reviewed. The university has also piloted an alternative approach to admission in which non-traditional students and applicants not meeting regular admission standards, complete basic skills in two evening sessions. All related educational offerings are handled by the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DECEP), and its affiliated unit Extended University (UNEX).

#### **Commendations:**

- The university is building a track record of capturing the professional development market, recently by providing training for teachers. Other identified areas of opportunity are in the business/government administration and computer technology fields.
- Offerings are integrally linked to the strength of long standing day-time programs, the expertise and teaching of regular faculty, and the stated university mission.
- There is a consistent effort to analyze results and grow educational offerings carefully and systematically, increasing the chances for success.

#### **Recommendations/Suggestions:**

- Conduct a comprehensive market analysis to better identify needs and potential for growth of the evening program, including the expansion of online offerings, as well as for non-credit professional development offers.
- Consolidate a branded presence for non-credit professional development offerings to surrounding business, industry and government entities
- Plan carefully for technical resources and capacity and faculty professional development that will be necessary for online teaching, and execute accordingly.
- Incorporate an assessment of learning component in all Related Educational Offerings, building up on the work done in this area in for the day programs

## **Standard 14-**

## **Assessment of Student Learning**

The University of Puerto Rico at Bayamón meets these standards.

### **Summary and observation:**

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals

### **Commendation:**

The UPRB produced an excellent Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning which provides a theoretical framework and a detailed plan of action for the development of an implementation of a system of student learning outcomes. This plan integrates the UPRB institutional mission & vision, strategic plan, external accreditations requirements, and the development of educational goals at the program level under a participatory model in which faculty and academic program directors play a critical role.

Through the implementation of the **Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning (Assessment)**, the UPRB aims at continuously strengthening a culture of assessment of learning supported by the institution's mission and vision. The objective of this plan is to evaluate, document, and enrich the attainment of learning outcomes and the improvement of teaching and learning processes.

Through the implementation of the Assessment Plan, the UPRB will:

- Clearly articulate statements of expected student learning outcomes
- Maximize the use of data and information for assessment purposes
- Provide direct and indirect evidence of student learning
- Promote improvement in learning and teaching processes
- Improve curricular designs
- Identify the best way to establish curriculum
- Advise and support academic departments in their educational goals

The UPRB Assessment Plan is based on a well documented theoretical model and a collaborative effort between the UPRB faculty and several committees and offices:

- Committee for Institutional Assessment of Student Learning
- The Institutional Committee of General Education
- Institutional Committee of Educational Goals in Contents
- Office of Assessment and Student Learning
- Office of Institutional Planning and Research

The UPRB Assessment Plan identifies different levels of assessment of student learning:

- Classroom Level
- Department Level
- Program Level.

The UPR Assessment Plan is a living document linked to processes which need to be continuously improved, updated, and modified, with the active participation of faculty and steadfast institutional support of the entire University community.

**Recommendations:**

- Produce a simple, attractive, and user-friendly analytical report oriented to internal and external publics documenting the achievement of the UPRB's Assessment Activities
- Assign adequate human and financial resources for the Office of Assessment and Student Learning in order to ensure the development and sustainability of assessment activities at the UPRB
- Promote assessment driven activities and communication among the UPRB faculty and academic departments

Enhance the process for submitting annual reports on Assessment of Student Learning by UPRB's academic departments and the learning support office.

**Conclusion**

The team was impressed with the atmosphere and sense of family which permeated UPRB. It is a University, which in spite of challenges with the economy and its prior student unrest, has been able to rise above the controversy and maintain its academic focus.

The University seems to have competent leadership which has the confidence of the faculty, staff and students. It is likely that this leadership and stable faculty and staff is a contributing force in the sense of family that permeates the University.

It is also clear that the central administration has confidence in the University's leadership. Their process truly seems to work. While the University still has challenging days ahead with the economy, UPRB it seems is positioned to cope with it.