

**REPORT TO THE FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION, TRUSTEES,
STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO-CAROLINA
CAROLINA, PUERTO RICO**

BY

**AN EVALUATION TEAM REPRESENTING THE
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
OF THE
MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

**PREPARED AFTER STUDY OF THE INSTITUTION'S
SELF-STUDY REPORT AND VISIT TO
THE COLLEGE ON MAY 13-16, 2001**

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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 University of Puerto Rico-Carolina campus. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the college, and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO-CAROLINA

Date the Institution began: 1974

Year of the first graduation class: 1976

At the time of the visit:

Dr. Juan Sepúlveda Rivera, Chancellor

Dr. Rodolfo Gautier, Dean Academic Affairs

Prof. Víctor Pérez, Dean Administration Affairs

Prof. Angel Maldonado, Dean of Student Affairs

Prof. Zoila Matos, Director of Institutional Planning

Dr. Rosa M. Rodríguez, Director of the Library

INTRODUCTION

This report presents to Faculty , Administration, Trustees, Staff, and Students of the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina the findings and recommendations of the Team that visited the institution from May 13 through March 16, 2001. The report is based on the College's Institutional Self-Study, its Catalog, and all pertinent documents and materials as well as the Team's observations resulting from visitations with members of the College community .The evaluation criteria are the standards for accreditation provided in the document entitled *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, published by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association.

The *Characteristics of Excellence* defines integrity as the manner in which an institution specifies its goals, selects and re-trains its faculty, admits students, establishes curricula, determines programs of research, pursues its fields of service, demonstrates sensitivity to equity and diversity issues, allocates its resources and serves the public interest. Institutional integrity is achieved by a transparent communication of academic standards and procedures as disseminated in the university catalog, faculty and student handbooks, and faculty and staff advisement. New course offerings and programs have been implemented successfully consistent with university planning, policies and procedures.

MISSION AND GOALS

The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has long-standing statements of mission and goals that serve to guide the institution in its decision-making process. As stated in the self-study document the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina campus underwent a revision of their mission as a result of a process of autonomy from a two-year associate degree granting institution to a four-year baccalaureate degree institution. On January 15, 1999, the Board of Trustees of the University of Puerto Rico issued a mandate, Certification number 019,1999-2000, calling for UPR-Carolina, along with five other sister institutions, to participate in this process. The mandate became effective on July 1, 1999. Based on actions undertaken by UPR-Carolina, the new mission reads as follows:

"To foster a learning community that supports the development of our students' talents, teaching them to learn so that they can adapt to an ever changing workforce, therefore being able to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and to be leaders in society."

This stated mission places primary focus on issues to prepare students to be effective citizens and to become members of the professional labor force in Puerto Rico. Goals designed to meet this mission focus on the institutional environment, curriculum, learning, and teaching, community service, research and creative action, student life, education and information technology, and planning and assessment.

The mission and goals are clearly stated and consistent with the institution's resources and the needs of its constituents. The mission and goals should be reviewed on an ongoing basis as new responsibilities and opportunities arise in the context of institutional autonomy.

The mission and the vision of the university are widely distributed through the institution catalog, planning documents, the student handbook, annual reports, and other publications, as well as through print and electronic postings in their facilities, and on the university Internet site. The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina is to be commended for its diligent attention in the pursuit of a relevant and appropriate mission, and corresponding goal statements for the institution.

ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND GOVERNANCE

Organization of University of Puerto Rico-Carolina is structured around the UPR system model. It is headed by a system-level President who is advised by a University Board and reports to the UPR Board of Trustees. Reporting directly to the University President, the Chancellor serves as the campus chief academic officer and interacts with the Academic Senate, and the Deans of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Administrative Affairs. In turn, these academic administrators interact with their respective unit organizations to articulate the academic vision, the comprehensive institutional and strategic plans, and the operational budget.

Affixed to this structure are periodic committees charged with specific tasks such as the Planning Committee, and the Institutional Assessment Committee. Institutional autonomy has been instituted by the central administration among the various system-wide campuses and which in turn has resulted in the compression of various administrative positions. For their part, members of the faculty are responsible not just for teaching, but also for curriculum renewal and innovation. Finally, members of the faculty help to craft strategic initiatives for the future evolution of the institution. This overall organizational structure is comparable to those found in similar peer institution systems of higher education.

Institutional autonomy has decentralized part of the administrative and operational responsibilities to the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina campus. In a further step, effective in August of 2001, budgets are to be allocated directly to individual university campus units consistent with overall budget and program proposals submitted by the chancellor of each institution. To the extent that budgetary resources are transferred fully to each campus, institutional autonomy will acquire more tangible significance. Confirmation that autonomy extends to budgetary planning and execution would be useful in determining the shape and direction of organizational effectiveness.

STRENGTH

The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina builds on its two-year program foundations to extend its outreach to the community around a good record of logically established programs that respond well to the needs of employers and interests of students.

WEAKNESSES

While we find a natural progression from a two-year to a four-year institution consistent with the establishment of autonomy, there are organizational and resource issues that need to be addressed if the transformation is to succeed consistent with the institution's commitment to academic excellence.

- There is a need to develop a long-term plan to bring the qualifications of faculty in line with those of a peer-level baccalaureate institution.
- We find that the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty at 53 percent to be somewhat low, with almost half of the teaching faculty falling into the contractual and temporary categories.
- We note that with 57 percent of faculty at the instructor rank is inconsistent with an institution seeking to become a 4-year baccalaureate institution. This is particularly so in light of the fact that only 25 of 200, or 12.5 percent of the faculty hold doctoral degrees.
- We find that institutional planning, which encompasses departmental, strategic, and comprehensive development plans, needs strengthening through linking outcomes assessment to the institutional planning process. While the Institutional Comprehensive Development Plan of 1999-2004 sets a goal of combining institutional planning with an institutional assessment, we see neither a timetable for implementation, nor an identification of specific budgetary resources other than internal resources necessary to bring this about.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend the adoption of a comprehensive long-term faculty development plan. This plan should contain a commitment to a timetable, consistent with the evolution of baccalaureate level programs, to increase the percentage of permanent doctoral, or equivalent terminal degree, qualified faculty. The plan should involve each department that contemplates the creation and/or expansion of baccalaureate degree level programs, the University Faculty Senate, the corresponding Academic Dean, and the University Chancellor. It further should identify specific ways in which current faculty may obtain sufficient financial support to enable them to meet appropriate terminal degree qualifications, as well as adequate budgets

for departments to be able to hire doctoral level qualified faculty as new openings and replacements occur .We also noted with concern the relatively high percentage of faculty at the instructor qualifications level and the relatively high degree of dependency on adjunct and part-time faculty. As University of Puerto Rico-Carolina evolves into a primarily baccalaureate level institution, it is important to ensure that its faculty profile develop at a commensurate rate.

- We recommend the appointment of an Outcomes Assessment Coordinator who will work with the Planning Committee, the Academic Senate, Chairs and Department Faculty, the Office of Institutional Research, the Academic and Administrative Deans, and with the University Chancellor to implement a comprehensive system of outcomes assessment on an ongoing basis. Responsibilities of the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator logically include overall coordination of institutional level assessments, serving as a resource person, and as facilitator for the development of assessment plans for individual departments and programs.

SUGGESTION

- We suggest increased emphasis on expanding faculty and student ownership of institutional goals and objectives. Greater use of electronic mail and Internet postings of meeting agenda and committee minutes may be a cost-effective means of accomplishing this goal.

GOVERNING BOARD

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The University of Puerto Rico 13-member Board of Trustees is highly dedicated and seems very committed to serving the eleven campus units of the system. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the development of all policies for the university system and the implementation rest within the president and the campus chancellors.

The Board remains strongly committed to the mission and goals of the University. The Board and the system president seem to have an excellent working relationship of mutual respect. However, interactions with the campus chancellors appear to be minimal.

GOVERNANCE

The members of the faculty at UPR-Carolina participate in governance in many ways. At the departmental level, committees help to ensure broad-based participation on curriculum planning and renewal, as well as in faculty personnel decisions. At the University level, faculty members serve on the Institutional Personnel Committee, the Academic Senate and the Administrative Board. At the system level, one faculty member from each entity serves on the University Board.

In addition there is the Faculty Association, an entity registered with Puerto Rico State Department, to which between fifty and sixty percent of the faculty belong. The executive board of the Association meets monthly with the Chancellor to discuss issues relating to the faculty. The Association has petitioned the court for the right to represent the faculty as a bargaining entity. The court has ruled that, since members of the faculty serve on the governing boards, they are not entitled to collective bargaining.

Per Board-adopted policy, the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina governance structure should foster clear and timely communication within and among the College community and to provide forums within which the various constituencies (faculty, students, support staff, and administrators) of the institution can discuss and express views on matters deemed to be of interest and importance to the membership of its constituencies.

To this end, the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has a governance structure consisting of: the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board, and the Institutional Personnel Committee. Each unit meets regularly and is governed by its own constitution and communication process for its respective constituents. In this institution, the Academic Senate recommends policy and curricular changes to the Chancellor. In addition to faculty, this body has student and administrative staff members. The Chancellor serves as Chair of the Senate. Their leadership, foresight, and efforts are to be commended.

Although an excellent model on paper, and generally well executed in reality, the institutional governance model needs more 'attention. While opportunities for participation by all are available, some members of the Faculty Senate find the governance process ineffective. The communication is more often than not "one-way" -top down. They feel frequently left out of the loop and not consulted on academic matters that affect them. As already noted above, improved communications regarding committee decisions can help to expand institutional ownership of actions taken at the institutional level. With a strengthened governance process, the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has the potential for even greater leadership locally and nationally as institutional autonomy moves forward.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND CURRICULA

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina education programs consist of two-year professional and technical programs, as well as a growing number of four-year baccalaureate. The shift from a two-year to a four-year institution is evident by the changing mix of new student admissions. In 1994-95, forty percent of new admissions were in two-year professional programs for transfer to senior institutions; over fifty percent were in two-year technical programs, while fewer than five percent were in four-year baccalaureate programs. By the fall of 1999, the proportion of new admits in professional programs was approximately the same as in 1994, while the proportion of students in technical programs had declined to 30 percent and the percentage of new admits in 4-year baccalaureate programs had grown to 30 percent. If these trends continue, it is clear that University of Puerto Rico-Carolina progressively will become a four-year baccalaureate institution over the next several years, and that this transformation is evident in the articulation and implementation of steps in its comprehensive institutional development plans.

CURRENT STATUS

Although institutional autonomy has proceeded fairly quickly within the University of Puerto Rico system, the transformation of its primarily two-year colleges into comprehensive four-year baccalaureate institutions depends on both the level of resources as well as on the speed of adoption of new programs as UPR member institutions put them forth.

Team members noted that many program proposals appear to undergo a relatively long external review period prior to adoption. As an example, the B.A. in Elementary Education has been under review for over two years. Such delays also affect the development of new program proposals such as the B.A. in Tourism, the B.A. and B.S. in Gerontology, the B.B.A. in Accounting, the B.S. in Biology, the B.S. in Chemistry, and the B.A. in Design as noted in the institutional self-study (page 195). What appears clear is that the current pace of new program approval is relatively slow.

One additional question is the preparation and revision of course syllabi. The course outlines placed on file as part of the Self-Study and meet the minimum requirements as set for in Middle States standards for course outlines. They contain a catalog description, course objectives, principal text(s), topics to be covered, evaluation standards, and a short bibliography. Some of these outlines indicated that they had not been revised in over ten years while others were relatively current. What we think needs to be addressed is not just the continuous revision of course outlines, but that course syllabi that are distributed to students contain time-specific topics and activities to be covered as well as specific learning outcomes beyond the existing course objectives. We have already noted the importance of this component in our recommendation regarding the appointment of an Outcomes Assessment Coordinator. We view the incorporation of learning outcomes as helping to clarify how each course contributes to the fulfillment of the institutional mission and objectives, thereby creating greater programmatic and program coherence.

A third overall question is the need to infuse in the ongoing process of curriculum review the growing role of a common core curriculum for B.A. and B.S. degree programs consistent with counterpart baccalaureate programs at the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras and at other peer institutions. We note that at many institutions, B.A. and B.S. four-year programs typically specify a general education core curriculum that is built largely around a liberal arts foundation. While the term "liberal arts" does not appear within the institutional self-study, we do note references to this framework in the initial presentation of University of Puerto Rico-Carolina by its administration, and in terms of informal communications among faculty as part of the Middle States Association team visit.

We note finally in this regard, the extent to which UPR-Carolina can successfully transform itself from a two-year to a four-year institution in light of continuing severe budget constraints. For the 1999-2000 academic year, it ranks nine out of eleven in per student funding, at just under \$4,000, and its student-teacher ratio stands at 45 to 1, one of the highest in the system. It is clear that adequate funding will be necessary if the current and evolving programs in the institution are to succeed in providing sufficient course offerings as institutional autonomy proceeds.

STRENGTHS

- Efforts by the institution to develop collaborative institutional partnership reflect initiative and commitment by individual faculty and departments.

- We commend the dedicated efforts of participating faculty to articulate achievements, areas for improvement, and projections for individual academic degree programs.
- We commend the careful efforts undertaken by many individual departments in terms of program reviews and curriculum revision, notably surveys of employers, secondary school students and counselors, and alumni regarding suggested future directions.
- We further commend the efforts of several departments to sponsor research, organize workshops and colloquia, encourage student activities, and in general enrich the quality of the academic curriculum through these supporting activities.
- We commend in particular the consortium or collaborative work of the integration of the industry in the technology advertising and graphic arts academic programs.
- We commend in particular the consortia relationships between the Automotive Technology program and General and Ford Motors, the Disney college program, and an off-site course offering sequences at the Eli Lilly Pharmaceutical Company, and the Puerto Rico Electrical Power Authority.
- We commend the efforts of the graphics arts and technology advertising program faculty in the acquisition of new computers and equipment necessary to fulfill the needs of the students.

WEAKNESSES

- We find that there is confusion between inputs and outputs under departmental achievements that could be remedied through a more careful effort to engage in institutional assessment. Where listings of faculty hiring are noted as an achievement, they represent an input, not an output measure, for example.
- While space constraints may have determined the presentation of department and program reviews in the institutional Self-Study, we found few linkages between statements of areas for improvement and projections for many departmental programs. It is hoped that these linkages are spelled out more clearly in departmental reviews, and that the rationale is put forth

more clearly in the supporting documentation for the institution's comprehensive development plan.

- There is insufficient emphasis on doctoral, or equivalent terminal degree qualified faculty in the identification of new faculty hires, areas for improvement, and in departmental projections.
- We encourage as part of the departmental and program evaluation processes that projections for new equipment take into account some quantitative dimensions that could be more transparently communicated in budget documents for requests for new equipment. An example would be the number of students enrolled in a specific program that requires laboratory space and equipment, and that for a given number of students there is a need for some ratio of equipment per student by type as essential to the successful implementation and delivery of a given program.

RECOMMENDATION

- In terms of curriculum and programs, we recommend specification (or developing if needed) for all B.A. and B.S. four-year programs a general education core that accounts for approximately half of a student's undergraduate degree requirements. Such a core curriculum component should logically include a broad-based exposure to the value and application of scientific inquiry, humanistic values, and cultural diversity, each of which are consistent with the institution's mission and goals. We view this activity as one that should encompass the entire academic community working through the Faculty Senate, Department Chairs, the Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Chancellor of the University.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

This department offers an associate degree in Banking Finance and Insurance and in 1994 added a baccalaureate degree in Business Administration. Faculty in this department are fully engaged in studying new trends in the business world, reviewing syllabi and assisting students by completing income tax forms. Between 1994 and 1999, student enrollment doubled. These students are easily employed after graduation and leave University of Puerto Rico-Carolina with a sense of dedication and service to the community .

The growth in student enrollment has triggered a concomitant growth in the hiring of new faculty and the acquisition of new computer laboratories and computers. Five new faculty members were hired and additional office space was acquired.

STRENGTHS

- The department has kept pace with the increased demand for additional courses due to the burgeoning student enrollment.
- Over the years the department has conducted the required revision and evaluations of its courses.

WEAKNESS

- There is a need to implement a plan for the recruitment of terminal degree qualified faculty as new programs are proposed and adopted and as existing ones expand.

SUGGESTIONS

- Consider the submission of proposals to various businesses in order to obtain additional computers and equipment.
- Identify a timetable and budgetary resource requirements to raise the educational qualifications of departmental faculty consistent with the emergence of four-year programs.

HOTEL RESTAURANT ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

This department offers an associate degree in Hotel and Restaurant Administration and in 1994 added a baccalaureate degree in this field. Since tourism is such an important element in Puerto Rico's economy, the importance of this department is readily appreciated. The department keeps abreast of changing trends in the hospitality industry not only in Puerto Rico, but also in the United States and Europe. An advisory board provides feedback on new trends and developments in the industry.

Because of the lack of an adequate applicant pool, the department must sometimes hire individuals with a bachelor's degree. These faculty members are encouraged to obtain their master's degree as soon as possible.

STRENGTH

- Several student internship and management trainee programs have been established with organizations such as Valencia Community College in Orlando, Florida, Disney College and Hyatt and Wyndham Hotels.

WEAKNESS

- The hiring of faculty members with minimal educational credentials is not consistent with the transition of UPR-Carolina to a baccalaureate institution.

SUGGESTION

- Widen and augment recruitment efforts to attract more applicants with at least a master's degree level of qualification.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

This department offers a two-year transfer program in elementary education, building on a combination of general liberal arts and major courses in education to better meet the demand for future teachers. Members of the department work closely with the Puerto Rico Department of Education as well as with the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina Division of Continuing Education to strengthen professional opportunities and standards. In 1998, members of the Department

Curriculum Committee developed a proposal for a B.A. in elementary education with a major in mathematics, and completed a revision of the syllabus and departmental catalog offerings in conjunction with a departmental evaluation.

STRENGTHS

- Two of the three members of the department hold the requisite terminal degrees consistent with the evolution toward a four-year program.
- A new student association, "Asociación de Educadores Preparando el Mañana" has been established.
- There is evidence of faculty research being undertaken as well as participation in professional development workshops.

WEAKNESS

- Resource requests need to be linked more closely to outcomes assessment activity

SUGGESTION

- Conduct regular surveys of alumni and establish a database that can more closely track the development of teacher demand in anticipation of future program evolution.

GRAPHICS ARTS DEPARTMENT

This department offers a baccalaureate degree to prepare students for employment in graphic arts industries. UPR-Carolina is only one of two institutions in Puerto Rico that offer studies in graphic arts. The students in this department are exposed to state of the art equipment and receive hands-on experience. In addition, they visit print shops and attend seminars, thus keeping abreast of technological advances. Because of the growth experienced in the department, several new faculty members were recruited and several new computer used in the graphic design laboratory were obtained.

Technological innovations in the industry have necessitated concomitant changes in the curriculum. A revision of the curriculum began in 1998 and some of these curricular changes are now being evaluated.

STRENGTHS

- Students in the department receive hands-on experience.
- Curricular changes are being implemented as the industry changes.

WEAKNESSES

- A lack of adequate funding has impeded the acquisition of modern printing equipment.
- There is a need to focus on a faculty development plan to strengthen the qualifications profile.

SUGGESTION

- Proposals should be submitted in hopes of receiving funding for the purchase of new equipment and computers. These requests should link outcomes to changes in resources as part of the outcomes assessment and planning process.

NATURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

The Natural Sciences Department offers courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. It offers an A.S. in science and also prepares students for transfer to other units of the University of Puerto Rico to complete a bachelor's degree. Most of the faculty members in the department are of high quality and have advanced degrees, mostly doctorates. Most of them have done research, published their findings and made presentations at professional meetings. Some current research projects include: "Medida de Lluvia Acida en Puerto Rico" and "Variación Climática en el Caribe."

STRENGTHS

- A teaching faculty that is deeply committed to its students
- The opportunity to conduct research at this institution and also at the University of Puerto Rico campus in Río Piedras. This has resulted in publications of findings in refereed journals.

WEAKNESS

- Lack of laboratory space for biology and chemistry classes. The two laboratories are used almost continuously on a daily basis. Space is available for two additional laboratories but the required funding for renovations has not been allocated.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the central administration provide funding for the creation of new biology and chemistry laboratories.

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

While current library resources and services are appropriate to support existing academic programs, it is important that University of Puerto Rico-Carolina provide additional library support as enhanced general education and new baccalaureate programs are added. By continuing and expanding its instructional efforts, the Learning Resources Center will contribute to a collaborative effort to increase competencies in the identification, evaluation and use of electronic information. Thus, the Learning Resources Center will assure that "...students are prepared to become independent, self-directed learners." Thus, the institution will continue in conformance with Middle States standards.

COMMENDATIONS

- The Learning Resources Center provides effective library services that focus on the needs and abilities of University of Puerto Rico-Carolina students.
- The Learning Resources Center web-based, automated catalog is searchable in Spanish and English, reflecting the LRC' s commitment to students.
- Support and equipment is provided for the use of audio-visual materials to enrich curricular offerings.

STRENGTHS

- Specific library services are appropriate and of good quality. 92 percent of Carolina students consider library and information services good or better;

90 percent believe that the catalog is good or better; and 88 percent think the hours are good or better.

- The reserve desk is a popular instructional support unit, used at least five times a year by the average student.
- More than 2,000 periodical titles are available on campus electronically through Proquest; Ebscohost, Micro-Juris; and Conoco.
- Puerto Rican materials receive special organization and access support in an effort to fulfill a cultural need.
- Course-related instruction, orientations and publications are provided to increase student abilities to identify , evaluate and use information.
- An innovative homepage is being developed to direct users to course related electronic information on the Internet.
- Faculty are encouraged to request materials to support instruction.
- Learning Resources staffs are competent and make significant contributions to attaining the mission of the institution.
- Efforts have begun to assess Learning Resources services and collections.
- Process statistics are gathered and analyzed. User satisfaction is measured and analyzed. Analysis is used to redesign library services in conformance with campus needs and goals.

WEAKNESSES

- Library facilities will become inadequate as growing enrollment and more baccalaureate students create additional demands for seating. Current seating is available for less than 10 percent of the student population, a number far below accepted by the American Library Association standards.
- To support the University's technology, additional power and network connectivity are required.

- Library collections contain only about 60 percent of the volumes recommended by the American Library Association. The collection cannot support the demands for materials addressing new topics generated by additional baccalaureate programs or the additional depth in the collection required by general education courses at the baccalaureate level.
- The technology mission of the University and the Middle States recommendations on information literacy training are not fully addressed by the current orientation programs and course related instruction provided by the Learning Resource Center.
- Collaboration among the Learning Resources Center, academic departments and information technology units is not developed enough to assure that students develop information literacy. For example, comprehensive programs that integrate information technology and information content have not been developed. As a result, it remains difficult for faculty to integrate technology into their courses and attain the University's technology objectives.

SUGGESTIONS

- Make information literacy a major component of the proposed required freshman course in university life taught by library personnel.
- Develop collaborative relationships with information technology units to provide articulated support services and faculty training leading to technologically enhanced instruction.
- Hire an information literacy librarian with responsibility for offering information literacy instruction in the university life course as well as current course-related instruction and enhanced faculty training in the use of information technology and content.
- Install a 20-24 seat computer laboratory for teaching information literacy and providing faculty training and support in information technology.
- Implement the Learning Resources Center web page to guide access to course related Internet information.

- Install a minimum of 30 additional public access, Internet accessible computers in the Learning Resources Center to address student demands for additional computer support outside the classroom and laboratory while the students are on campus. It will also meet the general access needs of the 47 percent of students who do not have a computer at home. These additional computers will free departments to schedule more classes in their existing laboratories by relieving pressure for student access.
- Make electronic journals and other library resources available off campus to serve the 53 percent of students who have a computer at home by installing a proxy server.
- Implement electronic library reserves to support instruction.
- Include funding for library information resources in all formats in proposals for each new baccalaureate program and for general education.
- Add full library services in the evenings as the evening program is implemented. This will require additional staff to support extended hours throughout all areas of the library.

FACULTY

FACULTY PROFILE

It is evident that the faculty at this institution is a cadre of dedicated, caring professionals who are committed to the well being of students. One of the major strengths of University of Puerto Rico- Carolina is the commitment of this faculty to the student body.

There are 200 faculty members at this institution, of which 106 occupy a tenure-track and 94 are temporary or contract employees. In terms of the highest degree earned, 165 (82%) hold master's degrees, 25 (13%) have earned doctorates and 10 (5%) have a bachelor's degree. The Middle States Association's *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* states that "all faculty should demonstrate continuing professional growth and accept responsibility for maintaining the highest level of professional excellence." It is critically important that faculty members at University of Puerto Rico-Carolina, as the institution moves towards becoming a full-fledged baccalaureate institution, pursue and complete doctoral studies. The Self -Study Report shows that 115 (57.5 %) of the faculty members are instructors, 33 (16.5%) are assistant professors, 37 (18.5%) are associate professors and 15 (7.5 %) are full professors. The combination of such an elevated number of non-tenure track positions and the large number of faculty who do not hold terminal degrees contributes to the fact that over 57% of the faculty hold the lowest academic rank.

In so far as gender is concerned, 53.5% of the faculty is male and 46.5% is female. The 1999 *Digest of Educational Statistics* reports that in the U.S. 53% of all college faculty are white males and 35% are white females. University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has done an excellent job in implementing the Affirmative Action Plan for the Employment of Women and employs 11% more women than are employed in the faculty ranks in the U.S.

RECRUITMENT

All of the procedures for recruitment are clearly delineated in the University of Puerto Rico By-laws. The criteria for selection include excellent academic preparation and teaching experience is highly desirable. The minimum academic requirement is the master's degree although the bachelor's degree is accepted in specific fields in which there is a dearth of applicants.

The applicant pool usually consists of several qualified applicants because advertisements are placed in newspapers and professional journals. Additional applications are solicited from adjunct professors, instructors employed on service contracts and by word of mouth.

The candidate submits a curriculum vitae, an application and other required documents to the Human Resources Office. This documentation is submitted to the appropriate department and is evaluated by the chairperson and the departmental personnel committee. After the committee screens and selects the successful applicant, a recommendation is made to the Dean of Academic Affairs who, in turn, submits the recommendation to the Chancellor.

FACULTY WORKLOAD

The academic year is subdivided into three quarter terms of twelve weeks each. Faculty members teach twelve hours during the first and second quarters and nine hours during the last quarter, for a total of thirty-three hours per year. At all of the other campuses of the University of Puerto Rico the academic year is divided into two semesters and faculty teach twelve hours per semester, for a total of twenty-four hours. The university administration and the full-time faculty at Carolina are currently at odds over an equal pay for equal work issue. The faculty has filed a class action suit.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Faculty development occurs in many and varied ways at the institution. It includes the pursuit of doctorates, the presentation of papers and attendance at professional conferences, participation in workshops on various topics including videoconferencing and technology-related initiative. A Faculty Development Committee was established in 1998 under the auspices of the Dean of Academic Affairs. The committee produced a needs assessment instrument and faculty members indicated their faculty development preferences. Between March 1998, and April 2000, approximately fourteen activities were held including a workshop on evaluating academic programs, one on distance learning and two on PowerPoint presentations.

As far as the completion of graduate work is concerned, University of Puerto Rico provides excellent opportunities for faculty members to earn their doctorate. Faculty members receive full tuition remission for courses taken towards the completion of the doctorate. In addition, several faculty members receive their

full salary while pursuing graduate studies. As the institution makes the transition from a two-year to a four-year institution, more faculty members should avail themselves of the opportunities that are available to complete graduate work, thus improving the intellectual quality of the faculty.

STRENGTHS

- The faculty at UPR-Carolina is a cadre of dedicated, committed professionals. Diversity is enhanced with the high percentage of female faculty members.
- Faculty development activities are carefully conceived, well organized and executed.
- Some faculty are using technology in their instruction and research. For example, one faculty member in natural sciences has developed a database of Puerto Rican flora to supplement U.S. published texts and make her biology course more interesting for students.

WEAKNESSES

- An overwhelming majority of faculty members hold the master's degree instead of a terminal degree.
- The heavy teaching load mitigates against the pursuit of doctorate degrees.
- Most faculty indicate that they lack training for the effective use of technology in the classroom.

SUGGESTIONS

- Encourage more faculty members to complete doctoral studies.
- Employ more tenure-track faculty, thus reducing the dependence on adjunct faculty.
- Faculty should integrate information technology in instruction

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assign information technology and learning resource personnel to develop an integrated training program for faculty that addresses the instructional use of information technology and content. Offer the training program on a regular basis. Assist faculty in implementing technology in the classroom.

FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND OTHER RESOURCES

The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has stated their objective of providing the community with adequate physical facilities and equipment to maintain an effective academic environment.

The goals and objectives related to facilities, equipment and other resources were appropriately considered in determining the strengths and weaknesses addressed in the self- study report, and the financial plan seems to begin to address some of the issues as stated. Thus, creating a course of action to resolved the problems. In the Capital Improvement Plan the document outlines the strategies to deal with equipment replacement, maintenance and capital projects.

STRENGTHS

- The University is to be commended for performing a thorough review of this area. The review was complex in scope and thorough in its details producing an analysis that will provide the blue print for future construction and equipment acquisition.
- The University has acknowledged the need to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for the protection of physically challenged people in the Self Study and in the budget. The university has commenced to work towards fulfilling the needs of this sector of the university population.
- The University has conducted a thorough evaluation of all college facilities, equipment, and other resources in support of the university mission and compliance with regulatory agencies.

WEAKNESSES

- In spite of the fact that the institution has taken steps to comply with ADA regulations, some of the ramps and parking facilities have not resulted in adequate accommodations for the physically challenged population. In addition, current construction impedes accessibility to areas for the disabled.
- University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has developed a list of deferred maintenance items amounting to \$1.4 million that require immediate attention. Deferring maintenance will eventually result in the need for even

larger amounts of dollars to conduct necessary repairs or replacements, in addition to undermining the appearance and pride of the institution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- University of Puerto Rico-Carolina must assign the utmost priority in completing the necessary modifications to comply with ADA' s requirements and the potential loss of federal funds.
- The university should follow the ADA regulations and specifications in reviewing some of the accommodations already in place to see if they meet the minimum standards as required by the Act.

SUGGESTION

- The University should review the current list of deferred maintenance items and establish a priority list to request funding for these projects.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina has identified the following goals and objectives in the Self Study.

- To promote to the maximum the use of technological resources in the teaching-learning process.
- To continuously incorporate information and telecommunication technologies into institutional endeavors.

The information technology infrastructure is extensive. The telecommunication network is expanding. A new telephone system has been installed. There are four offices that provide general and specialized support for computing; the Information Systems Office, the Office of Academic Computing, the Educational Technology Center in the Learning Resource Center, and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research. In addition, some academic departments have technical staff to support their computer laboratories.

The Academic Computing Office provides technical support to computer laboratories and with the Office of Faculty Development plans and presents training in the use of information technology. The Office also reviews and assists departments making proposals for information technology resources. The Educational Technology Center manages and schedules two multi-media classrooms, delivers and operates audio-visual equipment to campus classrooms, and assists faculty with creation of multimedia presentations.

The Information Systems Office is responsible for supporting the campus network, the telephone system, and servers that manage student information, electronic mail, the Carolina campus web site, and a variety of special databases. The Office provides data reports to administrative offices as requested. The Office also provides back up technical support to the Academic Computing Office and academic departments.

More than 400 personal computers have been placed in operation on faculty, administrator and staff desktops and in 14 computer laboratories in several academic departments. Among the services available on-line for faculty, administrators and students, are on-line admissions, on-line registration, on-line bibliographic and full text journal and periodical resources, student information

for counseling and advising. There are also several departmental publications on-line.

STRENGTHS

- The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina administration and academic departments have moved quickly to prepare their management and instructional environments for use of technology for effective support of the teaching and learning enterprise.
- Computer support staff of a variety of departments is able to work together to provide assistance to areas as needed.
- There is broadly based awareness of the value of information technologies in fulfilling the University's instructional and management objectives.

WEAKNESSES

- Administrative information servers in the Office of Information Systems are aging and subject to higher incidence of failure. All server acquisitions have been put on hold pending a Central Administration vendor selection and negotiation for server hardware to support new administrative systems.
- Compensation levels for technical support positions are low compared to the market in the area. Departments and computer services units report that this leads to retention and recruitment problems. There are four positions remaining vacant. Unfilled technician positions affect the ability of departments to open their laboratories for general student use outside of scheduled class time.
- Students and faculty report that there are insufficient computer laboratory facilities for student use outside of classroom hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- University of Puerto Rico-Carolina must assign the utmost priority in completing the necessary modifications to comply with ADA's requirements and the potential loss of federal funds.
- The university should follow the ADA regulations and specifications in reviewing some of the accommodations already in place to see if they meet the minimum standards as required by the Act.

SUGGESTION

- Formalize the Office of Academic Computing to coordinate instructional computing, technical support, and training across academic departments, the Educational Technology Center, the Office of Planning and Institutional Research, and the Office of Information Systems to leverage services, support and laboratory availability for teaching across the curriculum.

STUDENTS SERVICES AND STUDENT LIFE

STUDENT PROFILE

The average student at the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina is between 18 and 19 years old, is female (62%), comes from the Carolina and San Juan metropolitan area, is a full-time student (71%) and receives financial aid (58%). As of the 1999-2000 academic year the typical student was enrolled in a baccalaureate program (54%) with the remainder enrolled in technical programs (19%) and transfer programs (26%).

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services include: Registrar's Office, Admissions, Financial Aid, Guidance and Counseling, Health, Employment, Student Childcare, Student Activities, Student Support Services and Athletics with the exception of the Registrar's Office and Student Support Services.

COMMENDATIONS

- The Registrar's Office has demonstrated its commitment to serve to the student body by maintaining office hours, which extend beyond those, which one would expect to find. By moving from a manual to an electronic registration process, the University has provided the students with a process that allows for fast and efficient registration. In an institution where all students register three times a year this has led to an improvement in student morale and a more efficient use of staff time.
- The Student Support Services Program serves well approximately 300 at-risk students.

STRENGTHS

- There is an orientation program that all new students are expected to attend before the beginning of the fall quarter. At that time students are provided with the information necessary to understand their rights and responsibilities within the framework of the university.

- Student records are computerized and secure, and information is shared among offices that serve students, i.e. registrar, admissions, financial aid, counseling and faculty counselors.
- Student transcripts are processed within 48 hours of the time students request them.
- The University provides financial and other support for student parents, which helps them to find and pay for adequate childcare so that they can continue their studies. Additionally, the University offers parenting classes as well as workshops on time management and other issues facing student parents with young children.
- The existence of a program of student counselors to serve as mentors to incoming students provides valuable service to those students and may contribute to retention rates.
- In order to address the needs of the working adult, The University has recently established an Evening School for the adult student.

WEAKNESSES

- Economically speaking, Carolina is one of the fastest growing areas of Puerto Rico. In such an area the lack of a formal Career Center may have a negative impact on the ability of its students to secure employment consistent with the education they are receiving at the University.
- There were 1752 class withdrawals during the 1999-2000 academic year. In conversations with the Dean of Student Affairs, he affirmed that the reason most often given for withdrawing from classes was academic difficulties. With those statistics it is of great concern that, except for the Student Support Services Program which provides tutoring for 300 selected students, there is no system of tutoring for students who are experiencing academic difficulty.
- While it is observable that some attempt has been made to make the campus handicapped-accessible, our observations and conversations with students made it clear that more efforts need to be made. In addition to addressing questions of physical accessibility, it is also obvious that greater efforts

must be made to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

- There is a perception among students that there is a lack of recreation/sports facilities for the students on campus and that this lack has a negative impact on their university experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive program to address the needs of students with disabilities as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Assign a budget to the endeavor. Provide faculty development to: increase faculty awareness of the problems faced by those students, sensitize the faculty to their needs, and provide faculty with strategies for providing appropriate accommodations.
- The Dean of Student Affairs needs to provide guidance and leadership not only to the directors and other staff in the student services areas so that they participate in the development and realization of a vision for integrated student services but should also provide leadership to the student government and clubs.

INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

There is a great deal of planning activity underway at the University of Puerto Rico Carolina. The University of Puerto Rico system has a strategic plan to guide all units of the system. This campus has a formal, university-wide strategic plan to guide the use of staff time, facilities, and financial resources. The strategic plan is fully articulated with the system strategic plan, demonstrating an understanding most important external force. A comprehensive plan containing realistic goals and using appropriate process data guides the operational initiatives of the University and is fully articulated with the UPR-Carolina strategic plan. Annual budget petitions address departmental needs and the comprehensive plan. The Institution has demonstrated its ability to undertake aggressive and successful planning in such areas as facility development, technology, and support for new academic programs. However, there does not appear to have been the same level of energy devoted to other key institutional areas such as the delivery of student services.

STRENGTHS

- The plans are realistic and are actively guiding the current development of the University of Puerto Rico-Carolina based on process data. Planning initiatives like the new business and sciences facility, improvements in campus networking and support for new baccalaureate programs demonstrate that much planning has been successfully achieved.
- Plans conform to the UPR system strategic plan and include a careful assessment of the financial implications of recommended initiatives.
- Planning is based on adequate and appropriate process data, such as per capita enrollment trends.

WEAKNESS

- Faculty ownership and support of planning are limited by lack of departmental participation in final budget assignments, after the budget is returned from the President's Office. As a result, faculty is unclear about why certain plans are implemented and others are not. This uncertainty can result in lack of support for campus initiatives.

SUGGESTIONS

- Develop and use outcome measures to replace current process measured used in institutional planning.
- Evolve current planning efforts to achieve an ongoing, outcomes-based planning process, addressing program relevance and the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.
- Develop and implement a feedback loop in the budget process to assure department participation in final budget assignments.
- Post strategic and comprehensive plans, as well as major committee minutes, on the home page.

BUDGET PLANNING AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The Dean of Administrative Affairs manages fiscal and administrative affairs at this institution. Included within this organizational unit are accounting and budgeting, administrative services, human resources, security, facility operations, facility planning, and construction.

UPR-Carolina's budget planning and resource allocation processes as outlined in the self-study accurately reflect the current state of the systems in place. The university has developed a comprehensive budget planning process since the implementation of autonomy.

Our review of budget data for the previous three fiscal years reflects recurring deficiencies in the allocation of financial resources to fulfill the university's mission. Our interviews with the various university constituencies indicate that in many cases lack of funding is overcome by the personal commitment of faculty, staff and students, as evidenced by the students' use of personal vehicles to participate in athletic events, purchasing athletic uniforms, participation by faculty in activities without adequate compensation, etc.

STRENGTHS

- Budget planning is being conducted with full participation of the university's various constituencies.
- UPR-Carolina maintains an adequate system that provides financial accountability and a budget that accurately reflects institutional resources.

WEAKNESS

- Current resource constraints will prevent the university to evolve into a comprehensive four- year institution capable of maintaining its human and physical resources in a pattern consistent with the commitment to academic excellence for its students.

SUGGESTIONS

- The President and Board of Trustees must ensure that adequate resources can support the university's mission.
- Provide departmental participation in the final budget assignments.

The financial and administrative staff of the College are appropriately credentialized and well respected within the College community for their expertise and effective management of the College's fiscal and physical resources. Administrative and financial services are managed in a manner that reflects both a commitment to quality and cost effectiveness.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

The Characteristics of Excellence require institutions to have in place a comprehensive plan for the assessment of outcomes. An effective assessment plan requires that an institution assess outcomes at all levels, linking course goals to program goals and both to institutional goals. While the University has made significant progress in assessment at the course level, it needs to give increased attention to extending the assessment to the programmatic and institutional level to have the type of systematic and comprehensive plan that will lead to continuous institutional improvement.

Institutional effectiveness requires a structure of broad-based communication among the constituent decision-making units. Oral and written communication, both printed and electronic, of committee meeting agendas and minutes of meetings, are essential elements to expand community participation in support of institutional coherence and effectiveness.

COMMENDATIONS

- Both faculty and administration has demonstrated an awareness of the need to develop a comprehensive and effective institutional assessment plan and the incorporation of the assessment findings into institutional planning processes.
- Carolina has recognized the importance of assessment by proposing the establishment of a new full-time position to provide a staff member to coordinate the institution's outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness program.

STRENGTHS

- Carolina has provided resources that have enabled a significant number of faculty members to participate in on- and off-campus workshops that have provided training in classroom assessment techniques.
- Faculty have been active in utilizing classroom assessment in the classroom setting.
- The Institutional Assessment Committee has recently developed a survey to gather information from the institution's alumni concerning their

perceptions of the institution's programs, which expands the range of assessment data being collected.

- Carolina also has a comprehensive system in place that addresses the evaluation of teaching effectiveness that includes student, peer and administrative evaluation of teaching effectiveness

WEAKNESSES

- University of Puerto Rico-Carolina needs to give increased attention to the development of systematic and on-going assessment plans at the programmatic and institutional level; this applies to all areas of the institution (i.e., academic, student affairs, and administrative services)
- The statement of desired student-learning outcomes for students in course syllabi and programmatic description in the level of specificity and ability to be measurable. Programs with particularly well-developed student outcomes include, but are not necessarily limited to, industrial automation and interior design. These programs may serve as models for other programs in their development of more specific and measurable student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina should move forward in an expedient manner to establish the position to coordinate institutional outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness. This proposed position should draw upon the existing faculty resources as well as the Office of Planning and Institutional Studies to achieve greater coherence in its planning initiatives and budgetary operations.
- The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina needs to devote increased attention to the development of specific student learning outcomes to be published in all course syllabi and programmatic descriptions. In addition, the desired student learning outcomes need to be stated in terms that ensure that they are measurable so that the data collect can be utilized for programmatic improvement and future planning activities.

CATALOGS, PUBLICATIONS AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Institutional integrity requires a structure of broad-based communication setting out "...the responsibilities of the institution and the student." Oral and written communication, both printed and electronic, helps expand student and community participation and thus support institution's reputation. The Committee finds that the catalog and related documents contain appropriate information and reinforce the institutional commitment to students. The Committee found that distribution of and orientation to these documents is appropriate. Thus, the Committee feels that honesty and accuracy expressed in the UPR Catalog and other publications meet current accreditation standards.

COMMENDATIONS

- The Carolina catalog is clear, accurate, attractive and graphically interesting, and is available electronically in a compact disk version
- Enrollment information is available on the homepage.
- New students must participate in a required orientation intended, in part, to communicate student rights and responsibilities.

STRENGTHS

- The institutional catalog contains a current roster of faculty with appropriate career information, basic academic policies, and a description of course offerings, accreditation, and financial information.
- Statements about accreditation by Middle States and the Commission on Higher Education are presented early in the catalog, engendering public trust.
- Auxiliary publications, like the student manual and student bylaws, are consistent with the content and philosophy of the catalog.
- For accountability purposes a signoff system documents that each student has received a copy of the catalog is in place.

WEAKNESS

- Information for students is located in many publications. This can lead to confusion and ignorance of important regulations on the part of students.

SUGGESTIONS

- Create a marketing plan using existing student personnel resources to develop an articulated and comprehensive approach carrying out the University's responsibility to fully inform students and the community.
- Create one single publication with all student regulations, encouraging student awareness and compliance
- Continue to develop and enhance the student orientation program, encouraging student awareness and compliance.
- Make catalog and publication with all student regulations available on the university's homepage.
- Make the signoff system electronic.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND RENEWAL

The Characteristics of Excellence notes that institutional change and renewal are essential characteristics of educational vitality. The University of Puerto Rico-Carolina, as evidenced by their self-study, is currently engaged in this process. As it makes the transition from a two year to a four-year institution, UPR-Carolina has identified new baccalaureate degree programs to complement its current degree programs at both the associate and baccalaureate levels. In developing new degree programs, UPR-Carolina has been responsive to the needs of the community, which it serves. In the case of the new degree program in Tourism, UPR-Carolina has developed a program, which will be unique to the University of Puerto Rico system.

As UPR-Carolina engages in its institutional transformation process, the institution is also making the commitment to continue to engage in institutional planning and decision making that is informed by the collection and use of outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness data. As it engages in the process of institutional change, UPR-Carolina remains committed to its historical focus of serving its students who remain its most important and valuable resource.

FUTURE PLANS

- The Guidance Department has proposed a course in University Life, which would be semester-long orientation to the issues and concerns of university students.
- A new student activities complex is planned, and funding has been approved, that will include a theater and gymnasium and will address the need for more student recreation space on campus.
- A new Childcare Center has been approved and building will begin in December of 2001. This will provide facilities on campus for the children of employees.
- Ascertain the needs that the students in the Evening School have for student services and make appropriate changes in the hours of operation of those services.
- Investigate the possibilities of improving the career counseling opportunities on campus.

- Develop an assessment task force to assess Student Services and institute a plan of continuous review and improvement.
- Investigate the possibility of expanding the Student Support Services Program to meet the needs of all students who could benefit from its services.
- Institutional autonomy is consistent with the transformation of UPRC from a two to a four-year institution. This transformation is consistent with the institutional mission, but we have already noted that this carries both core curriculum and faculty qualifications questions that need to be addressed.

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