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Monitoring Report

Submitted to
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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[Most Recent Commission Action: "To accept the Monitoring Report 2008 submitted by the institution. To request a monitor report, due by April 1, 2009, (1) further documenting progress in the implementation of effective institutional planning and assessment processes (Standard 7) and (2) the status of institutional finances and enrollment (Standard3). The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2010-2011."]

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHO-C	Catering Services of the School of Restaurant and Hotel Administration
ASLP	Assessment of Student Learning Plan
CA	University of Puerto Rico Central Administration
CAAPP	“Comité Institucional de Acreditación, Avalúo, Planificación y Presupuesto” (Institutional Accreditation, Assessment, Planning and Budget Committee)
DECEP	Continuing Education and Professionals Studies Division
DSA	Dean for Student Affairs Office
GenEd	General Education
OAA	Assessment and Accreditation Office
OPIR	Office of Planning and Institutional Research
OSP	UPRCA Operational Strategic Plan
OSPR	UPRCA Operational Strategic Plan Revised
PR	Puerto Rico
UAP	University Assessment Plan
UPR	University of Puerto Rico
UPRCA	University of Puerto Rico at Carolina
UPR-S	University of Puerto Rico System

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I. Introduction

In a letter dated June 27, 2008, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) requested the University of Puerto Rico at Carolina to submit a monitoring report documenting progress in the implementation of effective institutional planning and assessment processes (Standard 7) and the status of institutional finances and enrollment (Standard 3). In accordance with this request, the following report details our trajectory in these matters and analyzes our progress to date.

II. Institutional Update

The University of Puerto Rico at Carolina (UPRCA) is part of the Government of Puerto Rico's eleven-unit system of higher education (UPR-S). Located in Carolina, Puerto Rico, it was originally meant to serve the northeastern geographical area, however, due to its singular academic offering this is currently no longer relevant, and the institution receives students from different geographical areas of the island and a small group of students from the Caribbean. (See Appendix 2 A, *Organizational Chart*.)

The need for UPRCA to reexamine ongoing strategic planning, budget and assessment procedures became apparent in the course of the monitoring process advocated by MSCHE beginning in 2006, University of Puerto Rico Central Administration (CA) directives, and as a result of assessment and accreditation processes. Accordingly, the institution has been involved in a series of initiatives related to the mission and strategic plan. Since 2006, the academic community, students, faculty and non-teaching staff- has gathered in planning and assessment committees. The charge was to examine in detail strategic planning initiatives and outcomes in order to ensure their compliance with new guidelines and accreditation standards and submit specific courses of action. An important recommendation by all committees stated that the mission, goals and objectives needed to be revised in order to reflect the current and future direction of the Institution. As a result of these discussions and consultations within the Institution's constituency, the Academic Senate approved the new mission statement and ensuing goals and objectives on November 20, 2008. (See Appendix 2 B, *Certification No. 11, 2008-2009*)

In the past year, UPRCA has placed efforts on the development of a comprehensive institutional assessment model which incorporates all institutional assessment plans and procedures under a conceptual framework based on an expanded statement of purpose, the CA *Diez para la Década* and *Diez para la Década Operacional* and accreditation standards. Procedures for establishing priorities and aligning goals, objectives and budget have been implemented, and a revision of the institutional effectiveness plan is in progress. (See Appendix 2 C, *Diez para la Década*, and *Diez para la Década Operacional*.)

Currently, academic and educational support services, guided by our new mission and revised goals and objectives, are at different stages of assessment. With

assistance from the Office for Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) and the Office for Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR), educational support services are in the process of establishing assessment plans, success indicators and data collecting strategies in order to document achievements and identify strengths and challenges to inform accreditation agencies and institutional planning.

This report updates our progress in aligning our new mission, goals and objectives with our academic priorities and budget allocations; our improvement of the budgetary, assessment and planning processes in response to CA directives; the status of the revision of our strategic plan; and the need to reposition a detailed blueprint for the annual assessment of institutional effectiveness. It also provides a detailed table of our achievements since Monitoring Report 2008 (MR2008).

III. Standard 7: Institutional Effectiveness

This section of the Monitoring Report 2009 (MR2009) documents our improvement in the implementation of effective institutional planning and assessment processes at all levels. It is divided into the following sub-sections: Linking Planning and Budget; UPRCA Budget-Planning Process; Strategic Plan and Assessment; Faculty and Assessment; General Education and Assessment; Academic Programs and Assessment; Professional Accreditation and Assessment; Institutional Accreditation and Levels of Assessment; Institutional Effectiveness Plan; Office for Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR); and UPR-S Benchmarking Studies.

Linking Planning and Budget

The UPRCA Operational Strategic Plan (2006-2011) (OSP) was from its inception in 2006 aligned with the system-wide planning strategies set in *Diez para la Década*. In June 2007, the University of Puerto Rico's Board of Trustees issued new guidelines for determining budget priorities and allocations in all UPR-S units. Beginning with academic year 2008-2009, the goals and objectives of the OSP are being linked to specific budget allocations, following the model developed by the Central Administration in *Diez para la Década Operacional*. This new document from the CA provides a system-wide planning/budgeting alignment standard for all units under the UPR-S and was initiated in the present academic year at all UPRCA planning and assessment levels.

The OSP includes institutional priorities, the strategic directions needed to attain those priorities, the measures of their success, and multi-year budget allocations. Thus, it aligns all planning, assessment and resources needed to fulfill the university's mission. As a result of the new Board of Trustees' directive and the interpretation and analysis of documents and data relevant to the writing of MR2009, the Institutional Accreditation, Assessment, Planning and Budget Committee (CAAPP, in Spanish) was charged with revising the strategic plan and the institutional effectiveness plan in September 2008. The committee made sure that explicit linkages to regular decision making, key strategic areas and new budgeting strategies as well as appropriate measures of success are evident in the Operational

Strategic Plan Revised (OSPR). Underlying the revision process is *Diez para la Década Operacional UPRCA: UPRCA Operational Directions and Spheres of Action*, the Institution’s budget-planning document developed by the deans and CAAPP. (See Appendix 3 A, *UPRCA Operational Strategic Plan*, revised; Appendix 3 B, *UPRCA Summary of Operational Directions and Spheres of Action*, and Appendix 3 C, *UPRCA Operational Directions and Spheres of Action in Detail 2008-2009*.)

UPRCA Budget-Planning Process

The new Board of Trustees’ directive requires that each dean -academic, student and administrative- submit to the Chancellor an operational budget proposal and a projected budget proposal for the next fiscal year aligned with the key priorities in their areas and within the guiding principles set forth in *Diez para la Década Operacional* and the OSPR. In effect, it generates action plans to implement *Diez para la Década Operacional UPRCA* and the OSPR.

The deans, in consultation with their staffs and their constituents, first ascertain the key yearly priorities in their areas. Identifying academic priorities entails discussions with department chairs and faculty to identify the strategic initiatives they consider essential, while in the student and administrative deanships office directors meet with their staff to prioritize key areas. In addition, support offices perform longitudinal analyses based on campus enrollment, salaries and expenses, and services rendered. This process allows each office to assess its achievements and identify the priorities that will constitute the basis of its strategic planning.

The data obtained is further discussed within the deanships to link key priorities to strategic goals, and ascertain indicators and success criteria. To conclude the process, the alignment of strategic goals and budget allocations is brought together in the annual planning and budget document presented to the UPRCA Administrative Board for approval. Regular budget-planning-assessment meetings, both within the institution and with CA, ascertain the effective and efficient use of institutional resources and provide feedback for institutional effectiveness.

The following table shows the priorities established by the deanships for academic years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

**TABLE 1
UPR CAROLINA – DEANSHIPS’ PRIORITIES**

DEANSHIPS	PRIORITIES
Academic Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the General Education curricular component • Develop program and institutional assessment • Establish the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration • Achieve professional accreditation and revise academic programs • Strengthen faculty development • Develop undergraduate and faculty research

Administrative Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install solar lights on campus • Rehabilitate the Administration Building • Renovate bathrooms servicing students • Align UPRCA budget with planning and <i>Diez para la Década Operacional</i> • Develop a Non-traditional Fund Sources Plan
Student Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen recruitment initiatives • Strengthen the extracurricular and extramural activities program • Promote ongoing assessment of student services and use results to improve services • Strengthen the services rendered by the Placement Office • Strengthen the services offered by the Athletic Program

Strategic Plan and Assessment

As previously stated, the revision of the mission and goals was followed by a revision of the UPRCA Operational Strategic Plan. The revision of the UPRCA Operational Strategic Plan by CAAPP clarifies and defines the objectives of the strategic plan and, more importantly, the indicators that guide strategic initiatives.

To evidence the progress of institutional planning initiatives and objectives, deans and office directors prepare unit-specific reports that follow up on and monitor the progress of each unit toward the implementation of the OSPR. The reports ensure that the implementation, timeliness, and usefulness of the OSPR are evaluated and that planning efforts are followed by action. For example, the Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs recently released a report that documents progress made on specific, demanding areas assigned to the office. (See Appendix 3 D, *Cumplimiento con el Plan Estratégico en la Cultura de Evaluación, Avalúo Institucional y Resultados de las Iniciativas de Avalúo.*)

Another tool for monitoring and documenting the implementation of the OSPR was developed by CAAPP. To retrieve updated information of our progress a table was created to document achievements specific to the OSPR and to further record progress in areas that apply to MR2009. The current processes of institutional assessment, accreditation, and institutional studies have strengthened the effectiveness and quality of institutional data-gathering efforts, and the ensuing data has informed the development of the table. The Table of Achievements at present reveals progress made in 2007 and 2008 in the implementation of the OSPR. (See Appendix 3 E, *Achievements Table 2007 and 2008*)

With this instrument, we are able to know with a greater level of specificity how the different constituents charged with different areas, objectives, and directions of the OSPR are progressing. We are able to obtain feedback on the progression of institutional goals and objectives and determine whether the plan is being implemented as scheduled. Since CAAPP has found this mechanism useful for documenting planning and assessment efforts, a version of this tool has been permanently incorporated in the Comprehensive Institutional Model for Assessment. (See Section V)

One very important piece of information that we have learned from creating this table is that there has been continuous work toward the implementation of strategic initiatives at UPRCA. Short-term achievements, such as those in the area of technological infrastructure, evidence the implementation of strategic initiatives as planned. Long-term objectives have also proceeded on schedule, such as the development of the Department of Hotel and Restaurant Administration; first obtaining its professional accreditation in August 2008, and then becoming the only School of its kind in the Caribbean in October 2008. (See Appendix 3 F, *Accreditation Document and School Incorporation*)

Faculty and Assessment

An important key area that has represented a challenge for UPRCA is the strengthening of an institutional culture of assessment. In this respect, UPRCA has taken consistent steps toward the implementation of methods of assessment and fortifying a culture responsive to these processes.

Faculty has received assessment training and support since the deployment of the University Assessment Plan (UAP) through the Faculty Development Office, the Office of Accreditation and Assessment, the General Education Program and Title V. As documented in MR2008, the plan provided valuable data for continuing institutional improvement. The Achievement Table 2007/2008 documents the latest activity in faculty training. (See Appendix 3 E, *Achievements Table 2007 and 2008*)

Different forms of faculty evaluations are a part of the ongoing assessment processes that have been systematized at UPRCA. For instance, at the end of each academic term faculty members are evaluated by their students. Once yearly, each faculty member is also evaluated by his/her peers in the Departmental Personnel Committee. The peer and student evaluations are reviewed and discussed by the Departmental Personnel Committee and the director of the program. The results of the individual evaluations are discussed with faculty members in private assessment meetings.

Students are encouraged to include in their evaluations written comments about faculty teaching strategies and course management. As part of the assessment process, and to support student learning objectives, improvements to faculty educational strategies are an important priority in these assessment meetings. As a result, educational strategies based on dynamic interactions and critical thinking, the use of diverse assessment techniques and Web-based resources, and the full use of smart classroom facilities are being instituted.

General Education (GenEd) and Assessment

Another factor in the development and deployment of assessment procedures is the implementation of the restructured General Education Program. The Program has implemented assessment instruments for its twelve goals throughout the students' baccalaureate studies. In addition, the GenEd Program provides faculty with the necessary training to complete GenEd assessment. In the past two years, faculty

has received instruction in the development and analysis of pre-post tests, rubrics, ePortfolio, and the Writing and Information Literacy Module.

Pre-post Tests Starting in academic year 2007-2008, all GenEd basic courses began implementing pre-post tests. The tests are corrected in the Testing Center and specific course section results are reported back to the pertinent academic department for analysis. As a result, the departments identify strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate actions. Actions have ranged from changing textbooks and revising the measurement tool, to undertaking an in-depth study of a course for analysis.

Rubrics During the present academic year 15 rubrics are being officially instituted as GenEd goal assessment tools. A computer program was developed for the Testing Center to manage the rubrics allowing GenEd to track the students' progress throughout their studies at UPRCA.

Information Literacy Spanish and English introductory courses have implemented an information literacy module as an integral part of the courses.

Writing and Information Literacy The Writing and Information Literacy Modules have been developed and placed in the Interdisciplinary Writing Lab for students to complete on their own time and under supervision. Every quarter term concentration courses that offer students an opportunity to develop essays make use of the module. At the end of a term, the professors that teach the course, GenEd coordinators along with the GenEd program director meet to identify strengths and challenges and take the appropriate measures.

Exit Test The exit test is still in the process of being developed, with three quarters of the test ready for pre-testing.

E-Portfolio The institution is currently reviewing Web platforms for courses and ePortfolios. Consequently, the School of Restaurant and Hotel Administration and the Office Systems Department have begun developing a programmatic ePortfolio for their students. These academic programs are accredited or very advanced in their accreditation processes and thus have curriculums which will not alter significantly in the near future. Other academic programs are expecting curriculum revisions due to professional accreditation processes and will incorporate ePortfolios later on.

Academic Programs and Assessment

CAAPP, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR) developed a three-step process to evaluate the level of implementation of program assessment in both baccalaureate and associate degrees. The first step was a survey administered in September 2008, with a 100% rate of participation of academic programs working toward professional accreditation. The second step involved focus groups to corroborate

data and gain further feedback from programs surveyed. The third step was to analyze results from steps one and two and propose appropriate actions.

Following the survey results, focus groups were conducted with program assessment committees in order to follow up on responses. While some of the programs had indeed made significant progress in the planning and implementation of assessment processes, there were still misunderstandings and concerns toward program and course level assessment among some members of the faculty. As a result, first, the program assessment plan in use was studied in-depth and a revised Assessment Plan of Student Learning (APSL) was developed to provide the foundation for an operational and more effective mechanism for program and course assessment. Second, departments were organized into groups according to the degree of implementation of their assessment plans and the priority of their needs in order to provide specific assistance. Third, focus groups were instituted as instruments for strengthening the effectiveness of program and institutional assessment mechanisms. (See Appendix 3 G, *Assessment Plan of Student Learning*)

Professional Accreditation and Assessment

As UPRCA academic programs persist in their accreditation processes, compliance with the respective standards of the accrediting agencies continues to increase their level of refinement, scope, and effectiveness. Professional accreditation has resulted in an effective tool for strengthening and organizing institutional and program assessment procedures. In the past year we have made significant gains in the creation of operational program assessment plans that are currently in deployment or under development as a result of professional accreditation processes.

Out of sixteen degrees offered by the Institution, thirteen (81%) are susceptible to professional accreditation. Among the thirteen, the Hotel and Restaurant Administration Program (ADHO) has completed its accreditation process, and twelve (92%) are currently working on their respective accreditations. The Department of Office Systems, for instance, has worked on approximately 67% of accreditation standards and will receive an accreditation team visit by September 2009, while the Business Administration Department has completed 33% of standards and is in the process of coordinating the next team visit. Other programs such as Industrial Maintenance and Engineering and Automotive Technology should be visited during the 2010-2011 academic year and have worked on 23% of their standards. In addition, the Education Department is working on a new bachelor program side by side with professional accreditation.

Academic support services such as the Learning Center and the Counseling Office also undergo professional accreditation. The Library successfully completed its evaluation visit in May 2007, while the Counseling Office has worked on 50% of the required standards and will be visited in 2010. The institutional journal *Carolina: Humanismo y Tecnología* was accepted for inclusion by LATINDEX, the online

Regional Information System for Scholarly Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal.

In the case of the Graphic Arts and Advertising Programs (AGRA-PUCO) the Department has developed a plan to comply with accreditation standards and has begun to identify or develop the necessary documentation. In August 2008 the new curriculum responding to Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) standards was approved by the CA and is currently in deployment.

These achievements, while documenting the various stages of advancement in the implementation of assessment processes, demonstrate the expeditiousness with which programs are working toward more effective assessment and accreditation. Currently, eleven academic programs and support units are in different stages of professional accreditation processes. See Appendix 3 H, for a list of the programs and their accreditation status with the relevant professional accreditation agencies.

Institutional Accreditation and Levels of Assessment

The UPRCA, as part of the UPR-S, is subject to periodic program reviews which occur every five years (see Appendix 3 I, Board of Trustees Certification 43, 2006-2007). Moreover, the Institution as a whole completes cyclical reviews by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education (CES) for the renewal of the required state license and is monitored for accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). CES requires both strategic and long-term plans developed for guidance in institutional and program improvement to be compliant with MSCHE accreditation standards. In compliance with Certification Number 136 (2003-2004) and number 138 (2003-2004) of the UPRS Board of Trustees, regarding institutional effectiveness and professional accreditation respectively, UPRCA is continuously immersed in various forms of internal and external evaluation. Thus, the learning outcomes of the Institution reflect inputs from internal and external assessment and evaluation processes.

The following levels of internal assessment are carried out by UPRCA under the Comprehensive Institutional Model for Assessment. (See Section V)

COURSE LEVEL:

- Students evaluate professors
- Faculty members conduct course assessment through the ASLP and their program assessment plans

ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM LEVEL:

- The department director evaluates each faculty member
- The department director is evaluated by the academic dean

- Faculty members are evaluated by their peers through the departments' Personnel Committee

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- Faculty members conduct assessment of General Education-Academic Program goals using General Education assessment instruments in all baccalaureate programs
- Exit exams for General Education goals (implemented by academic year 2009-2010)
- Exit exams for some baccalaureate programs (in effect by academic year 2009-2010)
- Student-surveys
- Combined supervision and evaluation by faculty members and on-the-job supervisors of students' performances during their internship courses/practicum's (in most baccalaureate programs)
- Alumni surveys administered by OPIR every three years
- Graduation and retention rates studies conducted annually by OPIR

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT:

- External evaluation by the Board of Advisors (some programs)
- A Benchmarking/Best Practices study conducted by program faculty and with assistance of OPIR
- Professional accreditation processes (most programs)

While there have been significant gains in this key area, there are challenges that need to be addressed in order to reap the most benefits from assessment. CAAPP and OPIR have been methodically working to revise and update assessment and planning mechanisms guided by the development of a conceptual framework.

Institutional Effectiveness Plan

At the end of the academic year, an Institutional Effectiveness Report is released that analyzes and documents the efficiency of the priorities-budget process in advancing progress of academic programs and support units towards key areas, goals and objectives. The CAAPP Committee, together with the Chancellor and the deans are in charge of developing, submitting and disseminating a yearly report on institutional effectiveness. They gather the necessary data and documentation, discuss the yearly attainments in each area, and indicate the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges encountered and how they will be met.

The report responds to changes in intended outcomes or objectives, especially as a result of accreditation; fluctuations in budget projections; changes that result from experience with strategies and means of assessment; and unforeseen circumstances. Necessary changes and adjustments are recommended to take effect as soon as doable or by the next academic year. The fundamental questions are: Are we achieving what we set out to do? How can we best achieve what we said we would in the OSPR? What resources are needed to achieve the results desired? What adjustments are needed, if any, to achieve our mission, goals and objectives?

As a result of the new CA directives and the ongoing revision processes the Institutional Effectiveness Plan is undergoing changes. The University Assessment Plan 2005 (UAP), last updated in 2005, has been guiding assessment efforts in the institution since 2004. The UAP was developed under the Institution's mission and goals as of that time, and originally was meant to assess both student learning and institutional effectiveness. However, the mission and goals have been revised, a new strategic plan is in effect, and during the past four years of implementation we have learned that separate plans for institutional effectiveness and student learning is a more beneficial mechanism for obtaining relevant results in both areas. Therefore, as previously stated, a revised Assessment Plan for Student Learning (APSL) has been completed and a revision of the institutional effectiveness plan is in progress. (See Appendix 3 G, *Assessment Plan for Student Learning*.)

As we advance in the creation of a separate and effective mechanism for assessing institutional effectiveness, we have generated several working documents that serve, on the one hand, to gather and organize existing assessment efforts, evidences, and documents and, on the other hand, to organize and map the creation of the institutional effectiveness plan itself. These tables and documents are integrated into the Comprehensive Institutional Model for Assessment as they are completed.

For instance, the Achievement Table that connects achievements to the OSPR is an ongoing working table that records efforts to execute the plan. Three other working tables provide needed support to the assessment process. Two tables align support units and academic programs to specific institutional goals, while a third aligns assessment tools for institutional effectiveness with the ten institutional goals. (See Appendix 3 J, *Alignment of Support Units with Institutional Goals*; *Alignment of Academic Programs with Institutional Goals*; and *Alignment of Assessment Tools for Institutional Effectiveness with Institutional Goals*.)

These exercises provide a grounded basis upon which we can construct effectiveness mechanisms that connect with past efforts and pave the way for new ones.

Office for Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR)

The main charge of the Office for Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR) is to provide informed guidance to the decision-making bodies and processes of the Institution. It provides the data that informs planning, accrediting, licensing, research, assessment, and the development of federal and state proposals and reports.

In the last two years UPRCA has been working assiduously in the renovation and development of its academic offerings, especially as a consequence of professional accreditation and the restructuring of the General Education Program. OPIR has been actively promoting and providing the support necessary for the completion of such processes, and working diligently to provide a faster response pace to better serve the academic community.

Institutional procedures for assessing effectiveness have always been conducted at UPRCA, but were not always carried out systematically. In 2007 the Institution acquired a software subscription to Monkey Survey to implement an electronic evaluation of the effectiveness of academic programs through graduate and alumni surveys via the Web. This program has allowed the creation of new admission, student and alumni profiles, and has provided information regarding the level of satisfaction of current students and graduates. Previously, surveys were conducted by mail and the analysis of the data sometimes took a full academic year, whereas with this new software data is obtained and analyzed immediately and reports are generated promptly. For example, OPIR used the program to conduct a first year student survey in 2008-2009 and the results were discussed and distributed to the directors of academic departments and support units in October 2009 for their information and ensuing action. Using this new software OPIR has conducted special surveys for different academic departments, and the results are currently being analyzed by the academic programs for action.

Another tool developed by OPIR to increase the pace of the data collected for assessment of institutional effectiveness is a dashboard through which retention-rate data can be analyzed. This dashboard permits OPIR to compute retention data for the Institution, as well as for each academic department, up to the students' sixth year of studies. Previously, OPIR computed retention rates for only the first year, while the new system compiles data for cohorts from 2001 through 2006. OPIR then reports data on specific programs for departments to analyze and develop plans of action.

A dashboard for graduation rates is currently being programmed. A main objective of this tool is to quickly and efficiently provide departments with data indexing the proportion of students who complete an academic program within 150% of the established time and those who take more. Yet again, this will make it possible for departments to evaluate program effectiveness promptly and take appropriate actions in a timely manner. Both retention and graduation-rate dashboards will be updated on a yearly basis.

As part of a CA initiative, a new database named ORACLE Business Suite is being implemented system-wide to integrate the different processes that are carried out at educational support units within a particular campus and within the UPR-S. UPRCA is among the first campuses of the UPR-S to incorporate this software and it is currently being implemented in Admissions, Financial Aid, Finances, and the Registrar.

An important addition to assessment and planning tools is the acquisition of WEAVEonline as a mechanism for the management of institutional assessment information. Through this tool, the Institution will be able to access the data and information generated by assessment procedures at all levels. This Web-based software will satisfy several basic needs of the Institution: To centralize and disseminate documents and assessment evidences more effectively and efficiently; to institute more specific, unambiguous mechanisms for collecting and analyzing data; and to develop instruments for implementing more effective links between data analysis efforts at the program level and institutional analysis and decision-making.

Furthermore, a data warehouse is currently being created through Title V funds to serve as a repository of electronically stored data related to students, while the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) digital format and database permits benchmarking information to be obtained instantaneously on the Web. These tools facilitate the analysis and reporting of information to the relevant institutional offices and departments.

UPR-S Benchmarking Studies

The UPR-S regularly conducts benchmarking studies with peer institutions in the continental United States, within the UPR-S, and with private institutions of higher education in Puerto Rico. The following table shows the latest benchmarking report by CA dated June 2007 of the eight Carnegie-classification ExU4, MFT4/S/LTI, M4/NR, Bac/Diverse units within UPR-S.

**TABLE 2
UPR-S BENCHMARKING STUDIES - GRADUATION AND RETENTION RATES
COHORT 1999**

	UPR-S (8 units average)	Average - Peer Institutions in USA	Average - Private Institutions in PR	UPR Carolina
Graduation Rate	36.2	35.0	21.7	36.9
Retention Rate	76.0	61.3	61.2	80.2
UPR-S units	: Aguadilla, Arecibo, Bayamón, Carolina, Cayey, Humacao, Ponce and Utuado			
Peer Institutions in USA	: Lewis Clark State College, University of Pittsburgh Johnstown, Indiana University East, University of Pittsburgh Bradford, Kent Sate University and Pennsylvania State University Delaware County			
Private Institutions in PR:	Inter American University - all units, Pontifical Catholic University - all units, Ana G. Méndez University System - all units, Polytechnic University and Sacred Heart University			

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

UPRCA should manifest an increase in its retention rate in the near future as a result of initiatives of the Counseling Office and the implementation of the GenEd Program's First Year Seminars during academic year 2008-2009.

IV. Standard 3: Finance and Enrollment

This section of MR2009 analyzes the link between UPR-S finances and UPRCA budget and planning. It is divided into two sub-sections: UPR-S Finances and Enrollment and UPRCA Sources of Funds.

UPR-S Finances and Enrollment

UPR-S Operational Budget continues to be mainly dependent on recurrent state legislative appropriations. By law, 9.66% of the Government of Puerto Rico's revenues are obligated specifically for the UPR-S. The amount allocated results from the average of the last two years' state revenues, including revenues from special funds such as oil recovery and gambling taxes. To increase available funds, the President of the UPR-S has worked assiduously to raise corporate major gift and alumni annual giving to the UPR-S with a good deal of success. Additional funding is also received by UPR-S from non-recurrent special government allotments, federal proposals, private donations and tuition from enrollment.

UPR-S is a state-funded institution of higher education, and not a tuition-driven one, as revenue from tuition and fees do not cover the UPR-S operating budget. Although system-wide enrollment at present is approximately 64,000, undergraduate tuition at the UPR-S, among the lowest in the nation, is currently \$45.00 per credit hour, accounting for a small percentage of the UPR-S fiscal resources. Tuition has increased from \$40.00 in 2006-2007 to \$45.00 per credit hour in 2007-2008, in accordance with a projected 3% annual increase instituted beginning in academic year 2006 by the Board of Trustees. (See Appendix 4 A, *Board of Trustees Certification* 60, 2006-2007.)

The following table shows UPRCA tuition as reflected in the annual budget.

TABLE 3
UPR CAROLINA - TUITION & FEES IN THE RECURRENT BUDGET
FISCAL YEARS 2003-2004 TO 2007-2008

	Fiscal Year				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Recurrent Budget	\$ 24,925,237	\$ 25,411,958	\$ 26,984,964	\$ 27,897,005	\$ 29,332,894
Tuition & Fees	\$ 3,951,805	\$ 3,444,464	\$ 5,011,850	\$ 5,180,462	\$ 5,848,328
Percentage	16%	14%	19%	19%	20%

Source: UPR Carolina - Budget Office

UPRCA enrollment has been consistently held at approximately 4, 000 students. This has allowed the Institution to concentrate on developing action plans in order to attract students that are better prepared and to continue maintaining and improving the quality of its offerings and services. The following table shows enrollment at UPRCA in the last five years.

TABLE 4
UPR CAROLINA - TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY GENDER
ACADEMIC YEARS 2004-2005 TO 2008-2009

	Academic Year				
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Men	1,461	1,369	1,337	1,565	1,511
Women	2,530	2,510	2,600	2,754	2,729
Total	3,991	3,879	3,937	4,319	4,240

Source: UPR Carolina - Office of Planning and Institutional Research

The UPR-S Budget Office formulates, coordinates and evaluates the operating budget of the entire UPR system based on the strategic guidelines set forth in *Diez para la Década Operacional*, the Government of Puerto Rico's budget projections and its quarterly updates of revenue collection. Accordingly, representatives from the CA and the 11 campus chancellors discuss funding priorities each academic year ensuring the operational funds necessary for the chancellors' respective units and key main concerns. In these discussions, key system-wide initiatives are prioritized and budgeted along with a key initiative for each campus.

In the Emblematic Project Portfolio the CA and the chancellors, accordingly, specify the key areas to be developed. The Portfolio is divided into two sections. The first section presents the identified key systemic initiatives in the areas of infrastructure, program accreditation, access and success at the university, technological improvement, alumni and internationalization. All units within the system develop and budget specific activities to advance the goals included in *Diez para la Década Operacional* for these areas. The second section includes one emblematic project per unit with its timetable and indicators of success.

UPRCA Sources of Funds

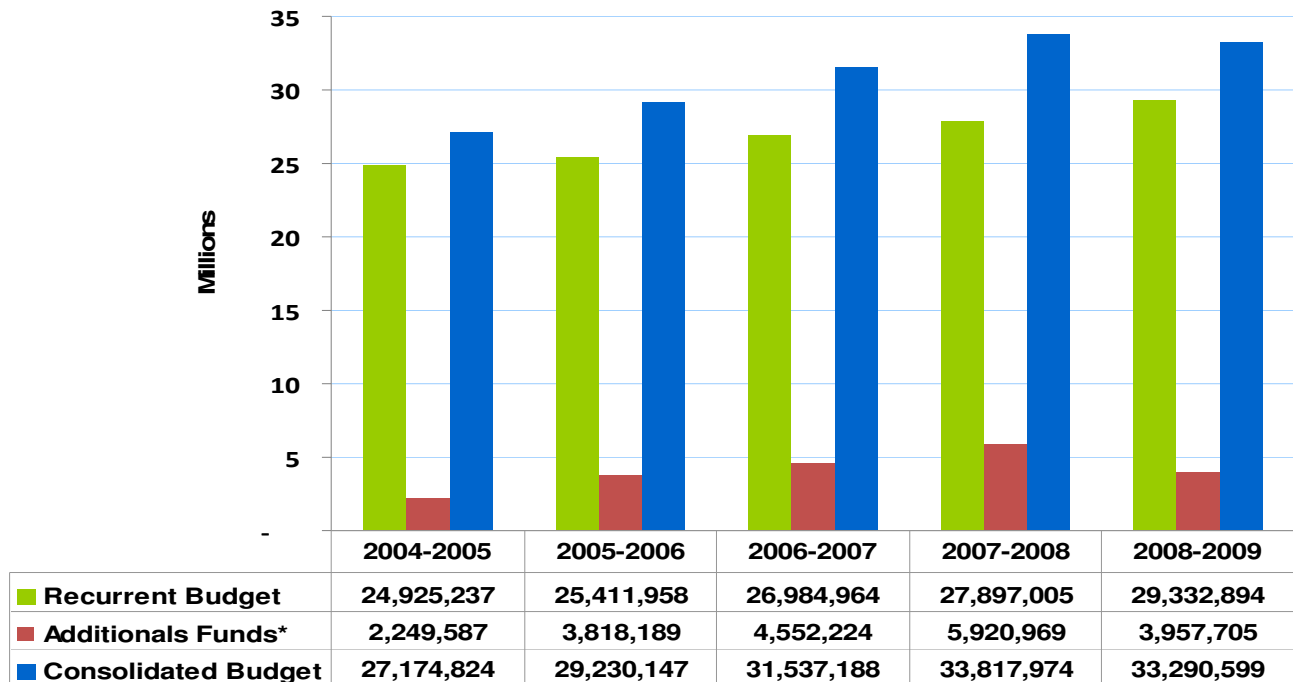
The Central Administration provides UPRCA the funds it needs for its operational budget and capital improvements. In addition, it makes available additional funds to be released as needed for institutional emergencies, specific system-wide initiatives, and particular UPRCA initiatives, as stated in the Emblematic Project Portfolio.

The UPR-S Budget Office thus obligates the funds the UPRCA has requested to cover basic university obligations and priorities. Additionally, non-recurrent funds for

capital improvement and renovations and restricted funds are incorporated into the UPRCA budget as needed and prioritized by the Institution and the CA.

The following figure shows how the UPRCA budget increases when the different sources of revenues for UPRCA are factored in from 2005-2006 through 2008-2009.

FIGURE 1
UPR CAROLINA - CONSOLIDATED BUDGET BY FISCAL YEAR
2004-2005 TO 2008-2009



Source: UPR Carolina - Budget Office

*Additional Funds for 2008-2009 are reported through February 2009.

Although learning and service improvement activities in the UPRCA Revised Operational Strategic Plan are based upon existing resources within each educational program and support unit, special initiatives that advance the Institution's mission and goals, within the context of system-wide priorities and emblematic projects are funded through the UPR-S Budget Office. At UPRCA professional accreditations are an example of an on-going system-wide priority while the establishment of the School of Restaurant and Hotel Administration was an institutional emblematic project that was achieved in 2008. These initiatives informed the planning/budgeting process stipulating needed resources, and as a result, UPRCA received additional funds to facilitate and fulfill accreditation requirements for the different programs and the establishment of the School.

The following figure shows the distribution in the last two years of additional funds to UPRCA by CA and other sources of funds. Included are funds distributed under

emergency funds (for example, the replacement of the telephone hub); the technology fee charged UPRCA students; funds for systemic priorities (for instance, professional accreditation); and UPRCA priorities (such as the Hotel and Restaurant Administration accreditation and school designation). Also included are other external funding, for example, additional state funds and federal funds, grants, and funds generated and distributed at the Institution.

**TABLE 5
UPR CAROLINA - ADDITIONAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTION
FISCAL YEARS 2007-2008 & 2008-2009**

	2007-2008	2008-2009*
Telephone Hub Replacement	-	300,000
Technology Fee	265,275	265,275
Program Accreditation	185,921	153,792
Education	8,333	4,697
Business Administration	8,351	5,417
Office Systems	36,378	7,830
Library	9,314	-
Counseling and Guidance	93,547	6,400
Hotel and Restaurants Administration	19,406	124,750
Personnel	6,447	-
Automotive Technology	4,145	4,698
ATLANTEA	6,430	1,500
Legislative Scholarship	792,853	806,322
Improvement Project for Hotel & Restaurants Administration		
Program Facilities	375,000	-
Indirect Costs	34,906	41,325
Open House	-	3,000
Regulatory Actions (Salaries, Fringe benefits, etc)	826,050	-
Student Council	780	897
ADA Office	4,000	-
Building Maintenance	60,000	-
State and Federal Funds	2,802,432	1,970,436
Student Support Services	432,413	455,115
Upward Bound	319,077	319,077
Title V	366,436	-
Coop I **	240,924	268,357
Coop II	699,416	699,870
HUD Federal Government		207,017
Domestic Violence Proposal	21,000	21,000
"Afinando la Práctica" Proposal	201,554	-
NASA Research Project	21,612	-
"Convivencia Pacífica" Proposal	500,000	-

	2007-2008	2008-2009*
Other Funds	567,322	415,159
Continuing Education & Professional Studies (DECEP):		
Short Courses	314,703	258,315
Credit Courses	88,798	8,244
Library Print Service	17,197	8,245
Intramural Practice-Catering Account	129,003	23,127
Recycling Account	621	300
HUD Matching Fund from CA	-	92,927
Vending Machines	17,000	24,000
TOTAL ADDITIONAL FUNDS	5,920,969	3,957,705

Source: UPR Carolina - Budget and Finance Offices

* Information submitted through February 2009

** Coop 1 Project is in approval process

In order to continue improving the UPRCA financial outlook, the Institution has intensified its efforts to augment non-traditional sources of funds defined for our purposes as sources of funds other than the Puerto Rican government's UPR-S funding, federal and state grants, major gifts and annual giving. Currently, the following projects at UPRCA fall under this heading: the Hotel and Restaurant Catering Services (ADHO-C) of the School of Restaurant and Hotel Administration; Continuing Education (DECEP); Special Student Services; rental of Facilities; vending machines, and printing services.

The Chancellor has named a committee to further develop this sphere of action. The committee is charged with creating a Plan for the Development of Non-traditional Fund Sources to increase UPRCA funds from untapped non-traditional resources. The committee has identified the following key areas for development in 2008-2009: Increasing the number of advertising in the Institution's close-channel monitors, adding marketing promotions to the campus' trolleys, increasing the sales of promotional ads in official activities, and the design and development of marketing campaigns by professors and students from the Graphic Arts Department.

UPRCA furthermore has increased resources to areas where funds reach the UPRCA directly. Given the important contributions of DECEP to UPRCA funds special attention was given to the development of its infrastructure. (Incoming funds from DECEP in 2001-2002 academic year were \$127,197.23, while in fiscal year ending July 2008, incoming funds totaled \$403,501.) Three new employees were hired, and recently the facilities housing DECEP have been relocated, expanded and modernized. As a result, the numbers of projects implemented have increased significantly. The number of courses offered has jumped from 33 in academic year 2001-2002 to 79 in the period from July 2007 to December 2008. Registered course participants in 2001-2002 were 479, whereas in the period July 2007 to December 2008 there were 8,366 registered participants. The number of conferences,

seminars and workshops has increased from 0 in 2001 to 483 in the same period above. The Alumni Office has also recently moved to new facilities and employs part-time student help to provide the support it needs to work this systemic-wide priority.

UPRCA recently signed a new contract with the Hotel and Restaurant Administration Catering Service that allocates 50% of earnings to the Institution. Though revenues were affected by the reconstruction and refurbishing of facilities this past academic year, the prospects for increased returns under the new School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration are excellent. (See Appendix 4 B, *UPRCA ADHO-C Contract*.)

At present these rotating funds are providing budgetary support to enrich a range of academic activities, for instance by providing funds to buy musical instruments, hire part-time employees, make available resources for faculty development activities and cultural activities, and supply added equipment and materials to the Institution.

In conclusion, it is the responsibility of the Dean for Administrative Affairs and the Budget Director to oversee the implementation UPRCA consolidated budget and monitor accountability to ensure the continuous financial capability of the institution. In consultation with the Chancellor and the deans, cost containment measures are set in place to strengthen fiscal liquidity. For instance, the following cost-containment measures were implemented in academic year 2008-2009: measures were introduced to lower energy consumption, overall budget for travel expenses was decreased, the number of institutional cellular phones was reduced, a new less costly cellular phone contract was negotiated, and measures to lower material and equipment costs were implemented. These measures ensure that costs in non-critical areas are reduced in order to focus resources on the prioritized academic areas.

An important indicator of success in the management of UPRCA’s resources is the Government of Puerto Rico’s Comptroller Reports of the last five years. The following table details the scores obtained by UPRCA.

**TABLE 6
UPR CAROLINA
EVALUATION RESULTS BY THE COMPTROLLER - AUDIT REPORT
FISCAL YEARS 2003-04 TO 2007-2008**

	Year				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Obtained Punctuation	95	92	94	91	98

Source: UPR Carolina – Chancellor’s Office

V. A Conceptual Framework in Development : Comprehensive Institutional Model for Assessment

In academic year 2008-2009, the UPRCA prepared to meet the challenge of revising its Strategic Plan in accordance with CA directives and a revised mission statement; and document further progress in the implementation of effective institutional planning and assessment processes linked to budget allocations.

As the revision process got underway, it was evident that a conceptual framework under which to work and achieve our goals was needed. To bring cohesion, method, structure, and meaning to the many efforts and initiatives brought to bear on the challenge through the years, it is essential to establish a set of assumptions, principles, and definitions to help us decide which paths to take based on the experience of others, which paths have been taken before at the Institution, and which we ourselves need to explore at this point in time.

We also recognized the need to further examine the way in which the Institution's organizational and administrative patterns support and promote the use of student assessment for academic improvement; how the institution uses student assessment data in making academic decisions; and how it impacts institutional behavior or performance. Our Institution needs to benchmark notably successful institutions in this endeavor to incorporate best practices in the field into our conceptual model

CAAP is working to develop the model's conceptual framework, streamline assessment mechanism already in place, generate new instruments and provide the direction of assessment at the Institution.

VI. Conclusion: Toward More Effective Mechanisms of Action

At UPRCA the philosophy of assessment has greatly changed since the implementation of the University Assessment Plan (UAP) in 2004. Through the Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP) and other assessment and planning efforts, such as the GenEd Assessment Plan and the Revised Operational Strategic Plan, systematic and formal assessment is being carried out at all levels of the Institution. Once the new Institutional Effectiveness Plan and WEAVEonline are wholly implemented, and the conceptual framework complete, assessment processes at UPRCA will be comprehensive, fully documented, organized and readily available for institutional planning and accreditation agencies.

The making of this Monitoring Report 2009 has been a useful process that has highlighted strengths in the Institution's progress toward effective planning and assessment as well as challenges that offer opportunities of action for further advancing toward better, more efficient institutional self-evaluation and renewal.

We believe that the actions taken to strengthen institutional effectiveness have naturally emerged from planning and assessment at different levels. As we work toward our next Self-Study and MSA evaluation team visit, we are confident that we will achieve our goal of strengthening mechanisms of institutional assessment that generate a continuous, self-sustainable and reliable flow of data, analyses and actions.

Over the next few years, UPRCA will continue to perfect, design and implement assessment-based processes to help administrators and faculty monitor and revise plans in order to reach appropriate, informed decisions and actions to ensure continuous institutional improvement.

The efforts and processes evidenced in this report and carried out at UPRCA to achieve effective assessment and planning confirms our commitment to excellence.

APPENDIXES