University of Puerto Rico at Carolina
PO Box 4800 Carolina, Puerto Rico 00984-4800

Self-Study Design

Submitted to
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared by:
Self-Study Steering Committee

July 2020

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I.   Institutional Overview

The University of Puerto Rico at Carolina (UPRCA) was founded in 1974 as part of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) System. Currently made up of 11 units, this is the only public system of Higher Education in Puerto Rico. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education first accredited the Institution, known at that time as Carolina Regional College in 1978. Twenty-one years later, Carolina became an autonomous campus within the UPR System. Accreditation was reaffirmed on June 27, 2019. Since the last decennial visit in 2011, the UPRCA has evolved into an Institution that provides technology driven services and offerings that strengthen its academic goals and support the accomplishment of its Mission and Vision.

The governance structure of the UPR System is made up of three main entities: the Governing Board, the UPR President, and the University Board. The highest-level officer at UPR units is the Chancellor. The Deans of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administrative Affairs, and the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration assist him in his endeavors. The Chancellor appoints all academic department chairs in consultation with the Dean of Academic Affairs, faculty, and non-teaching staff of the concerned departments. The campus Administrative Board and the Academic Senate, both of which include faculty and student representation, are key components that exercise authority in all decision-making processes.

Upon approval of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) in 2016, the island entered a challenging debt restructuring and economic development process under the purview of the Puerto Rico Oversight Board. The University of Puerto Rico, as a state-supported, higher education institution, was among the agencies targeted for a funding reduction. Even after an increment in tuition costs, fees are among the lowest in the nation ($115.00 per undergraduate credit hour up to $157 in 2022-2023). As one of its responsibilities established in Law 16 of June 16, 1993, the Governing Board annually approves and certifies the budget allocations for each campus. The Chancellor and the Budget Director distribute the resources and submit this distribution to the Administrative Board for approval. After receiving the annual budget certification from the Governing Board, decisions on resource allocations are made according to priorities established through planning and assessment processes.

The University of Puerto Rico at Carolina has seen reductions in its annual budget. In fiscal year 2019 the amount assigned was $22,980,381, which represented a net reduction of 9.22% in comparison to FY 2018 assigned budget of $25,315,733. This decrease was compensated by an analysis of expenditures and external funding sources. The guidelines used included reductions in temporary and vacant positions, compensations for administrative staff, non-essential service contracts, maintenance materials, personnel attrition, and employer's contribution to the Health Insurance Plan. Cost containment measures implemented included a more efficient use of utilities (installation of LED lights and solar panels on campus), and a paperless policy. Income generated by the Division of Continuing Education (DECEP for its Spanish acronym) is not subject to distribution by the UPR Central Administration. Instead, 100% of these funds remain on campus. DECEP offers short term courses, certificate programs, seminars, and workshops without academic credit.

Institutional efforts to strengthen research made possible the attainment of $3,506,883 in funding from Title V proposals through academic years 2013-2014 to 2017-2018. Support

for the development of more initiatives is charged to the Office of External Resources which provides advice through a dedicated staff that includes a director, an additional advisor on federal and private funding, and an administrative assistant. This office was recently reopened in June, 2020.

The implementation of these measures did not require any employees to be laid off as the general budget did provide for salaries, fringe benefits, and operational expenses. UPRCA self-generated revenues sustained unexpected expenses and emergent needs that covered the gap from government cuts. These funds provide a guarantee that the Institution remains operational with an appropriate workforce to ensure the academic and administrative services to its students.

Events that have taken place in Puerto Rico had an impact on institutional operations:

1. Student strike (April-June 2017): The institution remained closed during this period.
2. MSCHE Probation and Show cause period (May 2017-June 2019): This process had a delaying effect on the Self-Study process which was originally scheduled for 2020-2021.
3. Hurricane María (September-October 2017)

Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane María in September 2017, an event that caused many hardships to the vast majority of island residents. However, our campus quickly made all necessary arrangements to resume classes and regular operations on Monday, October 23 (student return rate was over 90%) even without power and water services. The academic calendar was amended so that the first quarter-term ended on December 29. As a result, the second quarter-term did not require any significant change and students did not experience delays in their educational goals.

In spite of the impact from hurricanes and budget cuts, UPRCA enrollment reduction was not significant. For example, the following figure (Impact of Students Strikes on Enrollment) shows that the enrollment observed after the student strike in 2017 was lower than expected.

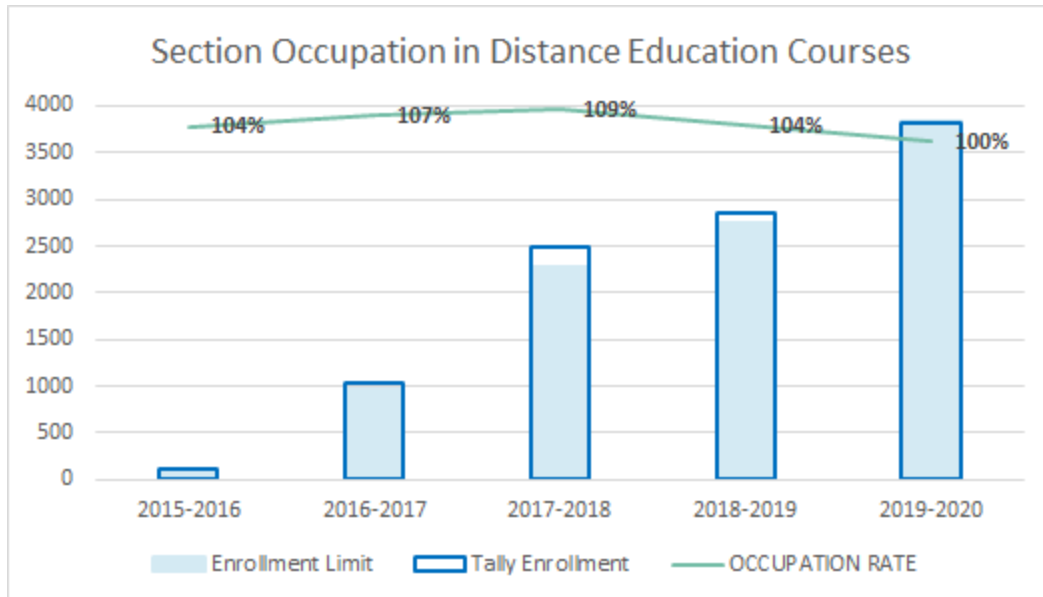Impact of Student Strikes on Enrollment
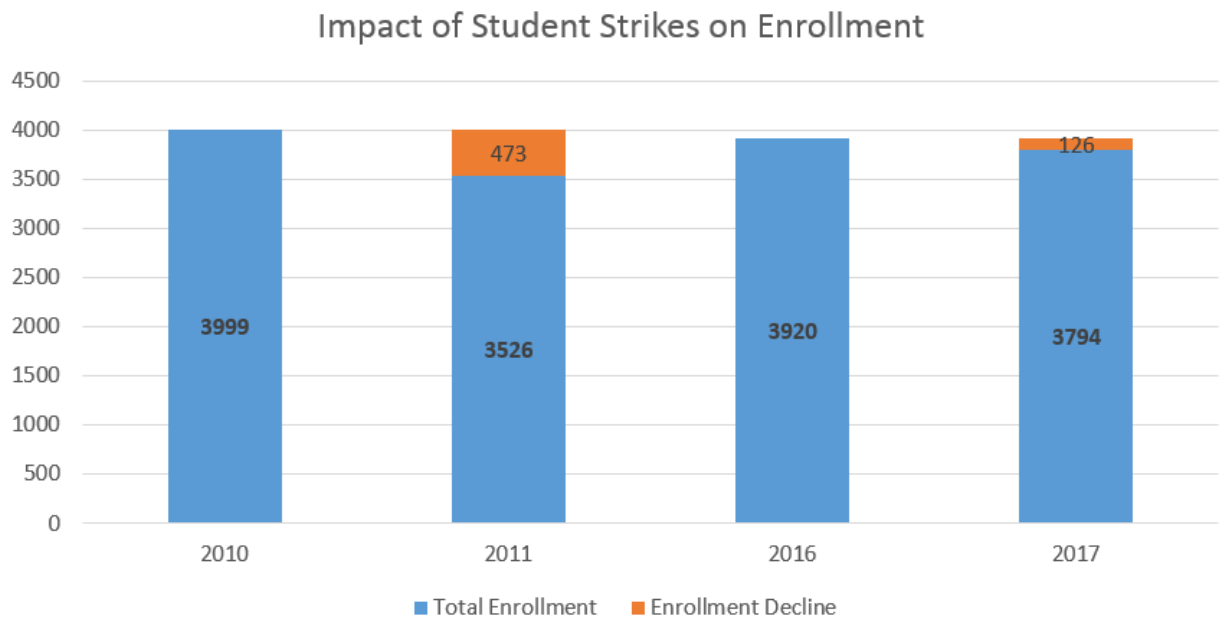
In fact, despite the effects of hurricanes Irma and María, and the consequently migration they caused, enrollment reduction was very low at UPRCA. As shown in the next figure (Hurricane Impact on Enrollment), only 1.5% of total enrollment was lost between September and November 2017 (59 students).

Hurricane Impact on Enrollment
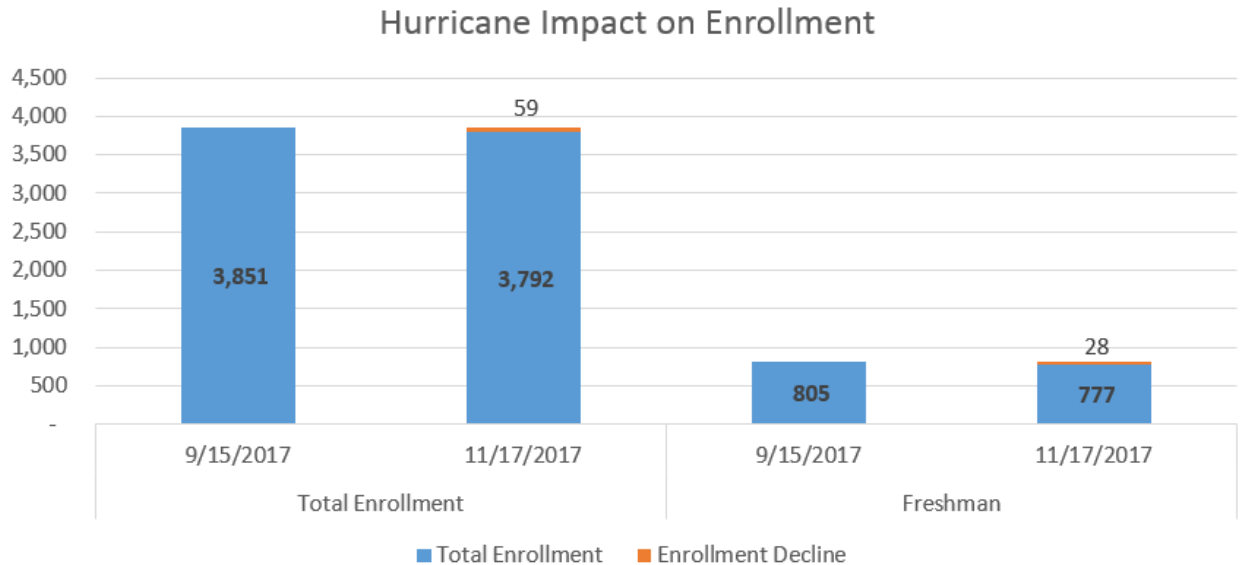
The institution was able to recover and continue to pursue its educational objectives and priorities as well as the revision of its Mission and the new campus Strategic Plan. The administration, students, faculty, non-teaching staff, and all stakeholders are being involved in these processes accordingly. Priorities are directly related to the implementation of initiatives that level the impact of the cuts. Their achievement will enable sustainability and the reaffirmation of the institutional Mission, its goals, and the characteristics that distinguish our campus among UPR units.

In order to expand the institutional outreach, UPRCA has submitted to MSCHE an alternative delivery substantive change request to obtain approval for distance education. At this time, 100% of our programs are face-to-face. However, since the academic years 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 the institution has developed over one-hundred courses online. The following figure (Section Occupation in Distance Education Courses) shows student enrollment in these courses:

Section Occupation in Distance Education Courses

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
OCCUPATION RATE	104%	107%	109%	104%	100%

Enrollment Limit — Tally Enrollment — OCCUPATION RATE

The Institution conducted internal and external assessments to develop the strategic plan and identified the institutional priorities to fulfill our mission within our new social circumstances, such as: socio demographic changes, PROMESA, hurricane María, and COVID-19. The priorities, described in more detail in the next section, relate to topics like external resources, academic innovations to expand our offerings, student professional growth and development, and assessing academic and administrative processes through institutional generated data.' Priorities selection responded to the above-mentioned facts about finances and events.

The institutional Mission Statement is as follows:

Mission

The University of Puerto Rico at Carolina is part of the public higher education system and its services are available to all sectors in our society. It offers a unique quarter-term calendar program of studies focused on the arts, the sciences, hospitality, and technology that allows students to complete an academic degree in less time within the UPR System. The Institution is committed to provide students with a holistic education that enables them to enter the labor market or pursue advanced studies to strengthen their professional development and contribution to their homeland.

Vision

The Institution strives to impact a diverse, dynamic, changing, and globalized society. Recognized by employers for its academic excellence and services. Committed with the development of new knowledge through research from its faculty and students both national and internationally.

Values

- Excellence: High-quality level of teaching offered at the institution that enables our graduates to contribute to society.
- Integrity, ethics, and academic honesty: Institutional rectitude that sets itself as an example to society in the process of creating new knowledge.
- Diversity and social awareness: Contribution to the establishment of a society that respects diversity of ideas and fosters a humanistic education.
- Culture of service: The institutional performance to serve the educational process.

Goals

- Provide opportunities for academic, professional, and cultural development to students in and out of Puerto Rico.
- Increase the outreach of UPR-Carolina unique academic offerings.
- Provide an efficient support for the completion of academic degrees in a shorter time frame.
- Offer a comprehensive education that helps transition its graduates into the labor market and advanced studies.

Description of Student Population

The University serves a population of approximately 3,394 students that come from the city of Carolina as well as other distant ones like Río Grande, Canóvanas, Trujillo Alto, Bayamón, and Caguas. Nearly half of the students are low-income who earn below $23,000 per year. A high percentage receives financial aid, mostly Pell grants. The following table shows a summarized profile of the student population at UPRCA:

UPRCA Student Profile	
Student Data	Percentage
Dependent	90.2
Non-dependent	9.8
Financial Aid	76.0
Full Pell Grants	62.0
Income: below $23,000	44.0
Male	39.0
Female	61.0
Origin: Carolina	48.4

Origin: cities adjacent to campus	51.6
Origin: public high school	65.0
Origin: private high school	35.0

II. Institutional Priorities to be Addressed in the Self-Study

The institution has identified the following priorities:

Priority I - External Resources and Research.

The financial situation of the government affects the University. Therefore, initiatives and efforts to identify and implement external sources of income through institutional enterprises and research is an institutional responsibility. UPRCA is committed to achieve sustainability.

The **External Resources and Research** priority leads every effort directed towards keeping institutional finances solid by obtaining revenues additional to the regular budget assigned by the UPR Central Administration (Working Groups 1 and 6).

Priority II. Academic Innovation

Renew offerings through innovation in academic programs and diversification of instructional delivery methods to enable the expansion of UPRCA academic impact beyond geographical boundaries, reaching traditional, non-traditional, and international students. The Institution must ensure that its technological infrastructure is continuously updated. This will enable the institution to provide renewed curricular offerings using diverse delivery methods guaranteeing the same academic excellence. All campus services must make use of state of the art technology.

The **Academic Innovation** priority entails the fact that over 80% of UPRCA curriculum within the UPR System is available only on our campus, a particularity that has always made a distinction for the Unit. The Institution intends to expand these offerings by making them available to more students through distance learning (Working Groups 1, 3, 5 and 6).

Priority III. Advance Student Academic and Professional Goals.

Reducing time to a degree is a priority for UPRCA. Completing a degree in less than 150% of the time allows students to continue graduate studies or enter the workforce faster and advance to their economic stability. The key elements to this priority are to increase retention and graduation rates within 100% of time. To achieve this, UPRCA, the only UPR unit with a full quarter-term calendar system, may capitalize on the quarter-term calendar system to help students complete their academic degree in less time. (Working Groups 3, 4, and 5).

Priority IV. Data-driven Decision-Making

Strengthen decision-making processes based on evidence-based assessment initiatives in all institutional endeavors.

Data-driven Decision-Making intends to integrate assessment practices into all academic departments processes, empower management with monitoring systems, and embed technology into all administrative services and delivery methods in order to improve enrollment projections and course development (Working Groups 3, 5, 6, and 7).

Alignment of Priorities with University Goals and MSCHE Standards

By design, the selected priorities have been aligned with the UPRCA Strategic Plan. The following table shows this mapping:

Mapping of Priorities with Working Groups	
Institutional Priorities	Working Group
1. External Resources and Research	WG's 1, 2, 6, 7
2. Academic Innovation	WG's 1, 3, 4, 6
3. Advance Student Academic and Professional Goals	WG's 2, 3, 4, 5
4. Data-driven Decision-Making	WG's 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

III.   **Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study**

1. Demonstrate compliance with all the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation
2. Examine spontaneous innovations within the multiple sectors at UPRCA that has allowed the institution to improve its operations to overcome historical challenges like never before and recognize them as institutional best practices.
3. Identify leaders from all sectors to foster people's empowerment and commitment to encourage new initiatives to achieve the institutional mission and priorities.
4. Conduct an inclusive process of self-examination to identify opportunities for development within the academic and administrative areas.
5. Identify and establish processes that support the attainment of institutional priorities.
6. Identify opportunities to strengthen the assessment processes to support the implementation of a data driven culture.

IV. Self-Study Approach

The UPRCA will be addressing the Self-Study Design using the Standard Based Approach considering the following:

- This is the first time using the new standards and this would allow us to look at each thoroughly, as has been the tendency at Carolina over the years. It will be an effective way for the campus to become better informed about revised Standards and Requirements of Affiliation.
- It also makes it easier for the university community to engage in an integrated review of its compliance with the Standards individually.
- It also provides the opportunity to analyze institutional effectiveness through assessment processes applied to all standards.
- This approach will clearly define where the institution is headed in time of financial constraints.
- Guidance in the Self-Study Institute from most institutions and MSCHE staff recommended the standards-based approach.

V. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

The Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) provides a source of knowledge and perspective about the university context. The ALO is the Chair of the Self-Study Process Steering Committee. Likewise, the ALO recommended the members of the Steering Committee that were approved by the Academic Dean based on expertise in the different standards, previous experience with accreditation, years at the institution and commitment to engaging the UPRCA community in the accreditation process.

The MSCHE 2020 team is composed of Steering Committee members, Leaders and Co-Leaders and Working Group members.

General Responsibilities of the Steering Committee:

1. Gather information related to the compliance with the MSCHE Standard and Compliance with the MSCHE Standard and Requirements of Affiliation, Verification of Federal Compliance, and MSCHE policies and procedures.
2. Identify and analyze key issues to be addressed in the Self Study Report.
3. Examine and correct all drafts and the final Self Study Report.
4. Comply with the scheduled timetable.
5. Encourage participation of the university community in the Self-Study process to seek input.
6. Develop the Self-Study Design.
7. Direct working groups on the accreditation process and activities.
8. Develop the Self-Study Report
9. Coordinate with the University Administration the MSCHE on-site evaluation visit.
10. Collaborate in developing the institutional response to the evaluation team report.

The Steering Committee will ensure that working groups will analyze relevant assessment and evaluation information to demonstrate that the institution's programs and services are delivered in a way that promotes the achievement of its mission and the institution is in compliance with all the seven accreditation standards. Furthermore, evidence will be

gathered from multiple sources to analyze the extent to which the institution implements strategies and assess the outcomes concerning institutional priorities. In addition to the chair of the Self-Study Steering Committee, the SC will have two facilitators, Dr. Wanda Rodríguez and Dr. Cristina Martínez whose role will be to keep in constant communication with the working group leaders and support their communication with the institutional units, if necessary.

The MSCHE Steering Committee Members is as follows:

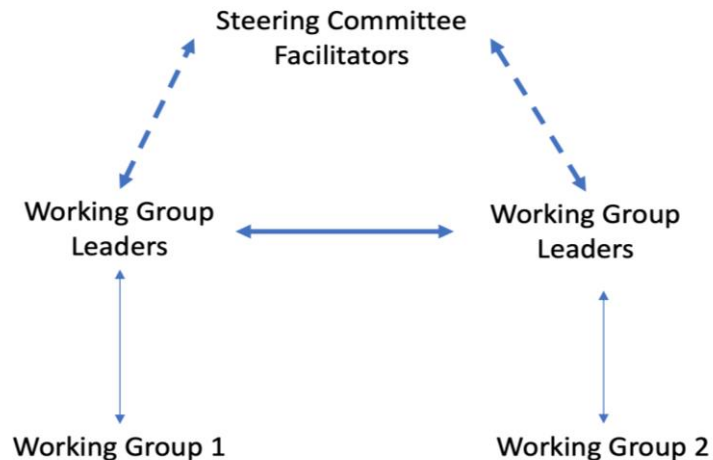| Member	Titles
1. Rafael Méndez Tejeda	Interim Dean for Academic Affairs
2. Jonathan F. Ramos Scharron	Interim Dean of the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration
3. Stanley Portela Valentín	Accreditation Liaison Officer, Chair
4. Cristina Martínez Lebrón	Director - Planning Office, Cochair
5. Wanda Rodríguez Delgado	Acting Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Cochair
6. Rafael Gierbolini Santiago	Director - Budget Office
7. Luz M. Cortijo Pagán	Administrative Assistant, Evidence Inventory
8. Alejandra P. Rodríguez	Student Council President

General Working Groups' roles and responsibilities

Each working group will be responsible to compile, review and analyze data and evidence needed to demonstrate compliance with the alignment of the institution's priorities, the Standards for Accreditation and the Requirements for Affiliation.

Responsibilities of the Working Groups

1. Gather and review relevant documentation to address each institutional standard, priorities, and requirements of affiliation.
2. Inform the Steering Committee with updates about the findings of the Self-Study Report.
3. Approve the documentation of the assigned standard as part of the Self-Study Report.
4. Recognize opportunities for improvement and innovation to advance the institution's priorities and goals.
5. Draft and write a report summarizing findings to the Middle States Steering Committee.
6. Meet deadlines for assigned tasks and reports.

The Working Groups submit draft reports to the Working Group Leaders. These reports will include compliance with the standards, gaps needing attention, and recommendations for improvements. The Working Group Leaders will compile submitted reports for revision. Further, the Working Group Leaders are encouraged to work and collaborate with each other on common areas of interest. The Steering Committee revises all Self Study drafts and final report and gives support and feedback to the Working Group Leaders on whether or not the institution is in compliance with the Standards of Accreditation, and Requirements of Affiliation, Verification of Federal Compliance, and MSCHE Policies and Procedures. The following diagram illustrates the communication path:

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                    Steering Committee
                       Facilitators


    Working Group  <----------->  Working Group
       Leaders                        Leaders



    Working Group 1               Working Group 2
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The Steering Committee will provide the working groups specific tasks for data collection. The working groups will work closely with the Director of Institutional Research to identify existing summaries and updates on the latest available assessment information, so they can compare and determine whether the available data complies   with the assessment standard. Some of the already available documents to begin the revision include: (a) the Institutional Assessment System Update Report, (b) the Strategic Plan Formative Evaluations, (c) performance indicators, and (d) academic program-level reports. The working groups may identify additional documents to evidence compliance with the standard.

Working Group 1 - Mission and Goals

Specific responsibilities of Working Group 1:

1. Examine to what extent the development and shaping of academic programs and services, administrative offices and institutional practices reflect the institution's mission, values, and goals (Priority 2).
2. Demonstrate how the mission and the goals of the institution are aligned to each standard's criterion for accreditation.
3. Determine the degree to which scholarly endeavor and creative activity are supported according to the institutional mission (Priority 1).
4. Analyze to what extent the institutional mission and goals are assessed periodically, and how the results of the assessments are used to inform decision making for institutional improvement. Analyze to what extent the institutional mission and goals are assessed (Priority 4).

Member	Titles
1. Magaly Hernández, Leader	Faculty - Business Administration
2. Perlie Adorno, Co-leader	Administrative Officer
3. Mónica Lladó	Faculty - Spanish Department
4. Alejandro Apesteguía	Faculty - Humanities
5. Mayra Encarnación	Faculty - Spanish Department
6. Alondra P. Cátala	Student Representative

Working Group 2 - Ethics and Integrity

Specific responsibilities of Working Group 2:

1. Review to what extent institution's policies on academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, diversity and respect for intellectual property have been effective in ensuring an environment of integrity, civility and respect.
2. Revise relevant documentation to verify compliance with federal, state, and commission report policies, regulations and requirements regarding personnel hiring.
3. Analyze to what extent the institution is committed to identify external resources to implement programs and services that promote students accessibility and success (Priority 1 & Priority 3).
4. Demonstrate that the institution performs continuous assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced by institutional policies, practices and implementation (Priority 4).

Member	Titles
1. Joselyn Rivera	Interim Compliance Officer - Equal Employment Opportunity Office
2. Ana Y. Rivera Soto, Co-leader	Director - Registrar Office
3. Roberto Díaz Juarbe	Student Ombudsman
4. Suheily Pastor, Leader	Officer - Financial Aid Office
5. Robert Santiago	Administrative Officer - Deanship for Academic Affairs
6. Carmen Colón	Human Resources Analyst
7. Angélica Torres	Title IX Coordinator
8. Giselle Rodríguez	Clinical Phycologist

Working Group 3- Design and Delivery of Student Learning Experience

Specific responsibilities of Working Group 3

1. Review offerings leading to a degree for an appropriate length and coherent student-learning experiences through innovative and diversified instructional delivery (Priority 2).
2. Analyze the evidence that supports Standard 3 compliance.
3. Determine to what extent the appointed faculty is qualified to design, deliver, and assess the curricula in order to ensure student success and a sufficient number of faculty.
4. Analyze information about the multiple ways faculty members deliver their instruction and examine to what extent they are involved in the assessment of student learning (Priority 2 & 4).
5. Assure that there are sufficient learning experiences and resources to support timely students' academic success in their programs of study, including traditional and non-traditional through diverse delivery methods (Priority 3).
6. Determine to what extent ongoing periodic assessment of the effectiveness of the academic programs and other student learning experiences are implemented to ensure continuous improvement and decision making based on evidence-based assessment (Priority 4).
7. Examine that the student-learning experiences provided through the General Education Program are sufficient in number and adequately interconnected to contexts and how effective they are integrated into the curriculum as a whole (Priority 2).
8. Analyze that documentation to evidence that alternate delivery methods establish distance learning offerings for traditional, non-traditional, and international students are rigorous and promote synthesis of learning (Priority 2).

Member	Titles
1. Lizaida López, Leader	Faculty - Criminal Justice
2. José García, Co-Leader	Faculty - Natural Science
3. Ketty González	Administrative Officer - Academic Deanship
4. Ángel Millán	Librarian
5. Damaris de Jesús	Faculty - Criminal Justice
6. Marilyn Rivera	Faculty - Tourism
7. José Rodríguez	Student Representative

Working Group 4 - Support of the Student Experience

Specific responsibilities of Working Group 4:

1. Examine to what extent the Institution focuses on recruiting students whose primary interest are academic degrees in fields congruent with its mission (Priority 2).
2. Determine if institutional policies and processes to admit, retain, and support the academic experience are clearly stated and are consistent with the institutional mission.
3. Analyze the institutional commitment to student success, as evidenced in support services and academic experiences to promote student retention, persistence and graduation (Priority 3).
4. Demonstrate clearly, stated policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits and credits awarded through experiential learning.
5. Revise the effectiveness of the counseling program and academic advising in the majors (Priority 3).
6. Evidence the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

Member	Titles
1. Antonio Vidal, Leader	Director - Department of Counseling and Psychological Services
2. Gerardo Perfecto, Co-Leader	Faculty - Criminal Justice
3. Lysette Montes	Administrative Assistant
4. Celia Méndez	Director - Admission Office
5. Alexy Ramírez	Coordinator - Services for Handicapped Office
6. Yaelivette Irizarry	Student Representative
7. Milagros Ramos	Department of Counseling and Psychological Services
8. Zaida Díaz	Medical Director

Working Group 5 - Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Specific responsibilities of Working Group

1. Analyze the documents that evidence that the General Education program and Majors have clearly stated educational goals and the courses are aligned to those goals (Priority 3).
2. Develop an inventory of the evidence from course and program-level assessment and the decision-making it supported (Priority 4).
3. Analyze the documentation related to institutional-level assessment and discuss how it has improved through time.
4. Provide evidence of how assessment results inform the following: Faculty development, planning and budgeting for academic programs and activities, and decision-making process to improve retention and graduation rates (Priority 3 & Priority 4).
5. Collect and summarize evidence to demonstrate the educational experiences provided to students is consistent with the institutional mission and prepare them for success in their professional and personal aspects of their life (Priority 3).

Member	Titles
1. José Rodríguez, Leader	Researcher - Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office
2. Helvia Guzmán, Co-Leader	Faculty - English Department
3. Lourdes Ortiz	Administrative Assistant
4. Delia Robles	Faculty - Spanish Department
5. George Otero	Faculty - Business Administration
6. Roberto Vizcarrondo	Director - Natural Science
7. Adriana Martínez	Student Representative

Working Group 6 - Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

Specific responsibilities of Working Group 6

1. Examine institution and unit-level plans to identify evidence of the following: clearly stated goals aligned to the institutional mission, methods to assess the achievement of the goals, and conclusions and recommendations based on the assessment (Priority 4).
2. Describe the planning and improvement processes at the institutional and deanship-levels.
3. Identify the use of assessment results for planning and resource allocation (Priority 4).
4. Examine the financial planning and budgeting process to determine its alignment with UPRCA's strategic plan and institutional priorities.

5. Analyze official documents to describe long-term institutional efforts to increase research activity and external resources to identify key elements in successful initiatives and make recommendations in areas for improvement (Priority 1).
6. Analyze unit-level initiatives and innovations that resulted in improved efficiency as opportunities to institutionalize (Priority 2).
7. Examine the report of the annual independent audit to determine to what extent institutions processes facilitate the submission of information promptly and the follow-up on any concern that may have arisen as the result of the audit.
8. Determine to what extent the institution's physical and technological infrastructure supports its academic programs and services (Priority 2).
9. Revise additional documentation to support Standard 6 compliance.

Member	Titles
1. Miguel Pérez, Leader	Director - Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies
2. Rafael Gierbolini, Co-Leader	Director - Budget Office
3. Víctor González	Director - Finance Office
4. Juan Torres	Accountant
5. Christopher Castillo	Faculty - Design Department
6. Sarahí Guadalupe	Budget Analyst
7. Carlos Pérez	UnEx Coordinator

Working Group 7 - Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Specific responsibilities of Working group 7:

1. Examine to what extent decision making demonstrates the Institution is governed with transparency and the constituents of its governing body do not interfere with daily operations, the mission, goals and priorities of the institution (Priority 4).
2. Evidence the governing body is legally constituted and has sufficient representation from multiple sectors of the academic community, including, faculty, staff, and students.
3. Gather and analyze data that demonstrates the governing bodies' commitment to identify and allocate resources that best support the institutional mission and goals (Priority 1).
4. Verify established processes to evaluate the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration (Priority 4).
5. Demonstrate open communication with Universities constituencies at all levels.

Member	Titles
1. Eileen Díaz, Leader	Faculty - Design Department
2. Bianca Aponte, Co-Leader	Faculty - Humanities
3. Nery Gordils	Human Resources Specialist
4. Walbert Marcano	Faculty - Education
5. Ramonita Román	Faculty - Office Systems
6. Lourdes Andino	Research - Deanship for Academic Affairs
7. Jorge Carranza	Faculty - Engineering Technology

VI. Guidelines for Reporting

Working groups and the steering committee will be required to submit bi-monthly reports of the activities conducted and the impact those activities have on the written sections of the self-study report. The purpose of the bi-monthly reports is to ensure constant flow of information from the working groups to the steering committee and to identify possible information gaps and difficulties with enough time to address them. The following table shows the types of products required, the resources available to produce them, and deadlines. A template for bi-monthly reports will be provided.

Product Type	Responsible	Periodicity / Deadline	Resources
Initial Self-Study Outline	SC	Jun 30, 2020	N/A
Initial Standard Outline	WG	August 30, 2020	Standard Outlines Guidelines - In process
Development of Sample Questions Guide for each Standard	SC	Sept 30, 2020	Standards for Accreditation
Self-Study Progress Report and Updated Timeline	SC	Monthly, starting on Sept. 2020	Report Template Timeline Chart
Development of Progress Checklist / Rubric	SC	Sep 1, 2020	N/A
Development of the Guide for Discussion in Standard Progress Meeting	SC	Sep 30, 2020	N/A
Standards Activity Report	WG	Bi-monthly, starting on Oct.	Activity Report Form

		2020	
Development of the Standard Report Template	SC	Oct 30, 2020	MSCHE Self-Study Guide
Development of the Rubric for Standard Reports	SC	Dec 15, 2020	N/A
Development of the Rubric to evaluate Evidence Inventory	SC	Dec, 2020	N/A
Development of the Rubric to evaluate Self-Study Report	SC	Jan 30, 2021	N/A
Standard First Draft Report	WG	Feb 2021	
First Draft of the Self-Study Report	SC	Mar 2021	
Second Draft Self-Study Report	SC	Jul 2021	
Self-Study Report	SC	Nov 2021	

SC = Steering Committee, WG = Working Groups, N/A = Not Applicable

VII. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

The work of each of the working groups will be submitted to the Steering Committee for suggestions and comments as drafts for the final Self-Study Report. These drafts will integrate the methodologies, data reviewed, findings, recommendations and requirements of affiliations compliance of each standard. The Steering Committee is responsible for the final draft of the Self Study Report.

The organization of the Self- Study Reports is outlined as follows:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Standard 1: Mission and Goals
- Standard 2: Ethics and Integrity
- Standard 3: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- Standard 4: Support of the Student Experience
- Standard 5: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- Standard 6: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- Standard 7: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
- Federal Compliance
- Conclusion

VIII.   Verification of Compliance Strategy

This process will be charged mostly to individuals with previous Verification of Compliance writing experience during the 2016 Periodic Review Report. The responsible officials are shown in the following table:

Area for Compliance	Person of Office Responsible
Transfer of Credit Policies and Articulation Agreements	Ana Y. Rivera Soto, Registrar Leader
Title IV Program Responsibilities	Rafael Ruiz-Vargas, Director of the Financial Aid Office Co-Leader
Student Identity Verification in Distance and Correspondence Education	Juan Cruz, Director of the Information Systems Office Yesenia Hernández, Distance Education Coordinator
Institutional Record of Student Complaints	Roberto Díaz Juarbe, Student Ombudsman
Required Information for Students and the Public	Ana Y. Rivera, Registrar Stanley Portela-Valentín, Accreditation Liaison Officer Rafael Ruiz-Vargas, Financial Office Director Alexy Ramírez, Office of Services for Handicapped Coordinator Roberto Díaz Juarbe, Student Ombudsman Celia Méndez, Admissions Office Director
Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies	Wanda Rodríguez-Delgado, Professional Accreditation Coordinator
Contractual Arrangements	Not applicable to UPRCA
Assignment of Credit Hours	Robert O. Santiago, Administrative Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

Communication between verification of compliance working group members and the Steering Committee will be constant and encouraged. It follows the same path available to all other working groups as explained in section **V. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups.**

1. Working group members contact working group leaders/co-leaders.
2. Group leaders/co-leaders refer questions to three Steering Committee facilitators.
3. Steering Committee provides feedback.

IX. Self-Study Timetable

In order to develop a successful Self-Study within a reasonable timeframe, the Institution considered the events mentioned in Section II (student strike, probation, and hurricanes) as well as its quarter-term calendar. We consider it important to mention that the present Coronavirus situation may have a significant impact on the Self-Study schedule as it will be presented in this document. The Steering Committee unanimously agreed that UPRCA prefers a Spring 2022 visit. A tentative timeline is shown in the following table:

UPRCA Tentative Self-Study Preparation Timeline	
Month/Year	Activity/Milestone
October 2019	● Attendance to Self-Study Institute (SSI)
December 2019	● Steering Committee Members Selected ● SSI information shared with Steering Committee members
January 2020	● Conference between VP liaison and Steering Committee ● Selection of Working Group Members
February-May 2020	● Writing draft of Self-Study Design (SSD) ● SSD final revision by Steering Committee
June-August 2020	● SSD Approved by Steering Committee ● Submit SSD to MSCHE VP liaison ● SSD feedback from MSCHE VP liaison ● Acceptance of Self-Study Design
September-November 2020	● SSPV to discuss SSD ● Chancellor Convenes Working Group Members ● Training to Working Group members ● Working groups begin information gathering and analysis ● SSR communication activities with stakeholders
January-March 2021	● Team Chair Selection ● 1st SSR written draft ● SSR communication activities with stakeholders (continued)
April-July 2021	● MSCHE visiting team selection ● 2nd SSR written draft ● Steering Committee validation of 2nd SSR draft ● Self-Study Draft Report sent to the Team Chair

September-November 2021	● Chair's preliminary visit ● Final Self-Study Report with Team's Chair recommendations
December 2021	● Presentation of the SSR to the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board, and the Central Administration
January-March 2022	● On-Site Evaluation Visit ● Team report ● UPRCA response
June or November 2022	● Commission action

X.   Communication Plan

The university community and related stakeholders at UPRCA must be well informed about the accreditation process. Transparency and engagement are very important as they will encourage participation and feedback. Intended audiences include faculty, students, non-teaching staff, management, and alumni. Institutional communication methods, tools, and strategies to be used include:

- Institutional website
- Google Drive
- Weave
- UPR email system (cartero.carolina)
- Academic Senate Meetings
- Faculty meetings
- Meetings with students
- UPR-Carolina Informa (facebook site).

The Steering Committee will develop Self-Study Documents using Google Drive tools available at the institution. Appropriate access will be provided to working group leaders and members in order to enable document submission during the entire two year self-study development. Feedback opportunities will be presented to the entire university community. News will be published periodically on Facebook and through the email institutional system to provide and disseminate information related to the Self-Study Report progress. The following table summarizes the Self-Study dissemination process:

Communication Plan				
Purpose	Responsible	Audiences	Methods	Timings
Chancellor convenes working group and Steering Committee members to introduce Self-Study Process.	● Chancellor ● SC facilitators	● WG members ● SC members	● Face-to-face ● Online: Google Meet or Microsoft Teams ● Google Drive ● Institutional email system	September 2020

Provide training to working group members; WG members begin information gathering and analysis	• SC facilitators • WG members	• WG members • SC members	• Face-to-face or Online using Google Meet or Microsoft Teams • MS Office 365 • Google Drive • Institutional email system	September 2020 - November 2020
Engage university community in Self-Study process	• SC facilitators • WG members	• Alumni and community members • Administration and Staff • Academic Senate Meetings • Administrative Board Meetings	• Face-to-face or Online using Google Meet or Microsoft Teams. • Institutional website • Institutional social networks	September 2020 - November 2021 (Ongoing process)
To gather feedback about Working Group reports	• SC facilitators • SC members • WG members	• WG members • SC members	• Face-to-face or Online using Google Meet or Microsoft Teams • MS Office 365 • Google Drive • Institutional email system • Institutional social networks	November 2020 - July 2021; monthly
Present and validate 1st SSR written draft	• WG members • SC members • Chancellor	• University Community	• Institutional website • Institutional social networks	January - March 2021
Present and validate 2nd SSR written draft	• WG members • SC members • Chancellor	• University Community	• Institutional website • Institutional social networks	April - July 2021
Self-Study Draft sent to MSCHE Team Chair	• WG members • SC members • Chancellor	• MSCHE Team Chair	• MSCHE Website	April - July 2021
MSCHE Team Chair preliminary visit	• SC facilitators • Chancellor	• Administration • University Community	• On-campus visit	September - November 2021
Presentation of Self-Study Report	• SC facilitators • chancellor	• Academic Senate, Administrative Board, and Central Administration	• Institutional email system • Meeting	December 2021
Host On-Site Evaluation Visit	• University Community	• University Community	• On-campus visit	January - March 2022

XI.   Evaluation Team Profile

Characteristics of the Team Chair

The Chair should possess an understanding of the unique mission of an urban university that is part of a system of public higher education. The Chair should have experience as a president or academic dean with extensive leadership experience at a campus comparable to UPRCA. It is desirable that the team chair speaks or understands Spanish.

Characteristics of the Team Members

Members of the visiting team should have experience working within a regional, public institution with a high percentage of Spanish-speaking students. Preferably, team members should understand or speak Spanish. Team members should be diverse in terms of gender and ethnicity, preferably with previous site visit experience and who are familiar with the UPR System. Professional experience in undergraduate institutions such as 4-year institutions or community colleges with background in the following areas will be desirable: Finance and Budgeting, Assessment, Student Services, Faculty Development and Distance Education. Preferably, in addition to administrative experience, members should have experience in the following areas of study: Criminal Justice, Hotel Administration or Tourism, Business Administration, Communication Arts and Design.

A list of institution's top programs by enrollment is provided below for your consideration:

Major	Enrollment Fall 2019
Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement	343
Criminal Justice - Forensic Psychology	388
Hotel Administration	300
Graphic Arts	225
Business Administration - Finance	224
Business Administration - Management	212

A list of comparable peers, most of them, within the MSCHE region is provided below:

- University of the District of Columbia
- University of Delaware
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- University of Maryland Baltimore
- University of Maryland-Baltimore County
- University of Pennsylvania at West Chester
- Thomas Edison State University
- William Paterson University of New Jersey
- SUNY at Albany
- SUNY at Buffalo

XII. Evidence Inventory

The evidence inventory will be completed by the working groups and uploaded to the institutional Google Drive. This evidence will include specific information of the accreditation criteria of the standards to provide compliance and its alignment to the priorities.

The members of the working groups will have access to a Google Drive folder according to their assigned area that will allow them to save and share evidence documents with the members of their working group. Further, they will be able to view the contents of the folders of each area while aiming to collaborate and reduce duplication of efforts in the process of searching evidence. Likewise, they will be able to make reference to evidence presented by other working groups.