

University of Puerto Rico at Ponce
Periodic Review Report Steering Committee



Recommendations to the Self-Study Report

Actions Taken and Action Plan



December 2008

Standard 1: Mission and goals

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Establish a revision process to update the Mission and Goals statement in which all university sectors are involved.</p>	<p>UPR-Ponce’s mission was revised, as evidenced by UPR-Ponce’s Academic Senate Certification # 51-2006-2007.</p> <p>UPR-Ponce’s goals are in the process of being revised by the Academic Senate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of goals by institutional decision making bodies by December 2008
<p>UPRP. Develop strategies to enhance student and faculty knowledge of the institution’s mission and goals.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write mission statement in all syllabi; create posters and put them in strategic places; create a bookmark or a pocket carrying card; put the mission statement on the plasma TV; among other things.
<p>UPRP. Review and revise both departmental and program mission and goals, so that they articulate to the institution’s revised statement.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create forms which allow the alignment of departmental and office mission and goals with institutional mission and goals. • Offer workshops in order to help people complete the forms.
<p>MSCHE. It is recommended that the university revise its vision, mission, and institutional goals to more clearly demonstrate what it is accomplishing and where it sees itself as part of the UPR system with its focus providing educational services to the southern part of the island of Puerto Rico.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a panel of experts convene in order to determine if vision, mission, and goals are clearly articulated and outcomes oriented. • Analyze with Academic Senate the decision of not pointing out in UPR-Ponce’s mission statement that its focus is providing educational services to the southern part of the island of Puerto Rico in order to justify decision made by this body.

Standard 2 & 3: Planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal, and institutional resources

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Planning efforts should be led by an executive committee composed of the Chancellor, the Deans and the directors of the Budget Office, the Office of Planning and Institutional Research, and Physical Resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Strategic Plan Committee was appointed through Circular Letter 05-04. • An Institutional Renewal Executive Committee was appointed as part of the institutional assessment’s restructuring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show evidence of committee efforts.
<p>UPRP. Further elaborate the planning process so that assessment, planning, and resource allocation are better articulated. All components of the institution with decision making authority should be involved in this process in order to effectively integrate it to assessment and budgeting.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a consultant in order to assess current situation and submit recommendations on how to better articulate the planning, budgeting, and assessment processes.
<p>UPRP. The Central Administration should periodically review and increase the institution’s operating budget based on its development plans and on the assessment of the goals attained.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit a report from the Budgeting Director describing how the budgeting petition and allocation processes are carried out.
<p>UPRP. The Board of Trustees should seriously consider the possibility of increasing UPR tuition cost. Its revision is long overdue as the current tuition rates are no longer able to provide for a more effective improvement of services and institutional resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Trustees revised tuition costs for the UPR system and generated a Certification stating tuition raises based on year of first enrolling at the institution. 	
<p>UPRP. Conduct more aggressive and structured fundraising campaigns on a regular basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund raising campaigns are being carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit a report from the Chancellor’s Assistant for External Resources stating goals achieved and future plans.

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Institutional governing bodies should promptly consider the approval and implementation of the <i>Strategic Plan for the Integration of Information Technologies at the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce</i>.</p>	<p>The <i>Strategic Plan for the Integration of Information Technologies at the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce</i> was approved by the Administrative Board through Certification # .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require a report from the Information Systems Office Director on the plan’s implementation.
<p>UPRP. UPR-Central Administration and UPR-Ponce should assign the highest priority to the library renovation project and to the implementation of the Physical and Programmatic Master Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Library was renovated. • The Council on Higher Education visited the institution to determine institutional compliance. • Related to the implementation of the Physical and Programmatic Plan, a Committee is working on determining ways to finance the Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require a report from the Chancellor’s Office presenting the Council on Higher Education’s visit results. • Require a report from the Physical and Programmatic Plan Committee on financing plan and implementation.
<p>MSCHE. It is recommended that the university consider establishing priorities in providing adequate study spaces for students and also to support the information literacy support efforts of the library for the next academic semester.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Library has adequate study spaces in its renovated facilities. • A Library Committee is working on creating an information literacy skills course that all students will be required to take. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require a report from the Library director on the status of the information literacy course.
<p>MSCHE. A review of space utilization may reveal that there are appropriate spaces as well as laboratories that may be shared until the library building is renovated and open to the public once again.</p>	<p>As the Library has been renovated, these recommendations are academic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require evidence of the Library’s opening activities and a map of its space distribution.
<p>MSCHE. Expedient implementation of the library renovation is also recommended.</p>		

Standard 4, 5 & 6: Leadership, governance, administration, and integrity

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Governing bodies of UPR-Ponce should regularly receive formal orientation concerning the institution’s mission, organization, goals, and academic programs.</p> <p>UPRP. Their participation in the establishment and ongoing assessment of the institution’s mission goals, objectives, and strategic planning process should be further evident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal orientations are being provided. • The Academic Senate has been consulted and updated on the planning process (<i>Diez para la Década</i>), accreditation reports, and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require evidence of orientations, certifications, and presentations. • Require evidence from the Academic Senate as how this governing body works with assessment results. • Name a Senate Committee which takes care of assessment results. • Offer Senators a workshop on the role of the Academic Senate in institutional assessment. (Possible workshop name: “The role of decision making bodies in accreditation processes, based on MSCHE standards”.)
<p>UPRP. The institution should explore strategies to minimize administrative changes and turnovers in order to guarantee stability and effectiveness in all administrative procedures. When undergoing administrative changes, stronger measures should be taken to ensure institutional continuity.</p>	<p>Work plans, internal procedures’ and planning documents (<i>Strategic Plan</i> and <i>Diez para la Década</i>) have been prepared.</p>	<p>Require the Chancellor and Deans to answer this recommendation.</p>
<p>UPRP. Institutional leadership and governance should seek new strategies to enhance the community’s perception of their roles.</p>	<p>The College community has been kept updated through letters, meetings with department directors, faculty meetings, electronic billboards, and bulletins about the functions and actions taken by decision making bodies.</p>	<p>Require evidence from the Chancellor and Deans.</p>

Standard 7: Institutional assessment

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Continue efforts to enhance the integration of assessment results to UPR-Ponce’s strategic planning and budgeting processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Institutional Renewal Executive Committee (CERI) was appointed as part of the assessment restructuring. • Assessment was restructured based on recommendations submitted in the report: <i>Reconceptualizing institutional assessment: Heading towards 2010.</i> 	<p>The CERI must meet to work on articulating the following processes: planning, budgeting, and assessment.</p>
<p>UPRP. Develop a more robust assessment structure to coordinate assessment activities and ensure that information regarding institutional effectiveness is used in ongoing and strategic planning efforts.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create forums to exclusively present assessment results. • It is important that assessment results be also shared with non faculty personnel. • Plan an annual activity directed exclusively towards discussing assessment results with the purposes of divulging and reflecting on them (assessment retreat).
<p>UPRP. Develop a more formal and regular process for communicating assessment results and for providing discussion forums at different levels to promote improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogues were generated among departments to communicate learning outcomes results (Dr. José V. Madera) • Results of the institutional study done with 2008 graduation candidates were shared with faculty in the 2007-2008 Academic Research Congress. 	<p>An Institutional Research Auxiliary is needed.</p>
<p>UPRP. Restructure and strengthen the OPIR, thus, making it more responsive to, and focused on assessment processes at all levels.</p>	<p>This recommendation was partially taken care of by restructuring the OPEI. A part-time Institutional Researcher and liaisons for assessment and accreditation were appointed.</p>	
<p>UPRP. Further enhance institutional leadership support and commitment to creating a culture that values assessment as a vehicle to improve educational programs, services, and operations.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a personnel perception study related to assessment as a means for improving programs, services, and operations.
<p>UPRP. Continue efforts to acknowledge</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary session to share assessment results,

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<p>existing assessment activities and to promote fuller participation by facilitating communication, encouraging discussion of results, and providing incentives.</p>		<p>especially how results are being used (February 2009) Include this activity as an official activity in the institutional academic calendar (it could be held every first semester).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select those departments that have done an outstanding job in assessing student outcomes so that they make presentations to the faculty in a faculty meeting or during the plenary session. • Invite faculty from other institutions to share assessment results. • Revise the faculty evaluation check sheet in order to include giving points to faculty for actively participating in assessment activities. • Tie budgeting, faculty promotions, incentives, and compensations to assessment activities being carried out. • Faculty should be able to request funds for implementing assessment processes through a proposal system. This process would need to be studied and implemented in such a way that it takes care of the MSCHE recommendation.
<p>MSCHE. The institution needs to consider what additional resources it will allocate to the assessment activities it has worked so hard to establish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OPEI was restructured. • The Institutional Assessment Coordinator was appointed. 	
<p>MSCHE. Although the institution provides the opportunity for faculty to apply for research funds – including assessment projects - through a mini-proposal application process,</p>		<p>Assess faculty perceptions on this matter through the faculty questionnaire. Ensure that the CERI discuss this matter in order to determine how resources can be</p>

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<p>there does not seem to be a clear system for allocating resources to both conducting assessment and funding the necessary changes that have been identified as needs and actions the institution indicated it would like to pursue.</p>		<p>allocated for assessment and institutional renewal activities.</p>
<p>MSCHE. The small planning and institutional research staff does not appear to have sufficient resources to coordinate all of the proposed assessment activities. It is important to provide the necessary resources to support this office so it can support the many campus activities underway and also those planned for the future. The team believes it is important to reiterate that responsibility for assessment activities is college-wide and should not fall on any one office.</p>	<p>Evidence can be shown of the OPEI's institutional research efforts. Some resources have been allocated to strengthen the OPEI.</p>	<p>Evidence of additional resources allocated to the OPEI.</p>
<p>MSCHE. In order to tie the assessment process to planning and budget, the institution should assign the responsibility of using assessment findings to personnel who have the ability to allocate resources.</p>	<p>The Executive Institutional Renewal Committee (CERI) was appointed, with this recommendation among its functions.</p>	<p>Evidence of the CERI's functionality.</p>
<p>MSCHE. The institution should continue to strive to tie together the assessment, planning, and budgeting processes rather than allow each to proceed without an explicit connection. By integrating this process, the institution should become more efficient possibly by reducing duplicative efforts. Providing a clear, well-communicated timetable for each step should assist the campus in meeting this objective. For example, the assessment cycle should</p>		<p>Find strategies to tie assessment to budgeting, promotions, compensations, and incentives through a rigorous process.</p>

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coincide with the budget cycle in some manner so the assessment findings can inform the budget requests.		
MSCHE. The evaluation team recommends that the institution reevaluate its strategic planning process and that it use its assessment results for prioritizing goals.		Invite Dr. Lisette Candelaria, of UPR-Humacao, to offer a workshop on strategic planning and the use of assessment results. This would enhance efforts towards documenting the importance the institution is giving to this topic.

Standard 8 & 9: Student admissions and student support services

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Ensure that external transfer students have their transferable coursework approved before enrolling at the institution for the first time.</p>	<p>The established procedure ensures this. Evidence needs to be submitted.</p>	
<p>UPRP. Work on developing strategies to improve student support services so that evaluation results coming from all student sources reflect an increase in student satisfaction with them.</p>	<p>Several studies have been carried out that support that this has been achieved.</p>	
<p>UPRP. Work on increasing graduation rates at the institutional level by developing support services that will enhance the student experience and help them in achieving their goals and aspirations, especially those related to academic success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the success of Title V, mentorship and tutoring projects is available. • Evidence of the success of the Department of Counseling and Guidance’s mentoring program is available. 	<p>Prepare a student questionnaire with the purpose of determining how student support services being developed help students achieve their academic goals.</p>
<p>MSCHE. While efforts to improve assessment of student learning and satisfaction with services are noted, the institution should strengthen the linkage of assessment results and findings with ongoing strategic planning and budgeting. It is critical that all offices view themselves as “stakeholders” in the total student learning experience.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze satisfaction studies. • Administrators should require action plans.
<p>MSCHE. It can be advantageous to have student satisfaction results inform the decision-making process regarding priority programs, expenditures, and staff assignment.</p>		<p>This needs to be assessed through linking student satisfaction survey results with expenditure increases in specific services.</p>

Standard 10: Faculty

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
UPRP. Continue efforts to strengthen the faculty professional development program in order to further enhance teaching effectiveness.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze faculty evaluation results.• Determine the direction taken by faculty professional development and if teaching effectiveness is one of its foci.
UPRP. Develop a project based on findings of the enriching educational experiences cluster to enhance faculty involvement with students.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold student meetings and assemblies and meet with student organizations. In order to determine future projects based on the findings pointed out.• BEAMS Project.

Standard 11, 12, & 13: Educational offerings, general education, and related educational activities

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Necessary improvements and revisions identified through academic program assessment should be promptly undertaken.</p>		<p>Solicit monitoring reports from the academic departments.</p>
<p>UPRP. Outline UPR Ponce’s general education philosophy, structure, and learning goals and establish a well defined approach for their assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The General Education Assessment Committee was appointed, coordinated by Dr. Carmen Celeste Morales. • The Academic Senate approved the definition used to define the General Education curricular component. • The Academic Senate appointed a committee to develop institutional policy which will guide the framing of the General Education curricular component and, at the same time, identify effective means for its assessment. • It was suggested that Prof. Rosa M. López, Student Outcomes Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Carmen Celeste Morales, General Education Assessment Committee Coordinator, and Dr. Lourdes Torres de Hayes, Institutional Assessment Coordinator, be appointed as advisors to the Senate committee. 	<p>Evidence of work done.</p>

Standard 14: Assessment of student learning

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Provide even greater support and encouragement for assessment through incentives for faculty participation, resources for departments interested in improving learning outcomes, and opportunities for communicating assessment results to the university community.</p>		<p>The Chancellor needs to provide additional funds to support assessment activities among faculty and academic departments and hold activities to communicate results.</p>
<p>UPRP. Revise assessment guidelines and practices in light of lessons learned from the past ten years in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process for the assessment of student learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment practices were restructured. • Assessment guidelines have not been reviewed and revised. • The student outcomes assessment guidelines’ revision process is being carried out by the Institutional Assessment Committee and the assessment coordinators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue offering trainings to academic department directors and assessment coordinators. • Revise assessment guidelines.
<p>UPRP. Strengthen the OPIR by providing it with the human and fiscal resources necessary to provide effective support to the implementation of assessment activities.</p>	<p>The OPEI has been strengthened, but an Institutional Research Auxiliary is needed.</p>	<p>Recruit an Institutional Research Auxiliary.</p>
<p>UPRP. Continue with the development and adoption of a student profile at the institutional level that clearly establishes skills, competencies and attitudes that a UPR-Ponce graduating student should possess.</p>	<p>The alumnus profile was approved by the Academic Senate.</p>	<p>Request that academic programs align their alumni profile with the institutional one.</p>
<p>UPRP. Continue enhancing efforts to educate the university community about assessment concepts, use of results and implementation of changes; provide training and orientation to new faculty concerning the assessment of student learning.</p>		<p>Evidence workshops and orientations offered.</p>

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Develop a structured approach for the assessment of general education competencies that makes greater use of direct measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The General Education Assessment Committee was appointed, coordinated by Dr. Carmen Celeste Morales. • The Academic Senate approved the definition used to define the General Education curricular component. • The Academic Senate appointed a committee to develop institutional policy which will guide the framing of the General Education curricular component and, at the same time, identify effective means for its assessment. 	<p>Coordinate this component's assessment.</p>

Conclusions (Chapter 10 in the Self-Study Report)

Recommendation	Actions taken	Action Plan
<p>UPRP. Future efforts should be directed towards the re-examination of mission and goals with wide participation of institutional constituents.</p>		
<p>UPRP. Future efforts should be directed towards the revision of the Strategic Plan in light of Self-Study findings and recommendations.</p>		
<p>UPRP. Future efforts should be directed towards the restructuring of the planning and resource allocation processes to better align them to assessment results.</p>		
<p>UPRP. Future efforts should be directed towards assignment of the highest priority to the Library renovation project and to the implementation of <i>UPR-Ponce's Physical and Programmatic Master Plan</i>.</p>		
<p>UPRP. Future efforts should be directed towards the establishment of a clearer conceptual framework for the general education component and refinement of the assessment process by increasing the use of direct measures.</p>		
<p>UPRP. Future efforts should be directed towards further refinement of the assessment of student learning outcomes to include multiple direct and indirect measures.</p>		