

**UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO IN PONCE**  
**PONCE, PUERTO RICO**



**MONITORING REPORT TO THE**  
**MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**MARCH 1, 2012**

Dr. Fernando A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Chancellor

Prepared by  
Ivonne Vilariño-Rodríguez, Accreditation Liaison Officer

In collaboration with the  
UPR-Ponce Monitoring Report Committee

**REPORT REQUESTED FOLLOWING THE EVALUATION TEAM VISIT APRIL 4-7, 2011**  
**ROBERT J. ALBRECHT, EVALUATION TEAM CHAIR**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Institutional Overview.....	1
Institutional Context .....	2
<b>SECTION 2: PROGRESS TO DATE AND CURRENT STATUS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standard 3: Institutional Resources.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1. <i>Strengthening institutional resources and developing alternative forms of income, including institutional pro-forma budgets that demonstrate the institution's ability to generate a balanced budget for fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including the personnel, compensation, and other assumptions on which these budgets are based .....</i>	<i>3</i>
UPR-Ponce Budget Overview and Projections .....	3
Cost Control Measures .....	5
Alternative Sources of Income .....	6
UPR-Ponce Pro-forma Budgets .....	10
2. <i>Steps taken to ensure timely production of audited financial statements for FY 2011 and subsequent years.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>Standard 4: Leadership and Governance.....</b>	<b>13</b>
3. <i>Further steps taken to improve communication and shared governance, especially in documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at the System level .....</i>	<i>13</i>
4. <i>Evidence of further implementation of the UPR Action Plan, including evidence that the action plan is being assessed and data is used for improvements .....</i>	<i>17</i>
5. <i>Evidence that steps have been taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional leadership, particularly in times of governmental transitions .....</i>	<i>19</i>
6. <i>Evidence that communication between the Central Administration and the institution, is clear, timely, accurate, and made available to all constituents .....</i>	<i>19</i>
7. <i>Evidence of further progress in implementing a procedure for the periodic objective assessment of the Board of Trustees.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<b>SECTION 3: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>22</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE 1</b>	Fiscal Impact of Cost Control Measures at UPR-Ponce, June 2008 vs. June 2011	6
<b>TABLE 2</b>	Current and Projected Consolidated Budgets by Type of Source .....	7
<b>TABLE 3</b>	External Resources Received and Projected, FY 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 .....	8
<b>TABLE 4</b>	Approved Grants and Projects FY 2011-2012 .....	9
<b>TABLE 5</b>	UPR-Ponce Statements of Projected Revenues and Expenses for Consolidated Budget FY 2011-2012 to 2015-2016.....	10

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>FIGURE 1</b>	UPR-Ponce Current and Projected Operational Budget 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 .....	5
-----------------	---	---

## APPENDICES

<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	<i>University of Puerto Rico System Organizational Structure</i>
<b>APPENDIX 2</b>	<i>UPR-Ponce Organizational Structure</i>
<b>APPENDIX 3</b>	<i>UPR-Ponce Monitoring Report, March 2011</i>
<b>APPENDIX 4</b>	<i>MSCHE Action Letter</i>
<b>APPENDIX 5</b>	<i>UPR-Ponce Financial Plan</i>
<b>APPENDIX 6</b>	<i>Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students of University of Puerto Rico – Ponce, May 2011</i>

## SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

*2007-2010 UPR-Ponce Catalog*

*UPR-Ponce Strategic Plan Excerpt*

*UPR-Ponce Annual Institutional Data Profile 2010-2011*

*UPR-Central Administration Second Assessment Report*

# MEMBERS OF THE MONITORING REPORT COMMITTEE

---

**Prof. Ivonne Vilariño, Coordinator**

Director, Office of Planning and Institutional Research  
MSCHE Accreditation Liaison Officer

**Prof. Lizzette Roig**

Dean of Academic Affairs

**Prof. Pier A. LeCompte**

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

**Prof. Félix Cuevas**

Dean of Student Affairs

**Mr. Harry Bengochea**

Dean of Administration

**Mrs. Reina González**

Chancellor's Assistant

**Mr. Isaac Colón**

Budget Director

**Mr. Pedro I. Martínez**

Finance Director

**Prof. Fay F. Flores**

Librarian

**Dr. Jennifer Alicea**

Institutional Assessment Coordinator, English Department Professor

**Dr. Joycette Santos**

Academic Senator, Chemistry Department Professor

**Mr. Jonathan Pérez**

Student Representative, Business Administration Department

**Ms. Anayarí Batista**

Administrative Secretary, Office of Planning and Institutional Research

# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

---

## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The University of Puerto Rico in Ponce (UPR-Ponce) is one of the eleven campuses of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), a large publicly supported multi-campus, coeducational university system, each campus holding a separate accreditation. The Carnegie Foundation (2010) has classified Ponce campus as a Baccalaureate College of Diverse Fields in response to its balance between the disciplines of arts, science, education, and business.

The Board of Trustees is the governing board of the University of Puerto Rico. It formulates policy for the system, guides its development, assists in generating its resources and allocates its budget. It is also in charge of appointing the President and the Chancellors. The UPR Central Administration (UPR-CA), located in Río Piedras, oversees the operations of the eleven academic units. The University of Puerto Rico Law (PR Law #1, January 20, 1966, as amended) confers on the President the highest authority and responsibility for leading the University system, as can be seen in the organizational chart included in Appendix 1. In collaboration with the University Board, which he presides, the President coordinates and supervises the academic, administrative, and financial tasks of the institution. Dr. Miguel Muñoz was appointed President in June 2011.

Each unit is headed by a Chancellor who presides over the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board, and faculty meetings. He holds the maximum academic and administrative authority of the institution. Appointed in September 2010, Dr. Fernando A. Rodríguez heads the UPR-Ponce since in collaboration with a staff of Academic, Student, and Administrative Deans. Appendix 2 describes the UPR-Ponce organizational structure.

Established as Ponce Regional College in 1969 and accredited by Middle States since 1970, UPR-Ponce was originally authorized to offer associate degrees and transfer programs, but added a number of baccalaureate degree programs beginning in the 1980s. It is located in the city of Ponce in the southern coast of Puerto Rico, approximately 67 miles from the capital city of San Juan. At present, the institution offers twelve bachelor degrees, four associate degrees, and fifty-two articulated transfer programs to other UPR campuses.

At present, the following academic programs of the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce are professionally accredited: Associate Degree Program in Physical Therapy by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA); the Business Administration Program and the Office Systems Programs by the Association of Collegiate and Business Schools Programs (ACBSP); and the Elementary Educational Program by the National Council Association of Teacher Education (NCATE). In addition, the Adelina Coppin Library was favorably evaluated by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), while the Guidance and Counseling Program was accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS).



Total headcount enrollment for fall 2011-2012 was 2,909. Around ninety-five per cent (95%) of the student population studies full time, 87% receives some form of financial aid, and 59% is female. Seventy-eight per cent (78%) of the student body is enrolled in bachelor degree programs, 8% in technical programs, and 11% in transfer programs. The remainder is classified into other categories. The student body is served by approximately 179 faculty and 233 non-faculty staff members. On average, the student/faculty ratio is 16:1. The 2011-2012 faculty profile revealed that 69% of faculty teaches full-time, of whom 73% is tenured. Thirty per cent (30%) has doctoral degrees. Eighteen per cent (18%) of faculty holds the rank of professor, 15% associate professor, 18% assistant professor and 37% instructor. UPR-Ponce's operational budget for the present fiscal year is \$22,890,166.

The UPR-Ponce Mission and Goals Statement (revised in 2007) guide all institutional activities. It establishes a commitment to the development of professionals with comprehensive academic preparations by means of effective and challenging teaching techniques, and aided by the creative and research activities which the institution disseminates. The institution also fosters community service, enriching educational experiences, and student support services. The UPR-Ponce Strategic Plan 2006-2016 sets the stage for accomplishing the institutional mission, defining and identifying priorities and critical assessment areas, thus assuring UPR-Ponce's continuous renewal.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

The recent challenges experienced by the UPR System have provided the Ponce campus community with an opportunity for reflection and action. These challenges have intensified the need to strengthen communication and shared governance and to address faculty, students, and other constituents concerns in a more effective manner. The UPR-Ponce administration and leadership have acted to ensure continuity in the institution's academic and administrative operations, in support of an open university culture, which values the diversity of ideas, and ensures and promotes freedom of expression and the right to dissent. Initiatives included in the UPR Action Plan are in place and have proven fruitful in enhancing institutional climate and in maintaining and nurturing additional sources of funding.

The UPR President and the UPR-Ponce Chancellor have made use of a variety of mechanisms to maintain the university community up-to-date on institutional affairs and finances. They have kept constituents apprised of initiatives to manage the budget according to institutional priorities, in order to guarantee the quality of its undergraduate offerings, services, and activities. These mechanisms have offered ample opportunities for constituents' input during decision-making processes as documented and evidenced through past Monitoring Reports and confirmed by the MSCHE visit team in April 2011. In addition, the strategies employed by the UPR-Ponce and Central Administration leadership to achieve a climate of shared collegial governance, have played a significant role in promoting an institutional climate of mutual respect and collaboration.



After reviewing the UPR-Ponce Monitoring Report of March 2011 (Appendix 3), the on-site visiting team's report, and the institutional response, the MSCHE acted to remove probation and to reaffirm accreditation of the institution (Appendix 4). The Commission also requested that UPR-Ponce submit another Monitoring Report by March 1, 2012 to document further progress in (1) strengthening institutional resources and developing alternative forms of income, including institutional pro-forma budgets that demonstrate the institution's ability to generate a balanced budget for fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including the personnel, compensation, and other assumptions on which these budgets are based (Standard 3); (2) steps taken to ensure timely production of audited financial statements for FY 2011 and subsequent years (Standard 3); and (3) further steps taken to improve communication and shared governance, especially in documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at the system level; (4) evidence of further implementation of the UPR Action Plan, including evidence that the action plan is being assessed and data is used for improvements; (5) evidence that steps have been taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional leadership, particularly in times of governmental transitions; (6) evidence that communication between the Central Administration and the institution, is clear, timely, accurate, and made available to all constituents; and (7) evidence of further progress in implementing a procedure for the periodic objective assessment of the Board of Trustees (Standard 4).

This Monitoring Report documents further progress at the UPR-Ponce in addressing the Commission's concerns. It is the result of input received from representatives of diverse areas of the campus community, as well as information provided by the Vice-Presidency of Academic Affairs of the UPR Central Administration.

## SECTION 2: PROGRESS TO DATE

---

### STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

***1. Strengthening institutional resources and developing alternative forms of income, including institutional pro-forma budgets that demonstrate the institution's ability to generate a balanced budget for fiscal years 2012 through 2014, including the personnel, compensation, and other assumptions on which these budgets are based.***

#### ***UPR-Ponce Budget Overview and Projections***

The UPR receives the majority of its funds from legislative appropriations as stipulated by the UPR Law. Each year, approximately 9.66% of the average total amount of the two previous years of government revenues is assigned to the UPR System. Tuition fees, which are among the lowest in the nation, account for approximately 7% of the university's fiscal resources. Budget development, a process aligned to institutional planning, mission, and goals, is a primary responsibility of governance. It is carried out within the calendar processes and regulations for its yearly development, as established through the Board of Trustees Certification 100 (2005-2006). The UPR-CA Budget Office issues general guidelines for the distribution of resources and discusses the budgetary outlook for the next fiscal year with the



Chancellors and their respective budget directors. It should be noted that budget allocation to the UPR units is not enrollment-dependent. Chancellors align each unit's budget to the respective strategic plans and assessment results in consultation with the Central Administration's Budget Director. Allocations of state revenues to the units (operational budget) are based on the previous year's recurrent budget, plus salary and benefit increases, operational expenses, and earmarks corresponding to the institutional plan.

Through the Board of Trustees Certification Number 141-2010-2011, the UPR-Ponce was assigned an operational budget from the general fund of \$22,890,166 for FY 2011-2012. Although this amount represents a reduction of .75% in comparison to FY 2010-2011's operational budget, current operational budget is greater than the amount expected for this year. An increase in UPR funds from state appropriations, \$45 million revenues from the Stabilization Fee, other institutional incomes, and a positive state economic growth, have resulted in a more optimistic financial scenario for the institution for the upcoming years. In addition, the institution has been proactive in generating alternative revenue sources, as well as in maximizing the use of its resources to ensure its ongoing financial stability and to achieve its mission and goals. A judicious reallocation of resources is constantly carried out by the Budget Office, based on the institution's Strategic Plan, Financial Plan, and assessment results.

UPR-Ponce's five-year financial projections have been revised by the UPR Budget and Finance Offices directors with updated external and internal parameters and assumptions in order to assure the institution's ability to sustain compliance with Standard 3 in generating balanced budgets for the years 2011-2012 through 2015-2016. The revised financial projections on expected revenues for the five year period ending June 30, 2016 are grounded on the following assumptions:

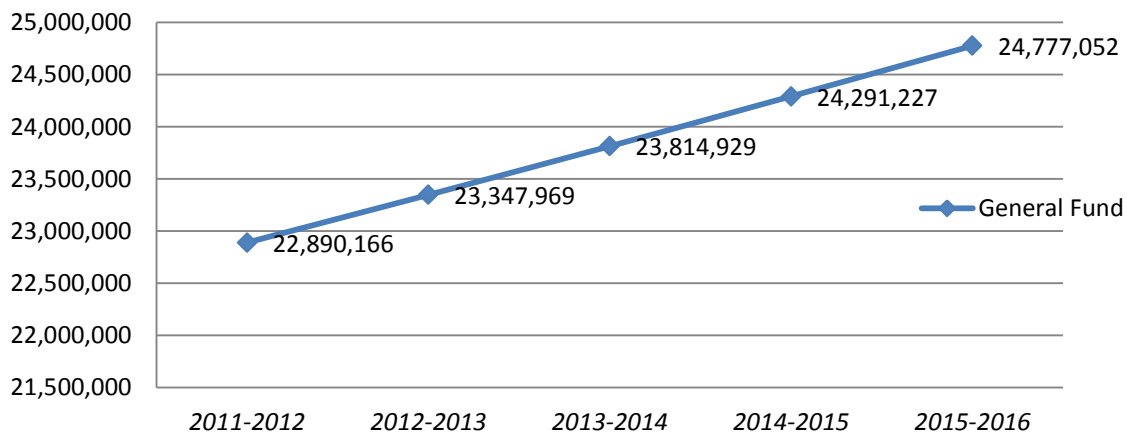
1. The 4% yearly increase in tuition fees established in Certification No. 60 (2006-2007) of the Board of Trustees.
2. The state support from the 9.66% formula.
3. A relatively stable student population.
4. The revenues from the stabilization fee implemented by the Board of Trustees through Certification 146-2009-2010 (\$400 per semester per full-time student).
5. An analysis of Puerto Rico's fiscal trends which anticipates a national economic recovery.
6. A conservative expected increase of at least 35% in funds from external sources.

The following figure depicts UPR-Ponce's current and revised projected budget allocation from the UPR general fund:





**FIGURE 1**  
**UPR-PONCE CURRENT AND PROJECTED OPERATIONAL BUDGET**  
**2011-2012 TO 2015-2016**



Source: UPR-Central Administration Budget Office, UPR-Ponce Finances and Budget Offices

Projections in UPR-Ponce's operational budget presented in the figure above were made considering a conservative annual increase of 2% based on a gradual recovery of Puerto Rico's finances, as evidenced by the state economic indicators provided by the Government Development Bank.

### ***Cost Control Measures***

The UPR-Ponce has been consistent in implementing relevant steps for cost control established by the UPR Board of Trustees and by the UPR-Ponce Chancellor. These were discussed in detail in the previous Monitoring Report submitted in March 2011. The following are examples of measures already implemented by the institution.

1. Limited replacement of retired faculty and non-faculty personnel.
2. Reduction in the number of full and part time professors on service contracts.
3. Decrease in all administrative compensations.
4. Decrease in faculty compensations above regular teaching load.
5. No increases in faculty and non-faculty salaries.
6. Reduction of special stipends to all personnel.
7. Establishment of a minimum course quota of thirty students per section.
8. Elimination of payment for sick leave days exceeding 90 days.
9. Implementation of new policies for granting faculty promotions.
10. Reduction of funds available for travel expenses.
11. Elimination of payment for ordinary leave exceeding 60 days.
12. Elimination of cell phones paid by the institution.
13. Reduction of energy consumption.
14. Promotion of proposal writing and the establishment of collaborative agreements.



15. Reduction in the use of paper through a policy that encourages the use of electronic mechanisms.

Cost control measures have helped the institution mitigate the fiscal shortfall's impact relatively well. An analysis of the implementation of cost control measures reveals that there has been a reduction in certain expense categories of nearly 39%, thus producing sufficient economies to secure the continuity of operations and institutional effectiveness. The following table shows in detail the economic impact of some of these measures on the institution's operating budget.

**TABLE 1**  
**FISCAL IMPACT OF COST CONTROL MEASURES AT UPR-PONCE**  
**JUNE 2008 VS. JUNE 2011**

COST CONTROL MEASURE	EXPENSE JUNE-08	EXPENSE JUNE-11	EXPENSE REDUCTION
Establishment of a minimum course quota of 30 students per section and reduction in the number of credit hours granted to faculty carrying out special administrative tasks	\$ 1,048,804	\$693,318	\$355,486
Reduction in utilities costs (cell phones, long distance calls)	1,159,691	1,132,789	26,902
Reduction in travel expenses	111,594	46,411	65,182
Reduction in institution's paper use	20,000	3,970	16,030
Elimination of payment for sick leave days exceeding 90 days	718,282	0	718,282
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE REDUCTIONS</b>	<b>\$3,058,371</b>	<b>\$1,876,488</b>	<b>\$1,181,882</b>

Source: University Financial Integrated Accounting System (UFIS)

Additional economies came from selective replacement of retired faculty and non-faculty personnel. During the past three years, following institutional policies and procedures, approximately 33% of retired personnel have been replaced. This action was taken without affecting the quality of academic programs and student services while saving the institution nearly \$1,935,444 for this three-year period.

During fiscal year 2011-2012, with funding from the Federal Department of Energy distributed by the State Energy Program, UPR-Ponce invested \$100,000 to strengthening the electric infrastructure at the campus. Total projected savings in this investment is \$50,000 annually, a reduction of almost 6% on energy consumption. Other measures are being implemented according to the UPR-Ponce plans for further reducing energy consumption.

### ***Alternative Sources of Income***

In addition to the implementation of cost control measures, the UPR-Ponce Financial Plan (Appendix 5) places great importance on strengthening external resources to maintain its financial stability and academic excellence. This Plan was commended by the April 2011 Visiting Team's final report which states:



*“The University has developed a Financial Plan that fairly presents the financial position of the University in an environment of limited financial resources, and establishes a five (5) year plan with goals and objectives to assure the ongoing academic and administrative excellence on the campus, and the efficient fulfillment of its mission and continual improvement”. (Appendix 6: Report to the Administration, Trustees, and Students of UPR-Ponce, 2011, page 3)*

The institution continues to strive to enhance its fiscal health by developing alternative sources of income, in alignment with UPR-Ponce Financial Plan goals. Specifically, Goal C aims to *“Reduce by four per cent (4%) the reliance on the General Funds Budget”*.

Table 2 presents a picture of the current and projected consolidated budgets by type or source of income. This data evidences the affirmative outcomes of the above-mentioned Goal C in UPR-Ponce’s finances up to this moment. For the current fiscal year, external resources constitute approximately 54% of the current consolidated institutional budget. When compared to the previous year, this data confirms that institution’s reliance on state appropriations (from the UPR General Fund) has decreased by more than 7%, thus evidencing its enhanced ability to generate additional sources of income.

**TABLE 2**  
**CURRENT AND PROJECTED CONSOLIDATED BUDGET BY TYPE OF SOURCE**  
**FISCAL YEARS 2010-2011 TO 2015-2016**

ACADEMIC YEAR	TOTAL BUDGET	GENERAL FUND	PER CENT	EXTERNAL FUNDS	PER CENT
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>\$ 43,133,594</b>	<b>\$ 23,063,866</b>	<b>53.47%</b>	<b>\$ 20,069,728</b>	<b>46.53%</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>49,499,518</b>	<b>22,890,166</b>	<b>46.24%</b>	<b>26,609,352</b>	<b>53.75%</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	46,942,149	23,347,969	49.74%	23,594,180	50.26%
<b>2013-2014</b>	48,279,321	23,814,929	49.33%	24,464,392	50.67%
<b>2014-2015</b>	49,665,627	24,291,227	48.91%	25,374,400	51.09%
<b>2015-2016</b>	51,288,255	24,777,052	48.31%	26,511,203	51.69%

Source: UPR-Central Administration Budget Office, UPR-Ponce Finance and Budget Offices

UPR-Ponce is currently considering new initiatives to develop alternative forms of income in order to strengthening stability in institutional finances. The institution is exploring the legal viability of leasing out several land parcels nearby the campus. If leased, this endeavor would contribute around \$100,000 to institutional resources every year. The administration is also assessing the renewal of privately administered services contracts, such as the cafeteria and the bookstore. In addition, proposals for establishing new auxiliary enterprises such as a “cyber café” and a “game room” are being considered. These steps could represent another \$100,000 annually. The strategies being gauged are in accordance with Goal E of *UPR-Ponce Five-Year Financial Plan* which states: ***“Continue the search for new sources of funding and income that includes: the creation of auxiliary enterprises, intramural practice, donations, gifts, among others”***. A series of fund-raising activities are also being implemented to reach alumni and private donors. For the past five years, a total of \$703,261 has been obtained through



donations from diverse sources. Donations channeled to the UPR-Ponce's Endowment Fund totaled \$25,035 for FY 2011. Funds obtained through these efforts will continue to represent a positive impact on institutional finances.

UPR-Ponce's resolve to increase its external funding in order to supplement revenues coming from state and tuition sources was commended by the small team that visited the UPR-Ponce April 4-7, 2011. On page 4 of the Report, the team expressed: ***"The University has been very aggressive in pursuing additional federal, state and private grant opportunities. The University's current grant proposal activity is in excess of \$10M"***. This fiscal year the institution expects to close the accounting books with an increment in its external funding of approximately 30% from the previous year, as shown in the following table.

**TABLE 3**  
**EXTERNAL RESOURCES RECEIVED AND PROJECTED**  
**FISCAL YEARS 2010-2011 TO 2015-2016**

SOURCES OF EXTERNAL FUNDS	RECEIVED	PROJECTED				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
<b>State</b>	2,202,384	\$2,312,503	2,428,128	2,549,535	2,677,012	2,810,862
	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>Private</b>	63,856	92,920	199,011	207,426	213,087	224,882
	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>Federal</b>	16,224,582	16,635,931	17,064,924	17,455,315	17,932,185	18,423,343
	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>69.5%</b>
<b>Pass-Thru and Auxiliary Enterprises</b>	1,578,906	7,567,998	3,902,116	4,252,116	4,552,116	5,052,116
	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,069,728</b>	<b>\$26,609,352</b>	<b>\$23,594,180</b>	<b>\$24,464,392</b>	<b>\$25,374,400</b>	<b>\$26,511,203</b>

Source: UPR-Ponce Finance and External Resources Offices

State funds include legislative grants provided by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as other student financial assistance. Beginning fiscal year 2010-2011, external state funds have included a special state allocation for the student aid program. For fiscal year 2011-2012, private funds were calculated considering the funds received from corporate donations and contributions from the private sector. Private funds include the cash flows from the rent to be received as part of the institution's efforts to develop alternative forms of income.

Federal funds are the greatest source of external funding. They represent nearly 63% of the total UPR-Ponce budget for fiscal year 2011-2012. These funds include student federal assistance programs as well as direct federal grants and pass-through federal grants. An increase of federal funds is projected in 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, pending the approval of proposals submitted for federal grants.

Other projected funds come from the University's auxiliary enterprises, especially the Continuing Education and Professional Studies Division, Evening Extended University, and



photocopy machine revenues. An increase of 380% is noted in these funds when the amount received in 2011-2012 is compared to that of 2010-2011. This sharp increase is the result of the Continuing Education Division's success in obtaining funding for the many proposals submitted to different agencies. For 2012-2013, the amount projected from Pass-through and Auxiliary Enterprises funds reflects a reduction of \$3,665,882. This decrease is due to the fact that two important grants, representing a total amount of \$3,000,000, will be concluded as of June 30, 2012. Amounts projected for fiscal years 2012-2013 to 2015-2016 take into account proposals to be submitted by the Continuing Education Division, some of which have already been approved, and proposals to be completed at each year-end.

To the present, institutional efforts to obtain alternative sources of revenue have been fruitful. The following table reflects resources obtained through twelve (12) new projects awarded to the institution starting in 2011-2012. These funds will strengthen academic and research programs and will have a significant impact in the services provided to students in pursuit of academic excellence. Total income from these grants amounts to \$6,751,271.

**TABLE 4**  
**GRANTS APPROVED FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012**

GRANT	TOTAL APPROVED
<i>UPR-PRISE NIH CFDA: 93.859</i>	\$ 358,212
<i>Sistema Fotovoltaico Department of Energy CFDA: 81.041</i>	100,000
<i>Producción Composta</i>	72,607
<i>Maratón Académico Vocacional</i>	64,100
<i>PTV-03 Proyecto Literacia Español (PROLITES)</i>	342,563
<i>PTV:02 Proyecto Matemática Práctica (PROMATPRA) Nivel Intermedio y Superior</i>	685,126
<i>Ciencias y Matemáticas en Alianza con la Tecnología (CiMaAlTec)</i>	500,000
<i>PT-12-037: Proyecto Academia Práctica en Liderazgo Académico para Directores</i>	292,105
<i>Plan de Trabajo 306 Adecuación Profesional para Maestros de Escuela Elemental en Plan de Mejoramiento Profesional</i>	885,843
<i>Proyecto CRECE 21 Español e Inglés</i>	1,500,000
<i>Proyecto CRECE 21 Ciencias y Matemáticas</i>	1,500,000
<i>Proyecto Asciende al Éxito (PAE)</i>	450,715
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,751,271</b>

Source: UPR-Ponce Finance and External Resources Offices

This section has presented sound evidence that the UPR-Ponce has effectively taken further steps to obtain additional sources of income for supporting its programs and supplementing general fund revenues.



### UPR-Ponce Pro-forma Budgets

UPR-Ponce's consolidated budget provides evidence that the institution is able to finance the full operational and educational costs of its twelve baccalaureate and four associate degree programs. The following table presents projected revenues and expenses for UPR-Ponce's consolidated budget for fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2015-2016. The revenue projections are based on the assumptions explained earlier in this section of the report; the expense categories are mainly supported by NACUBO expenditure codes. Assumptions in expenses are based on personnel, compensation, and other current operational obligations.

**TABLE 5**  
**UPR-PONCE STATEMENT OF PROJECTED REVENUES AND EXPENSES FOR CONSOLIDATED BUDGET**  
**FY 2011-2012 TO 2015-2016**

REVENUES					
Source	Current Budget	Projected			
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
General fund	\$22,890,166	\$23,347,969	\$23,814,929	\$24,291,227	\$24,777,052
State Funds	2,312,503	2,428,128	2,549,535	2,677,012	2,810,862
Private Funds	92,920	199,011	207,426	213,087	224,882
Federal Funds	16,635,931	17,064,924	17,455,315	17,932,185	18,423,343
Tuition and Fees	6,526,557	6,657,088	6,790,230	6,926,035	7,064,555
Pass-Thru Funds and Auxiliary Enterprises	7,567,998	3,902,116	4,252,116	4,552,116	5,052,116
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$56,026,076</b>	<b>\$53,599,236</b>	<b>\$55,069,551</b>	<b>\$56,591,662</b>	<b>\$58,352,810</b>
EXPENSES					
Expense Category	Current Budget	Projected			
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Faculty salaries	8,733,915.19	8,741,710.35	8,920,927.85	9,013,714	9,196,198
Non-faculty salaries	7,247,351	7,398,049	7,424,670	7,572,763	7,739,574
Student services	105,221	110,482	116,006	121,806	127,896
Fringe Benefits	5,934,149	6,065,174	6,146,922	6,254,655	6,379,009
Materials	2,707,656	2,556,090	2,340,821	2,314,994	2,341,452
Library resources	84,000	88,200	92,610	97,241	102,103
Communications	47,250	49,613	52,093	54,698	57,433
Professional services	113,625	1,518,447	91,728	76,915	77,302
Utilities	1,325,500	1,458,050	1,603,855	1,764,241	1,940,665
Travel and per diem	192,812	258,834	143,266	131,890	132,527
Equipment	374,442	316,152	201,584	201,487	210,606
Student Aid Assistant Programs	17,419,299	18,092,731	18,664,021	19,251,970	19,865,940
Student Stipends	666,950	287,200	122,200	44,200	44,200
Indirect Costs	63,541	78,753	79,053	79,362	79,938
Others	2,187,299	597,728	246,605	31,517	29,029
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$47,203,009</b>	<b>\$47,617,211</b>	<b>\$46,246,362</b>	<b>\$47,011,454</b>	<b>\$48,323,870</b>
<b>Net revenue</b>	<b>8,823,066</b>	<b>5,982,025</b>	<b>8,823,189</b>	<b>9,580,208</b>	<b>10,028,940</b>

Source: UPR-Ponce Finance and Budget Offices



The table above confirms that UPR-Ponce's enhanced efforts to pursue additional sources of income present a more positive scenario for institutional finances than the one projected in the previous Monitoring Report. Expected net revenues will have a positive impact in UPR-Ponce's cash flow for the next five years, resulting in a stronger financial position for the institution.

The information provided in this section of the report documents that the UPR-Ponce has strengthened institutional resources and developed alternative forms of income. Institutional pro-forma budgets demonstrate the institution's ability to generate a balanced budget for fiscal years 2012 through 2016, including the personnel, compensation, and other assumptions on which these budgets are based. The UPR-Ponce has the necessary resources to achieve its mission and goals, uses its resources effectively through sound financial planning linked to institutional goals and strategies, and allocates its budget according to institutional priorities, thus complying with Standard 3.

***2. Steps taken to ensure timely production of audited financial statements for FY 2011 and subsequent years.***

The Finance Office of the UPR-Central Administration oversees the preparation of the audited financial statements which are issued by an external auditing firm for the university system. The complexity of the university's accounting system and issues related to the implementation and capability of the University Financial Information System (UFIS) still pose some challenges for the institution in producing more timely audited statements. In addressing this issue, the University of Puerto Rico Central Administration has taken the following proactive steps:

- An external firm with expertise in government accounting processes was hired to assist the units and the UPR Central Administration in reconciling and verifying information for the external auditor, to identify difficulties in accounting and financial processes, to review accounts receivable practices, and to submit recommendations. As a result, FY 2010 Audited Financial Statements were issued on April 21, 2011, two months earlier when compared to the date of financial statements for the previous fiscal year.
- A firm of software specialists was also recruited to revise UFIS implementation, devise solutions to improve its performance, and develop reports to facilitate access to the financial information needed to draft timely financial statements. The firm developed an implementation schedule which is part of the recently approved UPR Information System Renewal Plan described in Board of Trustees Certification No. 7 (2011-2012).
- A second External Auditing Firm was hired to validate the trial balance of the financial statements draft in order to expedite substantive tests carried out by the auditing firm.
- The UPR Central Finance Office, in collaboration with the Vice Presidency of Research and Technology, organized a task force with key representatives from the units to implement the recommendations of the firms, expedite the necessary processes, and





implement the subsidiary modules to streamline the performance of the UFIS accounting system.

- UPR Central Administration has initiated the process of hiring a software specialist firm to support the implementation of the UPR Information System Renewal Plan. This action will facilitate access to the financial information needed for drafting financial statements. The firm will help implement the "Cash Management Module" throughout the System, the Resource Center for Science and Engineering and the Board of Trustees, and update modules in account creation, purchasing, accounts payable, and provide training to unit accounting personnel.
- Unit income and expense reports are produced to monitor monthly and quarterly performance. Also, reports such as "Statement of Net Assets", "Expenses vs. Budget", and "Statements of Revenues and Expenses" have been incorporated into UFIS to facilitate the production of reports required by the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) and by the Government Development Bank.
- A series of manuals were developed to guide units in expediting accounting processes required to ensure efficient monthly closings. They included revisions to the accounts receivable processes. The UPR Board of Trustees approved them in Certification No. 18 (2011-2012) in order to institutionalize mechanisms to facilitate collection of accounts receivable from federal and private entities.

The UPR-Ponce has also implemented measures to expedite the bank reconciliation process. The Finance Office now has direct access to bank account information through the WebCash Manager system provided by *Banco Popular de Puerto Rico*. Accountants in the Finance Office are now able to reconcile bank accounts immediately after the monthly closing of accounting books. In addition, the Finance Office personnel has been strengthened during fiscal year 2011-2012; an Auxiliary Accountant and a Claim and Collection Officer have been added to the staff, thus expediting accomplishment of existing processes. There is effective communication between Central Administration Finance Office and the unit's office in providing the necessary documentation for monthly and year-end closing processes. Constant follow-up is given by the Central Administration through circular letters containing specific instructions for the diverse procedures.

The information provided in this section has described some steps taken by Central Administration and the UPR-Ponce to expedite the production of audited financial statements for FY2011. At the moment this report was written, external auditors are performing the final substantive tests based on the drafts provided by the UPR-CA Finance Office. Audited financial statements for FY 2011 are expected to be issued in March 2012.





## STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

### ***3. Further steps taken to improve communication and shared governance, especially in documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at the System level.***

As evidenced by its March 2011 Monitoring Report, and the UPR–Central Administration (UPR–CA) Assessment Report (February 2011), UPR–Ponce has focused greater attention on fostering and cultivating an open institutional culture, with the implementation of clear institutional policies specifying the respective authority of the different governance bodies and their respective roles and responsibilities in shared governance. The UPR President Miguel Muñoz and UPR–Ponce Chancellor Fernando Rodríguez have optimized the flow and exchange of timely and accurate information, and broadened opportunities for productive communication and input from all sectors of the campus community. They have implemented a variety of strategies for a shared collegiate government that promotes an institutional climate of mutual respect and collegiality among its constituents, thus promoting a climate of trust, collaboration, communication, commitment, and identification with the institution’s mission, goals, and challenges.

Since his appointment in June of 2011, President Miguel Muñoz has evidenced his genuine commitment to actively promoting an open and transparent dialogue with representatives of all university sectors. There is ample evidence of his efforts to further promote a climate of communication and shared governance and to expeditiously implement actions towards achieving this goal. For example, the President meets periodically with student representatives from the UPR General Student Council, to listen to and consider student concerns. He also provides feedback on the status of issues that affect them, and they cooperate in seeking new ideas and viable solutions to the institution’s current challenges. These periodic meetings have been institutionalized as part of the activities included in the UPR Action Plan submitted with previous Monitoring Reports. During these meetings, student representatives have brought to the attention of the President issues related to courses offered through the Extended University, the Special Scholarship Fund, and campus security. President Muñoz and his staff have kept them informed of the following actions taken towards addressing these concerns: development of clear policies regarding the offering of courses by the Extended University and eligibility requirements for student aid; implementation of measures, procedures, and policies to further expedite the disbursement of the Special Scholarship Fund; and improvement of measures to increase campus security, especially in the Río Piedras Campus.

President Muñoz has also conducted campus visits to hold face-to-face dialogues with constituents in order to receive their input on major institutional issues and concerns. He has made these visits a top priority in his agenda. The President and senior staff have visited all units in the System more than once. For example, the President actively participated in past semester freshman student orientation sessions at the Río Piedras, Mayagüez, Humacao, Cayey, Carolina and Utuado campuses. He recently took part in meetings of the Academic Senates of the Río Piedras, Mayagüez, and Utuado campuses to listen to and consider faculty



and student senators' input and to keep them informed on institutional matters of their interest. The President and his senior staff have also visited the Río Piedras, Cayey, and Utuado campuses in August 2011 with Dr. Tito Guerrero III, Vice President of the MSCHE, to introduce him as the new Liaison and to exchange ideas with staff, faculty, and students in preparation for the September 2011 Monitoring Reports and site visits to these units.

Similarly, the UPR President and members of the UPR Board of Trustees have continued to conduct planned campus visits to meet with Chancellors, Academic Senates, staff, faculty, and students to gain firsthand information of their plans, needs, concerns, and ideas, and to assess the conditions of the physical facilities. During the past four months, the Board has already visited five of the eleven UPR campuses, including UPR-Ponce, and will continue to carry out visits to the rest of the campuses during this academic year.

As established in the UPR Action Plan, a committee composed of institutional researchers, coordinated by the Vice Presidency of Academic Affairs, is working on surveys which will be administered to the different sectors of the university community in order to gauge their opinion on several institutional issues related to leadership and governance and to institutional climate.

Most recently, President Muñoz acted upon a recommendation of the UPR University Board with regard to a report prepared for the Governor of Puerto Rico by a special advisory committee on the future of higher education of Puerto Rico. This committee was charged with the task of assessing and making recommendations to strengthen the effectiveness and pertinence of higher education institutions, including the UPR. Muñoz requested that Chancellors charge their respective Academic Senates with reacting to and gathering input from the campus community regarding the recommendations made by the committee. Their reports will be discussed at a future meeting of the University Board. On February 21, 2012, the UPR-Ponce Student Council organized a dialogue open to the whole campus community to discuss the recommendations included in the report of the Governor's advisory committee with respect to the University of Puerto Rico.

UPR-Ponce Chancellor Fernando Rodríguez has also taken further actions to promote constituent participation in shared governance and to solicit and consider input for decision making. Some examples of recent actions are:

- Institutional leaders held a dialogue with elected student leaders on October 11, 2011 in which students presented their concerns about some issues that affect them. Actions taken by the administration to address them include: extending library service hours; timely processing of payment to students participating in the Work Study Program, Pell Grant, and student loans; providing further maintenance of air conditioning units and elevators; improving ramps for handicapped students; revamping sports facilities such as the tennis court; and considering the use of the institution's open areas for the development of sports facilities.



- A student open forum was celebrated on October 25, 2011 where institutional leaders provided participants with a report on actions taken regarding matters brought up by students during past forums. During this session, students had the opportunity to express additional concerns to the administration.
- The Dean of Students carried out a colloquy with freshmen students on November 1, 2011 in which students provided their input on several issues of their concern.
- The Office of Planning and Institutional Research implemented several satisfaction and needs assessment studies such as: *2011 Freshmen Student Profile*, *2011 Graduating Student Exit Survey*, *Library Satisfaction Survey*, *2011-2012 Student Dropout Study*.
- The Board of Trustees visited UPR-Ponce campus on November 9, 2011 to receive input from representatives of all sectors of the university community on matters of their concern.
- Facebook pages for the General Student Council and for the Dean of Students are accessed frequently. Students receive information and freely and respectfully express their concerns, opinions, and ideas on different subjects of interest. These are referred to the corresponding authorities for action.
- A Twitter account was created by the Dean of Students to receive student input and to inform the student body on different matters.
- The Dean of Academic Affairs carried out monthly meetings with academic department chairpersons to inform them and to receive their input on departmental and institutional issues related to enrollment, academic planning, faculty and non-faculty appointments, fiscal and physical resources, and others.
- Faculty representatives of the Board of Trustees participated in an open forum held on February 21, 2012 to discuss recent university issues. This forum was organized by UPR-Ponce's Student Council.

The above examples of actions taken serve as opportunities for constituents to communicate directly with the Chancellor and senior campus administrators. Concerns and ideas are documented, considered, and channeled, accordingly. Follow-up is given by the Chancellor and his staff. In addition, these are opportunities for the Chancellor to share governance with other senior officials.

At the executive level, the Chancellor holds frequent staff meetings with the deans and other executive administrators. The meetings offer opportunities to assess daily operational activities, to establish integrated work plans to address assessment findings, to prioritize activities, and to gain insight into matters to be shared with various institutional stakeholders and the



community at large. Issues concerning the institution and the Central Administration are presented and preliminary action plans are developed.

Faculty meetings, both at-large and by academic areas, are scheduled throughout the year with the objective of allowing the Chancellor or the Academic Dean to present new academic projects, institutional achievements, progress in accreditation status, challenges to be faced, and the budget for the academic year. They offer the Administration an opportunity to gain insight into the faculty's positions, opinions, input, and proposals on matters such as fiscal stability and other areas in which faculty involvement is important.

Campus input and assessment results are also considered by institutional leaders for decision making in the Executive Committee for Institutional Renewal (ECIR) presided by the Chancellor. Members include the Deans of Academic Affairs, Students, and Administration, the Director of the Office of the Planning and Institutional Research, the Budget Office Director, and the Institutional Assessment and External Auditing Coordinator. This group is responsible for leading institutional planning efforts by analyzing assessment information and results flowing from institutional assessment activities, and using these elements for planning and budget allocation.

Faculty and student senators have been proactive in submitting proposals on issues affecting them to UPR-Ponce's Academic Senate. The Academic Senate considered and took actions to address the following recommendations: to extend Library service hours (Certification 2010-2011-72), to amend Academic Senate Internal By-laws (Certification 2011-2012-25), to define faculty responsibilities related to providing course syllabus on time (Certification 2011-2012-20), and to evaluate a change in the institution's universal hour (Certification 2012-2012-27). Although all certifications are disclosed to the university community through official e-mails, the Academic Senate is working to design a webpage so that certifications will be more readily available to the community. This action resulted from a recommendation made by faculty senators (Certification 2011-2012-26).

Faculty members have the opportunity to express their needs for professional development through needs assessment studies carried out by the Institutional Committee on Academic Professional Improvement. After examining the results of these surveys, the Committee elaborates professional development plans to address professors' needs. Examples of some workshops and conferences organized by the Committee during the past semester are:

- Faculty Workshop: Facebook and Google Apps- August 9, 2011
- Orientation for New Faculty- September 2, 2011
- *Cineforo* (Film Forum) as an Educational Strategy- September 30, 2011
- Videoconference: Strategies to Prevent Plagiarism- October 5, 2011
- *PREZI* Workshop- October 7, 2011
- Workshop: Designing Rubrics- October 21, 2011
- Workshop: E-Portfolios- November 4, 2011
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum of Student Assessment- December 6, 2011



- Faculty Workshop: Teaching Strategies: New Technologies in the Classroom- January 13, 2012
- Director's Academy on Leadership and Supervision- February 3, 2012.

The UPR-Ponce Chancellor continuously acts to ensure that information provided to constituents is clear and accurate, and that the sources of communications are clearly defined. Policies and procedures established for the efficient, effective, and secure disclosure of written and electronic communication are strictly enforced. Release of official documents and reports distributed in paper or electronic format must always comply with institutional policies and protocols. As an additional step taken to further promote an Open University culture and effective communication with the internal and external constituents, on September 2011, Chancellor Rodríguez appointed a person in charge of public relations to serve as the official liaison with the community.

UPR-Ponce Chancellor Dr. Fernando Rodríguez was commended by the small team that visited the institution on April 2011 with the following words:

***"Finally, this team commends the Chancellor of UPR-Ponce. His commitment to listening and to genuinely hearing those who make up the Ponce community is exemplary. It is the chancellor who sets the standard for shared governance on this campus while preserving all of its legal authority. It is the chancellor who maintains peace on the Ponce campus and who offers by his very example hope for a better society."*** (Report to the Administration, Trustees, and Students of UPR-Ponce, 2011, page 6)

#### **4. Evidence of further implementation of the UPR Action Plan, including evidence that the action plan is being assessed and data is used for improvements.**

On September 2010, the University of Puerto Rico embraced an Action Plan for ongoing and sustained compliance with the Leadership and Governance, Educational Offerings, and Institutional Resources Standards of Excellence. The Plan sets forth an agenda of institutional change and improvement aligned with the prevailing values and expectations of higher education institutions, aimed to:

- (1) foster an enhanced institutional climate and identity
- (2) develop an open university culture
- (3) revisit and empower leadership and governance at all levels
- (4) guarantee sustained length, rigor, and depth of academic offerings
- (5) secure continuity and institutional effectiveness with available resources
- (6) maintain and nurture additional sources of funding to continue advancing institutional education, research, and service priorities

Since its initiation, the UPR has been diligent in implementing and assessing its *Action Plan for Sustained Compliance with MSCHE Standards 3, 4, and 11*. Key actions therein have been effectively deployed and assessed at all levels of the University system, as verified through the previous Monitoring Report of March 2011. Findings revealed that, currently, 99% of activities



included in the action plan had been fully deployed or were in progress, and that they have had a positive impact in reaching the stated goals and objectives.

Examples of significant outcomes of the implementation of the Action Plan are:

- MSICHE's action on June 2011 to remove probation and to reaffirm accreditation of the UPR-Ponce.
- No significant events affecting continuity of the institution's operation have been experienced since the deployment of the UPR Action Plan.
- An increase of 17% in freshmen applicants to the UPR for the next academic year, which validates an improved institutional climate and the community's restored confidence in the UPR as a public higher education institution.
- An increase of 3% (from 74% to 77%) in UPR-Ponce's freshmen to sophomore retention rate for academic year 2011-2012.
- An increase of 8% in total degrees conferred and 3% in UPR-Ponce's six-year graduation rate for academic year 2010-2011.
- Improved mechanisms of communication with constituents, as evidenced by the President's meetings with student leadership and faculty, campus visits by the Board of Trustees, the development of the 2011 Summer Policy and the Tuition Exemption Policy with broad constituent participation, and the redesigned webpage, among others.
- Implementation of a procedure for the periodic objective assessment of the Board of Trustees in meeting its stated objectives and responsibilities.
- Effective implementation of fiscal measures resulting in the ability to grant faculty promotions in FY 2012 to professors qualified in 2008-2009.
- Increased capacity to negotiate employee benefits in FY 2012.
- Closing of FY 2011 with zero deficit in all units and in increased budget reallocations to the units in FY 2012.

The Committee for the Implementation and Assessment of the Action Plan (CIAAP), appointed by the UPR-Ponce Chancellor in the past academic semester, will continue assessing and revising the UPR-Ponce's September 2010 Action Plan to make any modifications needed to achieve the goal of maintaining sustained compliance with Standards 3, 4, and 11.



***5. Evidence that steps have been taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional leadership, particularly in times of governmental transitions.***

As mentioned in the previous Monitoring Report, like most higher education institutions, the UPR has historically undergone periodic changes in leadership while maintaining the necessary level of continuity and stability in key areas to carry on with its mission. We recognize that, particularly in times of governmental transition, assuring continuity and stability of institutional leadership has presented some challenges to the UPR. However, clearly established By-Laws, regulations, policies, plans, and procedures have contributed to the effective functioning and governance of the institution, particularly in times of administrative changes.

During the past two years, the institution has undergone a period of transition with some leadership changes at top levels in the UPR system. On these occasions, the Board of Trustees has required that UPR's planning agenda *Ten for the Decade* and the units' strategic plans be strictly followed in order to give continuity to institutional processes (Board of Trustees Certification 2009-2010-10). Appointed institutional leaders must evidence their commitment to institutional mission, goals, values, and objectives. In designing their operational plans, they must abide by systemic and unit plans and by transition reports provided by their predecessors. The Board of Trustees is committed to taking steps to develop more formal policies to ensure further continuity and stability of the institution at every level.

***6. Evidence that communication between the Central Administration and the institution, is clear, timely, accurate, and made available to all constituents.***

Historically, effective communication networks between the UPR-CA and all sectors of the UPR-Ponce have kept the university leadership and community informed on matters of their concern in a clear, timely, accurate, and official manner. The UPR-CA and UPR-Ponce have doubled their efforts to assure that the diverse channels of communication at every level are effective and made available to all constituents. Ongoing communication is maintained with the campus community at-large, both through e-mails and the institution's website, where institutional documents and presentations are readily available.

During the current academic year, the UPR- Central Administration leadership continues to give high priority to apprising its constituents in a clear, opportune, and precise manner. Existing communication mechanisms and channels have been reinforced and optimized in order to ensure that information is readily accessible to all segments of the university community. The following opportunities have proven effective in enhancing the quality of communication between UPR-CA and its units and in providing for an interchange of information and ideas:

- Monthly meetings of the University Board which is chaired by the President and whose members include the Chancellors and elected faculty and student representatives from each of the eleven units.





- Regular meetings of the President and the Chancellors which are held not less than twice a month.
- Periodic meetings of the Deans of Administration with the President's staff.
- Monthly meetings of the UPR-CA Vice President for Students Affairs with the Deans of Students, Financial Aid Directors, and other student service officers. The Deans channel the relevant information to students through their elected representatives by means of periodic meetings and official communications.
- Periodic meetings of the UPR-CA Vice President for Academic Affairs with the units' Deans of Academic Affairs, professional accreditation committees, Institutional Research and Planning Directors, accreditation coordinators, Registrars, Directors of the Divisions of Continuing Education and Professional Studies, as well as other committees, groups, university community members, and stakeholders.

UPR System and unit information, such as governance documents, policies, and procedures, is always readily available to the UPR-Ponce university community through by both printed and electronic means. Governing bodies issue official certifications every time a new policy or procedure is adopted or changed in order to ensure both its fulfillment and community awareness.

In an effort to further enhance communication with its units, the UPR-CA has developed and implemented new strategies for the timely and accurate delivery of institutional information to the internal and external communities. Its Office of Communications redesigned its communication plan to maximize the use of the university website and increase and diversify information mechanisms (social networks, *Cartero AC* and *UPR Informa*) to communicate relevant information and address important issues.

Additional examples of steps implemented to enhance the access, quality, and timeliness of communication between the UPR Central Administration and the institution include broadening communication delivery channels, thus capitalizing on the diversity of internal and external outlets available. Some of these include: local newspapers, bulletins, system and units' web pages, radio stations, and others.

Additional strategies for timely and accurate delivery of institutional information to the internal and external community have been also developed and implemented. Examples of these are described below.

- Appointment of a new Special Assistant to the President for Press and Communications.
- Increased UPR presence in social networks, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.
- Redesigning of the *Diálogo* Newspaper and webpage <http://dialogodigital.upr.edu/>.





- Periodic postings by *Cartero AC* (Central Administration electronic mailman) on the UPR System network of communications, announcements, press releases, TV, radio and press interventions.
- Overall revamping of the UPR System and units' webpages to make them more effective, comprehensive, and dynamic.
- Development and implementation of an *Awareness and Promotion Plan* by the UPR System Development and Alumni Office, including communication mechanisms such as newspapers, radio, bus shelters, social media, direct mail, emails and TV.

**7. Evidence of further progress in implementing a procedure for the periodic objective assessment of the Board of Trustees.**

The roles and responsibilities of the UPR Board of Trustees are clearly defined in the University By-Laws and in their internal regulations. An examination of multiple documents such as Board reports, minutes, proceedings, and certifications yields clear evidence that it carries out its responsibilities and achieves its objectives. Some of this evidence was discussed in the previous Monitoring Reports. However, aware of the need to address the Commission's concern for a more formal approach to the periodic objective assessment of its effectiveness, the Board has embarked on a structured process of self-assessment.

As stated in the previous Monitoring Report, on February 10, 2011, the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs drafted an assessment rubric based on the Commission's expectations and fundamental elements contained in *Characteristics of Excellence 2011* (Standard 4), and in *Governing Boards: Understanding the Expectations of MSCHE* (2010). The Board hired an external consultant with whom they met on February 25, 2011 to receive recommendations for refining and implementing the assessment rubric according to the UPR Board's particular profile, roles, and responsibilities. After all the necessary revisions were made, the rubric was deployed and the results were analyzed by the members of the Board in order to identify areas for improvement. As a result, an action plan was developed which currently is in its initial implementation phase. The Board's Internal By-Laws were revised and the Board received additional orientation on its roles and responsibilities. Also, its *Conflict of Interest Policy* is being reviewed, including validating its compliance with recently established public policy applicable to governmental corporations and public entities.

Most recently, in February 2012, the Board of Trustees, the UPR President and his senior staff participated in a two-day retreat designed to continue the Board's assessment process. Assisted by an external consultant and a representative of the Association of Governing Boards, the Trustees identified the following outcomes from the assessment of their action plan:

- Appointment of the new UPR President following the established search process
- Election of the Board President as mandated by existing internal regulations
- More rigorous orientation process for all Board members
- Significant progress towards the revision of Board's By-Laws and policies



## SECTION 3: CONCLUSION

---

As evidenced in this report, the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce has made progress in responding to the issues identified by the April 2011 visiting team. Despite a series of challenges associated with the Commission's requirements, the institution is advancing steadily in strengthening its resources and improving communication and shared governance. In doing so, the UPR-Ponce has addressed all matters diligently and promptly, and is committed to continuing its efforts.

This Monitoring Report confirms that the institution is making judicious budgetary decisions for the benefit of its academic programs and services. It also demonstrates that it is employing initiatives to identify and develop alternative forms of income in order to assure a balanced budget for the coming years. Financial difficulties have provided UPR-Ponce with an opportunity to identify its strengths and challenges, to review its priorities, and to enhance several administrative procedures. As a result of this self-examination, UPR-Ponce has become a more efficient and competent institution. Conservative and efficient fiscal planning and management processes have been crucial in helping the UPR-Ponce to weather the financial downturn well. Its effective administrative practices have consistently earned the recognition of the Puerto Rico Comptroller's Office audits, obtaining a ten-year average of 98%. This successful track record, together with the effective reallocation of resources, and a more positive state economic scenario for the forthcoming years, suggest that the institution is well positioned to maintain its financial stability.

The report also evidences that the UPR system and UPR-Ponce have made progress towards documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at every level. Communication with Central Administration is clear, timely, and available to all constituents. Both the UPR System and institutional governance and leadership have been dedicated to implementing their respective action plans for strengthening governance as well as the institutional climate and identity, and facilitating an open university culture. Clear evidence of the implementation and assessment of these plans has been provided throughout the Monitoring Reports and demonstrates significant progress on all fronts.

We believe that we have carefully addressed the Commission's requirements and that this Monitoring Report provides thorough evidence that UPR-Ponce has made noteworthy progress in achieving continuing compliance with Standards 3 and 4 of the MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence. The UPR-Ponce is ready to advance as an institution that will preserve its educational quality, financial stability, and effective governance. While challenges still lay ahead, UPR-Ponce's numerous strengths will allow it to maintain the prominent place in higher education it has earned since its establishment in 1969.



