



MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
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Public Disclosure Statement

University of Puerto Rico – Ponce

May 18, 2017

By the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

This statement has been developed for use in responding to public inquiries, consistent with the Commission's policies on [Public Communication in the Accrediting Process](#), [Accreditation Actions](#), and [Standardized Language for Commission Actions on Accreditation](#). It should be read in conjunction with the *Statement of Accreditation Status* for University of Puerto Rico - Ponce. The policies listed above explain what information the Commission makes public regarding its member institutions and what information remains confidential, describe the various accreditation actions the Commission can take, and define the terms used in the Commission's actions.

University of Puerto Rico - Ponce, located in Ponce, Puerto Rico, is a public university within the University of Puerto Rico System. UPR – Ponce has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1970. The University offers Associate's and Bachelor's degrees. A summary of the most recent Commission actions relative to the institution's accreditation follows.

Current Accreditation Status

On May 18, 2017, the Executive Committee of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to accept the institution's Supplemental Information Report and to place the institution on probation because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 (institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs) and 8 (documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability), and with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources). The full text of the Commission's action is provided below. The Commission's accreditation standards are available online at <http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf>.

University of Puerto Rico -Ponce remains accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education while on probation.

The Commission places an institution on probation when, in the Commission's judgment, the institution is not in compliance with one or more accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation and the non-compliance is sufficiently serious, extensive, or substantial that it raises concern about one or more of the following: (1) the adequacy of the education provided by the institution; (2) the institution's capacity to make appropriate improvements in a timely fashion; or (3) the institution's capacity to sustain itself in the long term. Probation is often, but need not always be, preceded by an action of warning. The Commission may place an institution on probation at any time if it determines that the institution has failed to satisfactorily address the Commission's concerns regarding non-compliance with accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation in a prior action. A follow-up report, called a monitoring report, is required of an institution on probation to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance. A small team visit also is conducted to verify institutional status and progress.

Summary of Recent Commission Actions

The Commission's policy, *Public Communication in the Accrediting Process*, states, "If an institution conducts its affairs in ways which generate serious public concern, the Commission reserves the right to request additional information from the institution." On May 2, 2017, staff acted on behalf of the Commission to request a supplemental information report, due May 5, 2017, addressing concerns regarding recent developments at the institution which may have implications for current and future compliance with Requirements of Affiliation, Standards, or Commission policies.

On May 18, 2017, the Executive Committee of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted as follows:

To accept the Supplemental Information Report. To place the institution on probation because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 (institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs) and 8 (documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability), and with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources). To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation. To request a monitoring report, due September 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and

can sustain compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 and 8 and Standard 3, including but not limited to (1) the institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs (Requirement of Affiliation 3) and (2) the institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability (Requirement of Affiliation 8 and Standard 3). A small team visit will follow submission of the report. To direct a prompt liaison guidance consultation to discuss the Commission's expectations. To remind the institution of its obligation to inform the Commission about any and all significant developments relevant to this action, including developments relevant to Title IV program responsibilities. To remind the institution of the Commission's request of November 17, 2016 for a progress report due April 1, 2018. Upon reaffirmation of accreditation, the next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2024-2025.

Current Status and Expected Activities

University of Puerto Rico – Ponce remains accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education while on probation.

Following receipt of a monitoring report on September 1, 2017, the Commission will conduct a small team visit to assess the institution's compliance with the Commission's standards and policies. Following the on-site visit, a report by the visiting team will be completed. The monitoring report, the small team report and the institutional response to the small team report will be considered by the Committee on Follow-Up Activities, and then by the Commission.

Following review by the Committee on Follow-up Activities, the Commission will take further action, in accordance with the Commission's policy, *Accreditation Actions* (available at <http://www.msche.org/documents/P2.3-AccreditationActions.pdf>) . If, based on the monitoring report and small team report, the Commission determines that University of Puerto Rico – Ponce has made appropriate progress in addressing the cited concerns, the Commission may act to remove the probation and reaffirm accreditation. If the Commission determines that progress sufficient to demonstrate compliance with its accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation has not been made, the Commission may take further action as allowed under *Accreditation Actions*.

For More Information

The following resources provide additional information that may be helpful in understanding the Commission's actions and the accreditation status of University of Puerto Rico - Ponce:

Statement of Accreditation Status for University of Puerto Rico – Ponce (http://www.msche.org/institutions_directory.asp) provides factual information about University of Puerto Rico – Ponce and the full text of the Commission's recent actions regarding the institution.

Media

Backgrounder (<http://www.msche.org/documents/MediaBackgrounder2017.pdf>) answers questions about accreditation such as “What is accreditation?” and “What is the Middle States Commission on Higher Education?”