University of Puerto Rico
Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs

Revision August 9, 2010

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
MONITORING REPORT SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

STANDARD 4

Leadership and Governance: The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

COMMISSION'S ACTION

The institution has achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance with Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance), including but not limited to the development and implementation of clear institutional policies specifying the respective authority of the different governance bodies and their respective roles and responsibilities in shared governance.

GUIDANCE VISIT – CONCERNS AND EXPECTATIONS

INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE	CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS / OPEN UNIVERSITY	INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES / LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
▪ Is there a climate for shared collegiate government? What means promote a climate of mutual support, respect and collaboration with all constituents involved in the governance function. ▪ Find effective ways to change the 'institutional culture of strikes. ▪ All constituents must know and understand why things are happening (transparency). ▪ Politics should not interfere with the institution. ▪ Explain that the government makes the institution accountable and how that is different from political intervention. ▪ Explain to constituents the three legged accountability that institutions owe: (1) to MSCHE; (2) Federal government DE & HEA; (3) State government and licensing agency. ▪ Explain to students the ramification of their actions. To understand that this is a serious matter so they may weigh the risks and consequences to the institution and Puerto Rico's economy. ▪ Foster ongoing and transparent communication with all constituents. ▪ Make sure that there are official (student bodies, etc) and unofficial (surveys, website) communication channels ▪ Establish communication system between university and government authorities, work together to run the university and help it fulfill its mission.	▪ The institution is required to be operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs. Must guaranty a high quality and effective education. ▪ The law establishes that if an institution ceases to provide educational programs for any reason other than a scheduled vacation or a natural disaster, the institution will lose its eligibility to participate in Title IV funds. ▪ The governing body serves the public by ensuring the continuity and fiscal and academic integrity of the institution. ▪ The strike was symptomatic of other underlying issues regarding governance that need to be addressed. ▪ How can we make sure it does not happen again (strike)? ▪ The institution must find ways for this cessation of instruction and loss of eligibility to Federal funds to happen again. ▪ There is concern of influences outside may be influencing administration and students. See policy statement regarding political intervention in Higher Education. ▪ The agenda should be the discussion of all political ideas. Politics should be expressed freely in the university as opposed to holding an institution hostage to political agendas at all levels. They should not dictate who is appointed to roles and what changes take place.	▪ Examine and evaluate if policies that structure and operate the governance system actually work: Board of Trustees, President, Chancellors, University Board and Administrative Board; Student's Bylaws ▪ Development and implementation of clear institutional policies specifying the respective authority of the different governance bodies and their respective roles and responsibilities in shared governance. ▪ Define or clarify the roles, responsibilities and respective authority of the different governing bodies and constituents. That each knows their limits and responsibilities; how their voices are heard and come together. ▪ The governing body should assist the executive officers by helping them resist pressures from individuals or groups outside the established governance structure of the institution that threaten to impede fulfillment of institutional mission and goals."("Standard 4, p.14, Characteristics of Excellence) ▪ Does the structure of the governing body provide sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development? ▪ Clarify the relationship of the campuses with central administration / total system. ▪ There should be no micromanaging by the governing body. ▪ There need to be processes that provide opportunities for input in decision making by the different members of the community. Ensure students have appropriate input on decisions that affect them. ▪ Communicate decisions in a timely manner to commission and constituents. ▪ The commission has noted and is concerned with the excessive transition in leadership every time the government changes. The concern is how it affects the institution. o Concerns that too much change in leadership may affect institutions ability to continue to operate. o The commission does not tell the institution how to run but it needs to assure that quality continues in spite of changes. o Make transitions in leadership smoother, seamless, and in a timely manner o You may want to establish a **protocol t**o maintain continuity in the process of leadership transitions that may avoid the uprooting of all leadership at the same time. o Develop a **transition plan** to deal effectively with changes in leadership.

WRITING THE REPORT:

1. Past, current and sustained actions for compliance with the standards, i.e., accomplishments and outcomes that have already been achieved, more than on the structure or processes used to arrive at those outcomes.
2. Statements of what the institution is doing. Concrete details rather than vague generalities or intentions to come into compliance at some point in the future.
3. Detailed action plans with specific timelines, accountabilities, and benchmarks. Describe implementation and analysis of outcomes.
4. If progress has been slower than anticipated, explain the underlying reasons and how the institution is addressing them.
5. Evidence that the governance structure is fulfilling its responsibilities rather than just evidence of what the structure is.
6. Provide documented evidence to narrative response; what is the institution actually doing.
7. If the institution cannot comply with a Commission request, be honest and candid and explain why. Provide a definite date when the requested information will be available.

MSCHE - Fundamental Elements Guiding Questions	Past, current and sustained UNIT ACTIONS	Documented Evidence of compliance	Clear and concise response Campus – Unit level
Are written policies outlining the governance system and responsibilities of administration and faculty available to the campus community?			
Are the policies that structure and operate the governance system effective and efficient to enable the institution to realize fully its stated mission and goals to benefit the institution and its students?			
Are the authority and responsibilities assigned, delegated, and shared in a climate of mutual support and respect?			
What means promote a climate of shared collegial governance in which all constituencies involved in carrying out the institution's mission and goals participate in the governance function in a manner appropriate to that institution?			
Is the governance environment appropriate to discuss openly the issues concerning mission, vision, program planning, resource allocation and others, by those who are responsible for each activity?			
Does each major constituency is able to carry out its separate but complementary roles and responsibilities in an appropriate degree so that decision-makers and goal-setters consider information from all relevant constituencies?			
Does the collegial governance structure provide for timely decision-making?			
Are the opportunities for student input appropriate regarding decisions that affect them?			
Is the institutional governance structure effective to ensure an environment of communication, collaboration, civility, respect, and professionalism to support students' deeper and lasting learning achievement?			

MSCHE - Fundamental Elements Guiding Questions	Past, current and sustained UNIT ACTIONS	Documented Evidence of compliance	Clear and concise response Campus – Unit level
Governing body: - Is the UPR Governing Board effective in fulfilling its primary responsibility as to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals? - Does the UPR Governing Board demonstrate that is responsible and ultimately accountable for the institution's integrity and quality? - Does the UPR Governing Board reflect that It serves the public interest by seeing that the institution clearly states and fulfills its announced mission and goals and by ensuring its continuity and fiscal and academic integrity? - Does the UPR Governing Board manage, micro manage, or interfere in the day-to-day operation of the institution? - Do members of the governing body act with authority only as a collective entity? - Are the relationships clearly established and interests carefully balanced of the units with those of the total system? - The UPR Governing Board has a process in place to orient new group members and provide continuing updates related to the mission, organization, and academic environment of the institution to assure that all members understand their role in the governance structure? - The UPR Governing Board has a procedure in place for the periodic objective assessment in meeting stated governing body objectives? - The UPR Governing Board implements a periodic assessment of the effectiveness of institutional leadership and governance? - Is the UPR Government Board conflict of interest policy effective to assure that interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution? -Is the UPR Governing Board sufficiently independent of any relationships that could interfere with the exercise of independent judgment and free from pressures from any particular individuals or groups, either internal or external to the institution? -Do governing board members demonstrate that, regardless of how appointed, their primary responsibility is to the accredited institution and does not allow political or other influence to interfere with the governing board duties?			