

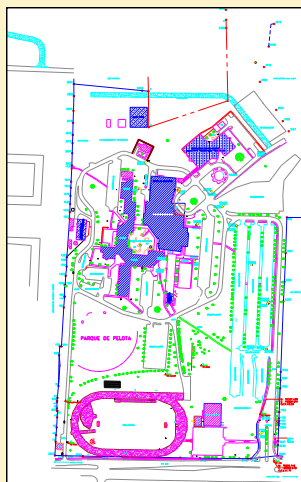
Embracing Institutional Change

University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo

A Monitoring Report submitted to the MSCHE



2007



March 12, 2007

Dr. Judith Gay, Chair
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Dear doctor Gay:

Enclosed is the *Monitoring Report* prepared by the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo for the corresponding evaluation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The report reflects our Institution's commitment to continuous enhancement.

As Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo, I consider the report to be an accurate analysis of our assessment and planning efforts, subsequent to our last on-site evaluation. I endorse the *Monitoring Report* and submitted it to your consideration.

You may contact Dra. Wanda I. Delgado, Accreditation and License Coordinator, at (787) 815-0000 Ext. 1106 or at (787) 878-2714.

Cordially,

Edwin Hernández Vera, Ph.D
Chancellor

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INTRODUCTION

As a result of the joint visit by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education (PRCHE), the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo engaged in a process of analysis which resulted in a series of changes in various areas –curriculum, academic services, planning and budget—to insure compliance with accreditation standards and to advance institutional excellence.

In this *Monitoring Report*, the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo (UPRA) documents the manner in which it has responded to the five findings cited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in a letter dated on June 23, 2005 addressed to Dr. Edwin Hernández Vera, Chancellor. The Commission indicated that UPRA must present evidence of the following corrective actions: (1) “implementation of a budget process that is aligned with the institution’s mission, goals, and strategic plan”; (2) “development and implementation of a comprehensive facilities master plan; (3) “implementation of a written plan for the assessment of institutional effectiveness”; (4) “steps taken to strengthen general education”; and (5) “evidence that student learning assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning” (Statement of Accreditation Status, June 23, 2005, p. 2). What follows is an account of the actions taken by the university to address these findings.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT/UPDATE AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Academic Areas:

Since the visit by the Visiting Team, the University of Puerto Rico in Arecibo has worked continuously to strengthen all of its institutional components. As part of this process, a new Dean of Academic Affairs, an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, an Institutional Coordinator for Student Learning Assessment and an Institutional Coordinator for General Education have been appointed. These new officials have directly oversee the expansion of academic offerings by seeking **program accreditation** from appropriate specialized **accreditation** agencies, obtainment of external funding, development of cultural and academic activities, implementation of new services, and the improvement of physical facilities.

UPRA’s academic areas have been strengthened with the approval of a *General Education Policy* and the implementation of an *Institutional Assessment Plan*, which includes learning assessment as one of its key components. Furthermore, a Learning Assessment Office, under the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs, and a Developmental Education Program have been established in UPRA (Academic Senate Certification No. 2005-06-15). Also several academic departments are currently seeking accreditation of their programs with various external agencies. These departments include: Education, requesting accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); Business Administration, from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP); Computer Sciences, from the Accrediting Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET)-Computer Accrediting Commission (CAC); the Biology Department’s Program in Animal Health Applied Sciences, from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA); Physics and Chemistry, from the Accrediting Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET)-Technology Accrediting Commission (TAC) and the chemistry students’ certification from the American Chemical Society (ACS); and the Office Systems Department, from the Association of Collegiate

Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). Alongside these efforts, the Library is seeking an evaluation from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and the Department of Counseling Services seeking accreditation from the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS). The standards set by these professional organizations require the development of student learning assessment plans in their respective areas of knowledge. In turn, these plans are being articulated with UPRA's student learning assessment plans. The aggregated data resulting from these assessment plans allow UPRA to share the findings with the university community and to make carefully considered decisions in steering fiscal resources towards the sustained improvement of the quality of current academic offerings and the development of new offerings to meet those needs that may be ascertained in the process.

In the area of curricular renovation, a Professional Certification in Biotechnology was established through the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DCEPS). A joint effort between the Departments of Biology and Physics and Chemistry and the DCEPS ended up in a proposal to establish an Associate Degree in Biotechnological Operations. This proposal is currently under consideration of the University Board from the University of Puerto Rico. To strengthen and reinforce this academic proposal a project titled Curricular and Professional Development Activities to Support Associate Degree in Biotechnology Operations was approved by the National Science Foundation through the Advanced Technological Education Program.

Furthermore, the TRIO Student Support Service Proposal was approved by the US Department of Education. The Program provides services to individuals who are low income, first generation and students with disabilities. It also includes non-traditional students. The Program intends to increase the retention and graduation rates of that population. The student area also experienced significant achievements. These include the approval of *UPRA's Retention Plan*, and a study about *UPRA Enrollment Projection*. Furthermore, the Virtual Student Plaza (*Plaza Virtual del Estudiante* - www.plaza.upra.edu) was created to expand services to the student population. In this cyberspace, students have access to academic offerings, the academic calendar, university policies and regulations, a description of their rights and duties, and a variety of services provided by UPRA.

Significant activities in the academic area have taken place. These include the celebration of the *Tercer Congreso Internacional de Español: Escritura, Individuo y Sociedad en España, Las Américas y Puerto Rico* (Third International Spanish Congress: Writing, the Individual and Society in Spain, the Americas and Puerto Rico) from November 16 through 18, 2006. This event, which brought international attention and hundred of visitors to our university, was dedicated to Luis Rafael Sánchez and Mario Vargas Llosa, two authors of international prestige, who were conferred honorary doctorates (*Doctorado Honoris Causa*). UPRA has also established several collaborative projects and consortia including the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center (Arecibo Observatory), Naval Research Laboratories, NASA-PR Space Grant Consortium, and the *Corporación Observatorio del Caribe Colombiano*.

Other Areas:

UPRA's Administrative Board approved in 2005 a restructuring of the budgetary distribution and allocation which brings together planning, institutional assessment and budget. This process has served to redirect institutional resources toward the most needed areas.

Moreover, UPRA has moved forward on the planning of physical installations through the drafting of a *Framework for Physical Planning 2006-14* (Academic Senate Certification No. 2006-07-18). This *Framework* is congruent with the *Strategic Plan 2003-08: 40 Years of Excellence* and with *Diez para la Década: Agenda para la Planificación Sistémica 2006-16* (UPR Board of Trustees Certification No. 123, 2005-2006), which deals with the development of the University of Puerto Rico and its eleven units.

BUDGET PROCESS

The MSCHE Commission requested that UPRA documents “the implementation of a budget process that is aligned with the institution’s mission, goals, and strategic plan.” In general terms, the Commission pointed to a lack of coherence in planning the allocation of resources. The budget must be integrated with and derived from the process of strategic planning.

General Information:

Articulation among planning, budgeting and financial projections is a highly participatory and representative process which includes self-study, reflection and thoughtful analysis. This is particularly true in an institution of higher education as complex as the University of Puerto Rico System which includes eleven campuses and a central administration.

In a joint undertaking, the Board of Trustees, the Central Administration of the University of Puerto Rico System and the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo simultaneously defined and implemented procedures that contributed to the integration of the budgetary process and strategic planning. These procedures have made it possible for the Central Administration to transfer additional funds to UPRA's operational budget. All budget and regulations guidelines will be available during the Commission visit.

University of Puerto Rico:

As part of the assessment of its institutional effectiveness and the process of strategic planning, the University of Puerto Rico was engaged in a rigorous process of consultation and self-study in light of the parameters and criteria of excellence demanded by the accrediting agencies for the corresponding evaluation periods.

Visits by MSCHE and PRCHE to all institutional units coincided with the approval of UPR Board of Trustees Certification No. 123-2005-2006 (*Diez para la Década: Agenda para la Planificación Sistémica 2006-16/* Appendix 1) and UPR Board of Trustees Certification No. 100 -2005-2006 (*Approval of Budget Regulations for the University of Puerto Rico*).

The current phase of systemic implementation of *Diez para la Década: Agenda para la Planificación Sistémica 2006-16* requires that each unit articulate its development plan and its priorities with the goals and objectives delineated in the University Planning Agenda.

Starting in fiscal year 2005-06, the Budget Office of the University of Puerto Rico Central Administration revised the procedures for budgeting in all units of the System. In

that year, the System Administration revised the *Guidelines for Budget Formulation*, in an effort to insure more participation by the university community and strengthen integration between planning and budget. The revision of this procedure is framed within the *Budget Regulations* approved by the Board of Trustees of the University of Puerto Rico (Certification No. 100-2005-2006), which promotes integration between planning and budget, and encourages participation by the university community in the process.

Finally, it should be highlighted that in July 2005 an increase in tuition and the implementation of a new technology fee went into effect by virtue of UPR Board of Trustees Certification No. 70-2004-05. These measures have provided the University with additional financial resources.

University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo:

UPRA has always been extremely efficient in the management of its financial resources as demonstrated by the audits conducted by the Puerto Rico Office of the Comptroller. This Office gave UPRA a score of 96% in 2005 and 99% in 2006. UPRA's management approach means that the institutional resources are distributed according to the university's mission and goals (Academic Senate Certification No. 2002-03-32 / (Appendix 2), and according to the *Strategic Plan 2003-2008: 40 Years of Excellence*.

In fiscal year 2005-2006 UPRA revised its budgetary assignment and distribution procedures by virtue of UPRA Administrative Board Certification No. 2005-06-14 (Appendix 3). The new procedure allows the institution to allocate its resources based on the strategic plan and data gathered from our assessment strategies with the active participation of the university community.

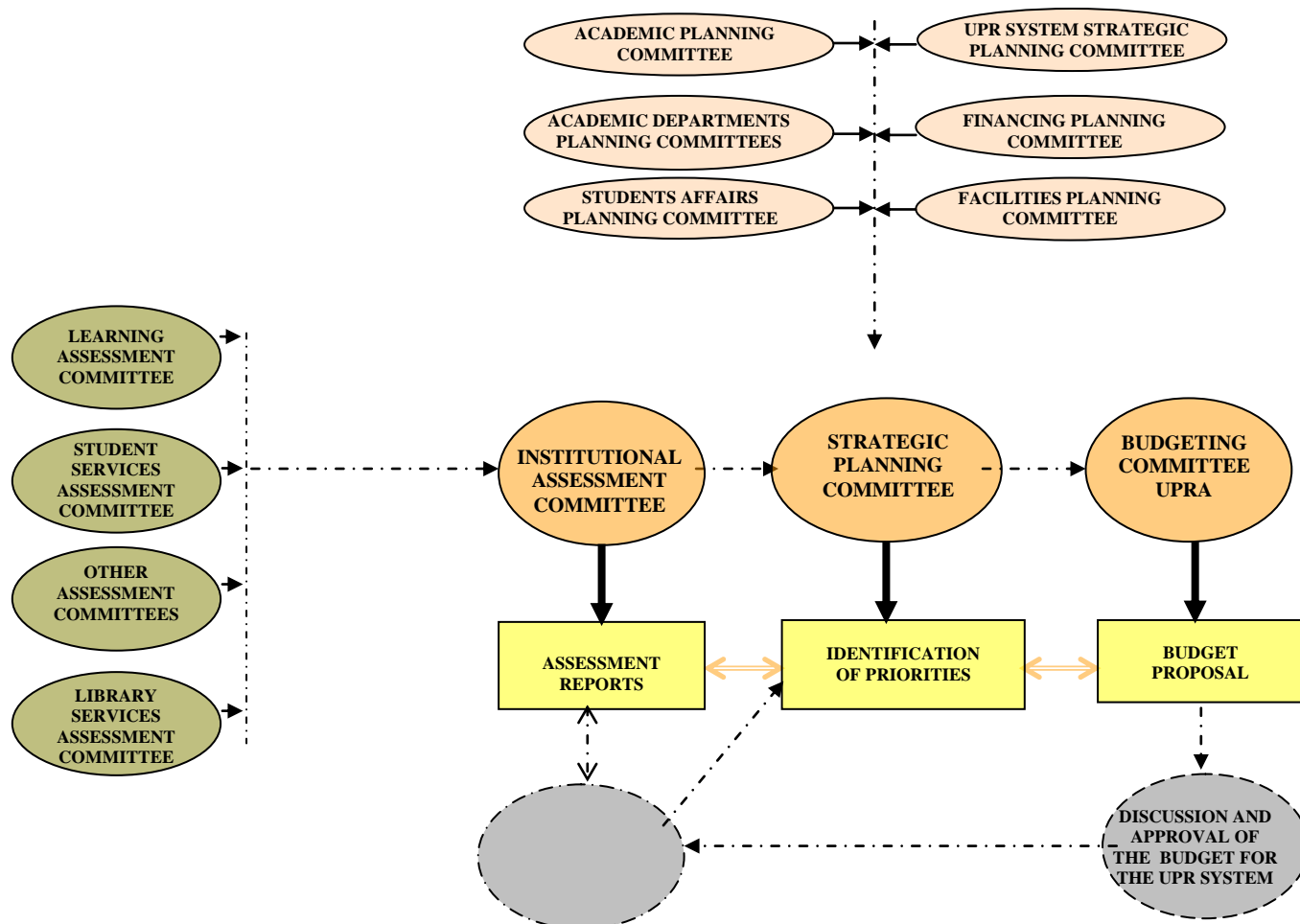
Participation in the Process of Strategic Planning and Budgetary Distribution:

Two committees work in the process of aligning planning and budget as mandated by the Administrative Board: the Strategic Planning Committee and the Committee for Budget Analysis, Allocation and Distribution of Resources (Budget Committee). The Strategic Planning Committee is charged with the identification of institutional priorities based on our Strategic Plan, and on the analysis of institutional research reports and of the data on institutional effectiveness. Relying on the institutional priorities identified by the Strategic Planning Committee as a framework, the Budget Committee is responsible for the budget analysis, allocation and distribution of resources for each fiscal year.

This new budgetary procedure, based on the identification of academic and administrative priorities derived from assessment reports, UPRA's and UPR System's strategic plans, was established in fiscal 2005-06 with the drafting of *Recommended Budget 2006-2007*. Having proved effective, this procedure will remain in place for the drawing up of UPRA's budget for 2007-08.

Along with the implementation of UPRA Administrative Board Certification No. 2005-06-14, the Strategic Plan Strengthening account was activated. This account holds a portion of the funds destined for use in the *Priority Plan* of each fiscal year. Besides, the *Five Year Budgetary Projection* includes this account with funds for these purposes. This instrument provides us with a broader vision of the projected incomes and expenses thus facilitating a more efficient distribution of resources and the strengthening of areas in need of strengthening. This process takes place in accord with strategic planning, assessment processes and budgetary distribution, aligned with the institutional mission, goals and objectives.

Table 1
Participation in the Process of Strategic Planning and Budgetary Distribution



Conclusion:

UPRA has experienced significant growth in the last two years. The analysis of data derived from the assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness has served as the basis for decisions that made it possible to redirect and add resources for a variety of goals and activities such as: accreditation, evaluation and renovation of academic programs, updating classrooms and laboratories, acquisition of equipment and materials for teaching, projects for meeting the needs of the disabled, improvements to the physical plant, enhancement of sports facilities, and organization of activities to improve the cultural and linguistic formation of the university and external communities.

As shown above, the University of Puerto at Arecibo has attained significant accomplishments in the implementation of a budgetary process articulated with the mission, goals, objectives and the *Strategic Plan 2003-2008: 40 Years of Excellence*. Furthermore, we foresee a continuation of the setting of goals to be reached through the

integration of development processes and plans to bring about the formation of well-rounded individuals that will improve our quality of life and our society.

FRAMEWORK FOR PHYSICAL PLANNING –FPP

The Commission required the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo to evidence “the development and implementation of a comprehensive facilities master plan”. To respond to this finding, and according to the dispositions of the *Strategic Plan 2003-08*, UPRA drafted a *Framework for Physical Planning (FPP)*. This framework, as a kind of plan for infrastructure, makes it possible to identify the most pressing physical plant and infrastructure necessities. In addition, it presents various goals that will guide UPRA’s development between 2006 and 2014. The *Framework for Physical Planning*, which is already in place, was created with ample participation of the university community and the Central Administration of the University of Puerto Rico. The activities are in various stages of development: some are currently under study; resources are being identified for some; and others are in the design, bidding or development stages.

Drafting of the *Framework for Physical Planning*:

Before the finding by MSCHE, UPRA had recognized the need to draw up “a comprehensive facilities master plan,” as reported in the *Self-Study* presented as part of the reaccreditation process in 2005 (*Self-Study for Accreditation Review by the MSCHE*, p. 21). In this regard, UPRA’s *Strategic Plan 2003-2008: 40 Years of Excellence* states the need to draft an *Infrastructure Plan* (goal 6.1.1 of the *Strategic Plan 2003-08*).

As points of departure, UPRA worked on the assessment of the physical plant and on short, medium and long range enrollment projections. To work on the assessment of the physical plant, in 2004 the Chancellor appointed a Special Committee, which consisted of representatives from the following departments/sectors of the UPRA community: the Office of Planning and Institutional Studies, middle-management personnel, each of the Deanships, faculty and non-teaching personnel. This Committee began the job of assessing UPRA’s installations and carrying out a preliminary identification of necessities. At the same time, in 2005, the Chancellor appointed a Committee for Enrollment Projection. This Committee was headed by the Office of Institutional Research, and included several faculty members, the Director of Admissions and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Committee concluded in 2006 that UPRA is neither seeking nor anticipating an increase in enrollment during the next six years, and works towards keeping the number of students at approximately 4,000 students. This projection considered an increase in the number of students enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs, and a decrease in enrollment in associate degree and transfer programs.

In December 2005, the Chancellor designated a task force to work on a framework for physical planning. This task force evaluated the enrollment projections and the assessment of the physical plant and proceeded to identify goals and activities for the *FPP*. With active participation from several members of the community -which included management staff, faculty and students- a final version of the *FPP* was completed in 2006, and it was approved by the Administrative Board on January 18, 2007 (UPRA Administrative Board Certification No. 2006-07-27 / Appendix 4). The document is available on UPRA’s webpage: www.opei.upra.edu/mdf.

Contents of the FPP:

A copy of the *Framework for Physical Planning*, in the original Spanish language, has been included with this report (Appendix 5). The main components of the *FPP* are described below.

A. Objectives: UPRA's mission and current and projected enrollment figures constitute the point of departure for *FPP*. The document defines eleven objectives:

1. To increase the area dedicated to academic use and improve the academic spaces currently available. This includes classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices and student service areas. The target is to improve the efficiency of current and future academic endeavors.
2. To strengthen computer centers and laboratories to facilitate the planning of services, and operations.
3. To bring campus infrastructure up to date. This includes electrical distribution, lightning and improvements to the air-conditioning system.
4. To improve athletic, recreational and leisure areas.
5. To facilitate access and pedestrian and vehicular circulation for students, employees and visitors.
6. To acquire adjacent land and preserve it for future use.
7. To remodel administrative areas and to build a new Operations and Maintenance Workshop. This will make it possible to replace the existing workshop and to build parking facilities for the vehicular fleet.
8. To set standards for all future constructions and campus improvements. These standards will be included in a maintenance plan and will serve as guides when writing proposals for funding of projects that will impact the physical plant.
9. To preserve all green areas and set up landscape embellishment programs.
10. To replace temporary structures with permanent buildings.
11. To eliminate all architectural barriers on campus.

Activities:

The *FPP* also includes a breakdown of short, medium and long-term projected activities, between 2006 and 2014 (pp. 22-25 of Appendix 5). These are presented in narrative form along with preliminary blueprints that present evidence of the changes projected on our campus. All projected activities are linked with the objectives included in the *FPP* (pp. 9-21 of Appendix 5).

A. Inventories: The *FPP* also includes inventories of the physical plant and related information, distributed as follows:

- Land, access, streets, parking areas, and sidewalks (pp. 26-40 of Appendix 5).
- UPRA's buildings (pp. 41-80 of Appendix 5).
- Sports and recreational facilities (pp. 81-85 of Appendix 5).

B. Codes: The document also includes building codes and regulations for the development of permanent improvement projects (pp. 86-96).

Financing:

The development of all activities included in the *FPP* is accompanied by possible sources of revenue to cover the labor costs. Some of the activities will be financed with funds allocated for materials and improvements in the yearly budget. For example, the cost for bringing classrooms and laboratories up to date is covered primarily from UPRA's

internal funds, such as the technology fee and special assignments from the UPR Central Administration.

Other short or medium-term projects have been included in the *Plan for Permanent Improvement* approved by the UPR Board of Trustees for the period ending in 2008-09. A number of short and medium-term activities have been or will be financed with external funding. UPRA will request funding from the Board of Trustees for most long-term activities. These will be included as Permanent Improvement projects. For the remaining long term activities, funding will be procured from external sources.

Implementation:

As mentioned, the *FPP* covers the period from 2006 until 2014. During this eight-year span, a variety of strategies will be used to deal with matters of campus development. Even before its completion, an early draft of the *FPP* served to guide development in those areas where consensus had been reached within the university community. Many of these activities became part of the *FPP*'s short-term activities, i.e. the first two years of the plan. Activities projected for the period between 2008 and 2011 are considered medium-term, while those contemplated for the period between 2011 and 2014 are considered long-term. The following table enumerates some ongoing activities contained in the *FPP*.

Table 2
Ongoing activities contained in the *FPP*

Activity	Status
Development and Implementation of a three years <i>Plan for Updating Academic Laboratories</i>	The first stage has been completed. The second is under way.
Development and Implementation of the <i>Plan for Updating Classrooms</i>	The first stage has been completed. The second stage is scheduled for the summer of 2007.
Improvements to air-conditioning system	Task has been completed in the Library Building. Administration and Academic Buildings are being evaluated.
Building of the upper level of the Title V building.	The request for funding has been approved. Construction is currently in the pre-design stage.
Building of the third level of the Library Building.	A proposal is being written. The design is in a preliminary stage.
Renovation of the tennis court and building of a second court.	Request for funding has been approved. Design has been completed. Work is set to begin in 2007.
Relocation of the Honors Program.	Scheduled for the 2006-07 fiscal year.
Installation of a new elevator in the Administration building	The elevator was designed and the bidding for the project was completed. Installation is scheduled for 2007.
Installation of a platform lift in the Academic Building.	Equipment is being evaluated. Installation is scheduled for fiscal 2006-07.

Activity	Status
Renovation of Emilio E. Huyke Gymnasium	In progress
Remodeling of Annexes for use as Education Building	The bidding process has concluded.
Relocation of offices and areas in third level of Administration Building.	Currently under design
Acquisition of Pre-School Center	Expropriation is under way.
Purchase of land on the north side.	Expropriation is under way.
Preparation of land for P1 Parking lot.	Design has been completed
Paving repairs to C1 Parking Lot	Scheduled for fiscal year 2006-07
New electrical sub-station and improvements to electrical distribution system in Academic Building.	Design is complete. Work is scheduled for 2006-07
Improvements to main entrance.	Work has been completed.
Paseo de los 40 años (Forty Year Mall)	The first stage is under design. Budgetary assignation was included in the Budget for fiscal 2006-07.
Improvements to Student Center	Bidding scheduled for fiscal 2006-07.
Installation of new lighting poles in student parkings	Scheduled for Summer 2007.

Conclusion:

The *FPP* was drafted with ample participation from the university community. It was based on the University Mission, UPRA's strategic plan and enrollment projections, and the UPR System's agenda for strategic planning. Even before its final approval, the *FPP* provided guidelines for strategic planning and for budgetary decision-making to ensure maximum efficiency of institutional operations.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN (IAP)

The MSCHE Commission required UPRA to submit evidence of “the implementation of a written plan for the assessment of institutional effectiveness”. *UPRA’s Institutional Assessment Plan* is based on the university’s mission, goals and objectives and the current *Strategic Plan*. The drafting of the *Plan* in 2004-05 coincided with the preparations for the MSCHE Commission visit. The document had been discussed with the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board and the university community.

The implementation of this Plan has impacted various UPRA processes. For example, the Institutional Assessment Committee and the Student Learning Assessment Committee were activated; the eight excellence indicators contained in the *Plan* were used in the drafting of departmental yearly reports; and both Institutional Assessment and Learning Assessment coordinators were included in the Strategic Planning Committee. Furthermore, the alignment among planning, budget and assessment has been prompted by virtue of UPRA Administrative Board Certification No. 2005-06-14. The assessment system has become an essential element, with data and information gathered through assessment serving as guides for setting academic and administrative priorities, and, in turn, making budget decisions.

To achieve this progress, UPRA has committed to the assessment process for services and learning. A Coordinator for Learning Assessment has been appointed in each academic department with release time of 25% of regular academic load. Most of these coordinators have attended assessment workshops in and out of Puerto Rico, with the purpose of acquiring knowledge to strengthen the University’s assessment practices.

Institutional Assessment Plan:

The goal of the *Institutional Assessment Plan* (Academic Senate Certification No. 2005-06-18 / Appendix 6) is to gather and present in an organized and articulate manner all assessment efforts undertaken in UPRA, to achieve the fulfillment of the institutional mission. The *Plan* describes the actions initiated, and establishes a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and methods designed for its implementation. To direct these efforts, responsibilities are described and assigned.

Assessment is defined in the *IAP* in conformity with UPRA’s *Institutional Assessment Policy* (Academic Senate Certification No. 2002-03-42 / Appendix 7). In UPRA, assessment is defined as:

[...]a continuous process of self-evaluation to which the institution voluntarily submits itself to determine its strengths and weaknesses in the fulfillment of its educational mission. The aim is to use the data gathered in the process to correct insufficiencies and to develop new alternatives to allow UPRA to meet its goals and objectives with efficiency and excellence.

Goals and Justification of UPRA's Institutional Assessment Plan:

The *Institutional Assessment Plan* has three goals: (1) to institutionalize assessment processes, (2) to create in the university community a conscience of the importance of assessment, and (3) to promote and establish a culture of assessment in UPRA. In this manner, UPRA insures the commitment of all members of the community to strive for institutional excellence.

Institutional assessment continuously provides data in the areas of Learning Outcomes, Academic Research and Other Academic Endeavors, Student Services and Programs, and Administrative Excellence.

Implementation:

The *IAP* has been implemented by stages that encompass the four areas mentioned above. The first stages consisted in the revision, approval and dissemination of the *IAP*. The implementation stage was managed by the Institutional Assessment Office, under the Office for Planning and Institutional Studies. It included dissemination of the plan and orientation to the university community. An Institutional Assessment Committee, composed of the Institutional Assessment Coordinator and assessment coordinators from all of assessment areas, was responsible for making sure that information was gathered and for analyzing institutional effectiveness. Several strategies and activities were defined.

The various stages for the development and implementation of the *Plan*, as defined by the UPRA Academic Senate Certification No. 2005-06-18, as well as the results of each stage are summarized below. The main objective of the first stage was the development of a communication system through which to inform the community about institutional assessment. Afterward, assessment was performed on the four areas identified in the process: Learning Outcomes, Academic Research and Other Academic Endeavors, Student Services and Programs, and Administrative Excellence. All four areas were assessed simultaneously. The Institutional Learning Assessment Coordinator bears the main responsibility for articulating assessment of Learning Outcomes, and Academic Research and Other Academic Endeavors. Coordinators are designated by the Dean of Student Affairs and the Dean of Administrative Affairs to be in charge of assessment in Student Services and Programs, and Administrative Excellence, respectively. The Institutional Assessment Coordinator facilitates the articulation of all assessments across the university.

The work done by the Institutional Assessment Committee has been a key factor in the success of this endeavor. The Committee is composed of eight staff members who facilitate and watch over the assessment process. The members of the Committee represent all the areas mentioned above, as well as planning, institutional research, accreditation and the Library. As part of its duties, the Committee members prepare an operational assessment plan for each academic year, gather data and document their findings in yearly institutional effectiveness reports. As of the moment of this MSCHE Report, a first *Institutional Assessment Report* has already been drafted. The process for a second *Institutional Assessment Report* has already begun. Both documents it will be available during the Commission visit.

The Institutional Assessment Committee has completed the identification of process and execution indicators, to aid in the assessment of institutional effectiveness. These indicators are based on the UPRA's Mission, and integrate goals and objectives from UPRA and UPR's strategic plans, as well as objectives from the Institutional Assessment Committee. Among the indicators, we wish to underscore the following: attain and

maintain a retention rate above the average of comparable universities in Puerto Rico and the United States (above 80%); attain and maintain a graduation rate (based on the number of students who receive a degree within 150% of the appropriate program length) above the average of comparable institutions (over 40%). In fact, studies of retention and graduation rates are high priority items in the strategic planning agenda.

Due to the importance attached to the articulation of institutional assessment with strategic and financial planning, several members of the Institutional Assessment Committee also participate in the Strategic Planning Committee and the Budgetary Assignment and Distribution Committee. Assessment has already begun playing a major role in the identification of strengths and areas in need of improvement. In this way, planning and budget are aligned with assessment as we proceed in the path towards the improvement of institutional effectiveness, efficiency and renovation. Also, in academic year 2005-06, we began the development of indicators of effectiveness in line with the seven institutional objectives contained in UPRA's *Strategic Plan 2003-2008*. These indicators are included in the second institutional assessment report currently being drafted by the Institutional Assessment Committee.

Below is a description of the activities which demonstrate the implementation of the *Institutional Assessment Plan* in the four areas defined in the process of institutional assessment: Learning Outcomes, Academic Research and Other Academic Endeavors, Student Services and Programs, and Administrative Excellence.

Learning Outcomes Assessment:

Assessment of student learning outcomes, including implementation of departmental assessment plans and their impact on the university, is discussed more in detail in the section on Student Learning Assessment (pp. 15-19) of this *Monitoring Report*.

Assessment of Other Academic Activities:

This effort focuses in the assessment of research opportunities for faculty and students, along with other forms of creation and dissemination. It also includes activities and services provided to the community served by UPRA. The Dean of Academic Affairs, the Institutional Coordinator of Student Learning Assessment and the Director of the Center for Research and Creative Endeavors (CRCE) bear the responsibility for this area. In addition, continuous efforts take place in the assessment of library services and Continuing Education at UPRA.

Actions Taken:

By means of a strategy adopted by the UPR Central Administration (Culture of Evaluation and Institutional Assessment in *Diez para la Década: Agenda para la Planificación 2006-16*, pp. 10-11), all units of the UPR System embarked on a systematic gathering of data for the assessment of institutional effectiveness in various areas. One of these areas consists of academic research, creation of knowledge and dissemination. To that effect, UPRA began to gather information including research, publications, and creative and dissemination activities. The results of this analysis are discussed yearly with the Academic Senate, with department chairs and with the community.

An immediate result of this assessment has been the strengthening of the Center for Research and Creative Endeavors (CRCE), attached to the Chancellor's Office, which promotes academic research. Several meetings have been held with the Director and with

the Coordinator of CRCE to begin formal assessment of the Center and to devise strategies to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement.

The ongoing analysis of this data has resulted in the adoption of strategies to increase the number of faculty member engaged in research projects funded by seed money and external funds. This initiative is congruent with the research element expressed in the university mission.

Finally, the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies has received support to initiate the implementation of the assessment system and the necessary gathering of data to evaluate the services provided to the community. The Library has also made great progress in implementing an assessment process for evaluating its services.

Assessment of Student Services and Programs:

One of the objectives of this area is to develop, organize and systematize the assessment processes of student support services. The services are evaluated to determine whether the offices which provide them fulfill their intended functions and meet the quality standards established for them by the Institution. Ultimately, the goal is to improve the quality of the services provided. The assessment of student services is performed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria that gauge institutional effectiveness.

Actions Taken:

Every year, the Office of Institutional Research gathers information through four questionnaires administered to incoming freshmen, second and third year students, graduating students, and alumni. The data gathered provides, among others, a profile of the student body, the degree to which their expectations were met, their academic needs, their degree of satisfaction with other services, and a general evaluation of various institutional areas. The results of these surveys are published and distributed to the community and presented to the Academic Senate and to department chairs.

The results of these surveys are complemented with other assessment activities such as focal groups, student interviews, the electronic mailbox *Exprésate* and specialized questionnaires. The findings have made it possible to identify services and offices that elicit low levels of satisfaction. Several offices and services such as Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office, Medical Services Office, online registration, academic counseling, and the Student Ombudsman have been assessed independently.

As a consequence of the assessment system adopted, the following changes have been implemented to improve the quality of the services provided:

- extension of online registration period
- new web page for online registration (www.upra.edu)
- counseling by staff qualified in student orientation
- automatic electronic counseling
- online financial aid process for filling out federal scholarship forms
- Financial Aid and Registrar's Office personnel attended customer service workshops
- access to the grades for each semester via UPRA's home page
- development of the Virtual Student Plaza (*Plaza Virtual del Estudiante* - plaza.upra.edu)
- extension of hours of other offices to meet student needs.

Assessment of Administrative Processes:

One of the main objectives is to design assessment processes to gauge administrative efficiency. The parameter used to determine efficiency is the *Auditing Report* from the Puerto Rico Comptroller's Office, in which UPRA scored 99% out of a possible 100 for the 2005-06 academic year. This auditing report is used by the Comptroller's Office to scrutinize financial and administrative aspects of all of Puerto Rico's governmental entities, including public corporations, agencies and all units of the University of Puerto Rico System. Every year, the results from the Comptroller's Report are discussed in UPRA and corrective action is taken in those areas that do not meet the established effectiveness parameter

Other methods for the assessment of administrative processes included the drafting during academic year 2005-06 of questionnaires to gauge the labor climate in administrative offices and employee satisfaction with administrative processes and services. The process of administering, codifying and analyzing the findings began during the first semester of academic year 2006-07. The data gathered through the questionnaires will be disseminated during the second semester. The analysis will make it possible to identify those offices earning low approval rates from the employees, both teaching and non-teaching personnel. This information will guide the making of decisions and the implementation of actions designed to improve the quality of the services offered by these offices and to implement follow up strategies to monitor the assessment indicators in them.

Results:

During the past two years, institutional assessment has experienced continuous progress. The impact of the *Institutional Assessment Plan* has been apparent: as a result of this *Plan*, UPRA has formalized and systematized its assessment efforts in all institutional areas. The plan has not been seen as an isolated effort, but rather as an integral part of strategic planning and the process for budgetary assignment. The findings reported become part of the process of identifying academic and administrative necessities and priorities, and of the eventual resource allocation procedure. The assessment of institutional effectiveness is complemented by the assessment efforts undertaken by the UPR Central Administration, as part of its Assessment Culture initiative, where data are gathered to guide the making of decisions about the future of the University.

Additional results of the effectiveness of the *Institutional Assessment Plan* include the growing awareness of the importance of institutional assessment throughout the university community, the opening of lines of communication with students and employees to engage them in the institutional process, and the development of a culture of collaboration for institutional and learning assessment. The Committee has embarked on a consciousness raising process about the importance of assessment by means of orientations to the university community about the nature of assessment and the manner in which it is organized and articulated in UPRA. This has resulted in a feeling of appurtenance among a larger number of students and employees which has led, in turn, to a lower level of resistance and a deeper commitment towards UPRA.

Through initiatives that combine quantitative and qualitative strategies for institutional assessment, UPRA has been able to systematize the mechanisms for gathering data and for promoting the making of decisions based on the data gathered. In this way, a formal space has been opened for constructive analysis with the goal of continuously improving processes and services.

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Introduction:

UPRA explained to the MSCHE Visiting Team that the university established an Assessment Office supported by a grant proposal under Title III. This project supported the training of faculty, and the process of defining assessment strategies and methods. The development of a Student Learning Assessment System advanced significantly. The *Institutional Assessment Plan*, a document that includes the results of learning assessment as first order indicators, was completed in 2004. It was also explained to the Visiting Team that the first stage of assessment was hampered by resistance from various departments and faculty members, which undermined the implementation of the assessment plan (*Self-Study for Accreditation Review by MSCHE*, February 2005, p. 97).

During its last visit, the MSCHE Commission recommended that a learning assessment plan be implemented to ensure a consistent effort of student learning assessment. The Commission also recommended that financial, human and physical resources be provided to sustain the effort towards gauging the assessment of student learning.

Corrective Actions:

After receiving the report with the Commission's findings and recommendations, UPRA adopted a series of strategies to strengthen learning assessment. The Institution gave priority to the activities identified as needing attention. The section of the *Institutional Development Plan* dealing with learning assessment was revised.

Furthermore, the process for the dissemination of the efforts towards the use of the results of the assessment plans was formalized by means of an extraordinary annual faculty assembly on February 17, 2006 and another on February 20, 2007. In this assembly, the student learning coordinator from each academic department presented to the faculty the impact that assessment had made up to that point in each department. During this assembly, evidence was presented of the capacity of assessment to improve teaching and learning, and of the vital role it plays in UPRA.

Other activities where the results of assessment plans were divulged include the following:

- *Progress Report on Learning Assessment* before the Academic Senate on January 21, 2006 and February 15, 2007
- *Progress Report on Learning Assessment* before the departmental chairs on January 22, 2006 and February 16, 2007
- Meetings of department chairs
- Assessment workshops conducted for academic departments

It should be noted that assessment procedures have been established in all academic departments, Student Learning Assessment Coordinators have been appointed and Student Learning Assessment Committees have been constituted. Every year, each department documents the results of the assessment process. These results summarize direct and indirect assessment strategies, findings and corrective actions.

Results of the Implementation of Learning Assessment:

Below are identified some of the most significant actions and results related to the process of learning assessment. These data are based on the results reported by academic

departments on the documents produced by the Institutional Coordinator for Student Learning Assessment. This information reveals the considerable investment made by UPRA to guarantee the success of learning assessment initiatives.

- Eleven (79%) academic departments use grade distribution in course as assessment criteria (Business Administration, Biology, Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Nursing, Spanish, Physics and Chemistry, English, Mathematics and Office Systems).
- Three departments (21%) initiated a Developmental Education Program (Spanish, English and Mathematics) to give service to incoming students whose entrance examination scores fall below a score identified as a predictor of success in university courses.
- Six departments have integrated assessment strategies in practicum/internship/project/seminar courses (Biology, Computer Sciences, Office Systems, Nursing, Education and Social Sciences).
- Nine departments (62%) use pre and post-testing for assessment (Business Administration, Social Sciences, Education, Nursing, Office Systems, Radio and TV Communications, Spanish, English and Mathematics).
- The Education Department continues to use the results of the standardized exam titled *Pruebas para la Certificación de Maestros (PCMAS)* administered by the College Board Association for the purpose of measuring achievement in general and specialized skills required by the Puerto Rico Department of Education for candidates for public school teachers. Furthermore, since the graduation index is considered as a criterion for candidates for the teacher candidate registry of the Puerto Rico Department of Education, the Education Department uses this index as an assessment indicator.
- The Nursing Department uses the results of the licensing examination administered by the Examining Board of Nursing Professionals in which the general and specialized skills required by the Puerto Rico Department of Health from candidates who aspire to become registered nurses are evaluated. To become a registered nurse, candidates must join the Puerto Rico Association of Nursing Professionals and pass the licensing exam.
- Six of eight departments who offer general courses (75%) integrate these courses in their departmental assessment plans (Biology, Social Sciences, Spanish, English, Physics and Chemistry, and Mathematics).
- Seven departments (50%) have established tutoring programs (Spanish, English, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Computers Sciences, and Office Systems).
- Four departments (29%) conduct preparatory summer workshops for first-year students (Spanish, English, Mathematics and Physics and Chemistry).
- Several departments use the portfolio as an assessment tool (Office Systems, Education and Social Sciences).
- Seven out of nine departments with associate degree or bachelor's degree programs (78%) have begun or continued to revise their program's curricula (Business Administration, Computer Sciences, Physics and Chemistry, Nursing, Office Systems, Radio and TV Communications and Biology).
- Five other departments are engaged in curricular revision at the course level (Spanish, English, Mathematics, Education and Social Sciences). Now, all

academic departments have initiated the revision of their curricular offerings to harmonize them with the already approved *UPRA General Education Policy*.

- Six departments have set the objective of receiving specialized accreditation similar to the Nursing Department whose Associate and Bachelor's Degrees are fully accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). The departments working on short or medium term accreditation plans are Business Administration (ACBSP), Education (NCATE), Physics and Chemistry (ABET-TAC and ACS), Computer Sciences (ABET-CAC), Biology-Animal Health Applied Sciences (AVMA) and Office Systems (ACBSP). The decision to seek accreditation is directly or indirectly linked with the results of the assessment of the programs and the acknowledgement of the benefits of individualized accreditation. It is also congruent with the UPR Institutional *Policy on Accreditations of Academic Programs and Services* (UPR Board of Trustees Certification No. 138, 2003-2004 / Appendix 8).
- Three departments (21%) use questionnaires to determine the level of employers' satisfaction with graduates of UPRA's programs (Office Systems, Nursing and Business Administration).
- Several academic departments have also adopted mechanisms for assessment of the student satisfaction with the academic offer.
 - Five departments use alumni surveys as a way of assessing the degree of satisfaction that graduates feel about their academic programs (Office Systems, Biology, Physics and Chemistry, Education, and Business Administration).
 - Four departments (29%) measure degree of satisfaction among current students (Social Sciences, Office Systems, Nursing and Business Administration).
- Three departments use focal groups to assess the level of satisfaction with academic programs among current students (Physics and Chemistry, Social Sciences and Office Systems).

Results:

As stated in our mission, learning constitutes the primary function of the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo. The *Institutional Assessment Plan*, approved by the Academic Senate, gives priority to the assessment of learning. UPRA constantly monitors the results of learning assessment, and the data gathered are crucial in planning and budget decision-making. In general terms, all academic departments have shown evidence of the implementation of their learning assessment plans. The most outstanding results include:

- the setting in motion of a broad-reaching initiative for the revision of syllabi by the faculty of all academic programs,
- evaluations and curricular revisions being done in most academic departments,
- the seeking of specialized accreditation by various departments,
- the implementation of a developmental education program,
- the approval a new general education policy, and
- the ongoing assessment of student achievement of key learning outcomes, including professional certifications and competency tests, pre and post tests, portfolios, grade distribution, departmental evaluations, and other assessment tools and techniques.

The implementation of the corrective actions by the academic departments facilitates the year after year continuity of the learning assessment process and insures that the results of this process be used to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Administrative Support:

The University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo is committed to support the learning assessment process as a fundamental aspect of institutional culture. To that effect, an Office of Student Learning Assessment was created, under the purview of the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs. Each academic department was required to designate an Assessment Committee. Conscious of the need to expedite the compliance with plans for assessment, UPRA assigned funds in the yearly budget to give 25% release time to at least one faculty member per department to coordinate assessment activities in the department. There is continuous analysis of the results of assessment in our university.

Professional Development:

Professional development is fundamental for Student Learning Assessment Coordinators who must keep abreast of the diversity of new tendencies in learning assessment. Coordinators were invited to the following conferences: *Student Learning Assessment for Beginners*, *Assessing Student Learning in General Education*, *Institutional Effectiveness Assessment for Beginners* (sponsored by the MSCHE, and a *Forum on Learning Assessment and General Education* (sponsored by the Office of Student Learning Assessment and the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs). Furthermore, the Institutional Coordinator for Student Learning Assessment attended an Assessment Institute in Indianapolis, sponsored by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (November 2006). The Chancellor is also providing support for this coordinator to attend the Student Learning Assessment Institute sponsored by the MSCHE that will be held in Delaware, US, next May 2007.

Conclusion:

The University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo recognizes the fundamental importance of learning assessment, and has undertaken aggressive action to guarantee that the university has “a comprehensive and systematic culture of learning assessment at the departmental levels”.

The results of this process are utilized to strengthen the work of the faculty in all academic departments. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of the articulation of the planning, budget and institutional assessment processes. They also make it possible for the Institution to ensure compliance with the institutional Mission and goals, and to strengthen the process of institutional renovation.

GENERAL EDUCATION

UPRA reported during the MSCHE Commission visit that the Institutional Committee on General Education had been assigned the task of revising the existing General Education Policy (*Self-Study for Accreditation Review by MSCHE*, February 2005, p. 83). The Commission, in turn, requested that UPRA produce evidence of “the steps taken to strengthen general education” (*Statement of Accreditation Status*, June 23, 2005, p. 2)

Corrective Actions:

UPRA readily accepted the Commission’s words and embarked on a process to establish *UPRA’s General Education Policy*. The following actions were undertaken to guide this initiative:

- The composition and functions of the Institutional General Education Committee were revised. This committee is constituted by representatives of the faculty, the student body, Academic Senate, plus the Institutional Coordinator for Student Learning Assessment. The Committee began its work in August 2005.
- The Institutional General Education Committee adopted the following strategies and mechanisms to discharge its responsibility:
 - A study of the institutional mission, goals and objectives, and objective 2.4 (“Evaluate the general education component in all academic programs to ensure the well-rounded formation of our university students, as established in our university’s mission and to create a General Education Policy”) of Goal 2 (“Optimize the teaching and learning process”) of the *Strategic Plan 2003-2008: 40 Years of Excellence*. This assessment process demonstrated that the general education component is a fundamental element of institutional mission and objectives. Furthermore, it showed that all processes, policies and regulations produced in UPRA are based upon and congruent with the institutional mission. It also evidenced that the learning assessment process is articulated with the Institutional Assessment Plan.
- Comparative analysis of alumni profiles with the documents provided by academic departments where the knowledge, skills and aptitudes for various disciplines and professions, among others, are established.
- Use of MSCHE guidelines and other documents.
- Evaluation of general education models from Puerto Rico and the United States.
- Invitations to experts to engage in conversation about the topic of general education in higher education.
- Exercise in alignment the knowledge, skills and aptitudes expected from UPRA’s alumni with the objectives and contents of courses, as established in the syllabi provided for some courses in the Humanities, Chemistry, Computers Sciences, Spanish and English.

The result of the work of the Institutional General Education Committee was the drafting of a *University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo General Education Policy*, approved by the UPRA Academic Senate (UPRA Academic Senate Certification No. 2005-2006-17 of January 26, 2006 / Appendix 9). In this policy:

“UPRA acknowledges the fact that General Education is multi- and interdisciplinary. The Institution must identify and strengthen general education components needed to prepare students beyond the scope of their

specialization. These components also aim to mitigate the students' lack of social and cultural knowledge, one of the major problems faced by our current educational system. Besides providing specialized knowledge, all program curricula must integrate the development of thinking skills, attitudes and values. UPRA's general Education Policy sets a paradigm in agreement with the new tendencies in higher education. This paradigm demands that students develop the following skills and knowledge throughout the curricula of the various programs offered in the university: oral and written communication skills in Spanish and in English; quantitative and scientific reasoning skills; logical and critical thinking skills; information skills; collaborative work skills; historical, social and cultural knowledge; ecological awareness; ethical, moral and spiritual values; and self-knowledge".

Other Actions:

After the approval of the *UPRA General Education Policy*, the Dean of Academic Affairs sent a letter to all faculty members that included a copy of the *Policy*, for analysis and discussion. In addition, a sub-committee of the General Education Committee drafted a checklist to align the objectives of the *UPRA General Education Policy* with the syllabi of the courses offered in our academic programs.

A Plan for the Implementation of the *UPRA General Education Policy* was also drafted. This plan, which includes an assessment plan, was disseminated to all faculty members, and discussed and analyzed in an extraordinary faculty assembly held on January 26, 2007.

Activities:

As part of the process for developing *UPRA General Education Policy*, the faculty has participated in various capacitation activities. Among these:

- The members of the Institutional General Education Committee attended a *Forum on Learning Assessment and General Education* held on campus on November 28, 2006.
- Various committee members and other faculty members attended the Twelfth College Board Annual Conference which dealt with *A Culture of Continuous Learning: From General Education to Professional Performance* (November 2-3, 2006).
- The Dean of Academic Affairs, the Institutional Coordinator for Student Learning Assessment and other members of the faculty attended workshops on Student Learning Assessment, Institutional Assessment and General Education sponsored by the MSCHE (August 2006).
- A group of professors and librarians were chosen to participate in the Summer Institute 2006: Collaborative Models for the Integration of Information Competencies and Research to Courses. This activity was held between August 2 and 4, 2006 at the Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico. The Dean of Academic Affairs attended a pre-institute lecture delivered by a librarian from the University of Louisville in Kentucky. The lecture dealt with the development of information competencies in higher education and the collaboration that makes this development possible.
- The *First Symposium on the Integration of Information Technology into Education* was sponsored by the Title V Project, funded by the US Department of Education

for a period of five years (2000-2005). The main objective of the Symposium was to promote an integrated vision of the use of technology and distance learning in academic development.

- Various departments held academic activities of historical, social and cultural nature. The Spanish Department organized the *Tercer Congreso Internacional de Español: Escritura, Individuo y Sociedad en España, Las Américas y Puerto Rico* (Third International Spanish Congress: Writing, the Individual and Society in Spain, the Americas and Puerto Rico). The Center for Iberian American Studies of the Department of Social Sciences organized the *Seminario Travesías: Pensamiento Social y Filosófico en América Latina* (Passages: Social and Political Thought in Latin America). Both faculty and students were impacted by these activities.

In addition, various academic departments have articulated the *UPRA General Education Policy* as part of their self-study for accreditation purposes. For example,

- The Education Department, as part of their request for accreditation from the National Council Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE), has conducted assessment of the Spanish oral and written communication skills among their students. Faculty from the Spanish Department is playing an active role in this process.
- The Library staff is evaluating the use and handling of library information as part of the professional evaluation by the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries (ACRL).

Impact:

The institutionalization of the *University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo (UPRA) General Education Policy* becomes apparent also by its impact on other academic areas in the university. Among these are the approval and establishment of a Developmental Education Program by virtue of UPRA Academic Senate Certification No. 2005-2006-15 (Appendix 10). The following services are among the ones provided by this program: early diagnosis of learning deficiencies; the development of innovative strategies in the teaching of basic skills in Spanish, English and Mathematics, among others; the effective integration of technology in basic courses; the elimination of affective barriers that hinder student learning and the incorporation of a seminar course dealing with the adjustment of students to the university life.

Also worthy of note is the fact that UPRA is currently working to prepare and submit a proposal to build a General Education Center that will be located in the third floor of the Library Building. This Center would include writing laboratories, both for English and Spanish, a multimedia laboratory, faculty offices, tutoring rooms and meeting rooms. This center is included among the activities defined by Objective 1 of the *Framework for Physical Planning 2006-2014*.

Conclusions:

The development of the *UPRA General Education Policy* demonstrates that the management of the university is predicated upon the university's mission, goals and objectives, the *Strategic Plan*, and the assessment of learning and institutional effectiveness. It also demonstrates the commitment of the faculty and the university administration with academic excellence.

Its development also shows the university's fulfillment of Goal 2: *Optimizing the teaching and learning process* of the *Strategic Plan 2003-08: 40 Years of Excellence*, specifically objective 2.4 which indicates the need to "Evaluate the general education component in all academic programs to guarantee the well-rounded formation of our students."

CONCLUSION

This *Monitoring Report* addresses all of the findings by the MSCHE Commission in their report of June 23, 2005. The University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo is an institution whose development is based on the following: a transparent and coordinated planning system; an articulated distribution of resources; a procedure approved by the Academic Senate and divulged throughout the university community; the implementation of an assessment plan, approved and known by the university community; the identification of priorities as the basis for the action and development plans; the establishment and dissemination of policies and regulations; and the profound analysis of the institution's situation.

Alongside these coordinated processes, stands the institutional commitment to provide an excellent academic offer. This offer is based on a general education component, clearly defined in an official policy and implemented by means of a plan. This plan is the product of the efforts of academic, administrative and student representatives. The general education component is the result of a faculty intent on developing a general education institutional model for the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo.

This academic component receives, in turn, the support of the Developmental Education Program, where incoming students receive the needed support to overcome their academic shortcomings. The academic component also integrates the results of an articulated learning assessment process in which all academic departments, faculty and students are engaged. It is a process which responds to the Institutional Mission and Goals, departmental goals and objectives, to the student profile and to the academic offer of each program.

Finally, the careful planning of human, financial, technological resources, of physical installations and further resources of the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo guarantees compliance with the Institutional Mission and Goals. This compliance becomes evident by means of articulated processes of dissemination throughout the university community. The effectiveness of these procedures, in turn, both guarantees and depends on participation by the whole university community in the management of the university.

STEERING COMMITTEE

- Prof. Edwin Hernández, Ph.D., Chancellor
- Prof. Wanda I. Delgado, Ph.D. – Accreditation and License Coordinator – Chair
- Prof. Otilio González, Ph.D., J.D. – Director of OPIR – Co-Chair
- Prof. Maiella Ramos, Ph.D., Dean of Academic Affairs
- Prof. Enoc Robles, Dean of Student Affairs
- Prof. Elizabeth Cortés, Dean of Administration Affairs
- Mrs. Genoveva Rivera, Director of Budget Office
- Prof. Soriel Santiago, Institutional Researcher
- Prof. Nilda Fernández, Ph.D., Institutional Assessment Coordinator
- Prof. Yazmín Pérez, Ph.D., General Education Coordinator
- Prof. Edgardo Pérez Montijo, Ph.D., translator
- Miss. Stephanie Toledo, Honor Program, Industrial and Organizational Psychology,
and Student Representative