REPORT TO THE
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO AT UTUADO
(UPR-Utuado)
P.O. Box 2500
Utuado, Puerto Rico 00641
by
An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Prepared after study of the Institution’s Self-Study Report
And a visit to the Campus on March 6-9, 2011
Members of the Team:

Carlos Vargas-Aburto, Provost
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, 15200 Kutztown Road
Kutztown, PA 19530-0730 – CHAIR

Conrado Gempesaw, Dean of Lerner College of Business and Economics
University of Delaware, 303 Lerner Hall, Lerner College of Business and Economics, Newark, DE 19716

Douglas M. Goodale, Professor of Agronomy & Environmental Science and Technology Coordinator
State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill, 219 Warner Hall, Cobleskill, NY 12043

Reginetta Haboucha, Former Vice President for Academic Affairs (Ret.)
Fashion Institute of Technology, NY
Mailing Address: 401 East 86th St, Apt 7J, New York, NY 10028

Maureen D. Sasso, Director, Information Services Division, Duquesne University
Gumberg Library, 600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Mary Ellen Petrisko, Vice President, Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair. The report goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the University of Puerto Rico - Utuado. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.
AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT
TO
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO AT UTUADO
(UPR-Utuado)

Acting Chancellor:
Prof. Eladio Gonzalez Fuentes

Acting Dean for Academic Affairs:
Dr. Eneida Rodriguez Rossy

Chair of the Board of Trustees (UPR System):
Ms. Ygri Rivera de Martinez
I. Context and Nature of the Visit

The University of Puerto Rico at Utuado (UPR-Utuado) is one of the 11 campuses that constitute the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). UPR-Utuado was created by the Legislative Assembly of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico on December 1, 1978, and began operations in August 1979 with a total of 195 students. UPR-Utuado initially offered associate degrees in agricultural technology, education, business, and arts and sciences. In its 30+ years of existence, UPR-Utuado has grown in size and offerings. According to the most recent accreditation status, UPR-Utuado is a public institution with state affiliation that offers Associate and Baccalaureate degrees, with no distance education offerings, and with a total enrollment of 1623 students in one (Utuado) campus. UPR-Utuado holds specialized accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). UPR-Utuado currently employs 121 faculty members, and is located in the central region of the Island of Puerto Rico, on 118 acres in the barrio (neighborhood) of Salto Arriba, Utuado.

Initial accreditation of UPR-Utuado by MSCHE took place in 1986. Accreditation was last reaffirmed in 2006. On December 2010, an evaluation team was selected by MSCHE, and visited UPR-Utuado March 6-9, 2011 to carry out the following evaluation visit, scheduled for 2010-2011. The self-study model selected by UPR-Utuado for the 2010-2011 evaluation was comprehensive with two emphases: linkage between budget and planning, and assessment of student learning.

Prior to the evaluation visit, in a letter dated February 11, 2011, the chair of the evaluation team was informed of the resignation of Chancellor Iris-Mercado, and the immediate appointment of Prof. Eladio González Fuentes as Acting Chancellor of UPR-Utuado, by Dr. José Ramón de la Torre, President of the UPR System.

The MSCHE evaluation team consisted of the chair and four team members. The chair made a preliminary visit to UPR-Utuado on October 28, 2010, as called for by MSCHE. The visit was very positive, and took place without incident. Since that time, communication existed between the then Chancellor, Dr. Iris Mercado-Ocasio, the Accreditation liaison Officer, Dr. Luz Mendez-del-Valle, and the chair of the team (C. Vargas-Aburto). The evaluation team wants to
take this opportunity to express appreciation to the leadership, faculty, staff, and students of UPR-Utuado, and to the President of UPR and his staff in San Juan, for the courtesy and warm hospitality that they were shown prior to, and during their accreditation visit.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the self-study report as well as the monitoring report and appendices, interviews, and other institutional documents, the visiting team cannot affirm that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation under review.

Specifically, the team cannot affirm that the institution continues to meet Requirement of Affiliation 8: that “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.”

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

The evaluation team affirms that UPR-Utuado Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits.

IV. Evaluation Overview

See section VI.

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Self-Study Chapter 1 – Mission Goals and Integrity

This section of the report covers the following standards:

Standard 1: Mission and Goals
Standard 6: Integrity

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

*The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.*
Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

UPR-Utuado has a mission that is based on providing post-secondary education of relevance and quality in the fields of agricultural technology, education, and business administration, as well as in the arts and sciences. It aims at forming graduates that are motivated intellectually and morally in their skills, and are committed to sustaining and protecting the environment.

UPR-Utuado’s mission and vision have been revised as part of the updating of their most recent strategic plan (2006-2011), and include five strategic goals that are consistent with its mission. The mission and vision are aligned with the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) system plan (Diez para la Decada, or Ten for the Decade). In the discussions held with members of the university community, it appears that university stakeholders are mostly aware of UPR-Utuado’s mission. UPR-Utuado presents limited evidence that its mission and goals clearly guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes, as well as the inclusion of support of scholarly and creative activity.

UPR-Utuado has presented evidence that its mission and goals were developed through collaboration and involvement of the university community, and are periodically evaluated and formally approved; although the latter did not occur on a timely basis the last time. In particular, its current mission, developed as part of the last strategic plan (2006-2011) was approved by the Academic Senate in April 2010. Documentation of this action can be found in Certification 2009-10-31 and 2009-10-32 with additional reference found in the Historic Synthesis Revision of UPRU Values, Vision, and Mission from 2002-2003 to 2009-2010.

The Academic Affairs Deanship, Student Affairs Deanship, and Administrative Affairs Deanship, and their corresponding offices and services are to be commended for developing their corresponding mission statements.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations

The institution as a whole seems to be quite aware of the importance of devoting serious attention to the development of its next strategic plan while keeping in mind the standards of accreditation.

The recent challenges experienced by the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) have provided an opportunity for reflection and action that the university community at UPR-Utuado are beginning to take advantage of.

The team commends the faculty, staff, administration, and students for fully embracing the mission of UPR-Utuado.
Suggestions

- It may be useful for UPR-Utuado to revisit its definition of mission to avoid confusion with its vision, and to ensure that it reflects its purpose, and indicates whom the institution serves, and what it intends to accomplish.
- UPR-Utuado should ensure that its mission is explicitly considered as a reference and guide in the development of its new strategic plan.

Standard 6: Integrity

*In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.*

UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard #6 – Integrity

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

UPR-Utuado has a student handbook and student evaluation policies, including appropriate documentation, a student complaint system, and grievance process with access to an ombudsman. Recent updates to the student by-laws and code of conduct have been published and provided to the students and announced through email. These documents were developed by the parent institution, UPR.

Student grievances that resulted in a strike have been addressed to the degree possible by the UPR-Utuado administration. Communication was maintained through email and the web site. UPR-Utuado is commended by the Middle States monitoring team for their work in assuring that students were able to complete the courses affected by the recent strike. Interviews with students confirmed that they were able to complete the coursework that was interrupted by the strike.

The institution uses the faculty, staff, and administration hiring, evaluation and dismissal policies of the UPR system. The policies related to faculty teaching, research and service are well defined and appropriate given its mission. Documentation including information provided to students and other constituents, such as accrediting agencies, is factual and complete.

Effective communication remains a concern. Students interviewed indicated that students do not believe that the administration is consistent in abiding by the bylaws. Faculty interviewed expressed the strong concern that institutional policies and procedures are not well documented, well known, and consistently followed. They noted frequent changes in leadership as a contributing factor.
Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations

UPR-Utuado is commended for its active involvement with the local community, through an advisory board (Comite Asesor) to the Chancellor formed by members of the local community (members of the community, professionals, public employees, etc) that has existed since UPR-Utuado was established.

Suggestions

- Continue a meaningful dialog with elected student leaders and the student body in general, to ensure that students, administrators, and faculty understand and consistently follow the newly approved institutional by-laws.

Recommendations

- Take steps to ensure that faculty, staff, and administrators have appropriate access to current policies and future revisions. Provide orientation to new employees and appropriate communication of policy revisions as needed.

Self-Study Chapter 2 – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Renewal

This section of the report covers the following standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Institutional Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal**

An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard #2 – Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

There is a significant record of planning at UPR Utuado since 1983, when its first strategic plan was prepared. In 1994, strategic planning became part of a UPR-system-wide effort. The campus has continued to develop its own strategic planning goals and align them to those of the UPR system. This alignment is clearly demonstrated in the self-study, the institution’s statement of values, vision, and mission, and in the strategic plan alignment with responsibilities of the
deanships. UPR-Utuado also has supporting plans such as the Master Plan, Environmental Safety and Occupational Security Plan, and the Learning Resource Center planning documents.

Institutional goals and objectives are clearly stated and linked to mission. Less clear from the self-study is whether unit goals are linked to institutional goals (though they are clearly linked to mission). Evidence presented in meetings indicates that, at least in the areas with external accreditations, there is a process for linking departmental goals to campus goals, that there is annual reporting process, and that some decisions are based on these reports. There is also evidence of evaluation of the strategic plans.

Whereas planning processes are continuous, inclusive, and systematic, they are also problematic. In AY2005-2006, a Strategic Planning Committee was appointed to assess the University’s 2003-2008 strategic plan. In 2006, the committee drafted the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. It was adopted in 2007, but there were significant delays in the approval process. According to the self-study, issues regarding the differences in overlapping of dates, wording, and focus between the 2003-2008 and 2006-2011 versions were resolved by the 2009-2010 Strategic Planning Committee and the Academic Senate. The Senate did not approve the revised mission, vision, values and strategic plan until April 2010, the fourth year of the five year plan.

While it is unclear from the self-study alone why these approvals took so long, evidence from interviews points to frequent changes in administrative leadership, in addition to changes in responsibility for planning. When the individual responsible for planning and gathering institutional data retired, the responsibility was distributed among the campus units. This decision proved to be an impediment to self-study, adding to the difficulty of collecting data for analysis. Responsibility for accreditation reporting and strategic plan revisions, previously shared with the Academic Affairs Deanship and the Accreditation office, became the responsibility of the Office of Planning and Research in 2009-10. This office is staffed by a statistics officer and a secretary. The planning director is a faculty member who is concurrently chairing both the strategic planning committee and the self-study committee while continuing to teach. The team commends the planning office and its director for their efforts to ensure the timely completion of the self-study, but notes that the resources dedicated to supporting the planning process appear to be insufficient, particularly in view of the additional monitoring reports required by Middle States. The self-study steering committee recommended that the institution return to the pre-2007 organization for planning. The team recommends that the institution give prompt attention to providing adequate resources and expertise to support institutional planning.

The evidence presented regarding standard 2 is challenging to interpret. There is overreliance on survey data. Survey data presented do not necessarily address the standard in the most relevant way, and there is insufficient narrative regarding issues of concern, findings, and conclusions. Planning is clearly prevalent, but the connection to budget and assessment is tenuous.

There is no clear evidence of the systematic links between planning, budget, and assessment required by the standard, although there is evidence of the attempt to link planning to resource allocation at the institutional level. UPR-Utuado’s 2006-2011 Strategic Plan contains both strategic planning goals and operational objectives. It also assigns responsibility for accomplishment of each and lists assessment measures. The plan includes estimated costs, but in some cases these are given as hours dedicated to an objective and seem unrealistically low. In other cases monetary costs are listed. The document provided to demonstrate linking budget to planning priorities for 2008-11 is problematic. In many cases, the breakdowns of spending listed
do not appear to directly correspond to strategic objectives. Instead they show spending on operating expenses such as salary increases and merit pay, and Christmas bonuses. Interviews indicated that this analysis is completed after the fact rather than as a spending plan.

On the other hand, the self-study points to a list of accomplishments in improving the infrastructure in direct support of strategic planning goals 4.15 and 4.3. The largest and most visible accomplishments are the construction of the Learning Resource Center and Technology Laboratories (Title V building), and remodeling of the previous learning resource center facilities. All of these were done in response to assessment findings. Funding for these projects was obtained from UPR system sources. The technology laboratories were funded by Title V and UPR system funds. The learning resource center is an example of a unit that has documented how its strategic planning is linked to that of the institution and how its decision making and budgeting are directly linked to assessment.

UPR-Utuado has spent a great deal of effort in developing clearly stated goals and objectives in support of its mission and ensuring that its goals are in concert with those of its parent institution. It has successfully conveyed to its internal units that their goals must also have these linkages. While there is evidence that some goals reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, there is little evidence that assessment is used for resource allocation at the institutional level. The links between budget, planning, and assessment required by the standard have not been established by evidence in the self-study or the site visit.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

The institution has demonstrated persistence in campus planning efforts in the face of changes in administration and scarce resources. The correspondence of the campus plan to the UPR system plan, and the systematic effort to align the goals of the various units to the mission and strategic plan are commendable.

The Learning Resource Center’s self-study, evidence of strategic planning, and ongoing use of assessment results for decision-making and continuous improvement efforts are exemplary.

**Recommendations**

- The team concurs with the self-study’s suggestions regarding providing training to those involved in planning; improving communication of its strategic planning efforts with the campus community; and reaching out to the external community to raise awareness of the institution’s commitment to service.

**Requirements**

- The institution must present evidence that its goals and objectives reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels.
Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient use of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard #3 – Institutional Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Summary of Evidence and Findings

In MSCHE’s Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, two benchmarks are stipulated for institutional resources. The first one deals with the availability and accessibility of human, financial, technical, physical facilities and other resources necessary to achieve the institution’s mission and goal. The second benchmark focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency in the utilization of the institutional resources.

Serious concerns are raised, primarily regarding the financial status of the institution. UPR-Utuado, one of eleven campuses of the UPR system, depends on system administrators for its budget allocation. The current total budget of the system is $935 million. The consolidated FY 10-11 general budget of UPR-Utuado is about $14.2 million which is $2 million less than the previous year, almost a 13 percent budget reduction. Another $6.7 million in funding comes from external sources including federal (mostly Pell grants to students) and other state funds.

In the monitoring report, UPR-Utuado provides a budget projection for the next four years based on several assumptions regarding slightly increasing enrollment, freezing faculty salaries, reducing administrative salaries, higher classroom utilization and operating at a higher efficiency level. It also assumes an additional 5% budget cut for next year but an increase in budget allocation from the system starting in 2012-13 until 2014-15. All these assumptions and corresponding budget projections are based on the UPR system projection. UPR-Utuado’s share of the system budget is a fixed 1.52% over the projected four-year period. Basically, the system projected a decline in the total budget next year and a slight increase starting in FY 2012-13 and for the next two more years with campus allocations held as fixed during the planning period. This indicates that potential differences in enrollment and number of faculty among the campuses over the next four years are held constant at the current levels, a very unlikely scenario. It must be noted that UPR-Utuado’s financial situation simply mirrors the larger financial issues faced by the UPR system. In fact, UPR-Utuado faces a $695,000 deficit for the current year which is about 1.4% of the estimated $50 million deficit at the system level.

In discussions with UPR system budget staff, they indicate that a decade ago, the system had cash reserves of around $80 to $100 million. However, as programs expanded with corresponding personnel requirements along with salary and benefit cost increases, the system covered its deficit through its cash reserves, basically depleting its reserves to pay for recurring expenditures. The state government supports over 85% of the UPR system budget through the 9.6% funding formula of the average state net income collected by state appropriations in the two prior fiscal years. When the recession started in 2008, the system received $105 million of ARRA stimulus funds and another $15 million was received in 2009. Without any cash reserves,
the ARRA stimulus dollars were used to cover recurring operating expenses when in fact it was known that they were one-time funds, again repeating past actions of using one-time dollars for recurring expenditures.

This academic year, the system faces another serious budget deficit of $50 million with next year’s deficit estimated at $25 million. It is assumed that the deficits are/will be temporarily managed through the one-time $100 million line of credit. During the time of this visit, the budget staff indicated that the net balance of the credit line was closer to $90 million. The repayment terms include interest payments only for the first two years and principal plus interest after that for another period of five years. In addition, the system will also borrow (or have secured) another $75 million line of credit for capital expenditures (construction projects) and $20 million for its information technology software and infrastructure. These two credit lines must be repaid over a three-year period.

It was explained that Puerto Rico is expected to increase its revenue collection based on a new sales tax imposed on manufacturing companies operating on the island. Preliminary revenue estimates indicate that this new tax will allow the state legislature to lower income and corporate taxes which in turn will act as a stimulus to expand economic activity causing an increase in state revenue. In short, the system expects to receive an additional $25 million from the state per year. As shown in the monitoring report, this accounts for the $24.4 million projected increase in the system budget in FY 2012-13. In FY 2013-14, the system expects to receive an increase of around $20 million from the previous year and again, another $20 million increase for FY 2014-15. This budget projection is rather very optimistic.

In the November 19, 2010 MSCHE letter to UPR-Utuado, the institution was required to submit a monitoring report by March 1, 2011. Among the requirements imposed, the institution must submit a five-year budget projection and pro-forma budgets that demonstrate the institution’s ability to generate a balanced budget for the next five years. The five-year financial projection submitted as part of the monitoring report is too simplistic. It is based on a straight line budget allocation (it assumes a constant UPR-Utuado budget share of 1.52% of the system’s total budget during the planning horizon). In addition, the enrollment projections, which are forecasted to increase, are not realistic and not supported by any reliable market study or analysis of demographic trends, particularly of high school and college age students. In fact, at least two high schools in Utuado have closed in recent past.

Although this report pertains to the accreditation review of UPR-Utuado, it is important to understand the total system budget situation since UPR-Utuado depends entirely on the system budget. The ongoing budget difficulties in the UPR system which is closely tied to the state’s economy through the 9.6% formula funding, low tuition, and highly fluctuating external sources of income will continue to negatively impact the ability of the institution to deliver its mission and meet its goal.

The financial strategy being used by the system which is passed down to the different campuses is very risky and may not be sustainable. If the state’s experiment on the additional sales tax and corresponding decrease in income and corporate taxes do not produce the necessary increase in state revenue, UPR will face a much more difficult financial situation given its large long-term debt, cash flow pressures to pay its three new credit lines totaling more than $185 million and the usual increases in the cost of utilities, pension funds, health benefits and compensation packages
for its employees. One must also note that the demographics do not support an increase in enrollment given the continued population decline in Puerto Rico. When asked if there was a plan B if the state’s tax strategy does not work, the response given by the budget staff was very clear, i.e., there is no plan B.

It is critical for the senior leadership of UPR and all its campuses to develop an alternative plan if the current optimistic budget projection does not materialize over the next four to five years. The institution also presented information that linked its strategic planning process with its budgetary resources. However, the information provided deals with the past four years. It will be helpful if the institution can develop a planning document that will also connect its strategic plan with its available resources so as to produce realistic outcomes and clarify stakeholder expectations.

UPR-Utuado is located in a former 118 acre farm. It has a total of 133,834 net assignable square feet of which 125,834 is used for instruction while the remaining 8,000 is used by the campus administration. Since 2006, the institution has spent over $9M in constructing new learning facilities along with much needed renovations. It is noteworthy that the institution has invested in projects designed for students with special needs. Several projects are also being planned as part of the facilities improvement projections. The information technology infrastructure as detailed in the self-study report seems to be adequate in the short-term. On the other hand, faculty have stated that there are some academic buildings that have sub-standard IT infrastructure. Given the financial pressures faced by the institution, it may not have the resources to upgrade its information technology capability to meet the requirements of a fast-changing technology world.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

UPR-Utuado administration and faculty should be commended for being able to operate the institution while facing its recent $2 million budget reduction.

**Requirements**

- The review team has **serious concerns** regarding the financial health of the institution and the system as a whole. The information provided in both the self-study report and the monitoring report is necessary but not sufficient to meet the standards required for institutional resources. It is recommended that the institution embark on a budget and priority setting exercise that will link its strategic plans and goals with available resources based on various economic scenarios, particularly a plan B scenario that does not assume budget increases from the government. Broad participation in this priority setting project is encouraged and could include representatives of various campus community members including faculty and students. The task would be to develop a medium-term plan (three to five years) that outlines possible strategies that the institution can take in view of its precarious financial situation. This plan should include cost-cutting measures and program changes necessary to meet a continued budget reduction over a three to five-year period. The plan should also include a demographic analysis of the pool of college-qualified students who could be potential applicants to the institution.
Self-Study Chapter 3 – Institutional Assessment

This section of the report covers the following standards:
Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

**Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

*The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.*

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard #7 – Institutional Assessment.**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Administrators and campus leaders/decision makers sufficiently implemented their institutional assessment plan with results displayed in their self study. An ample number of measurement tools were applied, campus interviews were conducted and the results are adequate to conclude their assessment is acceptable. Reflections on related issues and selected measurement tools are noted hereafter.

From the mission comes the development and stakeholder acceptance of objectives and goals. The self-study (p. 41) charts the metamorphosis of UPR-Utuado’s Strategic Plan from 2003-2008 into a renewed strategic plan for 2006-2011. How UPR-Utuado’s Strategic Plan aligns with UPR is referenced in *Ten for the Decade* with its five Strategic Goals (self-study p. 41). As with mission, each UPR-Utuado department developed their respective objectives and goals and is appropriately configured with the campus and Central Administration’s objectives and goals. Development of objectives and goals in harmony with mission is certainly a high priority but the most pertinent question is: at what level are the objectives and goals being attained? No measurement instruments are displayed in the self-study to reflect a specific level of attainment. This needs to be addressed commencing with developing a base line objective and goal accomplishment level.

UPR-Utuado’s self-study identifies the following institutional assessment measuring tools used in their evaluation process to determine level of mission, objectives, and goal attainment: Strategic Plan (formerly the Institutional Master Plan, p. 45), the Academic Plan, the Financial Plan, the Enrollment Plan, the Capital Facilities Plan, and the Technology Plan. Each is part of the self-study:. However, accomplishment indicators are not articulated or appended. It is highly commendable that these very important plans are living documents. However, considerable clarity of achievement levels would be attained if base line measurement points were established.

It is suggested that consistent assessment measures be established. For example, UPR-Utuado has a Strategic Plan but how is it possible to determine if the components of the Plan are being achieved? Stating an acceptable minimum level and then charting progress over time would tell Strategic Plan stakeholders if their efforts are effective and resulting in acceptable returns. The self-study (p.74) notes the institutional assessment activities being used; yet the results of surveys indicate that over half of the faculty does not know if the campus community is fully
represented in strategic planning (p 68). Notably (p. 68), only 26% of the administration appears to use the Strategic Plan as a basis for requesting fiscal support.

Clearly, institutional assessment has led to institutional change as evidenced by the accreditation of three new UPR-Utuado bachelor degrees in Elementary Education, Business Administration, and Office Systems, plus the establishment of the Learning Resource Center. It appears that UPR-Utuado’s efforts directed much attention to these initiatives, seemingly at the expense of other institutional assessment tools. Ultimately, each assessment tool should be completed annually. Even placing this action on a 5 year schedule would be an improvement to current period (every 10 years).

Chapter 1 through 3 of the self-study provide several examples of UPR-Utuado’s attention to institutional assessment. The ultimate goal is to develop a documented, organized and sustainable assessment process for the campus and its respective programs. This activity should include administration, faculty, non-teaching professionals, students and the external community. Quantitative and qualitative results would provide evidence upon which the multiple plans can be adjusted for future goal enhancements. Selecting common measurement tools and then establishing baseline data for each assessment index should be done.

**Suggestions**

- Select core measurement tools and establish baselines for each tool;
- Show evidence of how a recommended institutional change is reached based on inputs from the entire UPR-Utuado community; and
- Connect assessment results to physical and fiscal resource requests.

**Self-Study Chapter 4 – Educational Offerings**

This section of the report covers the following standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Educational Offerings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Related Educational Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

*The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.*

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 11 – Educational Offerings.**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

As noted in the UPR-Utuado mission statement referenced in the self study, the primary goal of any institution of higher education is “to deliver a relevant and quality program …” (p.5). The foundation for achieving such a goal is its faculty and its educational offerings. Self Study
Chapter 4 entitled Educational Offerings, focuses on academic programs at the Associate, Transfer Preparatory and Bachelor’s degrees (p. 88).

Core educational program fundamentals include: linkage to university and campus mission, attracting the right students who have a chance for collegiate success, coherent fostering of student learning, adequate resources to support desired student learning outcomes, indicators of instructional quality, indicators of course rigor aligned with preset learning outcomes and identifying if each educational offering monitors student progress as an assessment measuring instrument. Indices noted here, represent a collection of UPR-Utuado assessed elements to support their conclusion that the educational offerings need to be expanded (p. 130)

Recent review of UPR-Utuado’s Mission Statement, Strategic Plan and College Objectives/Goals as described in Ten for the Decade, suggests that attention should be redirected to program expansion. Student, faculty, and administrative surveys support this redirection for educational offerings as a means of enhancing the link to UPR-Utuado’s mission. Currently, there are eleven Associate degree programs, seven transfer preparatory programs and three bachelor’s degree programs accredited at UPR-Utuado. Data assembled to measure educational offering effectiveness are based on a 2000 to 2003 cohort and a 200% time completion factor. In essence, students graduating within twice (4 years for an Associate’s degree) the designated program length were considered “acceptable.”

Certainly, the potential for attracting “the right student” to an institution increases if the latter has an enticing educational offering. The self-study (p. 99) data on how prospective students learned about UPR-Utuado indicate the largest percentage (66%) being through orientation programs, followed by word-of-mouth through friends/family (35%). UPR-Utuado notes that 41% of the student population credits the educational programs as the reason for coming to UPR-Utuado. Additionally, UPR-Utuado’s location (29%) and an opportunity to raise their GPA (20%) were identified by students as reasons for selecting UPR-Utuado.

Are UPR-Utuado students ready to enter the job market or transfer on for additional degrees? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor and its Occupational Employment Statics dated October 4, 2010, there are as many as 5.8 million new jobs available or coming available within 20 occupations selected by UPR-Utuado for comparison to UPR-Utuado graduate qualification. UPR-Utuado graduates readily qualify to fill many of the top 20 job opportunities. In short, there are too few graduates; but those who do graduate, can successfully enter the job market (p. 95). Based on the successful job entry, UPR-Utuado concludes that its curriculum actually prepares its graduates for the work force referenced in the survey. In point of fact, a measurement tool is needed to ascertain how the educational offerings might change to have an even higher number of graduates directly entering the job market.

Improving the graduation rate by enhancing the educational offerings is a laudable goal. The self-study p. 91-94 displays the graduation rates for the 2000 to 2003 cohort. All rates seem low even when based on a 200% completion time. The key question remains: why are the graduates taking so long to complete their degree, and how can the completion time be reduced? There is no measurement tool in place to address this assessment point.
UPR-Utuado faculty and students were asked for their opinion as to the quality of instruction, the most popular style of course presentation and quality of facilities. Faculty ranked each of the three indices higher than did the students. However, the students did not raise undue concern. General satisfaction prevailed through both samples. However, once again, there was no baseline data from the previous assessments to determine if there was positive or negative change.

One could suggest that graduation rate in a designated period may be an indicator of course rigor. Others might claim that percentage of course completion with a passing grade is a rigor indicator; and hence should be monitored. The UPR-Utuado self-study assessed nine different teaching strategies as to their self-perceived influence on student learning with a low of 50% and a high of 88% saying yes, “the strategy helped me learn” including: oral and written communication in Spanish and English, quantitative analysis, decision making, creativity, research, leadership, ethics and computer skills. The information obtained throughout the self-study questionnaires focused on the questions established within the self-study design. The topic of academic rigor was addressed as part of the first Monitoring Report (September 2010).

UPR-Utuado selected the following assessment indicators to measure student progress: program completion time, number of completers, grade point average grade improvement over time, jobs graduates secured (although it did not designate a post-graduation period length) and student satisfaction. Reflections about graduation rate, program completion time, and job alignment are shared above in the mission linkage and fostering student learning sections.

Faculty were asked to prioritize what they felt were the most productive methods of teaching based on the perceptions of student learning. The self-study (p.109) lists the results. Interestingly, lecturing followed by discussion groups and computer instruction received the highest ranking from faculty. Students indicated: classroom discussion, lecture and group work worked best for their success. There are no baseline data or expressed goals with these indices.

In summary, the faculty/students indicate a reasonable level of satisfaction and describe the educational offerings as “average or better” concluding:

1. Administration, faculty, and students agree that the programs need to expand. They shared some frustration that the approval process continues to exhibit delays at the Central Administration level. Explanation for the delay was not attempted (p. 130).
2. Faculty and students agree that six of the nine teaching strategies being employed (listed in course rigor paragraph above) are appropriate and effective.
3. Faculty and students who use laboratories as part of their program believe that the facilities are “satisfactory”, with the exception of Agricultural Technology that gives only a 40% satisfaction.

Suggestions

- There is a consistently missing component for each selected educational offering assessment tool. The faculty and students indicate satisfaction but the instrumentation method needs validation. The missing piece is a baseline data set for each tool. The indices selected are fine but there are no indicators of taking the results to the level of making decisions for improvement. New program approval might well be expedited if there was notation of an Educational Offerings enhancement link for Central
Administration. Likewise, it might well bring a better base for fiscal requests to support indices associated with this standard.

**Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

_The institution’s programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 13 – Related Educational Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

UPR – Utuado has no branch campus, no additional instructional sites, and no contracted providers.

**Basic Skills for underprepared students:**

The institution recognizes that some students need help in improving their quantitative and analytical skills, their English oral/written skills, as well as their research and computer skills. Non-credit pre-college level courses, taken prior to, or concurrent with enrollment in degree credit courses, are a building block to enhance the success of underprepared students. Systematic procedures (tests or measures) are used to identify them, and they are given appropriate referral and support services.

**Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies**

The center provides service to the external community and its efforts to respond to its needs. It has been effective in maintaining excellent community relations, fulfilling the evolving needs of its traditional and non-traditional student neighbors for continuing education and for professional and personal self-improvement.

In collaboration with faculty, courses offered range from traditional offerings (such as developmental skills in math, English and Spanish) to courses for personal growth and others structured to the needs of current school teachers to maintain and enhance their skills or achieve certification. Credit and non-credit courses offered by qualified professionals responsible for the design, delivery and academic oversight are intended to offer lifelong development to those who seek it on a flexible schedule. The institution makes every effort to live up to the mission of the UPR to serve the people of its region and of the island by presenting opportunities to improve cultural as well as socio-economic conditions.

Educational and cultural programs, often consistent with the mission of the institution, are offered collaboratively with other institutions, within and without the UPR system, in response to specific and identified needs. In some cases, these offerings provide to the region academic programs directed toward agricultural development.
The Office for Social/Cultural Activities presents an array of artistic and cultural events on campus that are open to the community at large. To stimulate artistic creativity on campus, it presents workshops and plans events in the various artistic forms including theatre, dance, choir, cheerleading with the help of volunteers.

Funded by the US Department of Education and the UPR, the Talent Search Program at UPR – Utuado has served the central area of Puerto Rico since 1991. It funds 1,250 students every year and works with low income students from grades 6th to 12th who are potential first generation college students or in need of project services. Among its objectives, and through its activities, the program promotes secondary school graduation and applications for postsecondary education.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

The Institution should be commended for its community involvement and for its efforts to be responsive to the needs of its neighbors. It must offer great satisfaction that about 75% of the individuals queried for the self-study state that they are totally satisfied with their experience in the Continuing Education programs and that faculty performance was excellent.

The externally-supported Talent Search program has been a mainstay of UPR-Utuado. The latter should be commended for sustaining such important program for the benefit of the pre-college local population.

**Suggestions**

- The institution should make every effort to show evidence of effectiveness in the developmental programs for underprepared and low-achieving students by demonstrating how programs and support services help these students achieve expected learning goals. At the same time, it should spare no efforts in finding a way to support a robust tutoring program for its students.

  - Consistent standards and methods should be made clear to evaluate the level, quality, and quantity of learning consistent with the institution’s mission. An assessment of placement and successful completion on student persistence and academic achievement would enhance the reputation of the institution.

  - A periodic evaluation of the effect of these offerings on the institution’s resources should take place.
Self-Study Chapter 5 – General Education Component

This section of the report covers the following standards:
Standard 12: General Education

Standard 12: General Education

*The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.*

UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 12 – General Education

Summary of Evidence and Findings

The MSCHE’s *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* publication stipulates that the university is expected to offer a curriculum that will equip students with college-level proficiency in general education, oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning and technological competency.

UPR-Utuado offers 22 programs leading to degrees at the associate and bachelor’s level. With a predominant emphasis on agricultural programs, the institution has experienced enrollment growth in education, business administration, and life sciences. The location of the institution promotes the study of the liberal arts in an agricultural setting. The institution’s general education and related educational activities (GERE) program is focused on foundations and perspectives. Students are required to take two (12 credits) language programs (Spanish and English), one history course, one social science course that integrates sociology, anthropology, psychology, ecology, demography and social processes, one mathematics course, and two life sciences courses dealing with biology and physics. This is the traditional approach of defining general education based on the distribution of content areas. Given the resource constraints faced by the university, the current GERE offerings may be the best general educational program the faculty can deliver. However, there are other subjects that UPR-Utuado may want to consider.

First, in the current global climate, it will help UPR-Utuado students that courses specifically dealing with globalization be integrated as part of their GERE course offerings. Perhaps, an existing introduction to business or economics course can be used as a GERE elective for interested students. Second, it is not clear if, in the required GERE courses, students are able to fully develop their writing, speaking, and quantitative reasoning skills. For example, it is not known how many of the GERE courses require a term paper or class presentations. Providing an inventory of courses that contributes to the development of these skills would be helpful. Third, with the rapid transformation of the public and private sectors through the use of information technology, it is important for the institution to explicitly consider the use and application of information technology tools in the GERE offerings. For example, the review team is very pleased to know that UPR-Utuado was a recipient of a Title V program to support student learning outcomes through the integration of web-based technology. Since the grant ended in 2007, the concern is whether this initiative can be sustained. It must be noted that the self-study report states that the institution has 121 faculty members. In another section of the report, it is
described that only 29 faculty members have computer accounts in the distance learning platform. It is not clear if all 29 faculty members actually use (and to what extent do they use) the distance learning platform although they have computer accounts to access the platform. Finally, creativity, ethics, and leadership are key components in the educational formation of students in the 21st century. It is also suggested the GERE courses incorporate these and related topics to enhance the general education component of the university.

The assessment of the GERE program was conducted using indirect self-reporting measures as presented in the self-study report. Students responded positively regarding the quantity and quality of GERE courses offered. It is strongly suggested that other learning outcome assessment approaches be used to measure the effectiveness of the GERE program. Self-reports are helpful in ascertaining satisfaction levels but do not capture the more important learning outcomes. For example, course embedded measures through targeted exam questions can be used to determine if the desired learning outcome is achieved. In addition, it is not clear whether closing the loop actions were implemented.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

UPR-Utuado has provided the necessary courses to meet the MSCHE general education requirements. They are to be commended for establishing a program to support student learning outcomes through the integration of web-based technology.

**Recommendations**

- It is suggested that the institution identify possible initiatives to be undertaken to enhance its GERE program, including the use of appropriate learning outcome assessment measures and approaches. Such effort should also include closing-the-loop actions based on direct measures of learning outcomes.

**Chapter 6 – Student Learning Assessment**

This section of the report covers the following standards:
Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning
Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 14 – Assessment of Student Learning.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Are UPR-Utuado students learning what administration and faculty want them to learn? It is critical that selected student learning assessment tools be reasonably accurate and truthful to provide valid data upon which student learning adjustments can be made. Curricular changes and resource allocation amendments are easier to justify if the requests are based on living data rather than an opinion survey or conjecture. A documented, organized, and sustainable assessment process should be the end-goal.

Based on previous strategic planning (as noted in the review of standard #7), UPR-Utuado decided to emphasize three new programs and the Learning Resource Center. Bachelor’s degrees were recently approved in Elementary Education, Business Administration, and Office Systems followed by approval for recognition of the Learning Resources Center. Accreditation approval dates are noted in the self study (p.147). UPR-Utuado program development teams are to be commended for incorporating student learning outcomes assessment tools in each new degree. All new degrees are focused on knowledge enhancement, proficiency, skill development and disposition.

Systematic Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan – UPR-Utuado’s Business Administration program developed an assessment plan in 2004 linking program mission and goals to student learning outcomes. Their plan was based on a 5 year cycle utilizing portfolios, student entry and exit interviews, the monitoring of graduation rates and the implementation of student satisfaction questionnaires. This plan was so well received that the campus adopted a Systematic Outcomes Assessment Plan in 2007. Faculty governance structure “facilitates and fosters the incorporation of the assessment results into decisions on new programs or institutional directions …” (pp. 148-149). Plan underpinning rests with three motives: improve course content, adjust program admissions and enhance the teaching-learning strategies. Results of assessment plan are noted in the self-study (p.167).

UPR-Utuado’s Office Systems team took the plan a step further and developed a “Program’s Student Profile.” Similar to the “three motives” for business administration, the Student’s Profile (p. 151) provided a format for program enhancement decision making. Table 6-5 (p. 160) displays the evaluation methods and the base line data needed for future fiscal resources request.

Similarly, the Elementary Education team developed its assessment plan (p. 153) as their “comprehensive assessment program directed at collecting and analyzing data related to the student performance and program operation.” Tests of validity and reliability of their assessment plan are needed.
These three new bachelor’s degree program teams are to be commended for the vision and determination in implementing contemporary student learning outcomes assessment methodology. Their respective plans will likely lead to the establishment of a baseline data set needed for periodic comparison of previous change/results and the need for future student learning outcome adjustment.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) completed an extensive survey investigation gathering opinions of all components of the UPR-Utuado campus community. The data is very thorough and overall complimentary. However, the surveys need reliability validation. The LRC team is encouraged to select measurable indices that are fact-based. How many students use the LRC to sign out books, read references, use the computer center for study, socialization, etc.? Does the use of the LRC change during the semester such as midterms or finals time? Quantifying these results will give a solid basis for LRC modifications including infrastructure resources.

**Established Programs Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes** – There is no mention of assessing student learning outcomes for already existing programs. Faculty interviews indicate their assessment plans are written and in place but they are not reflected in the self-study. Program teams are encouraged to select an appropriate instrument, develop a plan that focuses on program stakeholders and implement it on an annual basis. It doesn’t have to be extensive, just consistent.

**Summary of standard #14 – Student Learning Outcomes Assessment** – Ultimately, student learning outcomes are all about the students and how to methodically transition the program into an offering resulting in on-time graduation (at the 100% level), directly to job procurement or successful and timely transfer for a higher degree. The three newly accredited degrees have developed student learning assessment plans that are student-centered. They are well organized and sustainable with sufficient and convincing results for future decision making. The linkage to the UPR-Utuado mission is also commendable.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

UPR-Utuado program development teams are to be commended for incorporating student learning outcomes assessment tools in each newly accredited degree (Elementary Education, Business Administration, and Office Systems).

**Suggestions:**

- Program directors are encouraged to incorporate student learning outcomes results into the budgetary development process.
- Faculty are encouraged to compare plans with new and existing programs searching for common points. There might well be a single common plan that is usable for the entire student body thus allowing common interpretation and future planning.
Self-Study Chapter 7 – Leadership, Governance, and Administration

This section of the report covers the following standards:

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance
Standard 5: Administration

**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 government 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.

**UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard 4 – Leadership and Governance**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with members of the Central Administration (President and his staff), and UPR-Utuado faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

*Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* describes a series of key elements that must be present for an institution to meet Standard 4. The Commission “expects a climate of shared collegial governance in which all constituencies … participate in the governance function in a manner appropriate to the institution.” “Within each system of shared governance, each major constituency must carry out its separate but complimentary roles and responsibilities”. “The governance structure should provide for a governing body with sufficient independence and expertise to assure the academic integrity of the institution and for a chief executive officer, appointed by the governing body, whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals.”

“The governing body is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, fiscal and academic integrity, academic planning, assets, and financial health of the institution. It should review institutional assessment results and participate in institutional planning. However, it should not manage, micro-manage, or interfere in the day-to-day operation of the institution.” “Governing body members…. have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and should not allow political or other influence to interfere with governing body duties.”

While the general description of the role of the governing body applies best to a free-standing institution, many institutions have different governing structures, such as those that include individual units within a system, and public institutions whose governing bodies’ decisions are subject to review by a higher –level board or administrative agency, etc. “In a multiple-unit system, the governing body should clearly establish relationships and carefully balance the interests of the units with those of the total system.”
UPR-Utuado provided the evaluation team with evidence that documented the leadership and governance policies and responsibilities of UPR’s Central Administration and addressed the institution only peripherally. Although such evidence is meaningful and valuable, it does not directly and specifically address the requirements the Standard 4 imposes on UPR-Utuado.

Even additional evidence provided to the visiting team as a result of the monitoring report that UPR-Utuado (and other nine campuses) were required to provide to MSCHE did not fully address the requirements of the standard. Both the Consolidated Monitoring Report submitted to MSCHE by UPR on September 6, 2011 and the Assessment Report (February 2011), do not address critical questions asked by MSCH in their action of November 18, 2010.

**Recommendations**

- UPR-Utuado should consider establishing an orientation program for new and existing members of the campus community, including students. A program of this sort could be very valuable for the institution to discuss and disseminate information about the mission, strategic plan, goals, and the structure and operation of the governance model for the campus as an integral entity of the UPR system.
- The Chancellor of UPR-Utuado should engage the President of UPR in a meaningful conversation about UPR-Utuado’s strategic plan, and the manner in which the President’s Office can support UPR-Utuado achieve its strategic goals, and long-term financial, enrollment, and leadership stability.

**Requirements**

- UPR-Utuado should produce a complete written set of: i) policies outlining governance responsibilities of administration and faculty; ii) governing documents that delineate the governance structure and provide for collegial governance, and the structure’s composition, duties, and responsibilities; iii) documents that clearly assign authority and responsibility for policy development and decision making; iv) documents that describe a selection process for governing body members. This documentation should be updated periodically, and be made easily and broadly available (including electronically) to the campus community.
Standard 5: Administration

The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution’s organization and governance.

UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 5 – Administration

Summary of Evidence and Findings

In the MSCHE Standard for Excellence document, the administrative structure of the university is expected to effectively facilitate learning, research and quality improvement. In addition, it must have the leadership capacity to support the scale of the institution and promote governance.

The organizational chart prepared and submitted to the review team presents the current administrative structure. UPR-Utuado is a small institution given its current enrollment and the number of faculty and supporting staff. We believe the current structure is adequate for the size of the institution. As noted in the self-study report, despite the relatively small size of the institution, the administrators already confirmed that they have performed duties beyond their own job responsibilities. Perhaps, a review of current administrative functions is in order to develop strategies for integrating responsibilities or delegation to the appropriate office or administrator.

Two weeks prior to the review team’s visit, the review team was informed that the Chancellor of UPR-Utuado had resigned and that an acting Chancellor was recently appointed. The institution faces a prolonged period of transition with leadership changes in the UPR system and in Utuado. In our meeting, the leadership at UPR-Utuado understood the serious challenges facing them with tight financial resources, high dependency on government support, declining revenues and increasing expenditures.

UPR-Utuado has dedicated staff and faculty and meets the MSCHE human capital requirement standard. The new administrative team is capable of leading the institution. Faculty feedback indicates that most complaints regarding leadership shortcomings were about previous leaders of the institution. It was also observed that many of the administrators and program directors are new in their positions, several of whom have “acting” in their titles. It is suggested that the institutional leadership move to finalize the permanent appointment of administrative leaders for stability in setting longer-term programmatic goals. The physical and technical facilities seem adequate to meet the mission of the institution. However, if the financial pressures continue to increase, the leadership team will have to make very difficult decisions of setting targeted priorities and down-sizing programs. It is recommended that the institution be proactive in anticipating that financial problems will continue to impact the institution. It is suggested that a task force comprised of various university stakeholders be formed to evaluate the direction of the institution during the next three to five years and provide recommendations to the leadership team on various actions that can be undertaken given most likely financial scenarios. In this manner, the communication process can be enhanced and the campus community is involved in charting the institution’s future direction.
**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

UPR-Utuado’s new leadership team should be commended for the stability they have provided to the institution at a time when they are facing not only serious budgetary problems but also student and faculty issues. The willingness of the new administration to engage students and faculty in an open manner is very important in enhancing communications among all parties involved.

**Suggestions**

- A review of current administrative functions should be undertaken to develop strategies that optimize the operation of the various units, and simplify and make more effective and efficient the integration of responsibilities or their delegation to the appropriate office or administrator.

**Recommendations**

- The institution meets the minimum standard for excellence in administration although the review team expects that the new leadership of the university should engage in a strategic planning and priority setting exercise in anticipation of possible continued financial difficulties.

**Self-Study Chapter 8 – Student Admission and Support Services**

This section of the report covers the following standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Student Admissions and Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Student Support Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

*The institution seeks to admit students whose interest, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students’ educational goals.*

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 8 – Student Admissions and Retention**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Because the admissions process requires prospective students to apply to the UPR system, rather than directly to the Utuado campus, UPR – Utuado appears to have little input into the admission process and, therefore, to have little use for an enrollment management plan. Nonetheless, it does as much as possible to help recruit potential students through outreach to high schools and promotion booths at shopping malls. Since about one third of each year’s entering class say that they learn about UPR-Utuado through orientation at their high schools, promotions on campus, or through friends and relatives, the strategy appears to be working. Other recruitment strategies that seem to work to some degree include personal interviews, orientations for potential students.
and their parents, and Open Houses on campus. These activities appear to involve university individuals from various offices and departments; such collaborative efforts reflect well on the institution. By offering comprehensive information about academic programs and various sources of financial aid, they assist prospective students in making informed decisions about attending the institution.

Those students who choose to apply to UPR-Utuado do so because it offers programs of interest and because of its geographic location. A number of students, however, come to Utuado to raise their GPA after being rejected by their first choice. Often these students leave the institution as soon as possible.

Admissions criteria include an academic index for each academic program that UPR – Utuado submits to the UPR System. This index is based on the student’s high school GPA + his/her College Board score and is adjusted periodically by each academic program. Based on summary of enrollment data for each program prepared by the Admissions Office, Admission Indices are set by each department and approved by the institution. They vary by program and range from 165 (Horticulture, Food Processing, Pest Control, Livestock Technology, Agricultural Production) to 300 (Natural Sciences-Transfer Preparatory Program). The university should try to evaluate whether to gradually raise its academic standards so as to try to attract a better prepared student body without jeopardizing the size of its entering class.

The yield from Admission to Enrollment for new high school students is 66%, down from 82% in 2006-2007. These results should be studied.

The institution offers a variety of activities and services to orient and support its new students. Such available activities as the ones described below contribute to student retention. On Campus Welcoming Day, admitted students are given information about academic programs and student services. Pamphlets are available regarding such campus services as Guidelines for transfer, Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, Benefits for Veterans.

Upon enrollment, freshmen are given their first semester schedule. They are later assigned an academic advisor to assist with course selection and registration for subsequent semesters. Academic advising is conducted by each department for its majors, but course registration is handled by department directors, faculty, secretaries, and the Registrar. Although online pre-registration is available, students must come to campus to register. Those with special needs receive assistance, but students request better training for faculty to assist students with special needs.

Due to financial exigencies, offices collaborate in support of students. Or they take on diverse responsibilities. For example, the Registrar is assisted by Admissions, Bursars and Financial Aid during registration period. The Office of Financial Aid makes available to students information regarding financial aid opportunities with a brochure. Although the majority of students (75%) do not work while studying, during AY 2009-2010 almost $6 million was awarded, mostly in Pell Grants ($5,561,599 to 1,281 students).

The Counseling and Orientation Office assists traditional and non-traditional students with transition to college life. It provides academic, vocational and personal counseling on matters that may thwart academic progress and assists with partial withdrawals, transfers, academic
problems, and changes in academic programs. It provides students on academic probation with academic follow-up. The office also plans Career Days and Open Houses and participates in recruitment visits. It administers and interprets student vocational questionnaires, runs crisis interventions and makes medical and psychiatric referrals.

Because no dormitories are available on campus, students from out of town are housed in boarding houses of sometimes dubious quality. Students request that the institution vet the boarding houses on the list they make available to students and work with the owners to ensure consistent quality of their residences. Ample parking is available for students on campus, and vehicles are made available to them for authorized athletic and social/cultural events sponsored by the college.

The student retention rate fluctuates between 68% and 70%. While this is acceptable, it would serve the institution well to work on improving retention. To illustrate, while student graduation rates were not raised as expected by the Title V funding, in the Title V courses, the retention rate was 86%. The program had been designed to 1) enhance student learning outcomes through integration of web-based technology in developmental courses [this was done through the use of Blackboard as a course management tool; now changed to the Moodle Platform due to cost]; 2) improve student services through implementation of online registration, advising, and counseling.

Graduation Rates for cohorts of 2000 to 2003 show that two/fifth of bachelor’s degree students completed their degree in 8 years, and less than one/fifth of associate degree students completed their degree in 4 years. In addition, fewer than half of transfer students (articulation agreements with other UPR campuses) graduated in 8 years. 10% of students transferred to another institution without completing their degree or completing a transfer-eligible program. These are not heartening outcomes; the data should be assessed periodically to identify ways to strengthen graduation rates. The good news is that it appears that the highest graduation rates were in the BS in Office Systems, BS in Education, and AAS in Natural Sciences and Social Sciences; the less good news is that the lowest graduation rates (lower than 20%) were in Business Administration, Pest Control, Horticulture, Livestock Technology, Food Processing, Humanities, Office Systems (AAS) and Education (Transfer) programs. One fifth of student respondents requested transfer to another Utuado program.

The AY 2009-2010 graduating class was small (124 students).

Enrollment Data indicate that the size of the first semester class has remained fairly stable, ranging from 560 in AY 2005-2006 to 654 in AY 2009-2010. AY 2007-2008 was highest, at 697. The majority of students enrolled in First semester AY 2009-1010 were new high school students; they came from the surrounding municipalities of the Central Mountain Region. Attrition from Semester 1 to Semester 2 varies from department to department, but it appears to be about 10% of the total AY 2009-2010 entering class. Here again, some assessment should be undertaken on an ongoing basis to find out why students drop.

Programs with the highest graduation rates are the bachelor’s programs in Elementary Education, Office Systems, Accounting, Livestock Technology, Natural Sciences (kudos to these departments!). While the total number of withdrawals is small (63 out of 1623 enrolled students
in First semester of AY 2009-1010), programs with the highest number of withdrawals are Elementary Education, Office Systems, Business Administration, Agricultural Production.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

There are many things to be proud of at UPR – Utuado. Among them is that students are enthusiastic about the campus. They love their teachers and are very pleased with the quality of their academic programs, the technology resources, and the location of the campus and its beauty. They are satisfied with the effectiveness of student services, including the Registrar’s Office, and report positively on their interactions with the Counseling and Orientation Office. A few students indicate that, because Utuado does not offer their program of choice or the bachelor’s degree in their program, they will seek a transfer to another UPR campus.

**Suggestions**

- It may benefit the institution to publicize required placement and diagnostic testing; make transparent expected learning outcomes and assessment results; conduct ongoing data analysis of student success, remediation results, etc.
- It may benefit the institution to measure the success of its students during and after their enrollment, whether they transfer, graduate, study part-time, continue their education, or study as non-degree student. This, of course, may require a dedicated Institutional Research specialist.

**Recommendations**

- The institution should seriously consider analyzing student persistence and attrition college-wide, as well as by academic program. A periodic review of retention data might help ascertain why admitted students do not persist.
- The institution should make every effort to show how ongoing institutional activities inform institutional decisions regarding programs, services, and resource allocation.

---

**Standard 9: Student Support Services**

_The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution’s goals for students. In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom._

---

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 9 – Student Support Services**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:
In partnership with central UPR, Utuado provides a range of student support services appropriate to student needs. Results of student surveys conducted for the self-study indicate a high level of satisfaction with the availability and quality of the services provided. The team’s interaction with the program directors confirmed the impression of a professionally knowledgeable, motivated, and caring staff. Students receive appropriate guidance and direction regarding obtaining services for which they are eligible including access to assistance with financial aid, advisement, counseling, and health service. Student grievance processes are documented, including access to the services of an ombudsperson.

Procedures are in place to provide accommodations to students with special needs. The self-study and site visit confirm that campus infrastructure improvements provide for handicap access. The new technology building has a ramp access to labs and some faculty offices. The new Learning Resource Center has parking ramp access and an elevator. The request for the installation of automatic doors has been approved by the Central Administration Infrastructure Development Office. The team commends the institution for its intentionally inclusive design and supports the self-study recommendation to continue efforts to ensure accessibility on campus taking into account the needs for clearly identified parking spaces and additional ramps.

Two areas that should be addressed by the institution were reported in the self-study and by the students. Students would like the institution to develop closer relationships with the local community to ensure that the housing offered to students is adequate. Students also strongly expressed the need for expanded tutoring opportunities because grant funding for the tutoring program has ended. Students expressed appreciation for the faculty and noted that faculty often extend their office hours to provide assistance. Nevertheless, students described this solution as inadequate. Some are volunteering to provide peer tutoring, a low cost initiative that could be expanded with institutional support.

The new Learning Resources Building is evidently well used by the students. Library resources are available online and the scheduled hours are adequate to meet the needs.

The team supports the self-study recommendation to provide students with orientation on emergency preparedness.

One clarification to the self-study and institutional profile is needed. The UPR-Utuado campus is not accredited by ALA as stated on the institutional profile. ALA accredits only library science programs. UPR-Utuado states that its Learning Resources Center has successfully completed a self-study of its programs and services using the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards for libraries in Higher Education (ACRL Certification of Completion, February 2008).

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

Students express a strong sense of satisfaction with campus support services.

**Suggestions**

- Given economic conditions, give priority to maintaining core services needed by students such as counseling and medical services.
Self-Study Chapter 9 – Faculty and Support Services

This section of the report covers the following standards:
Standard 10: Faculty

**Standard 10: Faculty**

*The institution’s instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.*

| UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 10 – Faculty |

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Data show that the institution employs qualified professionals (full-time and part-time) with appropriate credentials and experience. They appear to be effective and committed teachers. A number of them show evidence of continued productivity, professional development and research. And they are well integrated into the life of the institution.

Over half of the faculty is tenured, 18% are on tenure-track, and a third is hired on term contract. This is clearly a reflection of recent hires and of the renewal of the faculty.

To their credit, full-time faculty members fulfill their primary responsibility to develop and deliver academic programs designed to achieve their stated goal(s). They assure and evaluate student learning within the framework of the institution’s and the department’s mission and goals. They recently developed new bachelor’s programs (in Natural Sciences and in Agricultural Technology) that, due to budget considerations, have been put on hold.

Faculty communicate the planning of their courses through a course syllabus frequently revised. Many share their teaching strategies freely with colleagues. They demonstrate their willingness to participate in institutional planning and assessment. Various successful accreditation efforts have recently taken place: Elementary Education, Business Administration, Office Systems. This is a credit to their hard work.

Faculty benefits include an array of leaves, a pension plan, financial assistance for those who seek to achieve terminal degree, free tuition for faculty and immediate family at any UPR campus, and there is evidence that, until the current fiscal crisis, the institution sought to fulfill its responsibility towards the faculty with released time opportunities and support for professional development. In addition, under the Title V grant, 46 faculty members were trained in workshops on education, technology, learning styles, and neuro-linguistic programming. 29 professors are actively using a course management tool.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, exemplary/innovation practices, or commendations**

The team commends UPR–Utuado for the quality and stability of its faculty. After 2006, all tenure-track teaching or research faculty hired hold a terminal degree. All faculty now hold at least a Master’s degree. A large percentage already holds the doctorate, with a growing number
working on attaining their doctoral (Ed.D. or Ph.D.). Departments with the highest number of faculty with the Ph.D. are Agricultural Technology, Natural Sciences, and Education.

The team also recognizes the redirection of the institution regarding research and its support for a culture of publication in interested departments. Both the administration and the faculty are encouraged to find ways to continue in that direction as much as possible.

The faculty are very committed to the students that they educate. For faculty, getting the students to succeed emotionally, socially, and academically, is very rewarding. The team finds it heartening to see the close ties between students and faculty and how faculty appear to make every effort to serve as a link between the students and the community in a variety of ways.

**Suggestions**

Retirements are anticipated, but prospects for replacement are not promising at this time due to budgetary constraints. Fewer faculty on board, however, means that remaining faculty may be asked to teach more classes or that class size will grow. Serious consideration ought to be given to the analysis of the relationship over time between faculty performance with an increased teaching load and student learning outcomes.

**V.a Documents consulted and Individuals Interviewed.**

Below is a sampling of documents reviewed. Other documents, including those listed in the self-study for every chapter, and others provided on site were also reviewed as appropriate for the various standards.

Ley de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (Ley numero 1 de 20 de enero de 1966, según enmendada)
UPR-Utuado. Sintesis Historica Revision Valores, Vision y Mision (Plan Estrategico) de la UPR-Utuado a partir de la aprobación por el Senado Academico en septiembre de 2002
Comité Asesor del Rector. Experiencia y Retos (4 de marzo de 2011)
UPR Codigo de Conducta Estudiantil
UPR Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico
UPR Utuado Course Catalog
UPR Utuado Self-study Report 2005-2010
UPR Utuado Monitoring Report March 2011
UPR Utuado Websites
How the fiscal year budget is linked to Planning Priorities 2008-2011
Junta Administrativa Resumen Trabajo Ano 2009-2010
Print/Electronic Communication during UPR Utuado/MSCHE 2005-2010 Self-Study
UPR Utuado Avaluo Plan Estrategico 2003-2007
UPR Utuado Certification 2009-10-31—Academic Senate
UPR Utuado Certification 2009-10-31—Academic Senate
UPR Utuado Learning Resource Center Self-Study Report 2001/2 -- 2005/6
UPR Utuado Plan Estrategico 2003-2007
Below is a sampling of individuals interviewed. Other individuals were also interviewed as appropriate for the various standards.
Admissions: Maria Robles
ADA Compliance: Gretchen de Anca
Orientation: Carolyn Mercado
Procurador Estudiantil: current: Ana Arce; former: Marisol Diaz
Registrar: Marilla Santiago
Library Director: Catalina Soto
Financial Aid Director: Eltie Perez
Social and Cultural Activities: Aida Cabrera
Human Resources Director
Self-study Steering Committee
Students
Faculty
Director of Counseling/Advisement staff
Director of athletics
Representative from campus safety
Strategic Planning Committee
Assessment Committee
Budget Committee
Physical Planning Office representative: Jose Lugo Delgado
Deans
Program Directors
Members of the staff of the Student Affairs Deanship
Non-academic Directors
Strategic Planning Committee
Department Chairs
Non-academic Directors
UPR-Utuado student body representatives
Faculty representatives
VI. Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements

**Standard 1: Mission and Goals**

| UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard #1 – Mission and Goals |

**Suggestions**

- It may be useful for UPR-Utuado to revisit its definition of mission to avoid confusion with its vision, and to ensure that it reflects its purpose, and indicates whom the institution serves, and what it intends to accomplish.
- UPR-Utuado should ensure that its mission is explicitly considered as a reference and guide in the development of its new strategic plan.

**Standard 2: Planning, Resource allocation, and Institutional Renewal**

| UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard #2 – Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal |

**Recommendations**

- The team concurs with the self-study’s suggestions regarding providing training to those involved in planning; improving communication of its strategic planning efforts with the campus community; and reaching out to the external community to raise awareness of the institution’s commitment to service.

**Requirements**

- The institution must present evidence that its goals and objectives reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels.

**Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

| UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard #3 – Institutional Resources |

**Requirements**

- The review team has serious concerns regarding the financial health of the institution and the system as a whole. The information provided in both the self-study report and the monitoring report is necessary but not sufficient to meet the standards required for institutional resources. It is strongly recommended that the institution embark on a budget and priority setting exercise that will link its strategic plans and goals with available resources based on various economic scenarios, particularly a plan B scenario that does not assume budget increases from the government. Broad participation in this priority
setting project is encouraged and could include representatives of various campus community members including faculty and students. The task would be to develop a medium-term plan (three to five years) that outlines possible strategies that the institution can take in view of its precarious financial situation. This plan should include cost-cutting measures and program changes necessary to meet a continued budget reduction over a three to five-year period. The plan should also include a demographic analysis of the pool of college-qualified students who could be potential applicants to the institution. A follow up report should be submitted to MSCHE within one year.

**Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

**UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard 4 – Leadership and Governance**

**Recommendations**

- UPR-Utuado should consider establishing an orientation program for new and existing members of the campus community, including students. A program of this sort could be very valuable for the institution to discuss and disseminate information about the mission, strategic plan, goals, and the structure and operation of the governance model for the campus as an integral entity of the UPR system.
- The Chancellor of UPR-Utuado should engage the President of UPR in a meaningful conversation about UPR-Utuado’s strategic plan, and the manner in which the President’s Office can support UPR-Utuado achieve its strategic goals, and long-term financial, enrollment, and leadership stability.

**Requirements**

- UPR-Utuado should produce a complete written set of: i) policies outlining governance responsibilities of administration and faculty; ii) governing documents that delineate the governance structure and provide for collegial governance, and the structure’s composition, duties, and responsibilities; iii) documents that clearly assign authority and responsibility for policy development and decision making; iv) documents that describe a selection process for governing body members. This documentation should be updated periodically, and be made easily and broadly available (including electronically) to the campus community.

**Standard 5: Administration**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 5 – Administration**

**Suggestions**

- A review of current administrative functions should be undertaken to develop strategies that optimize the operation of the various units, and simplify and make more effective
and efficient the integration of responsibilities or their delegation to the appropriate office or administrator.

**Recommendations**

- Although the institution meets the minimum standards for excellence in administration, the review team recommends that the new leadership of the university engage in a strategic planning and priority setting exercise in anticipation of possible continued financial difficulties.

**Standard 6: Integrity**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard #6 – Integrity**

**Suggestions**

- Continue a meaningful dialog with elected student leaders and the student body in general, to ensure that students, administrators, and faculty understand and consistently follow the newly approved institutional by-laws.

**Recommendations**

- Take steps to ensure that faculty staff and administrators have appropriate access to current policies and future revisions. Provide orientation to new employees and appropriate communication of policy revisions as needed.

**Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard #7 – Institutional Assessment.**

**Suggestions**

- Select core measurement tools and establish baselines for each tool;
- Show evidence of how a recommended institutional change is reached based on inputs from the entire UPR-Utuado community; and
- Connect assessment results to physical and fiscal resource requests.

**Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 8 – Student Admissions andRetention**

**Suggestions**
• It may benefit the institution to publicize required placement and diagnostic testing; make transparent expected learning outcomes and assessment results; conduct ongoing data analysis of student success, remediation results, etc.

• It may benefit the institution to measure the success of its students during and after their enrollment, whether they transfer, graduate, study part-time, continue their education, or study as non-degree student. This, of course, may require a dedicated Institutional Research specialist.

**Recommendations**

• The institution should seriously consider analyzing student persistence and attrition college-wide, as well as by academic program. A periodic review of retention data might help ascertain why admitted students do not persist.

• The institution should make every effort to show how ongoing institutional activities inform institutional decisions regarding programs, services, and resource allocation.

**Standard 9: Student Support Services**

| UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 9 – Student Support Services |

**Suggestions**

• Given economic conditions give priority to maintaining core services needed by students such as counseling and medical services.

**Standard 10: Faculty**

| UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 10 – Faculty |

**Suggestions**

Retirements are anticipated, but prospects for replacement are not promising at this time due to budgetary constraints. Fewer faculty on board, however, means that remaining faculty may be asked to teach more classes or that class size will grow. Serious consideration ought to be given to the analysis of the relationship over time between faculty performance with an increased teaching load and student learning outcomes.

**Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

| UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 11 – Educational Offerings. |

**Suggestions**
There is a consistently missing component for each selected educational offering assessment tool. The faculty and students indicate satisfaction but the instrumentation method needs validation. The missing piece is a baseline data set for each tool. The indices selected are fine but there are no indicators of taking the results to the level of making decisions for improvement. New program approval might well be expedited if there was notation of an Educational Offerings enhancement link for Central Administration. Likewise, it might well bring a better base for fiscal requests to support indices associated with this standard.

**Standard 12: General Education**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 12 – General Education**

**Recommendations**

- It is suggested that the institution identify possible initiatives to be undertaken to enhance its GERE program, including the use of appropriate learning outcome assessment measures and approaches. Such effort should also include closing-the-loop actions based on direct measures of learning outcomes.

**Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 13 – Related Educational Activities**

**Suggestions**

- The institution should make every effort to show evidence of effectiveness in the developmental programs for underprepared and low-achieving students by demonstrating how programs and support services help these students achieve expected learning goals. At the same time, it should spare no efforts in finding a way to support a robust tutoring program for its students.
- Consistent standards and methods should be made clear to evaluate the level, quality, and quantity of learning consistent with the institution’s mission. An assessment of placement and successful completion on student persistence and academic achievement would enhance the reputation of the institution.
- A periodic evaluation of the effect of these offerings on the institution’s resources should take place.

**Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

**UPR-Utuado is in compliance with MSCHE Standard 14 – Assessment of Student Learning.**
Suggestions

- The conclusions noted in the self-study (p. 179) suggest each academic program has established its own student learning outcomes ... but ... they should be included in the self-study.
- Program directors are encouraged to incorporate student learning outcomes results into the budgetary development process.
- Faculty are encouraged to compare plans with new and existing programs searching for common points. There might well be a single common plan that is usable for the entire student body thus allowing common interpretation and future planning.
REPORT TO THE
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO AT UTUADO
(UPR-Utuado)
P.O. BOX 2500
UTUADO, PUERTO RICO 00641
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Prepared after a visit to the institution on
March 6-9, 2011

The visitors

Carlos Vargas-Aburto, Provost
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, 15200 Kutztown Road
Kutztown, PA 19530-0730 – CHAIR

Conrado Gempesaw, Dean of Lerner College of Business and Economics
University of Delaware, 303 Lerner Hall, Lerner College of
Business and Economics, Newark, DE 19716

Douglas M. Goodale, Professor of Agronomy & Environmental Science and Technology
Coordinator
State University of New York College of Agriculture and
Technology at Cobleskill, 219 Warner Hall, Cobleskill, NY 12043

Reginetta Haboucha, Former Vice President for Academic Affairs (Ret.)
Fashion Institute of Technology, NY
Mailing Address: 401 East 86th St, Apt 7J, New York, NY 10028

Maureen D. Sasso, Director, Information Services Division, Duquesne University
Gumberg Library, 600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Mary Ellen Petrisko, Vice President, Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair. The report goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the University of Puerto Rico - Utuado. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.
AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT
TO
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO AT UTUADO
(UPR-Utuado)

Acting Chancellor:
Prof. Eladio Gonzalez Fuentes

Acting Dean for Academic Affairs:
Dr. Eneida Rodriguez Rossy

Chair of the Board of Trustees (UPR System):
Ms. Ygri Rivera de Martinez
I. Institutional Overview

The University of Puerto Rico at Utuado (UPR-Utuado) is one of the 11 campuses that constitute the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). UPR-Utuado was created by the Legislative Assembly of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico on December 1, 1978, and began operations in August 1979 with a total of 195 students. UPR-Utuado initially offered associate degrees in agricultural technology, education, business, and arts and sciences. In its 30+ years of existence, UPR-Utuado has grown in size and offerings. According to the most recent accreditation status, UPR-Utuado is a public institution with state affiliation that offers Associate and Baccalaureate degrees, with no distance education offerings, and with a total enrollment of 1623 students in one campus. UPR-Utuado holds specialized accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). UPR-Utuado currently employs 121 faculty members, and is located in the central region of the Island of Puerto Rico, on 118 acres in the barrio (neighborhood) of Salto Arriba, Utuado.

Initial accreditation of UPR-Utuado by MSCHE took place in 1986. Accreditation was last reaffirmed in 2006. On December 2010, an evaluation team was selected by MSCHE, and visited UPR-Utuado March 6-9, 2011 to carry out the following evaluation visit, scheduled for 2010-2011. The self-study model selected by UPR-Utuado for the 2010-2011 evaluation was comprehensive with two emphases: linkage between budget and planning, and assessment of student learning.

Prior to the evaluation visit, in a letter dated February 11, 2011, the chair of the evaluation team was informed of the resignation of Chancellor Iris-Mercado, and the immediate appointment of Prof. Eladio González Fuentes as Acting Chancellor of UPR-Utuado, by Dr. José Ramón de la Torre, President of the UPR System.

The evaluation team wants to take this opportunity to again express appreciation to the leadership, faculty, staff, and students of UPR-Utuado, and to the President of UPR and his staff in San Juan, for the courtesy and warm hospitality that they were shown prior to, and during their accreditation visit.

II. Nature and Conduct of the Visit

On June 24, 2010, MSCHE acted as follows:

To place the institution on probation because of a lack of evidence that the institution is in compliance with Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance) and Standard 11 (Educational Offerings). To request a monitoring report due by September 1, 2010, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance with (1) 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; and (2) Standard 11 (Educational Offerings), including but not limited to a plan for assuring the rigor, continuity, and length of courses affected by the institution’s closure. In addition, the report should document evidence of the development and/or implementation of a long-term financial plan, including steps taken to
improve the institution’s finances and the development of alternative funding sources (Standard 3). An on-site evaluation will follow submission of the report. The purpose of the on-site evaluation is to verify the information provided in the monitoring report and the institution's ongoing and sustainable compliance with the Commission's accreditation standards. To further direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit to discuss the Commission's expectations for reporting. To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation. To note that the next evaluation visit is still scheduled for 2010-2011.

Subsequent to the September 2, 2010 monitoring report and small team visit, the Commission took action on November 18, 2010 as follows:

To note that the Commission liaison guidance visit took place. To document receipt of the monitoring report and to note the visit by the Commission's representatives. To continue the institution's probation due to a lack of evidence that the institution is in compliance with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources) and Standard 4 (Leadership and Governance).

To request a monitoring report due by March 1, 2011, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance with Standards 3 and 4, including, but not limited to (1) five-year financial projections for the UPR System including information from audited financial statements for fiscal year 2010; (2) institutional pro-forma budgets that demonstrate the institution's ability to generate a balanced budget for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, including the personnel, compensation, and other assumptions on which these budgets are based (Standard 3); (3) evidence of implementation of clear institutional policies specifying the respective authority of the different governance bodies and their respective roles and responsibilities in shared governance; (4) evidence that the Board of Trustees assists in generating resources needed to sustain and improve the institution; (5) evidence of a procedure in place for the periodic objective assessment of the Board of Trustees in meeting stated governing body objectives and responsibilities; (6) evidence that steps have been taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional leadership, particularly in times of governmental transition; (7) evidence that the UPR Action Plan is implemented, that it is assessed, and the data are used for continuous improvement of the institution's processes; (8) evidence that steps have been taken to improve shared governance, especially in documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at the System level; and (9) evidence that communication between the Central Administration and the institution and within the institution, is clear, timely, and accurate, and that the sources of such communications are clearly defined and made available to all constituents (Standard 4).

To note that the institution's evaluation visit will take place as scheduled in Spring 2011 and that this visit will include consideration of this report.

To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation.

The individuals and groups with which the evaluation team met are included in the team’s evaluation report.
III. Affirmation of Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation Under Review

Based on a review of the self-study report as well as the monitoring report and appendices, interviews, and other institutional documents, the visiting team cannot affirm that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation under review.

Specifically, the team cannot affirm that the institution continues to meet Requirement of Affiliation 8: that “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.”

IV. Commendations and Summary of Institutional Strengths

Commendations and/or institutional strengths have been included under each standard, in the first part of this document (report).

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standard(s) Under Review

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient use of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard #3 – Institutional Resources

Summary of Evidence and Findings

A thorough analysis of the response of the monitoring report as it pertains to Standard 3 was made in the discussion presented in the first part of this document, where all 14 standards are analyzed and discussed for UPR-Utuado.

Requirements

- The review team has serious concerns regarding the financial health of the institution and the system as a whole. The information provided in both the self-study report and the monitoring report is necessary but not sufficient to meet the standards required for institutional resources. It is strongly recommended that the institution embark on a budget and priority setting exercise that will link its strategic plans and goals with available resources based on various economic scenarios, particularly a plan B scenario that does not assume budget increases from the government. Broad participation in this priority setting project is encouraged and could include representatives of various campus community members including faculty and students. The task would be to develop a medium-term plan (three to five years) that outlines possible strategies that the institution can take in view of its precarious financial situation. This plan should include cost-cutting
measures and program changes necessary to meet a continued budget reduction over a
three to five-year period. The plan should also include a demographic analysis of the pool
of college-qualified students who could be potential applicants to the institution. A follow
up report should be submitted to MSCHE within one year.

**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 government 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.*

**UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard 4 – Leadership and Governance**

**Summary of Evidence and Findings**

Although the monitoring report requested five-year financial projections and audited financial
statements for FY2010, only the former were provided. (explanation of why audited financials
not available: p.6 Assessment Report).

The institution’s monitoring report did not fully and specifically dealt with the nine points that
were to be addressed in the March 1, 2011 monitoring report. An appendix (Assessment Report,
February 2011) to the monitoring report, prepared by the Central Administration, did discuss a
few of these points and provided useful information. However, the Assessment Report was not
specific to UPR-Utuado and did not include complete specific information about the latter.

The monitoring report was to provide, among others, evidence of implementation of clear
institutional policies specifying the respective authority of the different governance bodies and
their respective roles and responsibilities in shared governance. These policies exist and have
been implemented, but there is not yet evidence that the Board of Trustees assists in generating
resources needed to sustain and improve the institution. The Board of Trustees has established a
Special Committee for Development of External Resources through Certification No. 4 (2003-
2004) to attract private donations, setting fundraising goals for the Board, etc. Other actions
from the BOT are being explored, including the implementation of the $400/semester
stabilization fee (effective 2010-2011), a $100M line of credit for UPR from the Government
Development Bank, providing additional financial aid funding for needy students, establishing a
special scholarship fund of UPR (with proceeds from the Lottery), etc.

The AR presents evidence that steps have been taken to assure continuity and stability of
institutional leadership, particularly in times of governmental transition. However, this evidence
does not address UPR-Utuado; only the president of system and other positions at Central
Administration are discussed in AR. Therefore, it is not clear to the visiting team that continuity
and stability have been addressed for the UPR-Utuado campus. As is well known, the current
Chancellor at UPR-Utuado and other key positions are acting, and have been in place for a very short period of time.

Overall, the team found evidence that:

a) At the system level, steps have been taken to improve shared governance, especially in documenting how campus input is solicited and considered in decision making at the System level;

b) At the system level, there is a great deal of activity: forums with student leadership, information and listening sessions, campus visits by president beginning March 2011, various surveys, input solicited on tuition exemption policy, statement that Chancellors and Key Campus Leaders are involved in policy and decision making (this, however, is not clear from the team experience at UPR-Utuado; although consideration must be given to the fact that the leadership team (Chancellor and others) have been in place only for a short time); relationship of University Board (advisory) and BOT (governing). Effect on decision making ….(p 29 ff AR)

c) Communication between the Central Administration and the institution, and within the institution, is beginning to be more clear, timely, and accurate; and that the sources of such communications are more clearly defined and made available to all constituents.

d) Communication plan and strategies are discussed by Central Administration in AR (p. 37).

The evaluation team remains significantly concerned that the turnover of key management positions at UPR-Utuado is clearly impacting the continuity of operations of the campus. Clearly, the institutional memory is at times quite short, and fragmented.

The team continues to be gravely concerned about the effect that the frequent changes in the leadership of the campus has on its ability to face the challenging conditions posed by the current economic climate in Puerto Rico and in the UPR.

The following Recommendations and Requirements are the same included above, in the first part of this comprehensive document.

**Recommendations**

- UPR-Utuado should consider establishing an orientation program for new and existing members of the campus community, including students. A program of this sort could be very valuable for the institution to discuss and disseminate information about the mission, strategic plan, goals, and the structure and operation of the governance model for the campus as an integral entity of the UPR system.

- The Chancellor of UPR-Utuado should engage the President of UPR in a meaningful conversation about UPR-Utuado’s strategic plan, and the manner in which the President’s Office can support UPR-Utuado achieve its strategic goals, and long-term financial, enrollment, and leadership stability.

**Requirements**

- UPR-Utuado should produce a complete written set of: i) policies outlining governance responsibilities of administration and faculty; ii) governing documents that delineate the
governance structure and provide for collegial governance, and the structure’s composition, duties, and responsibilities; iii) documents that clearly assign authority and responsibility for policy development and decision making; iv) documents that describe a selection process for governing body members. This documentation should be updated periodically, and be made easily and broadly available (including electronically) to the campus community.

VI. Summary of Compliance

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

**UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard #3 – Institutional Resources**

Requirements

- The review team has **serious concerns** regarding the financial health of the institution and the system as a whole. The information provided in both the self-study report and the monitoring report is necessary but not sufficient to meet the standards required for institutional resources. It is strongly recommended that the institution embark on a budget and priority setting exercise that will link its strategic plans and goals with available resources based on various economic scenarios, particularly a plan B scenario that does not assume budget increases from the government. Broad participation in this priority setting project is encouraged and could include representatives of various campus community members including faculty and students. The task would be to develop a medium-term plan (three to five years) that outlines possible strategies that the institution can take in view of its precarious financial situation. This plan should include cost-cutting measures and program changes necessary to meet a continued budget reduction over a three to five-year period. The plan should also include a demographic analysis of the pool of college-qualified students who could be potential applicants to the institution. A follow up report should be submitted to MSCHE within one year.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

**UPR-Utuado is NOT in compliance with MSCHE Standard 4 – Leadership and Governance**

**Recommendations**

- UPR-Utuado should consider establishing an orientation program for new and existing members of the campus community, including students. A program of this sort could be very valuable for the institution to discuss and disseminate information about the mission, strategic plan, goals, and the structure and operation of the governance model for the campus as an integral entity of the UPR system.
- The Chancellor of UPR-Utuado should engage the President of UPR in a meaningful conversation about UPR-Utuado’s strategic plan, and the manner in which the President’s Office can support UPR-Utuado achieve its strategic goals, and long-term financial, enrollment, and leadership stability.
Requirements

- UPR-Utuado should produce a complete written set of: i) policies outlining governance responsibilities of administration and faculty; ii) governing documents that delineate the governance structure and provide for collegial governance, and the structure’s composition, duties, and responsibilities; iii) documents that clearly assign authority and responsibility for policy development and decision making; iv) documents that describe a selection process for governing body members. This documentation should be updated periodically, and be made easily and broadly available (including electronically) to the campus community.