

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students  
of

*AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO (AUPR)*  
*Bayamón, Puerto Rico 009062*

by  
A Self-Study Evaluation Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared After a  
Visit to the Institution on:  
*March 12 – 15, 2017*

The Visitors:  
Team Chair:  
Dr. M. Karen Jogan  
Professor of Spanish and Former Director of Planning and Assessment  
Albright College

The Team:  
Dr. Miguel F. Cairol  
Vice President for Administration and Finance  
New York City College of Technology of the City University of New York

Dr. Gerardo del Cerro  
Director of Assessment and Professor  
The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

Dr. Joann La Perla-Morales  
President  
Middlesex County College

Dr. John Meléndez  
Professor, Educational Leadership  
New Jersey City University

Dr. José Ricardo-Osorio  
Associate Professor of Spanish and Foreign Language Education, Department Chair  
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Moisés Silva  
Academic Consultant, Universidad San Sebastián (Chile)  
and Former Vice President for Quality Assurance, Universidad Andrés Bello (Chile)

Working with the Visitors:

Dr. Tito Guerrero III  
Vice President, Middle States Commission on Higher Education

At the Time of the Visit:

President/Chief Executive Officer:  
Juan C. Nazario-Torres, Esq.

Chief Academic Officer:  
Dr. José Ramírez

Chair of the Governing Board:

María O. Marrero Soto  
Urb. La Riviera #1262, Calle 42 SE, San Juan PR 00921

## **I. Institutional Overview**

American University of Puerto Rico (AUPR), Bayamón Puerto Rico, with an extension site in the municipality of Manatí, is a private non-profit institution located in a metropolitan area outside of San Juan. Both locations in the north-central of Puerto Rico serve approximately 1600 undergraduate and 107 graduate students; AUPR maintains a strong commitment to the low-income academically underprepared students comprising a majority of enrollment. The institution's commitment to its primary service area is unwavering, despite significant financial challenges. Founded in 1963, the AUPR initial accreditation was granted in 1982.

As a private university, AUPR is tuition driven and funded almost entirely (93%) by student tuition and fees. Severe shifts in enrollment and an extended recession have impacted all educational institutions on the island. External contextual challenges have resulted in an enrollment decline (from 2,260 students in 2012 to 1,485 students in 2016). The consequence has been a major fiscal challenge, weathered through mission-guided and student-centered decisions to reduce expenses while maintaining commitment to academic and student support services.

The institution recently launched a revised mission and clearly defined vision and goals, responding to an evolving internal and external context: *“Educate students to succeed in their professions and in their enterprising endeavors and to become responsible citizens.”* This newly articulated mission undergirds the development of the objectives and initiatives of the *Institutional Strategic Plan 2016-2020*, placing students at the center of the institutional focus. This *Strategic Plan* was developed in concert with the *Self Study*, weaving a critical reflection with positioning for the future.

Within this same recent time frame, AUPR applied for and received a significant grant throughout Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HIS): *Successful Learning Project: Improving academic success among Hispanic students by integrating technology into curriculum revision and faculty training*. This \$2.6 million award maps out an ambitious 5 year project, launched in late 2015 and extending through 2020, coinciding with the timeline of the most recent *Strategic Plan*. Moreover, since 2008 AUPR has received an additional \$1.2 million in curriculum development grants through Title II and Puerto Rico Developmental Disabilities Council.

All of these initiatives supported with grant funding are externally evaluated and involve efforts to promote continuous quality improvement in all aspects of the institution's operations.

University leaders and other members of the AUPR campus community recognize key challenges during this period of transition. They include: promoting and adapting to the demands of the new programs, launching initiatives to improve retention and reduce delays in time to graduation for students consistent with comparable cohorts at other institutions; utilizing assessment services that provide for quality assurance; and improving campus academic facilities through a timely implementation of the University's Master Physical Plan.

In the standard-by-standard report that follows, we identify both strengths and weaknesses of the current strategies outlined in AUPR updated vision and strategic planning statements, with a view toward helping the institution address critical needs in the period ahead. Our review combines a careful examination of the institution's self-study report with findings derived from our on-site campus visit of March 2017, incorporating site visits by team members to both campus locations.

## **II. Nature and Conduct of the Visit**

AUPR is seeking reaccreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. It is being visited by a team of peer evaluators as part of the institution's self-study.

### **Members of the team met with the following individuals during the visit:**

#### **Senior Administrative Leadership**

Juan C. Nazario-Torres PRESIDENT

José A. Ramírez Figueroa VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

#### **Finance/ Administration**

Ginette E. Oppenheimer Berríos HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

Jeanette M. Avilés Ferrán COMPTROLLER

Magda A. Cancel Pérez VICE PRESIDENT – ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCE AFFAIRS

#### **Planning**

José Jaime Rivera CONSULTANT

**Academic Affairs**

Bolívar Ramírez III DEAN OF FACULTY

Karola Ramírez Arango GRANT STAFF

Michelle García GRANT DIRECTOR

Nancy Rodríguez GRANT STAFF

Zahíra García ASSISTANT TO DEAN

José A. Ramírez Figueroa VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

**Faculty Leadership**

Bolívar Ramírez III DEAN OF FACULTY

Milagros Rivera Otero MANATI SITE DIRECTOR

**Institutional Assessment**

José A. Ramírez Figueroa VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Rosabel Vázquez Rosado GENERAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

Yisette Nieves Hernández INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH STAFF

**Assessment of Student Learning**

Awilda González ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR

Bolívar Ramírez III DEAN OF FACULTY

José Noel Torres López ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR

Karola Ramírez Arango GRANT STAFF

Mayra R. Salvá ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR

Nancy Rodríguez GRANT STAFF

Zahíra García Ressay ASSISTANT TO DEAN

**Student Services**

Claribel Rodríguez STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE (MANATÍ)

Daymeliz R. Colón STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE (BAYAMÓN)

Dirza K. Alméstica LIBRARY SYSTEM

Keren Llanos ADMISSIONS

Liszeidy Córdova Soberalt STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE (B and M)

Luz Selenia Hernández COUNSELING CENTER (BAYAMÓN)

Manfredo Vega ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

María A. Rodríguez Paz REGISTRAR OFICCE

María Ramos Ocasio LIBRARY (MANATÍ)

Raquel Torres Rosado BURSAR OFFICE

Sandra I. Colón COUNSELING CENTER (MANATÍ)

Yahaira Meléndez Guzmán FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

**Board of Trustees**

Ivelisse Cabiya

José Manuel Rosado

María Olga Marrero PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Ramón Armaiz

Ramón Rivas

**Self-Study Steering Committee**

Bolívar Ramírez III Carlo 7, 14  
Dirza K. Alméstica Martínez 8, 9  
Jaime González Rivera  
José A. Ramírez Figueroa 1 and CHAIR  
Magda A. Cancel Pérez 2, 3  
María A. Rodríguez Paz 10, 11, 12, 13  
Mayra R. Salvá González 1  
Miguel A. Santini Padilla 1  
Milagros Rivera Otero 4, 5, 6  
Zahíra L. García Ressay 1, 7

**Faculty**

Adela Vázquez Costa EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Andrés Rivera Betancourt BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
Awilda González Serrano EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Dr. José Collazo González ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
Gladys M. Ríos Torres ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
Ida M. Santiago González BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
Idalia Molina Rolón ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
Iris D. Colón Rivera BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
José F. Paraltici González ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
José Noel Torres López BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
Juan E. Martínez Báez ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
María M. Medina Ugaz BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
Mario O. Mendoza Cabrera BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
Mayra R. Salvá González ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
Miguel A. Santini Padilla ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
Tamia T. Torres Fontánez ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

**Students**

Abimael Montalvo Oliveras Information Systems  
Adarelllys Andino Criminal Justice  
Ángel L. Rivera Information Systems  
Astrid Y. Díaz Fonseca Criminal Justice  
Brian Pérez Oquendo Physical Ed  
Brian Santiago Otero Criminal Justice  
Bryan Espinal Ortiz Information Systems  
Caleb Santiago Molina Criminal Justice  
Carlos A. Guerrero Soti Human Resources  
Carlos D. Ramos Criminal Justice  
Carlos J. Luciano Information Systems  
Carlos M. Cruz Maldonado Criminal Justice  
Christian Correa Matos Criminal Justice  
Christian E. Rodríguez Information Systems

Christian R. López Sarmiento Human Resources  
Christopher Pérez Information Systems  
Cristian Pérez Díaz Accounting  
Dalianis Z. Santos Elementary Ed  
Emilio Rosado Criminal Justice  
Frances Ayala Elementary Ed  
Giovannie Vázquez Torres Information Systems  
Gisela Rivera Ortiz Criminal Justice  
Héctor L. Maldonado Physical Ed  
Héctor R. Cardona Puig Information Systems  
Hedmar L. Vázquez Meléndez Information Systems  
Jemmanuel Martínez González Information Systems  
Jeyssamar S. Cruz Látimer Management  
Jorge A. Fournier Physical Ed  
José J. Arau Information Systems  
Joyce M. Santiago Management  
Julio C. Ortiz Criminal Justice  
Luis I. Silva Communication  
Maribel Ortiz Berdeguez Special Ed  
Mathews Sánchez Accounting  
Miguel A. Cuadro Management  
Nathalia M. Cruz Quintero Criminal Justice  
Nilmarie Santos Rosado Communication  
Paola N. Fuentes Trinidad Criminal Justice  
Reinaldo Burso Management  
Samilys J. Rivera Fernández Accounting  
Yessmarie Fred Algarín Criminal Justice  
Yurimar Rivera Elementary Ed

### **Administration**

Bolívar Ramírez III Carlo DEAN OF FACULTY  
Carol Santiago Nieves AUDIOVISUAL  
Celeste Traverso Torres PURSHASNG OFFICE  
Claribel Rodríguez Vargas STUDENT SERVICES  
Daymeliz R. Colón STUDENT SERVICES  
Efraín Lugo Camacho GENERAL SERVICES  
Ginette E. Oppenheimer HUMAN RESOURCES  
Jeanette M. Avilés Ferrán COMPTROLER  
Julio Vega Oyola INFORMATION SYSTEMS  
Keren Llanos Figueroa ADMISSIONS OFFICE  
Luz S. Hernández Figueroa COUNSELING CENTER  
Manfredo Vega Carmona ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT  
María A. Rodríguez Paz REGISTRAR OFFICE  
Michelle García Freed TITLE V GRANT DIRECTOR  
Milagros Rivera Otero MANATI SITE DIRECTOR  
Nancy Rodríguez Morales TITLE V GRANT STAFF

Raquel Torres Rosado BURSAR OFFICE  
Roberto Reyes Calderón ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT  
Rosabel Vázquez Rosado GENERAL SERVICES  
Yahaira Meléndez Guzmán FINANCIAL AID  
Zahíra L. García Ressay ASSISTANT TO DEAN OF FACULTY

**University Community**

Atzel Drevón PROF  
Chrisdaliz Quiñones Caballero EMP  
Craig A. Barge PROF  
Dinorah Rodríguez PROF  
Edwin Viruet Torres PROF  
Gloria Cruz De Jesús PROF  
Luz Delia Torres Serrano EMP  
Mayra García Pérez EMP  
Migdalia Martínez EMP  
Nélida Matos PROF  
Nelly M. Duarte Vizcarrondo EMP  
Ricardo Marrero Díaz PROF  
Rosabel Vázquez DIR  
Sonia Villafañe Santiago EMP  
Astrid Y. Ferrer Otero ST  
Brian Pérez Oquendo ST  
Coralys I. Hernández Rosario ST  
Edwin R. Calderón Colón ST  
Gabriel A. Hernández Meléndez ST  
Geovanni Irizarry Guzmán ST  
Isaac Morales Acevedo ST  
Iván X. Sella Trinidad ST  
Jeniffer M. Ayala ST  
Joraisla I. Rivera ST  
José A. García Hernández ST  
Katherine M. Vélez Sánchez ST  
Mariangeliz Canales González ST  
Samantha Hernández Meléndez ST  
Geovanni Irizarry Guzmán ST  
Isaac Morales Acevedo ST

**Community members present at the Exit Report:**

Alexandra Rodríguez ST  
Ana M. Torres EMP  
Andrés Rivera PROF  
Antonia Serrano Vázquez EMP  
Awilda González Serrano PROF  
Carlos A. Guerrero ST  
Celeste Traverso Torres DIR

Claribel Rodríguez DIR  
Daymeliz R. Colón Rodríguez DIR  
Diego A. De Jesús ST  
Dirza K. Alméstica DIR  
Efraín Lugo EMP  
Ginette E. Oppenheimer  
DIR Gladys M. Ríos PROF  
Idalia Molina PROF  
Iris D. Colón PROF  
Jaime González ASST. VICE-PRESIDENT  
Jeanette M. Avilés DIR  
José Jaime Rivera CONSULTANT  
Josephine Torres Rodríguez PROF  
Juan C. Nazario Torres PRESIDENT  
Julio Vega DIR  
Karola Ramírez Arango EMP  
Keren Llanos DIR  
Liszeidy Córdova Soberalt EMP  
Luis Rivera Ortiz ST  
Luz Selenia Hernández Rodríguez DIR  
Magda Cancel Pérez VICE-PRESIDENT  
Manfredo Vega Carmona DIR  
María A. Rodríguez Paz DIR  
Mayra R. Salvá PROF  
Michelle García DIR  
Miguel A. Cuadro Molina ST  
Milagros Rivera DIR  
Myrna L. Virella Rodríguez EMP  
Nancy Rodríguez DIR  
Nina Roqué EMP  
Nydia I. Vázquez EMP  
Raquel Torres Rosado DIR  
Raymond O. Santos ST  
Reinaldo Burgos ST  
Rosabel Vázquez DIR  
Yahaira Meléndez Guzmán DIR  
Yissette Nieves Hernández EMP  
Zahíra García ASSISTANT TO DEAN  
Bolívar Ramírez DEAN  
José A. Ramírez VICE-PRESIDENT

**Members of the Team consulted the following documents before and during the visit:**

Self-study report  
Certification statement  
2017 peer reviewers of compliance



2017 verification of compliance  
AUPR Assessment Plan (institutional and learning outcomes)  
AUPR Strategic Plan 2016-20  
Faculty Handbook  
Fall enrollment report 2013-2016  
Institutional Catalog 2016-17  
Institutional Financial Plan 2016-20  
Institutional profile 2015-16  
IPEDS 2014-15 – financial information FY 2013-14  
IPEDS 2015-16 – financial information FY 2014-15  
IPEDS 2016-17 – financial information FY 2015-16  
Operational plan 2016-20  
Organizational charts  
Personnel Handbook  
Single audit report FY 2013-14  
Single audit report FY2014-15  
Single audit report FY 2015-16  
Students Handbook 2016-17  
2016-2017 enrollment by academic program

### **Supporting Documents**

Admissions policy  
AUPR Strategic Plan 2010-15 assessment  
Board of Trustees action plan 2016-20  
Board of Trustees composition  
Brochure: AUPR new educational model / Complete College America  
Budget Handbook  
Bylaws  
Composite scores FY 2013-14 to 2015-16  
Enrollment Management Plan  
Equipment Acquisition & Maintenance Plan 2016-20  
Facilities master plan 2016-20  
Faculty professional development plan  
Industry, government, and community alliances  
Institutional assessment performance indicators summary  
Integrity and conflict of Interest policy  
Learning Assessment Action Plan and instruments  
Learning Assessment outcomes summary  
Learning assessment sample of instruments  
Mission and vision statements  
Philosophy, mission, vision, and goals statement  
Retention and graduation rates  
Retention Plan 2016-20  
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy  
Students' general profile  
Students profile by majors

Successful Learning Project – approved budget 2015-20  
Teacher certification tests scores  
Title V Grant - Successful Learning Project  
Transfer credits policy  
TRUN 105 syllabus (transition to university life)  
2010-15 Strategic Plan  
SWOT analysis  
Mission, vision and goals 1st draft – September 2015  
Mission, vision and goals 2<sup>nd</sup> draft – December 2015  
2015-16 Strategic Plan  
2016-20 Strategic and Operational Plan  
Annual action plans samples  
Appointment letters samples  
AUPR Strategic Plan 2010-15 assessment  
Board minutes  
Evidence community engagement in strategic process  
Strategic plan drafts  
Strategic planning process trainings  
2010-15 facilities master plan  
2014-15 approved budget  
2015-16 approved budget  
2016-17 approved budget  
Budget planning process  
Cultural transformation project  
HIDTA grant award agreement  
HIDTA proposal  
Institutional grants  
List of recent grants  
Student satisfaction survey 2014  
Budget Handbook  
By-laws  
Board of Trustees' minutes  
Board of Trustees' self-evaluation  
Board of Trustees' work plan 2016-20  
Dean of Faculty  
Faculty Handbook  
Faculty Handbook - recommendations  
FERPA law (Buckley)  
Meetings from work groups or committees  
Meetings of the institutional curriculum committees  
Meetings with external specialists  
Meetings with students and instruments for receive student inputs  
Meetings with student leaders  
Meetings with President, Vice Presidents and Dean of Faculty  
Meetings with university community, faculty, employees, and students  
Organizational charts

President's cv and evaluation  
Student organizations activities and other documents  
Survey to teaching and non-teaching personnel  
Student Handbook  
CVs of chief Administrators  
Policies and Institutional Procedures (20)  
Admissions policy  
Enrollment plan 2016-2010  
Graduation and retention rates  
Privacy policy and other registrar procedures  
Retention Plan 2016-2020  
Athletic Department  
Promo materials from master in curriculum grant for teachers, technological summer program and university articulation program  
Retention plan 2016-2020  
School / University Collaborative Alliance  
Student organizations council (meetings)  
Student satisfaction with AUPR services (several years)  
Summer camp  
TRUN syllabus and other documents related to this course  
Faculty Handbook  
Faculty promotion cycle  
Faculty vitae  
Accounting program revision  
Institutional Curriculum Committee minutes  
Teacher Education Program revision including field experiences  
Transfer credit policy  
Tutoring procedures documents  
Curriculum revision plan  
Professional certificates documents  
Annual plans for academic services  
Satisfaction with Teacher Preparation Program (PCMAS survey)  
New educational model documents  
Alliances documents  
Technology and faculty  
Successful Learning Project workshops  
Electronic grading system documents  
Support to research policy and letters  
Default rates  
Student satisfaction reports  
Clearing House agreement  
Paper consumption: list of scanned documents  
Server information  
Admissions / promotion and marketing office staff documents  
Postage reduction and telemarketing reports  
Executive staff meetings: president, vice presidents, and their staff

By-laws (old and new), Board of Trustees evaluations  
President, vice president, and dean of faculty meetings with students  
Enrollment process surveys  
Annual course programming  
Athletic department activities and documents  
Change in night session class scheduling survey  
Satisfaction with change in night session scheduling survey  
Teachers' promotion documents  
Direct deposit promo  
Internet payment reports  
Technology support reports (ticket reports)  
Pre and post test scores  
List of students acting as sport officers  
Teacher preparation test (PCMAS) review sample documents  
Internship documents from different academic programs  
Master in criminal justice course revisions and comprehensive exam scores  
Master in education course revisions and final seminar documents  
Consultant meetings in information systems / CompTIA  
Courses impacted by successful learning project and other documents  
Professional development for faculty documents  
Sample of student activities and other documents  
Sample of library activities and other documents  
List of resources used for academic advisor and other documents  
Tutoring Program documents  
Learning assessment documents  
Co-curricular activities  
Course revision in graduate level and other documents

### **III. Affirmation of Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation and Compliance with Federal Requirements**

Based on a review of the institution's self-study and appendices, interviews, and other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation and meets all relevant federal and state regulations and the requirements of other Department of Education recognized accreditors.

### **IV. Commendations and Summary of Institutional Strengths**

The visiting team commends the institution for its thorough and inclusive self-study process, which involved significant number of members of the American University of Puerto Rico community from both the Bayamón and Manatí locations. The team further commends the institution for the quality of its self-study. Other commendations are reported under each standard (below).

## **V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

### **Standard 1: Mission and Goals**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

American University of Puerto Rico (AUPR) provides a strong narrative, reinforced through personal statements of faculty, students, and administrative personnel, that the institution is mission driven and committed to reinforcing its mission through linkage to planning, assessment, and resource allocation. The mission statement, "Educate students to succeed in their professions and in their enterprising endeavors and to become responsible citizens," is prominently posted at the campus entrance, on principle buildings, and throughout the interiors of buildings.

#### **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- A mission-driven institution since its founding in 1963, the mission was reexamined and reinforced with a recent 2015 revision, constant with the foundational mission.
- The revised mission statement was designed to better relate to current external and internal contexts, particularly relevant in light of the economic issues facing Puerto Rico and all universities on the island.
- This revised mission emerged from a broad based collaborative and participatory process, informed by a SWOT analysis, analyzed by teaching and non-teaching personnel, and finally affirmed by the President and the Board of Trustees.
- The integration of all members of the AUPR community in reexamining and defining an updated mission has served to unify the campus, as reported by community stakeholders including students.
- Institutional goals are consistent with mission and form pillars along with other key elements governing the institution, including Planning and Assessment initiatives.
- The revised philosophy, mission, vision, and goals statements are foundational elements of the 2016-2020 Operational Plan.
- The new mission statement is well disseminated in campus publications.
- The prominent and bold display of the mission statement throughout the campus, particularly evident in large banners in the exterior spaces, is an affirmation of AUPR as the institution moves forward.

**Commendation:**

- The careful examination and restatement of the AUPR vision, mission, and goals is commended in its efficacy and alignment with the current external and internal contexts of Puerto Rico and AUPR.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- None

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

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

The American University of Puerto Rico, finding itself in a situation that was and is very challenging, was able to conduct a thorough environmental analysis and developed a strategic plan to guide them out of their predicament into a better future.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments**

- There is an institution-wide strategic plan covering the period from 2010-2015. The plan was developed by an institution wide Planning Committee and with wide Institutional participation.
- Research and comprehensive environmental analysis was done by an external consultant to review and extend the plan from 2016 to 2020. Planning takes place at the Vice Presidential, College's, and department levels. The plan identifies the main goals for the planning period aiming at improving the financial conditions of the institution, the programs, retention and graduation rates and employability of the graduates.
- Planning charts were presented linking the goals to the mission of the institution. The system is evaluated by a number of indicators which are monitored to correct those areas with greater deviations from their targets. Operational plans have been developed for organizational units throughout the institution, which have resulted in developing goals linked to the mission.

- Assessment is done to some degree across the organization and the results are used to develop action plans for the departments. Key performance areas and key performance indicators are also developed to provide a means to monitor the attainment of strategies, objectives and the fulfillment of the mission. This process is being extended to the academic areas down to the course level.
- There are plans for technology integration, and for faculty development and assessment. The plans and goals are approved by the campus constituencies and presented to the top administrators, including the President and finally by the Board of Trustees of the university. Strategic objectives for quality, growth and financial health were also developed to react to the complex economic situation facing Puerto Rico and the university.
- Outcomes pertaining to the goals are reviewed by the various committees periodically, to ensure attainment and to take corrective action when necessary. The President works with the VPs, Deans and other academic and administrative leaders to respond to threats and opportunities. The President has appointed a Strategic Planning Committee, held public hearings and surveys to gather information for the development of the new plan 2016-2020. This effort was undertaken to start to develop and work on a new plan as the existing plan ended.
- The planning process is linked to budgeting. There is an annual budget cycle. Reports are submitted to the Vice President of Finance and Administration to attempt to correct budgeting problems and to generate reports. Funds for Institutional Renewal are allocated congruently with the goals and mission of the institution. Technology needs are considered and there is a concerted effort to determine what investments are necessary to be able to serve academic, student and administrative needs.
- Fiscal needs determined by the processes outlined above, are submitted to the Administrative Board for final approval. Assessment information seems to be used for the preparation of the budget and for decision-making in the administrative areas.
- The budget addresses the following areas: administration, academics, student services, institutional research and academic support. Growth and development can be managed most effectively by means of an ongoing, rational, continuous self-evaluation. The current system seems to follow a participative planning model that can help the institution to become more proactive and creative.
- Institutional planning covers a number of areas: finances, academics, enrollments, technology and facilities infrastructure. There is insufficient evidence that these plans are coordinated and interrelated. The academic plan should form the basis for all the other plans and should be driven by the assessment process. Assessment does not seem to be fully linked to the planning process in all areas.
- The fiscal planning and budgeting process is systematic and sustained, and decisions are made following the strategic goals and in consonance with the mission of the institution.

The plan is revised and updated according to the challenges and opportunities that present themselves to the institution. Internal controls are in place to protect the integrity of the fiscal system.

- There is evidence that the institution is well served by its fiscal planning in maintaining sufficient revenues to support improvements of services, facilities, equipment and upgrading the infrastructure at both locations. Resource allocation is handled efficiently by analyzing requests for funds, prioritizing the most promising ones and assigning the right amount of funds to ensure the completion of the project.
- Audited financial statements were submitted for the three most current years, which were prepared by certified public accountants. The accountant's opinion was that the statements presented an accurate view of the fiscal position of the institution, its cash flows and revenues resulting from operations.
- The financial position of the institution seems to be shaky due to the economic situation of the country and the university. The audits are clean and there are no weaknesses reported. The institution is making every effort to address the loss of revenues due to decreasing enrollments. There seems to be an effective system of internal controls in place.
- An institutional Facilities Master Plan was found to be well prepared and very helpful for the appropriate allocation of Capital Resources going forward in the current challenging economic environment.

**Commendations:**

- The institution's fiscal and planning efforts have served them well to stabilize the institution in spite of the negative economic and competitive situation in which they find themselves.
- The institution should be commended for significant effort to reach out for grant and other external funding from Federal and local sources to attain their goals and objectives and to make up for the loss of revenues due to dropping enrollments.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**



- Make sure that sufficient human and financial resources are in place to keep the momentum that was created by the original planning effort going forward with the 2016-2020 Plan and so that the planning culture continues to grow.
- Communicate the plans and budgets to the widest possible number of members of the institution. Develop a program to inform the faculty, students and employees on a regular and continuing basis on changes and developments affecting them. This will help to avoid rumors and miss-understandings and to prevent miss-information from interfering with the efforts to accomplish the goals and mission of the organization.
- Make sure the implementation of the plans calling for hybrid and online courses are planned carefully. The IT resources needed would require investment in bandwidth and other hardware and software resources. Investigate the availability of companies that develop courseware to fit the courses needed rather than trying to do the work in house.
- The team suggests that AUPR make an effort to integrate all existing plans, evaluate outcomes, and use outcomes to improve the institution in the next planning cycle.

### **Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

The institution has endeavored to create an educational model centered on the students. To accomplish this task they engaged in a multiyear assessment and planning process. This effort also aimed to improve enrollments, retention and graduation. And although their revenues come mainly from tuition (88%), they managed to take steps to stabilize the institution's resources without causing major damage to their academic, human and capital resources.

- The 2016-2020 Operational Plan sets goals and objectives to address their needs and indicates what resources are assigned to attain them. There are also provisions for results evaluation, controls and resource allocation. Upon implementation, the plan is designed to guide decisions and revisions to the goals and objectives as they become necessary.
- The financial plan was implemented and illustrations of budgeting adjustments to respond to actual performance results were provided. Forecasts of revenues and expenses were also produced and used as a basis for planning and decisions.
- There is a Budget Handbook setting the steps to be followed to produce the budget. Weekly meetings of the President's Cabinet and/or the "finance team" are used as a means to monitor the institution's finances. Organizational units present their budgets to their VPs for evaluation and adjustment.
- There is a Controller who supervises the budget and departmental compliance to it. The Operational Plan is the mechanism used to conduct resource allocation. This plan is made

available to faculty and staff and their comments solicited. Based on an annual revenue verification, the Strategic and Operational plans are revised and budgets are adjusted.

- The Human Resources department offers programs to develop the faculty and staff. There is an evaluation program aiming at maintaining employee performance, efficiency and effectiveness. Satisfaction surveys are conducted to measure employee satisfaction with services. Survey rates of participation and results reported indicate satisfaction with services provided.
- An annual Capital Budget is prepared to make appropriate adjustment to ensure alignment and compliance with the goals and objectives of the long term Master Plan.
- Because of the decrease in enrollments, Total Revenues have declined from \$11.8 million in 2011-12 to \$8.8 million in 2015-16, while Total Expenses remained higher than revenues. Unrestricted Net Assets have declined to less than half of what they were in the same period. Tuition was modestly increased throughout this period to counter the trend.
- Auxiliary Enterprise costs were reduced by contracting out the cafeteria services.
- Federal Grants were obtained to support several initiatives of the administration including the "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area," Title V Successful Learning Project, and others. A local government grant for Teacher training provided additional resources to stabilize the situation.
- AUPR participates in consortia: to provide library services to the institution at a projected saving of one million dollars; Universia, which provides cultural, research and job opportunity information, and also an alliance with Microsoft, which is helpful to students and faculty.

### **Commendations:**

- The facilities at the Bayamon and Manatí locations are well kept and adequate for the attainment of the mission and goals of AUPR. Facilities improvements were observed in both sites to comply with the faculty development plans.
- The Administration and financial staff are commended for their guidance in ensuring that institutional resources, particularly during these difficult times for the institution, are used efficiently to attain their goals and strategies.

### **Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- None

**Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments**

The governing board of the university is comprised of nine members who represent diverse professional fields. Board of Trustee members reside in the regions served by the university. The Board of Trustees has the authority consistent with best practices and is responsible for the appointment of the President of the University. In addition, the Board of Trustees approves the policies and initiatives required for the operation of the University. The AUPR Board of Trustees is an independent body with a defined Conflict of Interest Policy. As a result of a recent assessment process, the Board's structure was revised and a major revision of its By-laws completed.

- The current President, Juan Carlos Nazario was appointed in 2011 after the passing of the founder and first President. President Nazario has been at the university for more than 25 years serving as AUPR's Vice President for Administration and Financial Affairs prior to assuming the presidency.
- The Board of Trustees reorganized Board work by redefining its committees to focus on academic, fiscal and governance issues.
- The Board of Trustees, through the University President, invites key administrators to participate in Board meetings and to be included in the committee structure.
- The President of the University's leadership team includes three vice presidents, and a Director of Research and Planning.
- The Institutional Curriculum Committee (ICC) has legislative and advisory functions including changes in curriculum, creation of new academic programs and the termination of academic programs. The ICC is composed of various faculty members, the Registrar, the Manatí Center Director, the Dean of the Faculty, the Director of the Library System, the Academic Advising Coordinator and the Deans of Students. The ICC is chaired by the VP for Academic and Student Affairs.

- The University Community promotes participation and opportunity to provide input through general faculty meetings, academic department meetings, university-wide committees and task forces.
- The Student Organization Council is comprised of the leaders of student organizations and provides student the opportunity to have a voice in the decisions of the university.

### **Significant Accomplishments**

- The roles and powers of the Board of Trustees and of the President are clearly stated in the newly revised By-laws of the Board of Trustees.
- The newly revised By-laws include a Conflict of Interest Policy.
- The Board of Trustees has created standing committees, the Executive Committee, the Academic Committee and the Finance Committee.
- An Ad Hoc Committee, New Members has been established to fill vacancies on the Board.
- The Board of Trustees has included administrative representation in the committee structure.
- The Personnel Handbook has been revised and reflects the Labor Law signed by the Governor on January 26, 2017.
- The Board of Trustees has agreed to hold one yearly meeting at the Manatí center.
- The Board of Trustees has developed a formal orientation process for new members.
- The Board of Trustees has developed and implemented a self-evaluation process through a written survey.
- The Board of Trustees has established a regular pattern of meetings for the fourth Thursday of the months of September, November, March and June.

### **Commendation**

- The institution is to be commended for making major revisions to the Board of Trustees By-laws, for creating a formal committee structure, and for implementing a Board self-evaluation process.

### **Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestion:**

- The Board of Trustees should consider drafting Board policies based on the revised Board By-laws.

**Standard 5: Administration**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

Esq. Juan Carlos Nazario Torres was appointed President of the American University of Puerto Rico by the Board of Trustees on August 19, 2011. President Nazario Torres has an academic background in Business Administration and Law. Prior to his appointment at President of AUPR, President Nazario Torres served at the executive level for 25 years, most recently as AUPR's Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

- The administrative structure of AUPR is consistent with the fundamental elements of administration as outlined in the Characteristics of Excellence. President Nazario Torres supervises the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, the Vice President of Finance and Administration, the Associate Vice President of Community Affairs, and a Director of Research and Planning. This constitutes the President's Cabinet.
- The President has established an Extended Cabinet that includes deans and directors from all areas of the University, academic, financial, and student support services.
- AUPR has a qualified and committed full-time faculty of twenty-six members with an average of 24.5 years of service to the university.
- The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for all academic departments at both the Bayamon and Manatí locations. In addition, the enrollment service areas, library, athletics and student affairs areas report to this vice president.
- The Vice President for Finance and Administration oversees all financial and budget areas of the university and the Information Technology components.
- The Human Resources Office is responsible for implementing a recruitment process to attract and employ qualified personnel for the university workforce.

- The Dean of Faculty is responsible for the implementation of academic plans and he supervises the faculty from both locations (Bayamón and Manatí). Manatí Center Director assists him in that site.
- Meetings and forums are used to engage the university community in the decision-making process which includes representation from all constituent groups.
- Student groups are encouraged to make their voices heard through student organizations.

### **Significant Accomplishments**

- The President has a strong academic background, professional training and many years of experience at the AUPR and is well-qualified to lead the institution for the future.
- The President has a well-qualified Cabinet and has increased participation in decision-making by forming an Extended Cabinet.
- Through the institutional assessment process, students indicated an interest to interact more with the administration. The Dean of the Faculty now holds at least one meeting per semester with the Student Council and other interested students.
- The President has led the institution in developing a Strategic Plan for 2016-2020.

### **Commendation**

- The President has provided outstanding leadership during challenging economic times to position the institution for the future.

### **Requirements:**

- None

### **Recommendations:**

- None

### **Suggestions**

- The AUPR should consider disseminating accomplishments of its former Strategic Plan.
- The AUPR should consider distributing the new organization charts and informing the university community of the roles and responsibilities of administrators.

## **Standard 6: Integrity**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

AUPR takes a proactive posture in facing its current challenges. These actions are cemented in integrity and ethical values. AUPR has demonstrated integrity in several key dimensions. Among them are the patterns of communication within the administration, the process of assessment planning and implementation, faculty recruitment and retention, curriculum design, and student recruitment and advisement. All of these activities take place within an environment of accountability, transparency, and objective standards. Devoid of political interference in its internal affairs, AUPR has fostered a climate in which respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration is broadly shared and upheld.

We find evidence of this integrity through interviews with various administrators, faculty, staff and students as well as in terms of documented policies that guide the institution. AUPR upholds the principles of academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression, each being key elements of the integrity of an academic institution. We also find confirmation of sound ethical practices and respect for individuals through its teaching, scholarship/research, service, and administrative practice, including the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

### **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- There are clear written policies related to: Conflict of Interest (Board of Trustees); objectivity and fairness in faculty hiring and evaluation; academic freedom; intellectual property rights; academic integrity and plagiarism; application of academic standards and requirements.
- Policies directly relating to students such as articulated in Student Handbook, on course syllabi, and in the Institutional Catalog.
- The Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, and Personnel Handbook all reinforce policies, standards, and consistency in application.
- Where appropriate, statements relevant to ethical practices and intellectual property rights are posted on campus.
- The university demonstrates commitment to carry out activities in an ethical and legal manner.
- The university has directed clear changes in management and programs in response to student needs and to the professional and working environment.
- The university has addressed issues stemming from the current economic and financial situation within a framework of ethical values and integrity.

- The university has implemented an intervention system to address academic deficiencies for incoming students, supported by substantial grant funding, undergirding a respect for individuals.
- Periodic review ensures that policies are reviewed and reinforced as necessary.
- Assessment data is collected and used to better implement policy for consistency and improvement. For example, Human Resources surveys point to a need to enhance training for personnel.
- Ethical values and integrity are cornerstones of student volunteer initiatives.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- The campus spirit breathes a positive climate of integrity and pride among all campus constituencies. This is evidenced in conversations with community stakeholders.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- None

**Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

The key tools that the institution uses to analyze the effectiveness of AUPR are the Strategic Plans (2010-15 / 2016-20), the Institutional Plan for Assessment, (2013) and the MSCHE assessment criteria. The institution's Strategic Plan for 2016-20 is comprehensive and yet focused. Seven areas are evaluated: mission and goals, leadership and governance, community satisfaction, student learning outcomes, program change and improvement based on assessment, implementation of planning and assessment processes. The self-study document and examination of supporting documents clearly show the findings that resulted from the assessment process.



## **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments**

- There is evidence that each department participates in the process of strategic planning and in the application, allocation and effective use of assigned resources, based on mission, institutional goals and objectives, which are defined in the operational plans for the 2010-15 and 2016-20 cycles.
- There is evidence that the institution has been evaluating its academic offerings and programs, according to financial feasibility criteria and main socio-economic and labor-market trends.
- The institution has prepared a thorough Institutional Assessment Plan. The institution has formalized its commitment with planning, research and assessment with the creation of an Institutional Research and Planning Office (IRPO). This department compiles and documents, in a qualitative and quantitative manner, the data collected through questionnaires, focus groups, rubrics and other instruments. The results of assessment deliberations are disclosed in meetings with the university community, on the bulletin board intended for the disclosure of institutional information and on the University website [aupr.edu](http://aupr.edu).

## **Significant Accomplishments**

- There is evidence that the institution is focused on the achieving their mission and strategic goals. There is also evidence that the various evaluation processes are based on sound planning and lead to making decisions and taking actions to change and improve programs within the institution. There is evidence of unit-level mission and goals, as well as evidence of unit-level assessment processes. Unit directors design planning for their units and submit evaluation reports to their supervisors.

## **Commendations:**

- The institution is commended for a mission-driven process of planning and institutional assessment where the focus is on making decisions and taking actions to change and improve institutional programs in a context of diminished financial resources.
- The institution is commended for its sound strategic efforts to align the preparation of the Self Study with concurrent initiatives such as the development of institutional assessment, the planning design, and the integration of both budgeting and resource allocation.

## **Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- Given the current context of limited financial resources and personnel, the institution is encouraged to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its assessment initiatives in order to create synergies and prioritize assessment activities that add value to the students' educational process.
- The institution is encouraged to implement a formal process to gather feedback from employers of graduates, to the extent possible.
- The institution is suggested to develop and implement periodic Alumni Surveys with the purpose of gathering information about (1) alumni accomplishments and (2) alumni perceptions of the institution.
- The institution is suggested to prioritize the improvement of retention, graduation and placement rates as it refines and improves its institutional assessment process moving forward.

**Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

American University of Puerto Rico has implemented an undergraduate open admission policy that is consistent with their institutional mission, vision, and their commitment to serving the citizen of Puerto Rico. Admission's criteria are clearly articulated and available to prospective students on the university webpage and traditional print media. The University has provided evidence that it has a comprehensive understanding of its enrollment market, and has conducted a well-executed analysis that identifies its niche market in terms of student profile, location and academic program offerings, within the Puerto Rican higher education landscape.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- The institution has produced several planning documents to guide its efforts in improving recruitment, retention and college completion. This commitment to an integrated approach is evident in the planning documents which included defined strategies, timelines and assessment plans involving the entire university.
- AUPR has experienced a significant enrollment decline of 953 students (39%) from fall 2011 to fall 2016. This decline is reflective of the existing economic challenges faced by the

Commonwealth, and is exasperated by population declines due to outmigration, decreasing number of high school graduates, and multiple higher education providers including 58 institutions of higher education.

- AUPR has responded to the decline in enrollment by developing an enrollment management plan (Plan Para la Gestión de la Matrícula: 2016-2020), that includes a comprehensive analysis of market forces impacting enrollment, enrollment targets through 2020, recruitment plans and marketing strategies.
- The University has experienced wide fluctuations in retention rates over the past five-years, with most recent figures among the lowest for the period reported. The University has responded by implementing a retention plan (Plan de Retención 2016-2020) effective the current 2016-17 academic year, which is grounded in student retention theory and best practices.
- AUPR's retention programming described as "Key Transformational Initiatives" include implementation of the Successful Learning Project (supported by Title V grant funds), Guided Pathways, and a commitment to the Complete College Agenda (15 in 4 campaign). Early results have demonstrated a positive impact on pass rates in the Freshmen Transition course, and an increase in the number of new students earning 15 credits in their first semester at the University.
- The University acknowledges the need to introduce a full suite of online enrollment service offerings in order to better serve their commuter student population and also to capitalize on administrative efficiencies.
- AUPR's graduate offerings are limited to degrees in Criminal Justice and Education and have experienced enrollment declines similar to the undergraduate programs. The focused and integrated approach demonstrated in managing undergraduate enrollment is less obvious with regard to graduate enrollment.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

- AUPR's has adeptly conducted a thorough self-examination of institutional enrollment and retention practices and processes as a precursor to identifying a range of best practice initiatives in response to the severe economic challenges currently being experienced in Puerto Rico.

**Commendation:**

- The AUPR community is to be commended for the 'esprit de corps' and commitment to the university mission exhibited by all major campus stakeholder groups.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- The team agrees with and supports the self-study recommendation that AUPR needs to be proactive in monitoring progress in meeting enrollment projections, and increasing retention and graduation rates.
- The team agrees with and supports the self-study recommendation that AUPR should accelerate the implementation of the infrastructure for web-based services to meet the needs of their students.

**Standard 9: Student Support Services**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

AUPR serves an overwhelmingly at-risk student population that must overcome a range of academic, economic, and societal challenges in pursuit of their degree completion. The University has organized the delivery of essential student support services across their Bayamon and Manatí locations by leveraging an experienced and committed professional student affairs staff.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- The University has established the Student Services and Retention Office (SSRO) as the entity to deliver social, cultural, and academic support services programming. Through the SSRO, students can also access tutoring services, advisement, and adaptive technology support for students with disabilities.
- Full enrollment service offices (Admissions, Financial Aid and Registrar) are available at both the Bayamon and Manatí locations, with the University in the early stages of redesigning its' web portal and also piloting the one-stop shop service model.
- With 86.8% of students eligible for Pell Grants, the institution has demonstrated its commitment to the effective administration of federal and state financial aid programs by the staffing resources provided to the Office of Financial Aid (5 staff), to support the administration of approximately \$8.8 million in federal, state and institutional financial aid funds.
- Evidence has been presented that highlights the institution's commitment to student engagement and personal development through their Freshmen Experience offerings which

include a “Transition to University Life” course, new student orientation, and the introduction of learning community models. In addition, the University promotes student participation in extra and co-curricular programming through student clubs and organization, athletics, and participation in institutional governance activities.

- The self-study included the results of a graduating student satisfaction survey administered by the Institutional Research and Planning Office (OIPi). Results of the most recent survey of 2016 graduates indicate a high level of student satisfaction with regard to their educational and personal experiences at AUPR. In addition, survey results of current students assessment of services was presented, with the highest levels of dissatisfaction being reported for Security (30%), Sports and Recreational Activities (26%), Library (26%), Computer Labs (24%), and Information Skills in the Library (22%). The University reports that the institution is using these data to further assess strategies that will improve the delivery of these services.
- The University promotes student engagement in clubs and organization through activities and programming sponsored by the Student Services and Retention Office at both the Bayamon and Manati locations. Student organizations do not receive direct institutional funding and are self-funded via a variety of fundraising efforts.
- AUPR has well defined policies and procedures to protect the privacy mandates for student records and data.

#### **Significant accomplishments:**

- Despite the budget challenges faced by the University, the Student Services and Retention Office sponsors a full spectrum of cultural, professional-based, and community service programming which provides students with the opportunity to build leadership skills, explore career options, and develop an ethos of service.

#### **Commendations:**

- The team commends the Library staff for their commitment, integration, and engagement in providing a full array of academic student support services.
- The team commends the AUPR Athletic Department and student-athletes for their contributions in building institutional pride and providing a variety of ‘value-added’ services through their leadership in the Summer Camp programs and in their proactive stewardship of Athletic facilities.

#### **Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- The team concurs with the self-study recommendation that the institution should adopt measures aimed at increasing student participation in institutional and student organizations. In this regard, the institution should explore the feasibility of dedicating institutional funding for direct funding of student clubs and organizations.
- The team concurs with the self-study recommendation that the University should prioritize the development of a timeline for the creation of “One-Stop” Centers (which have been piloted) to facilitate student access to a centralized delivery of student services.

**Standard 10: Faculty**

The team’s judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- AUPR counts on 26 full-time faculty, all of them ranked in concert with internal policies and procedures, and 88 part-time faculty who are in general active in their professions. This professional activity facilitates the teaching of a professionally focused curriculum and linkage of the institution and students with the labor market and environment.
- Faculty appear to be well qualified to teach the courses they are assigned, in terms of formal credentials (academic degrees, Doctoral and Master’s) and both academic and professional experience. Additionally, almost all faculty have benefitted from pedagogical training activities facilitated by the institution. Based on a review of some programs and faculty assignments, sufficient faculty support and participate in these programs. In surveys and in meetings, students express satisfaction with full-time and part-time faculty.
- Faculty recruitment, professional development and evaluation as well as their responsibilities and expected institutional commitments are regulated by an accessible Faculty Handbook.
- Faculty have formal representative participation in the Institutional Curriculum Committee (ICC), which is a particularly important platform for curriculum analysis, and they contribute to regularly programmed events related to curriculum development, planning and program review.

- As evidenced in documentation, there are procedures for faculty selection, hiring and development. AUPR has a system in place for students to regularly evaluate their teachers, coupled with in-class peer observation and a self-evaluation completed through presentation of a portfolio including accomplishments. For part time faculty, evaluation results may be used to discontinue or continue the teaching contract.
- AUPR formally adheres to academic freedom and is committed to non-discrimination.
- Faculty interviews revealed expressions of commitment and enthusiasm in work; part-time teachers voluntarily assist students outside classrooms beyond the formal contracted hours. Faculty appear in general to be secure and satisfied; they understand the current situation of institution and work to accomplish the institution's educational goals.
- Teachers know and value the Successful Learning Project (Title V) and support the new educational model.
- All full-time faculty are academically ranked and have reached an academic degree (Doctoral, Master's).

**Commendations:**

- In spite of financial-economical restrictions, the institution has been able to maintain a qualified faculty and staff committed to covering the educational offerings.
- A Faculty Development Plan and a Successful Learning Project are in an initial phases. The latter program promotes the implementation of a new educational model and requires special tasks for the faculty. An important goal of the plans is to improve retention and graduation rates.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- The team suggests that AUPR establish a clear and well disseminated policy and formal mechanisms or procedures to promote initiatives such as teaching-improvement and innovation, entrepreneurship in students, and specialization studies.
- The team suggests that AUPR recognize part time faculty who make themselves available for students.

## **Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

### **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

AUPR offers a very robust curriculum for undergrad and graduate programs. Evidence shows that qualified faculty teach all the courses within programs and that the institution has the necessary human and monetary resources to meet the programs' needs. Academic programs also include curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance the students' learning experience. All undergraduate programs require a General Education core and all graduate programs require an advanced level course in which students must demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. AUPR has established specific institutional goals for student learning and these goals are aligned with the institution's mission.

- There is evidence in the documents provided about distinctive student learning outcomes for master's and undergraduate courses.
- Sample syllabi corroborate that student learning outcomes (SLOs) are properly stated.
- There is evidence that technology competency is a key component to the curriculum.
- There is evidence that AUPR undertakes assessment of student learning outcomes periodically and that assessment results are used for program improvement.
- Despite its financial constraints, AUPR allocates resources to support its educational programs.
- AUPR has clearly-articulated transfer policies and the students have easy access to this information.
- AUPR follows a very detailed assessment of course syllabi (prontuarios) to make sure that all faculty are addressing key educational elements in their courses.

### **Commendations:**

- AUPR is commended for processes discussing outcomes in teacher-student sessions and for maintaining careful records of these sessions.
- AUPR is commended for maintaining the quality of academic programs despite the financial constraints that the institution is facing.

### **Requirements:**

- None



**Recommendation:**

- Program goals should be consistently articulated on the website and in other official documents.

**Suggestion:**

- AUPR should ensure that official documents (i.e, Opúsculos) contain information on content, scope and SLOs on each undergraduate and graduate programs

**Standard 12: General Education**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

AUPR has identified General Education learning outcomes addressing oral and written communication in both Spanish and English; scientific and quantitative reasoning; critical thinking and technology competency. Courses from this curriculum are embedded within the professional curriculum for undergraduate programs. The students are expected to demonstrate the General Education competencies at entry, mid and exit levels. AUPR has established an assessment plan to assess General Education at the three levels. Assessment results are used for programmatic improvement.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- There is a detailed Learning Assessment Action Plan describing data and actions of how assessment results are used at the course, program and the institution level.
- AUPR is implementing the Successful Learning Project (Title V funds). SS pg 144. This plan focuses on Gen Ed. competencies.
- AUPR's Gen Ed curriculum requires 46 credits (average) for a BA and 24 (average) for an Associate degree.
- General Education students learning outcomes (SLOs) are applied in the majors.
- The assessment of General Education competencies plays an important role within the institutional assessment.

**Commendation:**

- AUPR is commended for working diligently on the recommendations provided by the 2007 Middle States review team. It is now evident that the institution has made the assessment of General Education learning outcomes a priority.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendations:**

- None

**Suggestions:**

- AUPR should establish explicit and clear policies, procedures, and communication to improve faculty and student understanding of the General Education curriculum.

**Standard 13: Related Educational Offerings**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

**Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

- AUPR has two instructional locations, a campus in Bayamon and a center in Manatí. The institution is poised to implement a new University Educational Model in both locales, which is inspired in the Complete College America Model initiative. Ultimately, this initiative focuses on attaining better retention and graduation rates at the Bachelor's degree level.
- The new University Educational Model incorporates a remedial approach and a commitment of AUPR with its students, with a focus on a Decalogue of Principles that serve as a guide for a new educational practice, leading to a transformation of the educational experience at AUPR.
- AUPR counts on a tutoring program that assists students from all levels with academic deficiencies; the students are referred by the faculty.
- AUPR is locally authorized to offer professional certificates both in undergraduate and post-bachelor levels. These programs support a service to important sectors of the community. Such educational offerings point to a continuing education opportunity for AUPR graduates.

- AUPR has mechanisms that assure a reasonable equivalence of quality of academic programs and support services on both locations.
- The institution is actively considering moving towards on-line instructional methodologies (hybrid mode) to support the tutoring system as well as regular educational courses.
- Both locations, Bayamón and Manatí, have been developed with good teaching facilities which are equivalent.

**Commendations:**

- The team commends AUPR for having obtained the Successful Learning Project (Title V grant) and for initiating the implementation of a new University Educational Model, unique in Puerto Rico Higher Education.
- AUPR has established increasingly strong relationships and linkages with the external community that positively impact the academic community. The number of alumni who are important professionals in the region is noteworthy.

**Requirements:**

- None

**Recommendation:**

- In order to improve student support services, AUPR should implement systematic procedures for identifying students who are not fully prepared for college level study through an enhanced placement program.

**Suggestions:**

- The team suggests that AUPR assure appropriate facilities and technology as well as faculty training to implement on-line teaching modality.
- AUPR might consider quality professional certificates and master programs to enhance offerings, as a way to meet local needs and diversify incoming resources.

**Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

The team's judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be *in compliance* with this standard.

The establishment of a comprehensive process to assess Student Learning is a relatively recent development at AUPR. It dates back to the academic year 2012-13 and the October 2013 Monitoring Report to MSCHE, which was the time when a new Institutional Plan for Assessment was approved.

### **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments**

- There is evidence that attention has focused on improving some competencies that showed weaker results. There is also evidence of some improvement in those competencies after the “loop-closing” process. This is for example the case in Business Administration as well as other programs.
- Currently, the institution assesses eight institution-wide competencies in all programs. In addition, between 40-50% of all courses are selected to measure the professional competencies of the different academic programs.
- There is evidence that the student learning assessment process has been refined since it was first implemented, based on the experience gained. A new Learning Assessment Action Plan has been approved that establishes priorities to move forward, in conjunction with the development of the Strategic Plan.

### **Significant Accomplishments**

- Current assessment methodologies and procedures utilize both direct and indirect, quantitative and qualitative measures (inter alia, surveys, focus groups, rubrics) and make use of existing data and information obtained by different institutional units in relation to students’ competencies, interests and needs.

### **Commendations:**

- The institution is commended for the depth and breadth of their student learning assessment efforts and the faculty-administration partnerships created to foster learning assessment. Faculty involvement includes the planning and design of both in-classroom assessment techniques and indirect assessment methods.
- The institution is commended for their work to design, apply and obtain Title V Grant on “Aprendizaje Exitoso,” a project that has the potential to significantly improve student learning assessment culture at AUPR.

### **Requirements**

- None

**Recommendation:**

- Establish appropriate targets for each of the eight institution-wide learning competencies identified in the Assessment Plan.

**Suggestion:**

- The institution is encouraged to participate in data consortia and other established groups that foster assessment initiatives so that it can begin to benchmark its data.

**VI. Summary of Compliance**

Based on a review of the institution's self-study and appendices, interviews, and other documents reviewed during the visit, the team draws the following conclusions.

- American University of Puerto Rico appears to be in compliance with all fourteen (14) Standards for Accreditation.
- The institution also appears to meet all accreditation-relevant federal regulations and the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation.
- Altogether, the team has identified twenty (22) instances for which American University of Puerto Rico is to be commended.
- In addition, the team has offered a total of twenty-one (21) Suggestions as part of a review, and it has offered three (3) Recommendations.