

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
The University of Puerto Rico,
Aguadilla Campus
by
An Evaluation Team Representing the
Commission on Higher Education
of the Middle States Association
of Colleges and Schools

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
and a visit to the campus on October 15-18, 2000

Mr. William L. Beck
Librarian
California University of Pennsylvania
Louis L. Manderino Library
250 University Avenue
California, PA 15419

Dr. Eida Berrío, Chair of Evaluation Team
Dean for Community Life and Diversity
St. Olaf College
1520 St. Olaf Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057

Dr. Roger W. Bruszewski
Vice President for Administration and Finance
Frostburg State University
Hitchins Administration Building
Frostburg, MD 21532-1099

Dr. John F. Egan
Chairperson, Business Administration
Professor of Business Administration
New Jersey City University
923 Linwood Avenue
Ridgwood, NJ 07450

Dr. Helen F. Giles-Gee
Dean, School of Professional Studies
State University of New York
College at Cortland
P.O. Box 2000
Cortland, NY 13045

Dr. Frank Gonzalez
Chairperson, Engineering Technologies
County College of Morris
214 Center Grove Road
Randolph Township, NJ 07869

Dr. Judith F. Kornberg
Director of Continuing Education and Summer Programs
State University of New York
College at Purchase
735 Anderson Hill Road
Purchase, NY 10577-1400

Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
North Fairview Street
211 Sullivan Hall
Lock Haven, PA 17745-2390

Dr. Juan F. Villa
Professor of Chemistry
City University of New York
Lehman College
378 Blauvelt Road
Pearl River, NY 10965-2009

Working with the team:

Prof. Maria Isabel Ortiz
Higher Education Analyst
Division of License and Accreditation
Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education

Dr. Ana Guadalupe
Director, Office of Academic Affairs
University of Puerto Rico

This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair. This report is prepared as an educational service, and all comments are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla. This report goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission, and the institution will distribute the report. The Commission applies its standards in the context of the special goals of each institution.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Date when instruction began: 1972

First students graduated: 1974

Chancellor/CEO: Prof. Juana Segarra de Jaramillo

Chief Academic Officer: Prof. Maria A. Garcia

**President, University of Puerto Rico:
Dr. Norman L. Maldonado**

**Chair of the Board of Trustees, University of Puerto Rico:
Dr. Salvador Alemañy**

public supported higher education system serving over 69,000 students. Until March, 1999, the University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla was part of a sub-system comprised of six Regional and Technological Colleges operating under the Regional Colleges Administration (RCA) of the University of Puerto Rico. This sub-system was dissolved granting the six colleges the status of autonomous university colleges.

The University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla^{*} received autonomous status in March, 1999. Prior to receiving autonomous status, UPR-Aguadilla had begun offering bachelors degree programs (1993). Offerings were previously limited to associate degrees and transfer programs. UPR-Aguadilla currently enrolls approximately 3,200 students, which represents a 19% increase in enrollment between 1995 and 1999. Most students are from the western region of Puerto Rico, where UPR-Aguadilla is located (on grounds of the former Ramey Air Force Base).

The governing board for the University of Puerto Rico is the Board of Trustees. The Board has thirteen members, ten of whom are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Puerto Rico Legislature. The other three members are two faculty representatives and one student representative selected by their corresponding constituencies for one-year terms. The Board of Trustees formulates policy for the University system in general and oversees its development. It establishes the by-laws and other regulations affecting the University as a whole, assigns annual budgets to the major campuses and appoints the President and the Chancellors.

At the outset, the team wants to acknowledge the visionary and strong leadership that Chancellor Juana Segarra de Jaramillo has provided UPR-Aguadilla. This leadership has been supported by committed, enthusiastic and energetic colleagues who have shared her vision. This synergy is allowing UPR-Aguadilla to emerge as a rapidly growing and evolving institution, with unlimited potential.

This report addresses the general areas covered in the institution's self-study, in relationship to the Commission on Higher Education Characteristics of Excellence. General observations are provided in each area, followed by concerns, suggestions and commendations as applicable.

MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES: Institutional Change and Renewal

The University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla has developed a mission statement, a statement of purpose of values, and a vision statement that reflects the new status of the institution, its expanded role and its quest for excellence. The UPR-Aguadilla mission is consistent with the mission and vision of the System/Board of Trustees.

Its mission is to provide educational alternatives, within the arts, sciences and technologies, that respond to the economic, social and cultural needs of Puerto Rico, particularly those of the northwestern part of the island. Academic options include programs at the baccalaureate and associate degree levels, professional certificates, and credit and non-credit courses for professional and technical development or personal growth.

^{*} Herein referred to as UPR-Aguadilla or the University, and the subject of this report. The Central Administration is referred to as the System.

Additionally, departments of UPR-Aguadilla have developed, or are in the process of developing, yearly action plans towards accomplishing the established goals. These goals also conform to those in the 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, and substantiate both budget and direction.

Strengths:

Exemplary human resource capability is present at UPR-Aguadilla to lead the institution. There is commitment on the highest level of the University Administration to support the goals, missions and objectives. For the most part, the UPR-Aguadilla community appears to value planning and assessment, and its contribution to institutional change and renewal.

Concerns:

Although outcomes assessment has been recognized as needed, implementation is in a preliminary stage and not equally embraced by all academic departments.

The planning group at UPR-Aguadilla realizes that some of the objectives are very challenging, but have chosen a path of optimization. The planning group and leadership would do well to monitor these objectives, and modify projections as needed.

Commendations:

With the multitude of changes occurring simultaneously, UPR-Aguadilla is to be commended for its ability to conduct these intense undertakings with limited resources. The particular attention to the granting of autonomy, introduction of enhancing efforts such as TQM, outcomes assessment, preparation of Middle States Self-Study Plan, writing of 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, as well as the transition to a competitive baccalaureate degree granting institution demonstrates the fortitude to stay the appropriate course of action.

With the advent of the development of new administrative structures, an enhanced customer service program has been implemented. This program communicates by way of brochures, etc., the services provided by each department, as well as asks customers to fill out quality assurance questionnaires. This is an excellent example of valid program feedback to make certain the offices are serving the customers at the highest level.

GOVERNANCE:

There has been substantial transition within the governing bodies affecting UPR-Aguadilla over the past ten years. During 1993, the Council of Higher Education was established as a separate body from the UPR System. A new governing body, the Board of Trustees, was established by law. Since UPR-Aguadilla attained autonomy, the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees Office shifted to support the institution during this transition to increased self-sufficiency. An advisory board was established by the Chancellor of UPR-Aguadilla, which provides additional support for the institution.

Chancellor, two faculty senators selected by their peers, and an elected student representative. The Board approves development plans for the institution as well as budget proposals submitted by the Chancellor. The Board, working in accordance with the provisions of the University By-laws, grants faculty promotions and tenure, leaves of absence, and leaves and economic assistance for studying to faculty and non-faculty personnel.

Academic Senate:

The preamble to the Academic Senate by-laws indicates that the purpose of the Academic Senate is to support the democratic principles of Puerto Rican society, promote the educational interests of the community, and provide a mechanism for participation through a free and open dialogue by students, faculty and administration in decision making. The structure of the Senate was created to facilitate carrying out the University's commitment to education.

Prior to autonomy there was a system wide Academic Senate with each regional college having six elected representatives and the Dean Director of each college. With autonomy, the Aguadilla Campus created an Academic Senate in March, 1999, with a requirement that 2/3 of the members be faculty.

Strengths:

The changes in governance have provided the institution with advantages:

- The Board of Trustees provides a liaison directly between itself and the institution to assist with program development. The Council of Higher Education provides an analyst who works more directly with the institution.
- Transfer is essential for a large proportion of students at UPR-Aguadilla in order for them to fulfill their academic goals. Board of Trustees policies promote articulation between programs at different institutions.
- The Chancellor has direct input at the University's Board of Trustees' level.
- The faculty voice has been enhanced with greater representation within the institution, within the Academic Senate and consequently within the University's Board of Trustees.
- A dramatic decrease in the time to develop programs has facilitated the development of program proposals to meet the needs of the community and the interests of the students.
- During the transition, there has been clear and consistent leadership that has moved the institution forward.

Commendations:

- The Chancellor has been recognized as a leader with vision and a strong commitment to UPR-Aguadilla. Her vision has promoted a sense of the outcomes of autonomy even prior to its realization. She has worked to develop a strong Advisory Board that is highly supportive. She serves as a strong advocate of UPR-Aguadilla with the President and the Board of Trustees. This leadership continues to serve the institution well through a time of continued transition.

establish the unique role that UPR-Aguadilla will play in meeting the needs of the community, especially industry and business. The President is to be commended for funding faculty scholarships and providing other financial means to educate those who will become faculty and for the substantial increase in faculty salaries over recent year.

Faculty Governance:

Faculty are involved in major academic decisions through representative participation in committees, appointment, promotion and tenure decisions. There has been a transition, which has increased the autonomy of UPR-Aguadilla. By Board of Trustee bylaw, the Chancellor presides over the Academic Senate, which includes elected faculty who are representative of their departments. There is also a faculty organization named "Asociacion de Profesores Universitarios de Aguadilla." This faculty body has its own elected faculty leader. The faculty leaders of this organization may meet with the Chancellor to discuss issues of interests to them.

There is no faculty handbook, as there is a bylaws manual for the University System-wide, which the faculty has determined is sufficient.

The leadership at the department head and deans level is extraordinary in terms of their dedication and foresight. Faculty are very student oriented. They make themselves available to assist and counsel students. Some faculty have been engaging students in research projects; a great way to teach while also preparing students for the world of work.

Academic Programs:

New academic programs are developed according to the needs of the community and their match to the mission. Many of the newly approved and proposed programs are outgrowths of current offerings at the Associate degree level. The faculty, community or others may initiate a program proposal, which requires the development of a needs assessment. Once the proposal is complete, it receives parallel reviews by the Academic Senate and the Administrative Council for academic and fiscal concerns, respectively.

Strengths/Commendations:

- UPR-Aguadilla is commended for providing resources to support faculty development, including education toward advanced degrees.
- Faculty and administration are commended for the effort, dedication and thoroughness with which they have implemented their course work within the new programs. They are also to be commended for the process of assessment followed in the creation of new programs - both in terms of interest and needs on the part of students and industry in the region.
- All levels of Higher Education are to be commended for the collaboration and collegial work to minimize bureaucracy to spur the development of programs that meet the need of the community. This new program approval process has become a unique strength that encourages faculty to develop new program proposals.
- The state of the art laboratories equipped by a grant from Hewlett Packard are commendable.
- The establishment of a Mathematics Tutorial Center and language labs to assist students with skills development is significant in increasing students' success.

- Several concerns were articulated by faculty in various departments. Team members observed also certain conditions that caused concern, and led to the following suggestions toward improvement.

Suggestions:

- With the transition from a two- to four-year institution, UPR-Aguadilla may have to review faculty workload expectations with regard to teaching, research/scholarship and service. Currently, the standard load is 12 semester hours, yet faculty overloads contribute to an average load of 17 semester hours. The University may want to consider whether this teaching load decreases scholarship and pursuit of terminal degrees. It is also encouraged to identify the appropriate balance of full-time and part-time faculty to assure that current and future faculty needs are properly met.
- The University should continue its consideration of possibly implementing a strategy to provide equity of workload to chairpersons by developing a model which considers department size and complexity.
- The Team suggests further exploration of the General Education approach to profile building.
- As more technology in the form of personal computers comes to campus, some faculty have not had the opportunity to stay abreast of the developments. Also, the effectiveness of hands-on teaching in some laboratories is handicapped by the absence of some low-end (not very expensive) instruments such as desktop IR and gas chromatography instruments. As an alternate possibility, the students could use computer simulation of the output of these instruments (the programs are commercially available).
- Enhance the electronic capability of the faculty. In particular, programs that mimic the output of instrumentation, and for molecular modeling are needed. This aspect might be better addressed as a campus-wide initiative where an office is entrusted with training and software licensing. (There is already an on-going Faculty Training Programs under the Dean of Natural Science.)
- Telephones and PCs should be made available to all faculty. The Team encourages the institution to prioritize meeting these needs.
- Although it was a faculty decision that a Faculty Manual was not needed, the Team recommends that the University reconsider the development of a manual to possibly include procedures, guidelines, and pertinent information such as procedures for obtaining faculty development funds. The Manual would address areas specific to UPR-Aguadilla and go beyond the System's Bylaws and Policies. The faculty Manual could perhaps be one for the System, with sections for each unit/campus.
- As new baccalaureate degree programs are created, and others expanded, the departments need to work closely in conjunction with the Librarian to request the appropriate library holding.
- The Business Administration Department specifically (and others) are encouraged to consider developing an Industrial Advisory Board composed of members of the local community. The board could provide the department(s) with continuing input about the changing (business) environment and help establish additional student internships.
- Suggest examining ways of providing grant writing assistance to faculty in various departments.
- Implement a strategy to assist students who require additional assistance in mathematics and/or are identified as high risk in mathematics. This strategy would need to engage the Mathematics Department faculty and faculty from other departments whose programs are dependent on mathematics.

STUDENTS AND STUDENT SERVICES:

Admission/Retention:

Autonomy has allowed the Admissions Office to accelerate services and procedures. For example, they can now evaluate an application and print the relevant paperwork immediately, rather than having the student wait several weeks.

The University reports that retention rates at the bachelor's degree level began to drop in 1996-97; retention of transfer students has steadily improved; and, retention of associate degree students has been more or less the same over the past four years, but much lower than for the other two program levels.

The University is considering two general approaches to improve retention: The development of basic skills in language (Spanish and English) and in Mathematics, using multimedia instructional strategies. The Orientation and Counseling Department is charged with the development of general learning skills coupled with the dexterity of setting career and personal improvement goals, maintaining high levels of motivation, and managing stress, time, and personal situations.

Strengths:

The Admissions area, which now processes all applications on site, was recently remodeled to better meet the needs of the office

The University recognizes that retention and graduation indices require more effective measures to improve. According to the Institutional Self-Study Report, "better formative outcomes assessment—to detect problems at an early stage—and a more structured approach to complement individual department support initiatives is warranted."

The University is to be commended for developing a retention tracking system by associate degree, bachelor's degree and transfer status. The cohort data provide a great opportunity to develop cohort specific strategies to improve retention rates.

Concerns:

With autonomy, Admissions has assumed more responsibility for marketing the University to potential students. To better market the University, additional promotional materials may be needed. The Admissions Web site contains basic information only and its layout could be improved. Increasing retention rates is a complex process, requiring contributions from each part of the University community—administration, faculty, and staff. Greater college-wide involvement is needed in this effort.

publications resources are limited, the Web allows for a wider audience on a limited budget. If resources permit, development of a publication specific to the University at Aguadilla should enhance the Admissions effort at open houses, college fairs, etc.

- The University's graduation rates have increased from 1995-96 to 1998-99 from 13.2% to 20.3%. While the rate of increase is commendable, benchmarks against peer institutions are necessary to determine the meaningfulness of this rate and the realistic gains that can be expected over time.
- With the collaboration and active participation of the academic departments, the Department of Orientation and Counseling has been charged with developing a Retention Program that will include adequate support services at the academic and personal levels. Faculty, staff, and students should work together in a committee to develop a formal retention program that includes specific action steps, timeframes for accomplishment of specific goals and objectives, and a program for assessment of the retention effort.

Student Services:

Self-assessment of the Student Services area concluded that the units were facing no major obstacles in meeting their responsibilities towards the students and that their personnel was highly capable and student oriented. Student Affairs cited the following improvements during the past five years:

- added personnel to respond to the increased level of services resulting from enrollment gains;
- the budget for program orientation in schools, social and cultural activities, the Student Council, and the graduation ceremony increased;
- some offices have been remodeled, whereas new office facilities were created for the Child-Care Program, the Student Council, and for the coordination of social and cultural activities;
- computers and office equipment were added to improve effectiveness and efficiency of services;
- alumni association was organized; and
- facilities were improved and new recreational equipment for the Student Center was added.

Team members met with administrative officials responsible for student services, student life, including the Dean of Student Affairs, the Director of Admissions, the Supervisor of Financial Aid, the Director of Counseling Services, the Director/Nurse in Health Services, the Director of Athletics, the registrar, the Ombudsperson, and the Placement Counselor. Team members also met with students, including students who are actively involved in student organizations.

Strengths:

- Autonomy has allowed Student Affairs to accelerate services and procedures.
- The Counseling Office maintains a staff of four counselors who are responsible for career counseling, retention and quality of life issues, special needs, and ADA compliance. The Ombudsperson helps students resolve issues on an individual basis.
- The Placement Office is staffed by an employee of the Puerto Rican Department of Labor, who provides students with job placement assistance. Students who are unsure of their career path are referred to the Guidance Office for testing and counseling.
- According to the Placement Office, degree programs offered by the college are congruent with staffing needs of industry in the Aguadilla area.

services response card and recommend strategies to address concerns.

- Team Members met with students on a number of occasions and were impressed by their maturity, how articulate they are (in Spanish and English), and how committed they are to the University at Aguadilla. A manager at Hewlett-Packard, with which the University has strong ties, rated Aguadilla graduates very high.
- The University has 21 student organizations, which provide students opportunity for participation in campus life and leadership development, as well as a voice in governance. The main organization is the Student Council.

Concerns:

- Easier access to administrative offices would help to enhance student life. Students and staff agree that the goal should be "one-stop-shopping," with the relevant offices (Registrar, Financial Aid, Health Services, etc.) clustered at a minimum or a new student services building built at a maximum. Students and staff agree that relocating the Financial Aid Office nearer to the Registrar would improve their access to both offices. In addition, Financial Aid expressed the need for a larger lobby area where students can wait to meet with counselors, complete forms, etc.
- Students expressed dissatisfaction with the Registration process, particularly the multi-step process and the long waits that are standard at the Registration Office. Additionally, they are very dissatisfied with the practice of closing the office at noon. Evening students indicate that in order to receive services they need to come to campus during the day, which for working students means missing a day at work.
- The Dean of Student Affairs expressed the need to expand the Quality of Life Office, which is now staffed by one counselor who organizes orientation and specific activities. Programs have been offered in collaboration with the Justice Department, the Education Department, etc., addressing such student life issues as drug and alcohol abuse prevention.
- With autonomy, many functions previously provided by the RCA have devolved to the campus. Staff has had to assume previously unfamiliar responsibilities, often with limited expansion in the number of personnel. Learning has therefore tended to be on the job and rushed. Now that the basics have been mastered, many staff stated that training in central administration procedures, in computer software, etc., is sorely needed to allow the offices to function even more effectively.
- Student leaders expressed frustration with the difficulty of obtaining the \$100 set aside by Student Affairs for each organization. Presidents of some of the organizations did not know of its availability. This matter is being addressed.
- The fact that no psychologist is on staff is a deficiency in meeting student needs.
- Building a new athletic facility to replace the current small gymnasium is another Student Affairs priority and capital funds have not been allocated to the project. A new facility would allow Physical Education to offer more programs for all students. Particularly if, as proposed, the general education curriculum will include a physical education component, new facilities and new programs will have to be developed to meet student needs.
- The campus bookstore appears to be sparse, and several campus leaders expressed concerns that it does not operate in a way that best serves students. The same books are more expensive at Aguadilla than at Mayaguez and orders are not always complete.
- The lack of parking and the fact that students are ticketed and then have difficulty paying the fines were cited as problems.

determine means of improving efficiency and effectiveness.

- Expedite the hiring process for a psychologist. The Team was informed that the process has been initiated.
- Continue the effort to build a new athletic facility.
- Review the office hours of all student services offices to ensure that they are open at hours of peak student demand and that evening students' needs are being met.
- Subsequent to listening to student's concerns regarding funding, the Team learned that this is the first year that funds have been made available for student organizations, therefore the Team suggests a review of the procedures for distributing this support and for informing students.
- Offer a training workshop for student leaders in their roles and responsibilities, as well as in student organization administrative procedures. Attendance at the workshop could be a condition of funding in order to increase participation.
- Establish a regular periodic meeting with student leaders and the Dean of Student Affairs
- Hold open forums for students at least once a semester, at which they can express their concerns to University administration.
- When the contract with the current bookstore operator expires, consider writing a request for bids that includes specific standards for bookstore operation and actively soliciting bids from a larger number of vendors than in the previous round.
- Explore the possibility of providing the Health Services Office a more private space (perhaps through a different configuration of its current location) thus making this service more "user friendly" to students by providing them more privacy.

Commendations:

- The Division of Student Affairs is to be commended for its energetic and on-going efforts to meet students' needs. The funding of student organization (a new initiative this year) will assist student organizations in their efforts to engage more students.
- Students have a very positive outlook and are very proud of their institution. They are generally pleased with the services, and confident that their unmet needs and concerns will be addressed.
- The system of soliciting student feedback in various student services offices is a right step toward identifying and addressing concerns. (Students utilizing the services have feedback cards available.)
- Health Services provides daily evening services to students; a doctor is available every day.
- Among its many jewels, UPR-Aguadilla has a singing diamond - its Student Choir. The Team had the wonderful opportunity to be delighted with a performance. The Team commends the student members, the Choir Director and the Administration.

ACADEMIC PLANNING/ASSESSMENT

The University has adopted a vision of excellence. To meet this goal through continuous improvement, each academic program is asked to develop an assessment plan. The departments have outlined objectives within the self-study. In a number of cases, these objectives do not provide an indication of substantive assessment of student learning outcomes. The departments are at varying stages with regards to outcomes assessment:

- assessment of the Honors program.
- Certain programs, such as the Electronics Department, Business Administration, and Quality Control have considered standards for their disciplines from national associations in the United States and have reviewed and reorganized their curricula around these standards.
- The Electronics Department is working to identify peer institutions so as to review and contrast their curricula.
- The English department is beginning to evaluate ways to measure basic skills.
- Faculty in the Humanities are beginning to talk about concepts of critical thinking and are exploring ways to assess whether students have developed this ability.
- The Spanish department has developed a pre-and posttest assessment program to determine the gains in proficiency by students in the beginning level of Spanish.

It appears that none of the programs have fully assessed their students to determine if after completing a program of study, students meet the competencies demanded by the standards in the disciplines at an appropriate level. Also, the connection between the assessment plans and the strategic plan was not evident in a number of the programs or in the assessment guidelines provided to the departments.

Commendation:

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning is commended for taking a leadership role in assisting academic programs with assessment. UPR-Aguadilla is commended for providing workshops for department chairs and curriculum committee members, and evaluating the effectiveness of these workshops. The University also has begun to provide program specific data to encourage assessment and allow faculty more time to analyze rather than collect data. The faculty confirmed the value they place on receiving data organized for their specific program needs.

Concern:

Not all academic departments have embraced the concept of, nor responsibility for, assessment. This is a particular concern regarding the Mathematics Department, particularly given the important role of this discipline across the curriculum, and the importance of the development of appropriate mathematical skills for success in most academic areas.

Suggestions:

- The University might consider building on the strengths of model programs and faculty who have gained expertise in assessment by enlisting their assistance in the review of the status of departments' plans and make recommendation for improvement where necessary.
- Given the importance of tying assessment to the institution's strategic plan and college mission, these concepts should be included in the institution's assessment guidelines.

Chancellor and Deans have more latitude to direct resources to the appropriate institutional issues. Bureaucratic steps have been reduced. More autonomy also creates new challenges and opportunities.

External Funding:

The Development Office has become one of the most important offices on U.S. college campuses. In Puerto Rico, however, there is no tradition of fundraising and tax laws have not encouraged giving by allowing a tax write-off.

Despite this lack of a fundraising tradition, the University recognizes the need to encourage outside giving to supplement institutional resources. The University has expressed the commitment to significantly improve its capacity to obtain external resources by submitting proposals to government agencies and foundations. Additional untapped resources include the University's alumni, its Advisory Board and corporations with ties to the institution.

Sponsored Research:

The University has obtained significant grants from federal and state agencies, and it is committed to increasing proposal generation and hopefully the number of grants awarded to the institution. While the University, as an institution that has relatively recently granted four-year degrees, does not have the resources to pursue major research grants, the funding environment is favorable for two and four-year institution-wide grants focusing on student life, retention, outcomes assessment, etc. Moreover, individual faculty members may well be successful in securing funding for their research projects.

Suggestions:

- To achieve the goal of increasing external funding, the University should consider hiring a grant writer whose responsibilities would include helping faculty and staff with identification of appropriate funding programs, conducting workshops for faculty and staff on the proposal process, writing proposals, and monitoring project progress, etc. As the University receives more grants, the position should in effect start paying for itself.
- One grants writer, however, cannot be responsible for increasing proposal generation and awards received on his/her own. A sponsored research committee that is composed of faculty, administration, and staff should be convened to develop a sponsored research plan. This plan should include recommendations on incentives and rewards for individuals and departments that actively develop proposals.

Alumni Giving:

The University has recently established an alumni organization. While still in its infancy, the potential is enormous. Current students express their tremendous regard for the University; presumably, alumni feel the same way. With recent legislation, allowing tax write-offs for donations to educational institutions starting in 2001, alumni giving is a potentially large source of external funding for the University.

ties to the institution. Over time, these alumni should be asked to consider a contribution to the University. Perhaps asking for funds to establish a scholarship program would be the most palatable way to introduce the University's alumni to the concept of giving.

Corporate Giving:

The University has strong ties to several local industry leaders, including Hewlett Packard, and it has received equipment donations from this and other corporations. Current plans to create a technology corridor between Aguadilla and Mayaguez present the University with an opportunity to develop close ties with additional corporations.

Suggestion:

Every effort should be made to make additional corporations aware of the University's programs and bring corporate staff into the University community. Particularly those corporations with branches on the mainland are familiar with academic fundraising programs. With close ties to the University, these corporations might be willing to donate additional equipment and monies, especially for scholarships.

GENERAL EDUCATION:

The General Education program is in discussion at the System and institutional level. The key questions is: 1) What are the primary bodies of knowledge and competencies that the University seeks to assure are gained by each student? 2) Also, how effective is the University in assuring that all graduates attain these competencies?

There are two general education programs: a current model and a proposed one. Both General Education Programs require that students take courses in the following categories: Communication skills (Spanish and English), Computer Information Systems, Mathematics, Society/Culture/Environment and an Interdisciplinary Seminar. The current academic programs requires specific courses and allow less flexibility of choice by students and the total number of courses within the general education program is 10 (31 credits). The proposed general education program provides for more student choice among many of the categories, while totaling 15 courses (45 credits).

In addition, graduates are expected to be able to demonstrate certain abilities such as to work in groups, be tolerant of diversity, sensitive to culture and environment. Twenty-four such capabilities form a "student profile" expected of the graduates.

The more flexible general education program has been included within the newly developed program proposal in Business Administration. In addition, each program's curriculum is being reviewed to determine the match with the "student profile". The results of this endeavor should contribute to a cross-faculty dialogue about student outcomes and general education.

In addition, the Board of Trustees has a role to play with regard to general education. General Education can be a major tool to promote transfer and academic success at the receiving institutions if a policy can be created which promotes the individuality of the institution's general education program while requiring the competencies within courses, which must also count toward accomplishing academic programs. Given the number of students who are enrolled in transfer programs at the

The University has realized the need to assess its general education program and to begin by focusing on the development of basic skills. The University is thinking of using a multimedia approach and new technology incorporating assessment within it. To be successful with this effort faculty training is vital.

Suggestions:

- The University should continue its efforts to determine the current status of the integration of the “student profile” across all programs.
- The System should continue to consider how, through both its transfer and general education policies, it could support institutional flexibility regarding the general education program while at the same time promoting transfer.
- After a general education program is fully adopted and integrated across the curriculum, the University should consider developing a comprehensive plan to assess its outcomes.
- Discussion with various departments revealed different strategies to assist students who may require more basic skills before advancing to the level of study required by their particular curriculum. Differences in philosophy exist about how best to accomplish student improvement, especially in mathematics. The importance of Mathematics to all programs suggests the importance of the institution coming to resolutions that promote the development of students’ Mathematics’ competencies at their highest level.
- The University might consider exploring additional ways in which faculty who are beginning to appreciate the merits of assessment might help move forward this agenda to support the assessment work already been done by their colleagues.

Planning:

There is consistency between the System’s and University’s strategic plans. Such congruence was promoted by the service of the Institutional Research Director on both parallel planning committees at both the level of the System and UPR-Aguadilla. Every academic department is required to develop an action plan in accordance with the strategic plan. The plans are submitted to the Academic Dean who reviews them and develops a proposal with those aspects of departmental plans, which have been accepted. The other Deans also collect unit plans and develop proposals. The proposals are reviewed by the Executive Committee, which includes the Chancellor, three Deans and the Director of Institutional Research. The Executive Committee develops the University’s annual action plan using the proposals and relevant data and available resources.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES:

Library:

The library at UPR-Aguadilla has indeed completed a thorough self-study of its programs and services that included various forms of assessment. All charges to the workgroups, were addressed in their reports. The library staff is aware of the challenges in this transitional period as the University moves from a two-year to a four-year institution and is planning appropriately. The strengths, concerns and recommendations are listed as follows:

professional staff to support staff is very good.

- Bibliographic Instruction Program - The BI program is excellent and was developed in a very comprehensive and logical manner complete with goals, objectives, methodologies, brochures, evaluation instruments, etc. Faculty and students who have availed themselves to the program rate its effectiveness very high. The program as developed is an excellent vehicle in which to address the attendant issues of information literacy.
- Availability and Access to Electronic Resources - The variety and array of electronic resources available is commendable. Several indexes and full-text databases are either on-line or in CD-ROM. Students and faculty have access to all the materials in all the libraries across the entire UPR system via Interlibrary Loan.
- Assessment and Improvement - The library has conducted various user satisfaction surveys of both faculty and students with the goal of improving services as a result. These surveys are done on a cyclical basis with the overall satisfaction rate of the library and its services rated as good according to the survey results. From the sample population surveyed, the overall satisfaction rate of students was 79% and of faculty 87%.
- Organization and Layout of Physical Facilities - The layout of collections and services is very organized and logical. Study spaces were filled to 90% capacity as the building was toured and the atmosphere was quiet and studious. The pending move to the new building under construction will be a major asset.
- Integration of Audiovisual Materials and Services as part of Library Services - The institution is to be commended for integrating the purchase, processing, housing, and distribution of audiovisual materials and services as part of the library's function. Materials and services are centrally located for all to use, thus insuring that limited financial resources are expended wisely, i.e. non-duplication of AV collections and services. Three rooms are dedicated for use by faculty and students for using a wide array of media materials. A limited materials production center is also available.
- Library Publications and Brochures - The library has produced and makes available to students various brochures about the library's collections, services, policies, etc.
- Strategic Planning and Alignment with University Goals - The library is to be commended for its efforts in this regard. The library's mission statement is concise and to the point. Its annual report and plan of action are in concert with the University's mission statement and plan of action.
- General Observations - Upon touring the library the following items became apparent from talking with staff. These are categorized as a library doing the right things behind the scenes, which are important but not seen by the public:
 - There is no backlog of materials to be processed.
 - The library was the first in the UPR system of libraries to implement the automated acquisitions module.
 - All of the library's procedures manuals have been revised.
 - Evaluation and weeding of the collection has begun in conjunction with the teaching faculty in selected subject areas.
- New Library Facility - The new library under construction will be a welcome addition to the campus' facilities and allow for growth of the library's collection and services in addition to providing adequate spaces for student study in a variety of configurations.

degrees to four-year baccalaureate programs, a significant infusion of additional funds is necessary to strengthen the collection for those programs. The library cannot adequately meet the needs of the faculty and students with a stationary budget and the collection is losing its vitality.

- **New Library Facility** - The library staff expressed concern that the new library under construction is not much larger than the existing facility thus limiting space for collection growth. It is suggested that the institution re-examine the projected assignment of space in this facility to insure adequate space for collection growth as the University adds additional programs that will require additional library resources.
- **Expand and Grow the Bibliographic Instruction Program** - As this program is one of the library's major strengths it needs to move from being optional and used by only certain departments to a university-wide program in which most all students and faculty participate. This is a major step in improving information literacy skills of students.
- **Develop a Library Homepage** - A library homepage would be an excellent tool for publicizing and marketing the library to the university community and provide a good introduction to the library's on-line catalog, services, electronic resources, and the resources available throughout the libraries of the UPR system.
- **Evaluation and Weeding the Collection** - The library staff has already begun evaluating and weeding the collection in selected areas in conjunction with the teaching faculty. This effort needs to become a priority and be done in a complete and systematic basis. This is particularly critical as the University moves from a two-year to a four-year institution.
- **Enhancing Utilization of Library Resources** - The library in conjunction with the other libraries in the UPR system needs to strive towards purchasing the licenses that will permit Web access to the various databases thus providing access to the library from any PC, any time, anywhere, on or off campus. This would also address the issue of providing library resources to students enrolled in distance education courses. In addition, the library should consider replacing CD-ROM databases with Web versions—again providing access to these materials from anywhere on or off campus.
- **Provide Additional PCs**. The library does not have enough PCs for student use of the library's electronic resources. Additional funding should be allocated to remedy this situation.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

Like most institutions of higher education, the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla is in a transitional phase regarding information technology. The University has made a significant investment in infrastructure, equipment, and personnel resources in an attempt to meet the needs of the University in this regard—both academic and administrative. Several improvements have been made but the University also faces many challenges in this area. The strengths, concerns, and recommendations concerning information technology are as follows:

Strengths:

- **Fiber Optic Infrastructure** - The University is to be commended for installing the fiber optic network infrastructure on campus. This investment will bring significant benefit to the institution as it enters the new millennium. The transmission of information and data in several formats—text, graphic, audio, and digital is possible and links the entire campus with the outside world.

- Teleconferencing Facility - The University just recently installed a teleconferencing facility that can be used for a multitude of purposes including distance education.
- Linkage of all Units of the University of Puerto Rico system. The linkage of all the campuses is of major benefit to the University. This linkage should improve and streamline several processes on campus. It also makes possible the availability of library resource sharing and cooperative purchase of databases across the system.
- Lab Technician Staffing - The University is to be commended for having sufficient numbers of technicians so that one is available for each computer lab on campus to provide assistance, instruction, etc.

Suggestions:

- Develop a Comprehensive and Unified Approach to Technology - There is uneven use and distribution of technology and equipment across the campus; students find that there are insufficient labs; technology planning is dispersed, uneven, sporadic and incomplete; and the University does not have an effective Web page or a Webmaster. It is recommended that the University develop a comprehensive, unified approach to technology with defined objectives, implementation schedule, assessment mechanisms, etc. The plan should address both administrative and academic needs as well as address the training needs of a variety of constituencies at various levels. Input into the plan must be drawn from all areas across the institution to insure completeness and accuracy as well as promoting "buy-in" to the plan.
- Consider Creating the Position of "Chief Information Technology Officer" - One of the growing trends in higher education to address total campus technology needs is to create such a division under the leadership, guidance and direction of this position. It is the responsibility of this position to take the initiative in technological endeavors to insure that technological needs are addressed in a uniform, equitable, efficient, and effective manner across the University. As problems and situations arise with endless changes and upgrades to systems, etc., there is a clear identified structure to deal with these issues. Combining academic and administrative computing allows for efficient use of resources and significant savings in bulk purchases. It also insures compatibility of campus systems.
- The Need for a University Webmaster is Crucial - The University needs to fill the vacant Webmaster position to develop and enhance the University's homepage. A fully developed functioning homepage would reap great benefits for the University in terms of public relations, admissions, communication, maximizing utilization of library resources, etc. It would also provide the University with an effective mechanism of keeping the academic community abreast of upcoming events, policy changes, etc. in a quick and efficient manner.

The University has made a conscientious, demonstrated commitment to information technology with the funds that have been allocated and expended on equipment and peripherals the past few years. It needs to take the next step and approach information technology in a uniform manner in order to address the needs of faculty, students, and staff in this era of increasing demand for technology.

facilities were built for the Air Force, managing the physical plant provides for some unique challenges. The buildings, because of their original design, are very hard and expensive to modify. Just maintaining and cleaning these buildings is a major issue. Deferred maintenance is a growing problem when dealing with buildings that are 59 years old. Many of the buildings were constructed in 1941. Energy conservation is very expensive to implement and considering the climate, extremely important.

- Electric systems are old and badly in need of upgrade and repair.
- A water reservoir is necessary to provide clean water to all buildings.
- Internal and external lighting needs replacement and improvement.
- Improvements to these energy projects will help reduce operating cost.

In addition, ADA was not an issue in 1977 when the College took over the facilities, but with a growing population of disabled students, renovations are necessary to create a use friendly environment. When the new Library is completed, the old one will be renovated for much needed academic classrooms and offices.

Concerns:

- Student parking seems to be inadequate considering that enrollment has grown by approximately 20% over the last five years and all the students are commuters.
- Work needs to resume as soon as possible on the new Library.
- An important new project that has yet to be approved for construction is the new Athletic and Sports Development Center which would provide much needed facilities for students, faculty and staff.

Suggestions:

- The telephone system should be upgraded and every faculty member should be provided a telephone. This would help to improve communication among students, faculty and staff.
- Coupled with the fact that the other institutions have facilities primarily designed for educational environment and UPR-Aguadilla campus is a former Air Force Base, the Board of Trustees should consider increased funding for capital improvements. UPR-Aguadilla has provided priorities in the Capital Improvement Plan 2001-2005.
- The Board of Trustees should consider prioritizing provision of funds for the new Athletic and Sports Development Center and additional parking for students.

CONTINUING EDUCATION/HONORS PROGRAMS/SCHOOL-TO-WORK PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM:

The University is to be commended for these three programs carrying out very special functions and providing unique services.

in particular, seek to strengthen relations with the community through frequent collaborative interaction, educational services, consulting, and social and cultural activities. Continuing Education also has the mandate to increase opportunities for non-traditional students through new alternatives, simplified administrative processes, and adequate services in non-regular working hours.

Continuing Education's mission is two-fold: to serve the Aguadilla community and to raise revenues for the University. The University's Continuing Education Division is currently assessing the external economic and job environment to determine areas of future program growth. Likely areas of growth are concentrated in technology, education, and health services, all of which are congruent with programs offered by the University.

Commendations/Strengths:

- Continuing Education offers an evening degree program that meets both aspects of its mission — community service and revenue generation. Indeed, since the revenues generated by the evening degree program remain at the University rather than being remitted to central administration, the program is of great importance to the University. Moreover, the potential for growth in the evening degree program is high, which would be of enormous financial benefit to the University.
- Students in the program are satisfied with the quality of the teaching and praise the services provided to students in the night division. Students appreciate the fact that many Continuing Education faculty members are working in the field they teach, bringing practical experience into the classroom.

Concerns:

- The Division of Continuing Education has identified the following concerns:
 - Lack of space affects Continuing Education's ability to offer courses and programs,
 - Continuing Education procedures need to be clarified and made more flexible (and the project to automate procedures need to be completed) to better serve students; and
 - The office staff should include more professionals with specific Continuing Education expertise.
- Evening degree students expressed concerns typical of their peers at other institutions, such as evening access to administrative offices and student services, and convenient, well-lit parking.
- As new evening programs are created, the number of students using these services will hopefully increase. Revenues accruing to the University will therefore increase; however, evening degree students, whose time is presumably limited, will be less likely to continue their studies if they are frustrated with the University's infrastructure.
- The current Continuing Education Web site contains general information only, and suggests that students telephone the office. Students expressed the need for a more comprehensive Continuing Education Web site that contains course information, as well as information on other issues of importance to evening degree students. Many evening students have access to the Internet either at work or at home, and would welcome the ability to gather information electronically rather than by telephone or actually visiting the campus.

student concerns. Over the next few years technology should help evening degree students enormously, whether through on-line or telephone registration, on-line access to library databases, etc. Continuing Education should also investigate short-term means of addressing the problems, perhaps through arranging that certain offices stay open several evenings prior to and at the start of the semester.

- Create a Web site that includes a listing and description of current course offerings, details on the evening degree program and certificates, and any other pertinent information. This type of Web site would be cost efficient (as compared to the costs for publication development and postage) and would serve two constituencies: current students seeking semesterly information and potential students seeking information about the Continuing Education Program.
- Evaluate expansion of the evening degree and certificate programs to better meet the career development needs of the surrounding community and also increase revenue generation.
- Provide staff training, as appropriate, to increase the staff's performance effectiveness.

School-To-Work Partnership Program:

The University is commended for their School-to-Work Program, which has developed strong links connecting high schools, the University and industry. It provides technical career guidance to high school students, and assists as a recruitment tool for the University. The Program was named the #1 program of its kind in the United States.

Honors Program:

This is also a program for which the University receives distinction. Students in the program feel the challenge and pressure they are under. However, they feel very well encouraged and supported. Their only concern is the need to have more consistent and inclusive meetings. Students believe that the group interaction would also provide valuable experience and learning opportunities. For these purposes, the students also are expressing a need for an Honors Lounge that would facilitate the interaction.

The Team found that the challenges faced by UPR-Aguadilla are primarily related to its recent transition to an autonomous institution, its growth in enrollment as well as degree offerings, and its physical location. The visiting Team also found that the administrative team under the leadership of its Chancellor, Professor Segarra de Jaramillo, is leading the institution in the right direction. There is a dedicated faculty and a student body with much institutional pride.

UPR-Aguadilla is recognized and supported by local industry and also receives strong support and recognition from the President of the UPR System and the Board of Trustees