University of Puerto Rico
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Summary of UPR-RP Student Surveys Results

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Introduction

During the period 2005-2016, the UPR-RP has maintained an ongoing effort to obtain feedback from undergraduate and graduate students across the campus. Findings from various student surveys have provided an overview and more clear understanding of our students' experiences, satisfaction, challenges, achievements and expectations. This report includes a summary of survey data findings that have supported decision-making toward projects and improvements undertaken by our strategic plan Vision University 2016 and the monitoring of the established strategic indicators.

The UPR-RP administers various student surveys to support the assessment process by gathering baseline data, identifying areas for improvement, and tracking progress over time. The UPR-RP relies on results from the Freshmen Profile Questionnaire, Senior Exit Surveys and four standard instruments used by many institutions of higher education. These instruments provide distinct types of information about students' educational experiences, opinions, and the challenges that they have faced. Their use allows the impressions of undergraduates as well as graduate students to be systematically considered in our assessment process.

Freshmen Profile

The creation of a freshman profile is an important resource for institutional assessment at UPR-RP. The analysis of profile information has supported institutional renewal by drawing attention to issues that deserve consideration in planning.

> **Freshmen Database.** From 2005-06 to 2014-15, more than 21,000 high school graduates chose the UPR-RP as the university where they would begin their undergraduate careers (see Table 1). As explained below, the analysis of demographic information about our students suggests that compliance with our mission may require that the institution recognize the importance of maintaining a percentage of male students on par with that of the general population. The other group of students that is slightly underrepresented is students who attended public schools.
>
> • Male Students: Historically, the entering freshman class has been predominately female. Between the academic years 2009-10 and 2011-12 there was a slight increase in male

students, from 37.1% to more than 38%. In contrast, the Bureau of the Census statistics show a decrease in the male population of Puerto Rico in 2000 (48.1%) and 2010 (47.9%).

- Students from Public High Schools: On average, 40% of the incoming class come from public schools. A possible explanation for this is the UPR-RP's location at the metropolitan area characterized by a proliferation of private schools, many of them near the institution. For AY 2013-2014, 56% of students from the UPR System's incoming class had graduated from public high schools and 44% from private high schools. The UPR-RP's incoming class does not reflect this same distribution given that 40% of these students come from public high schools and 60% private high schools.

Table 1

UPR-RP Freshmen Profile Data

Variable	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
n	2,433	2,384	2,725	2,817	2,868	2,287	1,747	2,021	2,236
Females	68.5%	65.4%	66.4%	66.5%	62.9%	62.6%	61.1%	61.2%	61.7%
Public high school	46.4%	42.1%	40.9%	39.5%	40.8%	36.9%	36.5%	39.8%	39.6%
Age: 18-19 years	57.9%	60.1%	62.1%	63.6%	65.0%	64.9%	66.7%	64.8%	66.3%
Both parents high school or less academic preparation	12.2%	7.9%	6.5%	5.9%	6.9%	4.0%	3.0%	2.7%	3.2%
CEEB Average Score - Academic Achievement in Spanish	545	544	556	561	568	566	566	574	565
CEEB Average Score - Academic Achievement in English	578	589	588	590	588	596	608	605	591
CEEB Average Score - Academic Achievement in Mathematics	599	602	603	593	599	602	609	613	600
CEEB Average Score - Academic Aptitude in Mathematic Reasoning	603	605	607	609	607	613	613	618	600
CEEB Average Score - Academic Aptitude in Verbal Reasoning	584	589	591	592	590	601	604	602	591
High School Grade Point Average (GPA: 4 points scale)	3.57	3.56	3.59	3.61	3.60	3.64	3.64	3.65	3.66
General Admission Index (IGS)	309	310	312	313	312	316	317	318	314

Source: SAGA (MT-OFICIAL_NRG), OPEP.

In addition, results of the College Entrance Examination Board's (CEEB) Program of University Admission and Evaluation are useful for establishing a baseline for the evaluation of student learning outcomes. These indicate that scores and GPA averages from 2011-12 to 2013-14 incoming classes were higher than in previous periods. This clearly shows UPR-RP's commitment to recruiting students with outstanding academic achievement and aptitude. This observation was made on the data included in Table 1.

Freshmen Profile Questionnaire. Results from Freshmen Profile Questionnaire (FPQ) provide data that the UPR-RP systematically monitors as part of its institutional assessment plan. The information this questionnaire provides is useful because it reveals shifts across cohorts. Recognizing how these shifts relate to learning opportunities at the undergraduate level facilitates institutional changes that will support students in areas that they have identified as areas of weak preparation.

Approximately 75% of the students who participated in the 2005 FPQ study reported they had adequate or substantial familiarity with the use of computers. This percentage increased dramatically by 2010 (90%). However, about 53% reported deficiencies in three skill areas: the use of libraries and written as well as spoken communication in English. Regarding the goals of incoming students, results show that more than 90% aim to prepare themselves in a particular profession and obtain a university degree. The majority of students aspired to increase their knowledge and technical skills (85.1%). These results have been paired with those of other assessment data.

Analysis of results from the Freshmen Profile Questionnaire has facilitated strategic interventions that will support student learning. Recently funds have been allocated for improvements in the area of technological equipment, databases, and related library resources. These acquisitions complement training activities and workshops on the use of library resources. Effective communication skills, including those in the English Language, have become a priority of the UPR-RP assessment cycle of student learning. In fact, curricular changes have been made to support those students with weak skills in English. Information about learning outcomes, and transformative actions related to the assessment of effective communication skills are presented in the UPR-RP 2015 Self-Study (see Standards 12 and 14, both of which are found in Chapter 6). Competence in technology and English are among the areas that students tend to prioritize as useful in their professional preparation.

Student Satisfaction Inventory and Adult Students Priorities

In Spring 2006 (*n* = 600) and 2009 (*n* = 777), the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) was administered at UPR-RP. Comparison of the ratings from both of these years reveal that students indicated that the following areas were both "highly important" and areas in which they were "highly satisfied": excellence of instruction, valuable course content, campus commitment to academic excellence and racial harmony, tuition paid as a worthwhile investment, institution's good reputation, knowledgeable faculty members and availability after class and during office hours, and the university experience as one that promotes intellectual growth and makes it enjoyable to be a student on campus.

The UPR-RP's SSI results improved for 2009. At that time, students also recognized the following as strengths: the variety of courses provided on campus, a more informative campus website, and the provision of adequate computer labs and library resources.

Students reported the following as challenges and areas of low satisfaction: registration conflicts, including the unhelpfulness of its personnel; security issues in campus facilities, including in parking lots and emergency responses; classroom and restroom conditions; campus maintenance; course placement procedures, services and concern for students as individuals.

The 2009 Noel-Levitz Adults Students Priorities Survey (ASPS) was administered to UPR-RP graduate students (n = 412). Similar to results reported by undergraduate students, graduate students expressed high satisfaction with instructional effectiveness and identified the following as areas of strength: the quality of instruction, course content, institution commitment to academic excellence, and knowledgeable faculty members and graduate program coordinators. Another area of strength was the non-teaching staff of graduate programs, who were described as caring and responsive to students' needs. Tuition cost and variety of payment plans for graduate students were also recognized as strengths. Students highlighted the UPR-RP's good reputation as an institution of higher education.

In contrast, graduate students described the registration processes and related problems, security issues, and limited hours (for administrative offices and student services) as institutional challenges.

SSI and ASPS address students' concerns and priorities. The results of these surveys, as well as other institutional studies and feedback strategies, served to identify areas of needed improvement that were targeted for planning and improvement from 2008-09 to the present.

National Survey of Student Engagement

Findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement, which was administered in 2009, reveal that 78% of first-year students feel that the institution places substantial emphasis on academics. Moreover, nearly 80% of these students stated that they frequently discussed readings or ideas from coursework outside of class. High percentages of these freshmen indicated that by the end of their first year they had already completed the following analytical exercises:

- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea or theory (88%)
- Applying theories or concepts (81%)
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas (79%)
- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods (75%)
- Making judgments about the value of information (69%)

Over 60% of participating students reported that they frequently engaged in the following activities:

- Working with other students on assignments outside of class (67%)
- Reading more than ten assigned books and packs of course readings (66%)

- Working with other students on in-class projects (65%)
- Writing a paper more than twenty pages in length (61%)

By their senior year, 52% of students had participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment; 81% had at least occasionally discussed career plans with a faculty member; and 94% indicated that they would choose this school again if they could start their college career all over.

Comparing these results with those from 2006 NSSE results, shows that the UPR-RP has made substantial improvement in the five areas included in the survey (See Table 2). Although these are areas in which students' responses fell short of institutional expectations, both in 2006 and 2009. The 2006 NSSE results have led the administration to increase budget allocations to projects and initiatives that promise to strengthen student-faculty interaction and those that enrich educational experiences.

Table 2

Benchmark scores NSSE results for UPR-RP: 2006 and 2009

Student Engagement Themes	First-Year Students		Senior Students	
	NSSE 2006	NSSE 2009	NSSE 2006	NSSE 2009
Level of Academic Challenge	55.7	60.6	57.4	61.9
Active Collaborative Learning	40.8	50.7	49.3	55.0
Student-Faculty Interaction	24.0	32.0	31.8	37.9
Enriching Educational Experiences	21.6	25.3	33.3	37.0
Supportive Campus Environment	53.6	55.1	51.8	54.8

Senior Exit Survey

The UPR-RP Senior Exit Survey (SES) is a brief survey of the level of satisfaction among graduating students. It documents opinions about their educational experience on our campus, their opinion about the contribution that institution makes to the development of key skills mentioned in the UPR-RP Mission, and their immediate plans, among other variables. From 2004 to 2015, seven face-to-face SES surveys have been conducted, with an average annual participation of 1,400 students.

Recent SES data offers encouraging results. In general terms, the SES results point to two main findings. These indicate that educational experiences at UPR-RP have succeeded in:

- Enhancing students' personal experiences.

- Developing key skill areas defined in the UPR-RP Mission and our baccalaureate graduate profile.

This survey shows that remarkable progress has been made in all priority areas. There is only one key skill area that remains relatively similar to the 2007 level: graduate students' oral communication in Spanish. In addition, the comparison of results from 2006-07 and 2013-14 results shows that almost all UPR-RP SES results have improved over time. This is the case for both undergraduates and graduates (See Table 3).

Table 3

Percentage of Graduating Students Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Development in Key Skill Areas

| UPR-RP Mission[1] | Undergrad. Exit Profile Skill[2] | Key skill area | Undergraduate | | Graduate | |
			Senior Exit 2007	Senior Exit 2014	Senior Exit 2007	Senior Exit 2014
1	3, 5, 6	Knowledge in area of specialization (major)	88.1	92.2	90.3	93.0
1	1, 8	Capacity for reflective and critical thinking	91.0	94.7	87.3	92.6
1	2	Oral communication in Spanish	86.5	89.3	86.7	86.1
1	2	Writing skills in Spanish	80.8	85.9	81.3	84.2
1	2	Oral communication in English	57.6	69.4	44.3	64.0
1	2	Writing skills in English	54.1	69.4	44.4	61.5
1	1, 9	Social responsibility	78.2	85.5	78.8	86.6
2, 3, 4, 5	3, 7, 11	Research and creation	70.8	81.2	83.6	90.9
1, 3	4	Logical reasoning in Mathematics	57.8	65.9	53.4	67.5
1, 3	4	Statistical skills	48.9	58.3	53.8	64.7
2, 3	4, 10	Technological skills	64.0	71.9	67.9	77.3
3	1, 5	Capacity for independent study	82.7	88.9	82.2	91.8
1	1, 4	Personal development	88.5	92.6	84.3	92.9
4	9	Capacity to comprehend and evaluate reality from an international perspective	76.7	87.8	74.2	86.1
1	1	Capacity for ongoing (lifelong) learning	85.6	91.3	82.8	89.8
2, 4, 5	9	Capacity to understand and evaluate Puerto Rican reality and contribute to its improvement	77.1	87.8	79.4	86.1
1	6, 10	Integral vision of knowledge	83.2	89.2	81.2	89.9
1	10	Search, effective management, and ethical use of information	81.8	90.5	83.2	90.4
1	11	Teamwork	80.8	83.8	77.4	85.4

[1] Mission of the Río Piedras Campus, University of Puerto Rico, Certification 67, 1989-90, Academic Senate, UPR-RP.

[2] Graduating Student Profile, Certification 46, 2005-06, Academic Senate, UPR-RP.

Undergraduate students most notable percentage increases are in two areas: written and oral communication skills in English and the capacity to understand and evaluate Puerto Rican reality and contribute to its improvement. Research and creation is another area of improvement documented at the undergraduate level.

Among the graduate level, students' answers suggest the highest percentage increases are in four areas: written and oral communication skills in English, logical reasoning in mathematics, and skills in statistics. Comprehension and evaluation of reality from an international perspective is a key area in which stronger learning outcomes are also evident.

Conclusion

The UPR-RP recognizes student learning as a fundamental component of institutional effectiveness. Moreover, as shown in Table 3 and in our discussion of student surveys, it has consistently relied on various instruments to evaluate overall performance in this area. The institution has taken close note of areas in which students' responses fell short of institutional expectations. Lower satisfaction were reported in the areas related to administrative processes and infrastructure. Consequently, the student surveys results, alongside other data, have led the administration to increase budget allocations to projects and initiatives that promise to strengthen student-faculty interaction and those that enrich educational experiences. Among the projects that have been launched in these areas are student conferences and literary competitions for first-year students in the College of General Studies (e.g., in the Departments of English and Social Sciences) and student research and a faculty mentorship programs organized by our Title V program Undergraduate Initiatives for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (iINAS in Spanish). Recent survey results demonstrate that our campus has succeeded in enhancing students' personal experiences and developing key skill areas that are defined in the UPR-RP Mission and our graduating student profile.