



## **Division of Institutional Research and Assessment**

University Institutions nowadays, center their efforts towards the students and the achievements of their goals. Faced with this reality, it becomes imperative that higher education institutions strengthen their decision making, performance review and resources allocation culture, and transform them into an evidence-based practices. An agile structure that allows us to build a database that is correct, official, reliable, accessible, timely, pertinent and that facilitates analytical and visualization processes, will allow the institution to evaluate operational results, make adjustments and demonstrate its state of affairs and the achieved progress.

The Río Piedras Campus, motivated by the need of knowing performance levels in diverse administrative and academic efforts which lead to an informed decision making process and to fulfil the institutional mandate and the requirements of the accreditation agency (among others), has created the Division of Institutional Research and Assessment (División de Investigación Institucional y Avalúo/ DIIA) to manage, receive, analyze, disclose and protect official data. The collected information will allow the entire university community to learn about the profile of the Campus, current student body and alumni, faculty and non-faculty members, and the findings of the self-assessment research. This will enable the institution to measure achievement levels in both administrative and academic processes as well as the challenges faced towards the fulfillment of the mission and goals set. Similarly, it establishes the path to transparency and accountability.

### *Institutional Regulations*

The regulations cited below are the framework for the creation of the Division and the functions it will be carrying out. We make reference to the regulatory segments which apply to the task at hand.

#### **Certification JS 1998-1999 University of Puerto Rico Policy on Institutional Research**

Establishes the definition, objective and functions of institutional research. The document defines institutional research as “*the total sum of all activities directed to describe the full spectrum of the processes (educational, research and development, service and administration) that occur inside a college or university. Institutional research examines these functions in its broadest definition and establishes the strategies for data collection and analysis in support of the decision-making process.*” The fundamental purpose is to establish a rational base of information and

knowledge for the processes of planning, decision-making and allocation of resources at the service of academic and administrative managers of the University of Puerto Rico System.

**Certification 145 JG 2014-2015 Measures to Optimize the Use of the UPR's Available Resources by Reengineering Institutional Processes and Practices**

Objective 4

*The University will link itself to the best university management practices, developing computer platforms that minimize administrative processes and that produce information and data which will serve for the university's planning and decision-making.*

Strategy b

*The Vice Presidency of Academic Affairs, jointly with the Body of Deans of Academic Affairs of the university system, will evaluate the planification structures and processes of the units of the university system, and will present a plan for the strengthening of institutional research for the university system. The President will submit the first draft of said plan to the Governing Board, no later than September 30, 2015.*

**Strategic Plan 2017-2022: A New Era of Innovation and Transformation for Student Success, Certification 50 JG (2016-2017)**

Strategic Issue: Educational Environment

Milestone 1 *Enrich the academic offer with relevant, differentiated and competitive academic programs through diverse modalities that respond to the evolution and requirements of disciplines, professions and the professional market, both nationally and globally; the recruitment of students and teachers, while attending to the continuous professional development needs of human capital.*  
(MSCHE STD: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Objective 1.a *Elaborate an academic development plan that promotes synergy between the System and other institutional units, which enables the renovation of the offer.*

Strategic Issue: Technology Culture

Milestone 2 *Establish an institutional plan of information and communication technologies (ICT) that coordinates, at a systemic level, the technological infrastructure, online services, support networks and the training of its users.* (MSCHE STD: 1,2, 6,7)

Objective 2.c *Strengthen coordination between information and communication systems of each one, thus supporting the areas of institutional research, academic areas (education, research and service), teaching and non-teaching administrative areas (finances, budget and human resources), library systems and student services.*

Milestone 3. *Strengthen the evaluation processes of programs and student learning in order to maintain a continuous improvement through the integration of complementary systems and technologies, and the coordination between program levels, undergraduate and graduate, of the academic units and the UPR system. (MSCHE STD: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)*

Objective 3.a *Develop assessment of online programs and student learning that coordinates at the program level, the academic units and the UPR system, the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and performance reports, which should be used to make informed decisions and for the continuous improvement of programs and student learning.*

Strategic Issue: Sustainable Management

Milestone 2 *Temper the policy on Institutional Research to the new vision and the best higher education practices for said field, which support the informed and timely decision-making process between the system and its units; it also allows us to define the actual positioning of the UPR among the local and international higher education community. (MSCHE STD: 1, 2, 6, 7)*

Objective 2.d *Strengthen the areas of Institutional Research with the necessary resources, coordinate personnel functions and standardize information systems, including databases, software, equipment and tools to ensure data integrity.*

### **Certification 68 SA 2005-2006      Student Learning Assessment Plan**

The Academic Senate approved the Learning Assessment's Office Plan which, among other tasks, assigns:

Approve and collaborate with academic programs in the development and implementation of the learning assessment's plan; evaluate the implementation process in a formative way; provide general information about the student learning assessment activities and the findings to the administration, the faculty and the Campus' student body; carry out and support relevant studies related to assessment or student learning evaluation in the classroom; offer technical support in the use of findings for the improvement of the learning-teaching processes; analyze the academic program's reports and prepare institutional reports to accreditation agencies and the corresponding bodies.

## **Middle State Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) (Summary)**

The Accreditation Standard V establishes that learning assessment and students' performances demonstrate that the students of the institution have achieved educational objectives consistent with their study program, degree level, the institution's mission and the appropriate expectations for higher education institutions.

Systematic and organized evaluations conducted by professors or the appropriate professionals, assessing the student's achievement of institutional and grade level or program goals should be a continuous and systematic exercise. Institutions should: a. define significant curricular milestones with defensible standards to evaluate if the students are achieving them; b. coordinate how the students are prepared in a continuous way with its mission of successful careers, important lives and, when appropriate, additional education. They must collect and provide data about on the extent to which they are meeting these objectives; c. support and maintain students' performance evaluation and divulge its results to the interested parties; d. Consider and use the evaluation results in order to improve educational effectiveness. According to the institution's mission, it could include: improvement of the students learning process; improvement of pedagogy and curriculum; review of academic programs and support services; plan, implement and support the development of professional activities; plan and budget for the programs' provisions and academic services; inform the appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs; improvement of the key indicators of the students' success, like retention rate, graduation, transference and employability; implement other processes and procedures designed to improve the educational programs and services; inter alia.

Regarding Affiliation, to be eligible and achieve and maintain the accreditation, an institution must prove that it entirely fulfills with the following requirements, the most important ones being:

8. The institution evaluates systematically its educational and other types of programs and shares the information on how well and in what way it is achieving its purposes.
9. The programs and learning opportunities of the students of the institution are characterized by the rigor, the coherence and the appropriate students' performance evaluation throughout the

educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level, or the method of delivery and instruction.

10. The institutional planning integrates milestones for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, the achievement of students' educational goals, student learning and the results of academic and institutional evaluations.

Compliance is expected to be continuous and will be validated periodically. This will be done generally at the moment of the institution's self-assessment and during any other compliance evaluation of the institution. Once eligibility is established, the institution must prove in a continuous matter that it complies with the Accreditation Standards.

### **Strategic Plan Commitment 2018-2023 Certification SA 79 2017-2018**

*Milestone 2 The Río Piedras Campus is committed to a comprehensive innovation and transformation of its academic programs and specialized services. The academic renewal widely integrates the technologies; responds to the direction of knowledge, to challenges of professional sustainability and to emerging scenarios of the job market and social lifestyle; Develops and strengthens educational practices and support services, using the results of the learning assessment and institutional effectiveness, of information technologies and communication for a continuous improvement.*

#### *Vision*

Provide official, accessible and timely institutional information to diverse audiences that leads the Campus to recognition for its excellence in university management, characterized by the use of institutional research and self-assessment results as a pillar for its decision-making process, planning and formulation of academic and management policies.

#### *Mission*

Generate, compile and provide information relevant to the institutional behavior systematically, which will lead to the selection of alternatives in the decision-making process that support academic and administrative management, tending to internal transformations, national and international. Said practice will contribute to the development of a culture of continuous and systematic evaluation and self-assessment directed towards updating the knowledge of processes and products for the institution's mission. Coordinate and institutionalize students' learning assessment efforts in a way that an Institutional Plan of Assessment is implemented and integrated.

Provide support to assessment coordinators of the academic programs for the selection of qualitative and quantitative instruments to be used, maintaining the results accessible to the entire community of the university.

### *Milestone*

Compile and offer reliable, updated and official data to the university and the outside community, that highlight the Campus' academic and administrative state of affairs. It is expected that the acquired knowledge will enable them to plan the academic, administrative and self-assessment work, consistent with the pursuit of academic excellence and institutional effectiveness which the Campus aspires to obtain. Likewise, the acquired knowledge will enable the necessary transformations to be carried out for the benefit of the university community.

### *Objective*

At the end of the academic year, the DIIA will have carried out the entirety of its institutional researches and learning assessment through surveys, headings and other valid instruments that show the Campus' state of affairs in accordance with the Annual Work Plan. Statistical data and analytical reports of the results will be disclosed on the DIIA's webpage and DAA (Deanery of Academic Affairs) and other means of the Campus and the external community.

The DIIA's range of action is to support the academic and administrative planning process that takes place in Río Piedras Campus. Thus, it contributes to the creation of a research culture, learning assessment and evidence-based decision-making, transparency and accountability.

For this purpose, the DIIA,

- ✦ Designs and carries out institutional studies using valid and objective instruments
- ✦ Prepares accessible and timely reports, incorporating state-of-the-art technology
- ✦ Maintains an updated and easily accessible database, in which data quality and integrity are guaranteed.
- ✦ Carries out partnerships with other Río Piedras Campus units that are relevant to its functions
- ✦ Ensures compliance through required reports of the diverse accreditation agencies in a systematic and scheduled manner.
- ✦ Offers consultation services and training to users and recipients of information systems in the different faculties and schools.
- ✦ Discloses the results of its researches and processes, using diverse platforms

- ✦ Guides academic administrators on the repertoire of activities and instruments that are a part of the learning assessment and that are accessible for the community
- ✦ Advises and trains professors of the academic programs on topics related to learning assessment

### *Goal*

1. Establishes an information basis which evokes reflection to implement strategies leading to the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of academic functions, research, development and Campus services.
2. Provide official data that empowers the Campus for decision-making, practices and informed policies and that contribute to its story.
3. Support the development of self-assessment culture by compiling data and offering support for its analysis.
4. Use data generated by institutional activity in order to identify performances that require corrective actions.
5. Keep data and statistics up to date for disclosure to different entities of the university and external community.
6. Post and disseminate data using the programmer for student learning assessment *Online Learning Assessment System (OLAS)*.
7. Demonstrate, by means of self-assessment, the effectiveness of educational efforts.
8. Improve the teaching/learning process, the planning and the curricular revision through the analysis of gathered information.

### *Functions*

1. Establish mechanisms that guarantee the maintenance of quality, integrity and data analysis promptness.
2. Establish the platforms to be used for data dissemination.
3. Stimulate interest in academic research.
4. Design and conduct institutional studies and research of interest to the Institution to guide efforts to improve decision making and institutional effectiveness.

5. Compile, organize, present and keep up to date in the online platforms, the Campus' official statistical data.
6. Compile necessary information for the evaluation of programs and services.
7. Synthesize and analyze data on institutional operations, internal and external environment, and complete studies that can develop knowledge on planning and academic activities.
8. Disseminate statistical data between the Campus and the Central Administration, that serve as a reference in the processes and situations of the Campus for which data is collected.
9. Keep the Appointing Authority up to date on the findings of these research.
10. Coordinate the assessment and institutional research processes.
11. Coordinate trainings, meetings and activities with academic programs about issues related to learning assessment, institutional research and instruments like rubrics, assessment plan outlines and the use of OLAS.
12. Conduct presentations of program assessment plans with the purpose of enriching assessment culture of the Campus.
13. Inform academic administrators about the repertoire of activities and instruments that comprise learning assessment and that are accessible for the community.
14. Administer Institutional Tests to exiting students, as requested from the faculties and specific academic programs.
15. Administer Institutional Tests in the faculties to exiting students.
16. Attend, in a timely manner, petitions of data and information of diverse internal and external audiences, such as: Central Administration, researchers, students and alumni, among others.
17. Collaborate with the accreditation and licensing processes of the Campus, Faculties, Schools and Departments.
18. Complete questionnaires (IPEDS) of the U.S. Department of Education.
19. Complete questionnaires to be used for the MSCHE reports.
20. Provide technical support for the use of OLAS (or any other program) and cooperate with the revision of assessment plans of the diverse academic programs.
21. Establish platforms and disclose the Campus' data and information.
22. Prepare routine annual report and reports upon request from the Appointing Board or other bodies.

23. Coordinate other activities related to institutional research.

### *Administrative Organization of the Office*

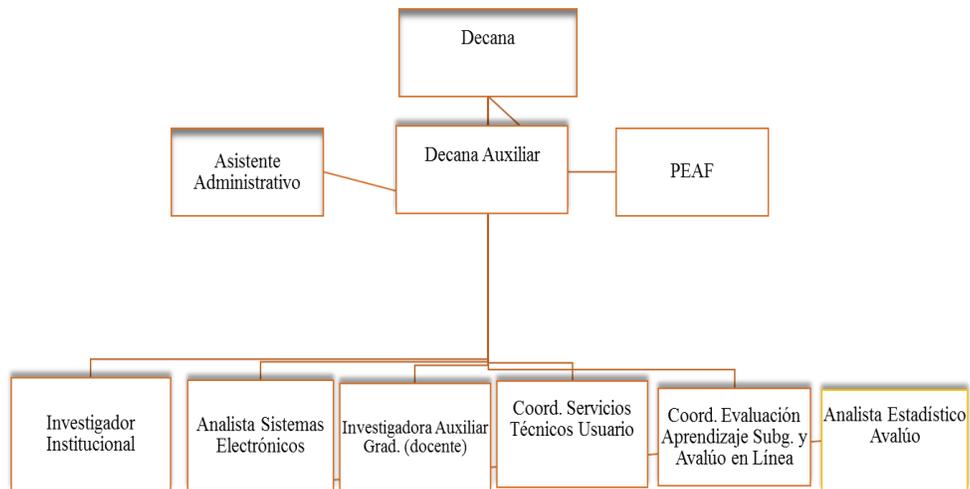
#### Description

The Division of Institutional Research and Assessment is affiliated to the Deanery of Academic Affairs, a unit that answers directly to the Rector's office. The nature of the functions it performs, places it in continuous relationship with other offices and units of the Campus and the Central Administration, such as: Human Resources Office, Registrar's Office, Budget/Finance Office, Deanery of Students, Deanery of Administrative Affairs, Financial Aid Office and the Vice-presidency of Academic Affairs.

#### Organizational Chart

##### Deanery of Academic Affairs

##### Division of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIIA)



## *Administrative Affairs*

Employees of the institutional research and learning assessment of the DIIA component participate in the studies either by compiling data, entering information of the findings in the programs or working with data analysis. Some reports are created on preestablished dates or at the request of faculties or higher bodies.

## *Institutional Research*

The research activity is created using diverse available sources or surveying students, faculty and non-faculty members. The obtained information is used to complete requested reports, inside or outside the Campus, in order to generate knowledge. With it, the information gathered serves the purpose of planning administrative and academic activities, and helps us consider corrective measures, among other things. They are also used for faculty members and students that conduct academic research or for administrative ends, having the certainty that they are reliable and official. It is expected that with the reports created from these investigations, the authors can validate their citations and bibliographic references, having the DIIA as an information source.

The relationship that the Institution has with accrediting, licensing and financial aid institutions, leads us to complete surveys that demonstrate institutional performance and effectiveness. Among these are: MSCHE, CLARIVIAATE, USNEWS, College Board, TORS, HEP. Additionally, university regulations require reporting of quantitative and qualitative data that evidence compliance with the predetermined milestones in the Strategic Plan.

## *Means for Information Dissemination*

All data is located in the SAGA program to ensure that officials like Deans, Directors of the Programs, Assessment Coordinators and Academic Senate Standing Committee Chairs (Certification AS 103 2018-2019) and internal or external people of the university community can have access to it. DIIA uses other means, like its webpage (under construction) or the Deanery of Academic Affairs and Campus webpage for the entry of data analysis reports, which allows all the Puerto Rican community to know the Campus' state of affairs and the activity generated in it.

For further information, or in order to request data for research or reports, you can contact us via our email address [peticiones.diia@upr.edu](mailto:peticiones.diia@upr.edu). Furthermore, you can request access to SAGA and other special reports. Excellent service to the university community is a commitment of all the Division team, which is why generating complete and reliable information, in a preestablished timeframe, is our main goal.