

## STANDARD VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

*The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 10:** *Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 11:** *The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.*

### 6.1: Institutional Objectives

The UPR-RP's main institutional objectives are clearly identified in documents that guide actions at three levels: (i) the UPR System's Strategic Plan 2017-2022; (ii) the UPR-RP Strategic Plan, Commitment 2018-2023, which has been extended to December 2024; and (iii) the various development plans that academic and administrative units created for the period 2018-2023. These documents are aligned with each other and linked to fulfillment of the UPR-RP mission, and ongoing institutional improvement. Over the last few years, when the institution has faced large-scale challenges due to the constraints imposed on the UPR System by the Fiscal Control Board, those objectives have also served to increase the visibility of institutional goals for a variety of constituents. Some of those challenges include:

- Decreased Commonwealth appropriations to support operations at the level of the UPR System
- Academic and operational setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Declining student enrollment, in line with the overall demographic shift in the country
- Impact of natural disasters on infrastructure and maintenance investment
- Reform of the UPR Pension System and other employee benefits

The UPR-RP's strategic plan, Commitment 2018-2023, focuses on allocating resources to address the challenges that have arise following massive reductions in the institution's state funding. Until 2017, the Government of Puerto Rico was required by law to set aside 9.6% of the General Budget and allocate it to the UPR System. However, the Fiscal Oversight Board rescinded that provision and conditioned the allocation of \$102 million to the UPR System's compliance with several operational and public policy requirements. To the extent that the UPR System does not meet the established requirements, the Board withholds the funds, which in turn forces the university to continuously readjust its budget through additional annual cuts.

Although these challenges have had a negative impact on the institution's finances, they have also reaffirmed the commitment of the UPR-RP community to fulfill the institutional mission. Changes achieved leading to more efficient approaches to operations, cost reductions in several areas, adjustments to practices that facilitate the capitalization of existing funds, and the pursuit of

new collaborations with external partners, are all evidence of a committed community that, even when opposed to budget cuts, is willing to keep working towards the institutional goals and objectives.

## **6.2: Strategic Planning at the Campus Level**

The UPR-RP strategic planning process is inclusive and extensive, allowing constituents to use assessment results to support institutional improvement. Diverse and multiple structured efforts ensure the participation and feedback of constituents from all sectors so that they can contribute to the formulation and systematic implementation of the plan. Looking back on the process leading to the current plan shows that at the end of AY 2014-15, the Chancellor activated the UPR-RP Strategic and Fiscal Planning Work Group, also known as the *Think Tank for Strategic Planning*, which included the Dean of Academic Affairs, faculty members, specialists with relevant professional experiences, and representatives from the Office of Strategic Planning and Budget.

The *Think Tank* produced a report that included strengths and challenges in the implementation of the previous campus strategic plan, University Vision 2016, recommendations based on findings of the *UPR-RP Self-Study Report* (January 2016), and the *MSCHE Peer Evaluation Committee Report*. The report served as a guide and common platform for the visualization and discussion of institutional improvement to be considered in the development of the new plan. The assessment exercise resulted in a list of strengths and weaknesses:

### Strengths

- The design process considered input from several groups, including: an internal steering committee, representatives of campus units and deans, and external off-campus collaborators.
- Its goals and topics detailed specific strategic outcomes to maximize areas of opportunities and adjust to changes over time.
- The objectives were measurable and quantifiable, allowing progress to be periodically assessed.
- Assessment was integrated into assessing each of the plan's goals.
- Standard formats were established for work plans, progress reports, and annual performance reports in conjunction with the strategic plan.
- Throughout the life of the plan, data collection was consistent and aligned with annual projects, facilitating the assessment of results and institutional effectiveness.

### Weaknesses

- A large number of objectives, indicators, and achievements were a challenge to continuously monitor.
- A large number of objectives, indicators, and achievements made the achievement of specific goals seem fragmented and less clear.
- The planning process had at times not paid sufficient attention to new areas.
- Focus on a specific initiative rather than a broadly conceptualized one sometimes complicated effective planning and budget allocation.

## **Creation & Approval of Current Plan**

Embraced as a planning tool, the aforementioned list of strengths and challenges and related discussion guided the design and development of the next campus strategic plan. In the period

leading up to its approval, the Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs established the Ad-Hoc Working Group for Strategic and Financial Planning (GTAH, in Spanish), composed of faculty as well as student representatives from the Academic Senate). Additionally, within the Academic Senate, the Special Committee for Institutional Effectiveness and the Ad-Hoc Committee to Evaluate Recurring Funding were established. In December 2017, the Dean of Academic Affairs presented the GTAH report and the new strategic plan 2018-2023 proposal to the Chancellor, who, after review, submitted the final proposal to the Academic Senate and the Administrative Board for discussion and final approval. In May 2018, the plan was adopted as AY 2018-19 AS Certification 17. These steps represent the general process for the approval of our strategic plans.

Commitment 2018-2023 recognized the difficult economic, social, and demographic scenarios facing public education at the tertiary level in Puerto Rico and the profound changes that is has led to in our institution. In light of these challenges, planning aimed to maximize areas of opportunity in support of new developments and continuous improvements that could boost efficiency and effectiveness in institutional processes. Four areas were prioritized for an effective balance between meeting goals and fiscally sustainable approaches to management and resource allocation: (i) research and creation; (ii) academic offerings and support services for student success; (iii) social responsibility and community networks; and (iv) sustainable management, effectiveness, and efficiency.

In July 2018, the then Acting Chancellor, Dr. Luis Ferrao Delgado, informed the campus community of the creation of an Institutional Committee for the Implementation of the UPR-RP Strategic Plan: Commitment 2018-2023. Simultaneously, the Division of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA), in coordination with the Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting, guided the implementation of the plan and related processes for institutional improvement. In addition, all major academic and administrative units (i.e., colleges, schools, offices of executive deans) elaborated and later implemented five-year development plans that integrated recommendations made by faculty, non-teaching staff, students, as well as internal and external collaborators, with specific projects and initiatives for each of the four priority areas.

The units' development plans and annual achievement reports, the UPR-RP Annual Reports on Effectiveness, and the UPR-RP Strategic Plan Summative Evaluation Report 2018-2023 informed financial and academic decision-making at multiple levels. These reports are available on the DIRAA and the respective units' webpages.

**Table 1: UPR-RP Strategic Plan 2018-2023: Summative Assessment of Development Plans**

UPR-RP SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	ACADEMIC UNITS			EXECUTIVE OFFICES & DECEP		
	# PROPOSALS	# PROPOSALS ACHIEVED	PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ACHVMT ALL UNITS	# PROPOSALS	# PROPOSALS ACHIEVED	PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ACHVMT ALL UNITS
1. Research and creation	62	54	89.40	8	4	76.38
2. Academic offerings & student support services	82	51	73.66	19	16	90.33
3. Social responsibility & community networks	43	30	79.37	8	5	87.50
4. Sustainable management, effectiveness, & efficiency	62	34	66.37	12	8	82.81
<b>All Priority Areas, campus-wide achievement: 81.45%</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>*77.20%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>*85.70%</b>

“Achievement” refers to 100% achievement for a given project. “Progress made towards achievement” refers to projects where achievement was less than 100%.

### **Achievement Under Commitment 2018-2023**

Overall, the UPR-RP Strategic Plan Summative Evaluation Report 2018-2023 demonstrates that the UPR-RP made substantial advancement in all priority areas. Outcomes signal the degree to which resources were used effectively and efficiently to accomplish goals and thereby reinforce fulfillment of the mission. Some examples of campus-wide exemplary outcomes:

- Major awards received for successful applications to competitive external funds to support research
- Dissemination of publications by faculty and students, locally and internationally
- Creation of new graduate programs and professional certificates, online and quarterly
- Conversion and approval of near 500 of traditional face-to-face courses to virtual and hybrid modalities
- Creation of undergraduate and graduate programs
- Renewal of academic offerings (e.g., majors, minors, second majors, areas of emphasis) and adjustments and revisions of programs of study
- Institutionalization of UPR-RP Education Project for Inmates
- Expansion of joint bachelor’s and master’s degrees
- Partnerships / collaborative alliances for the generation of proposals and service projects with government agencies and private and non-profit entities
- Participation in commissions, ad-hoc committees, special projects, and other public policy efforts
- Establishment of the College of Communication and Information
- Innovative strategies for the sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency of academic and extracurricular activities
- Optimization of efficiency through unit reorganizations
- Energy saving and renewable energy projects

Significant efforts have been made to consistently support research by students and professors, with initiatives aimed at increasing the production of innovative knowledge through research and creative activity, and the recruitment of professors of excellence (Goal 1.1). All units evidenced successful projects and increased external funds coming from competitive proposals, with notable achievements by the College of Natural Sciences, including 42 patent applications during the period under evaluation (Goal 1.2). As established in the UPR-RP Annual Achievement Reports, for the period 2015-2020, resource allocations to support research and creation at the campus level increased from \$8 to \$106 million; with additional allocations reported for 2021 and 2022, \$36 and \$21 million, respectively. It is important to highlight that during the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2020 to June 2021, 160 external funding proposals totaling \$94,226.294 million were submitted. Moreover, during that period faculty and students actively disseminated research and creative production at the local and international level, including publications in peer-reviewed journals, papers published in conference proceedings, research monographs and edited volumes, books and film reviews, and the sponsorship of annual conferences and congresses (Goal 1.3).

The UPR-RP shows significant achievements while strengthening its recognized longstanding excellence in undergraduate, graduate, and professional education. This includes meeting the specific strategic goals (Goal 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3), as well as launching several projects and initiatives.

Moreover, the Campus has continued to make great strides in its public service and outreach community goals of the Strategic Plan (Goal 3.1). In accordance with its Mission, the Campus has maintained and strengthened its community networks offering real-life practice experiences for students, while contributing to social, cultural and environmental projects. A notable achievement is the establishment of the BA in General Education by Extension for the Confined Population in the Puerto Rico Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, with the first class of 12 graduates in 2022. Partnerships with government entities and non-profit organizations for research and consulting opportunities, and an extensive list of outreach collaborative community projects have been embedded into academic programs (practical and internship courses, volunteer urban, community, and entrepreneurial work, tasks assigned or led by students), quality of life projects, and student organizations activities. Through the development of congresses, forums, expositions and cultural initiatives (virtual during the emergency periods), the Campus has led the discussion of public affairs and the formulation of public policy proposals, allowing for humanistic and creative reflections.

UPR-RP is committed to the implementation of environmentally responsible institutional practices (Goal 3.2). Recognized as an institutional priority, a six-phase project for improvement to the air conditioning system of the central cooling plant was 100% completed, resulting in savings of \$500,000 annually. In compliance with the UPR's energy policy, proposals have been submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Puerto Rico Department of Housing, for expected savings of over 50% of electricity consumption. Another notable project is the LED lighting system installed in 145 buildings, resulting in a 35% reduction in electricity consumption. The Office of the Dean of Students have lead multiple collaborative and innovative projects to promote the participation of student organizations and employees in an array of community services, social and cultural management activities [i.e. beach clean-ups, blood donations, visits to homes for the elderly, animal shelters, Julia de Burgos Protected Home, and hospitals, among others].

To enable an environment for research, creation, teaching, and service with greater fiscal sustainability (Goal 4.1), in addition to proposals for external funds, other sources of income implemented by the academic units include, intramural practices, trusts and donations, continuing professional education services, collaborative alliances with governmental and private, local and international organizations, and reduction in operational costs. The Office of the Dean of Students institutionalized a payment collection mechanism for specific services (e.g., medical services, medical plans, summer camps, guided tours).

During AY 2018-19, to support an organizational culture change with a holistic experience focused on student success, UPR-RP established the Online Education Unit under the Division of Continuous Education and Professional Studies (DECEP, in Spanish). Also, it provides distance learning education services to faculty and students and offers support in the creation of online programs and courses. In conjunction with this initiative, DECEP reorganized its operations and strengthened online structures and services to attract nontraditional students and new external funding sources as well as to establish alliances for innovative projects (Goal 4.2). DECEP is a successful income-generating entity due to its collaborative alliances with local and international organizations, other universities, and the UPR System units.

To optimize operations efficiency, the UPR-RP focused on the reorganization of units, updating procedures, and improving services (Goal 4.2). The Office of Human Resources, under the Office of the Dean of Administration, completed the evaluation and administrative reorganization of units' requests implementing reclassifications, updating of classification questionnaires and/or

granting of differentials to reduce temporary and/or substitute appointments, achieving an estimate payroll reduction of \$3.7 million in institutional funds. Efficiency was improved through sustained monitoring to ensure that services are provided by suppliers quickly and payments are processed within the stipulated time. Also, an analysis of the purchasing process was completed, and changes were recommended and implemented to increase efficiency. To improve external funds management, the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research successfully implemented an action plan for the transformation of the post-award processes.

Academic and administrative restructuring has been one means of optimizing operations and re-allocating available resources. A significant achievement in this area for AY 2020-21 was the consolidation of the School of Communication with the Graduate School of Sciences and Information Technologies, which led to the new College of Information and Communication (AY 2020-21 Governing Board Certification 125). This development maximizes the use of faculty and non-teaching staff as well as bibliographic and physical resources (Goal 4.2); it also sets the stage for more interdisciplinary research.

Undoubtedly, the UPR-RP confronted challenges during the five-year period of the strategic plan while also reallocating available resources to take advantage of opportunities to move forward into the established priorities. Among the challenges faced were:

- Consecutive cuts to the UPR-RP's operational budget.
- Elimination of tuition exemptions (waivers) for students as well as employees and their dependents.
- Increase in tuition costs and student fees, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Reductions in the size of the student population.
- Adjustments to campus resources (e.g., reduction in the number of graduate student assistantships, fewer bibliographic resources).
- A new approach towards faculty recruitment by the UPR System, which reduced the number of hires as of AY 2019-20.

### **6.3: The Financial Planning & Budgeting Process**

The financial planning and budgeting process facilitates the fulfillment of the campus mission while making possible an ongoing institutional improvement effort using resources from the budget approved from the UPR Governing Board. In the last seven years, the internal budgeting process and the allocation of resources to institutional priorities has undergone significant changes. The institutional planning and budgeting processes have been influenced by external elements that have tested the institutional capacity to respond to its needs; in particular, the dramatic decrease in state funding imposed by the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (FOMB), which was instituted in 2016 under the Puerto Rico Oversight Management and Economic Stability Act (the PROMESA Law).

Since FY 2017, the UPR financial and budget planning process is based on the fiscal plan approved by the FOMB. This plan includes annual cost reductions and revenue measures that the institution needs to implement and comply with, respectively. The annual budget process has been administered through interactions between the FOMB, UPR Central Administration, and the UPR Governing Board. The budget for UPR-RP and the other campuses is the results of that process. The UPR Central Administration establishes the distribution for each campus based on (i) the funding level that the FOMB approves for the UPR System and (ii) decisions about allocation based on the UPR System's budget model and data previously requested from each campus. In the

last few years, the budget process between the FOMB and UPR Central Administration has secured additional funds for the UPR based on itemized goals and projects, funds that are dependent on the realization of requested changes, and specific milestones requested by the UPR. Campuses do not have direct communication with the FOMB. Thus, funding to meet operational needs and strategic planning projects are dependent on communication that takes place between UPR Central Administration and the FOMB. At the campus level, available funds from the annual consolidated budget (General Fund budget and restricted funds) are used to support projects related to the strategic goals as well as goals established in the units' strategic development plans.

#### 6.4: Fiscal & Human Resources

Despite fiscal challenges, the UPR-RP has identified and distributed available funds that have allowed it to continue maintaining its high standards. Currently, it has the minimum human resources necessary to ensure the continuity of its academic offerings.

Human resources have faced the increase in the number of non-teaching personnel retiring. Areas susceptible to internal controls, such as payroll, HR transactions, budget analysis, and contracts, among others, experienced a significant reduction of employees, which resulted in slowing down processes and loss of efficiency. In response, in FY 2023-24 the UPR-RP requested additional fiscal resources from the General Fund budget to recruit personnel in two areas: (i) administration and (ii) maintenance of physical facilities and infrastructure. At the time of this report, the requested funds have not yet been allocated. In the interim, the UPR-RP opted to reassign existing personnel to better meet the institution's needs. However, in the very near future, as more employees retire, the operations might be seriously affected. A second area of concern was the poor personnel retention capability. An outdated compensation structure and reduced employee benefits are making it difficult to be competitive attracting and retaining temporary personnel. In this situation, the Central Administration is developing a new classification and compensation plan for non-teaching personnel in the UPR System. In fact, a UPR-RP academic unit, the Graduate School of Public Administration and its research center CEMGAP, was responsible for its design. Also, they will be designing the compensation structure for teaching personnel. Approval of the FOMB is required before the funds for implementation are assigned.

Personnel statistics from January 2024 show that there are about 2,100 employees with a ratio of 1:1 for faculty and non-teaching staff. The net decrease of employees in both areas over the past seven years is of approximately 797 employees, as shown in the Figure 1. The ratio of tenured and tenure-track faculty dedicated to teaching versus faculty hired annually to offer courses is roughly 1:1.

**Figure 1: Faculty and non-faculty positions (FY 2015-16 to FY 2023-24)**

	FY 2015-16	FY 2023-24	Change	Change (%)
<b>Teaching &amp; other academic personnel</b>	1,235	1,121	- 114	- 9%
Tenure-track & tenured	864 (70%)	609 (54%)	- 255	-21%
Annual contracts (FTE) 1/*	370 (30%)	512 (46%)	+142	11%
<b>Non-teaching personnel</b>	1,690	1,006	-684	-40%
	1.37	0.90		
Permanent	1,485 (88%)	798 (79%)	-687	-41%
Annual contracts	205 (12%)	208 (21%)	+3	0.17%

\*Includes faculty, librarians, professional counselors, and psychologists

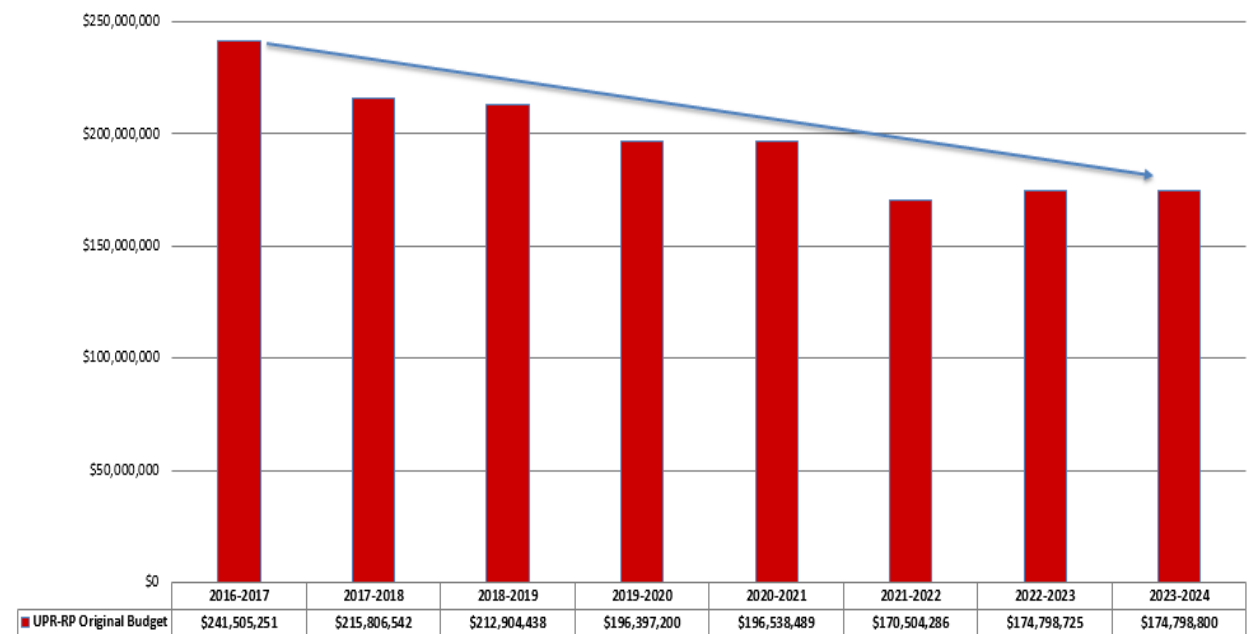
Regarding recruitment, the UPR-RP adheres to the UPR System’s Fiscal Plan for the tenure-track recruitment of faculty, which establishes that the equivalent of 3% of its faculty can be recruited annually. Unfortunately, this formula will not lead to improvement in the ratio of permanent teaching staff compared to temporary teaching staff. These 3% tenure-track faculty recruitments have been prioritized for accredited academic programs and in areas of student support services such as libraries and professional counseling for students. Efficiency is affected by the amount of non-tenure faculty that must be hired every semester. Government requirements for contract personnel are complex and cumbersome causing academic units to devote an important amount of time to prepare and process them.

As an additional initiative to strengthen the UPR-RP finances in the mid and long term, an external consultant is analyzing academic and administrative data to identify institutional opportunities for improvement and sustainability.

**6.5: Well-defined Decision-making Processes and Assignment of Responsibility: Review of Annual Budgets (FY 2016-17 to FY 2023-24)**

The chronology that follows offers a summary of the most significant events and adjustments to the UPR-RP General Fund budget for FY 2016-17 to FY 2023-24, a period in which the university’s annual budget was determined by the Financial Oversight and Management Board. It presents the budget approved by the Governing Board for each of the aforementioned years. In addition, it highlights institutional responses that allowed the UPR-RP to minimize the adverse impact of budget cuts. As shown in Figure 6.3, the campus operational budget has experienced a significant decline of \$66.7 million (\$241.5M - \$174.8M) during this period.

**Figure 2: UPR-RP General Fund Budgets Approved by Governing Board: FY 2016-17 to FY 2023-24**





### FY 2016-17

The PROMESA Act was implemented as a federal response to the bankruptcy of the Puerto Rican Government and the creation of the FOMB. Upon beginning its work, the FOMB established that the UPR System would be under its fiscal supervision even though the institution, distinct from other public institution, at the time had little debt. Therefore, the UPR Governing Board initiated the drafting and approval of the first UPR Fiscal Plan.

This was the last year that the UPR-RP received a general fund budget allocation of \$241.5 million. This funding allowed the institution to continue regular operations by allocating funds for projects in the colleges, schools, and offices of executive deans according to an established model. The latter was a participatory budget process that redistributed fiscal resources to the units that aligned their work with the strategic goals of the campus. In addition, it supported priority projects, including accreditations for programs and services, research projects, student support services, and the maintenance of the physical facilities and infrastructure.

### FY 2017-18

This year began with adjustments to the UPR-RP original operational budget that amounted to a decrease of \$25.7 million. The combination of budget adjustments and the increase in tuition costs initiated at this time resulted in a reduction of 3.3% fewer students as of August 2017.

The budget cut eliminated access to the funds for vacant teaching and non-teaching positions, along with employer contributions and other benefits. However, the UPR-RP administration was authorized to continue with the recruitment of faculty for research projects that were previously approved. Prospectively, faculty recruitment was guided by the provisions of the UPR Fiscal Plan (2018), which limited the recruitment of new teaching positions to the equivalent of 3% of existing faculty (this new faculty recruitment model would be first activated in FY 2019-20, after progress was made in recovering from the Hurricanes Irma and María, and resulted in 35 tenure-track hires).

With respect to non-teaching positions, the fiscal plan established that all positions that were vacant due to retirement would be eliminated as part of the annual adjustments to make operations more efficient. Campus administrators moved forward with the processes of relocating non-teaching staff and consolidating functions of administrative personnel to maximize human resources. With a budget of \$215.8 million, the campus was able to cover costs associated with academic offerings, the maintenance of physical facilities and infrastructure, student support services, support for program accreditations, and community service.

In September 2017, Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, damaging and destroying a significant amount of the physical facilities and infrastructure, as well as downing trees and power lines. An initial recovery phase extended until December 2017 with emergency funds approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Structural damage was estimated at \$243 million, an amount based on costs at that time. Administrative work and academic offerings were initiated in October 2017, with a revised academic calendar and schedules that permitted continuity of operations even when there was no electrical power.

### FY 2018-19

The UPR-RP original operational budget (General Fund) for this year was \$212.9 million. This marked a net decrease of \$2.9 million for the second year in this sequence of cuts. The FOMB eliminated tuition waivers for students and employees while also implementing tuition increases

for undergraduate and graduate students: from \$57 to \$115 and from \$143 to \$160 per credit hour, respectively. Fees for maintenance, technology, laboratories, and graduation, among a host of others, also increased significantly. The increase in tuition revenue created somewhat of a cushion for the institution, and operational costs were covered satisfactorily. Both the relocation of non-teaching staff and administrative reorganization continued.

#### FY 2019-20

The UPR-RP original operational budget (General Fund) approved for this year amounted to \$196.4 million, reflecting an additional decrease of \$16.5 million when compared to the previous year. The FOMB required the UPR to increase its contribution to the UPR Retirement System, and the budget was adjusted to meet this objective. In the second semester, specifically in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began. Due to the closure of on-site operations, costs decreased and the projected budget shortfall of \$7.4 million was avoided.

#### FY 2020-21

The UPR-RP original operational budget (General Fund) for this year began with an allocation of \$196.5 million approved from UPR Governing Board, of which \$31 million was earmarked for UPR Retirement Fund payments. The latter included the regular and increased employer contribution required by the FOMB. This scenario resulted in an operating budget of \$165.5 million with an initial shortfall projected of \$7.4 million. In consequence, the campus could not cover important budget items; among those: graduate assistantships, bibliographic resources, security services, and other minor operating expenses.

At the beginning of this financial year, UPR-RP received federal funds to address the fiscal needs related to problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. They included financial aid for students and funds that secured the continuity of academic offerings and services to students. These funds were disbursed after an institutional committee was formed to request, receive, and discuss proposals made by the Offices of Executive Deans and other units. Subsequently, federal recovery funds were used to cover expenses allowed by the pandemic grants. Other internal fiscal resources were used to complete the total operational cost.

#### FY 2021-22

This year, the fifth year of cuts to the UPR Fiscal Plan, the original operational budget (General Fund) totaled \$170.5 million, of which \$29.6 million was earmarked for contributions to the UPR Retirement System. This left an allocation of \$140.9 million for regular operations. The initial budget deficit was projected to be \$16 million. However, due to effective short-term planning, the deficit was covered with a combination of complementary funds. These included loss of federal revenue funds secured in the context of the pandemic, earnings from DECEP projects, funds from indirect costs, and funds resulting from reduced expenses.

The budget distribution model that the UPR Central Administration applied for this year was based on internal revenue generated by each of the campuses (i.e., tuition, charges and other revenues from services offered and restricted project funds). A modified zero-based budget method was used as a basis for formulating the budget for each campus, based on the number of projected students; estimated tuition revenues; funds from maintenance, laboratory, and technology fees; the recovery of indirect costs; and miscellaneous revenues. One of the serious challenges that resulted from the implementation of this model is that it instituted significant cuts without considering outstanding needs or overall operational costs. For example, at UPR-RP fiscal shortfalls and

deficiencies had accrued as a result of a lack of repairs and maintenance to the physical facilities. In addition, it was necessary to recruit non-teaching personnel as well as employees responsible for general administrative services.

In June 2021, the UPR-RP presented the Office of the President with a report that documented the shortcomings of the model and its adverse effects. Nevertheless, the model was again implemented without changes that would address these concerns in the forthcoming budgets. As a result, the fiscal capacity of the campus was adversely impacted, and it became more difficult to meet the needs of academic and administrative units. In response, the internal budget process focused more directly on identifying alternative sources of funding to cover the costs of regular operations and to redistribute a portion of these to meet the basic needs of its annual operations.

In light of the large cuts to the UPR-RP's operational budget and limited financial resources, the general focus of the allocated budget was to secure funds for: (i) guaranteeing the academic offering, (ii) covering the additional contribution to the UPR Retirement System required by Central Administration, (iii) supporting research through the allocation of funds received as the recovery of indirect costs, (iv) utility payments, and (v) the maintenance of physical facilities, laboratories, and technology for which students pay a fee. Budget allocations for other items such as graduate student assistantships, bibliographic resources, deferred maintenance of physical facilities, and other recurring operational costs were only partially covered by the original budget assigned to the campus and needed to be fully covered with supplementary non-recurring funds.

One of the changes that took place this year is that the FOMB's UPR System Fiscal Plan integrated a new level of funding approved under Law 53 of 2021. This legislation established that the UPR System, the Government of PR, and the FOMB would fix the annual contribution of the Government of PR to the UPR at a minimum of \$500 million for five fiscal years (i.e., from 2023 to 2027). Law 53 of 2021 helped to restrict further budget reductions but did not fully end continuation of the 2018 fiscal plan's detrimental cuts.

#### FY 2022-23

The UPR-RP original operational budget (General Fund) for this sixth year under the FOMB was \$174.8 million. The increase of \$3.3 million was allocated to electrical energy and other items due to cost increases.

The gains that were anticipated to result from Law 53 of 2021 were not reflected in the UPR-RP's budget for this year. In fact, the year began with the accumulated deficit projection of \$10.2 million. UPR Central Administration explained it had used the cash-to-bank mechanism in previous years' budgets to supplement past periods and that part of the \$500 million was used to replace that mechanism, which meant that it was unable to apply larger increases to campus budgets.

Nevertheless, the UPR-RPs projected \$10.2 million budget deficit was once again covered due to effective decision-making. This involved a combination of supplemental funds from the loss of revenue balance obtained from pandemic funds, earnings from DECEP projects, funds from the recovery of indirect costs, and savings from decreased expenditures in various operational costs.

#### FY 2023-24

The UPR-RP began this year with a budget of \$174.8 million, the same amount provided in the budget for the previous financial year. It should be noted that it does not reflect any increase or funding allocation associated with the \$500 million that the UPR System was to receive under Law

53 of 2021. Said funding was slated for academic and administrative transformation in the five-year period before a possible future round of substantial budgetary cuts.

In conjunction with this budget process, the UPR Governing Board invited campuses to submit documentation of their budgetary needs. The UPR-RP submitted a \$48.5 million request to address the strengthening of the campus infrastructure and the elimination of the budget insufficiency generated by the -\$26 million reduction applied in FY 2021-22. This request was also presented to the University Board’s Budget Committee, the System-level body that advises the President.

Of the \$174.8 million budget, \$26.1 million represents employer contributions that had to be paid to the UPR Retirement System, leaving a net \$148.7 million for operations from the general fund. This budget began with a projection of using supplemental funds and internal redeployments estimated at \$12 million to cover operations. Like prior years, the supplemental funds were identified from funds remaining from the pandemic loss of revenue mechanism, DECEP proceeds, the recovery of funds representing indirect costs, leftover funds from summer activities, and decreases in the costs of minor budget line items.

In October and December of 2023, the UPR-RP presented the UPR President its projection of additional budgetary funds that were needed to maintain a realistic level of operations from FY 2024-25 with its funding requests. The depletion of supplementary resources was noted in this projection. The response to this proposal was that Central Administration plans to request additional funds from the FOMB so that it can provide campuses with larger budgets.

**Table 2: UPR-RP Budget Appropriations & Revenues FY 2016-17 to FY 2023-24**

UPR-RP CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FY 2017 - FY 2024 (P)	Base Year FY 2017	1st Year FY 2018	2nd Year FY 2019	3rd Year FY 2020	4th Year FY 2021	5th Year FY 2022	6th Year FY 2023	7th Year FY 2024 (P)	TOTAL (7 years)	%
GENERAL FUND - ORIGINAL BUDGET (Appropriations and Revenues)	\$241.51	\$215.81	\$212.90	\$196.40	\$196.54	\$170.50	\$174.80	\$174.80	\$1,341.75	80.25%
<b>GENERAL FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>\$241.51</b>	<b>\$215.81</b>	<b>\$212.90</b>	<b>\$196.40</b>	<b>\$196.54</b>	<b>\$170.50</b>	<b>\$174.80</b>	<b>\$174.80</b>	<b>\$1,341.75</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>%</b>	90%	90%	83%	86%	78%	70%	78%	79%	80%	
DECEP PROJECTS GAINS	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$2.05	\$4.69	\$2.80	\$9.54	0.57%
FEDERAL FUNDS - GRANTS AND CONTRACTS	\$12.65	\$10.49	\$14.31	\$15.50	\$13.77	\$16.51	\$18.79	\$21.00	\$110.37	6.60%
CARES ACT AND ARPA FUNDS	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$27.07	\$21.75	\$8.30	\$ .00	\$57.12	3.42%
LOSS OF REVENUE FUND FROM CARES ACT	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$11.82	\$ .00	\$ .00	\$11.82	0.71%
LEGISLATURE AND UPR SCHOLARSHIP FUND	\$3.38	\$3.38	\$6.86	\$2.77	\$2.09	\$2.61	\$2.49	\$2.50	\$22.70	1.36%
STATE GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND CONTRACTS	\$2.96	\$1.03	\$1.44	\$ .98	\$1.95	\$2.33	\$ .38	\$3.50	\$11.61	0.69%
CORPORATIONS AND PRIVATE GIFTS	\$1.55	\$1.26	\$3.22	\$1.29	\$3.17	\$3.96	\$1.42	\$1.50	\$15.82	0.95%
FACULTY PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$ .57	\$ .08	\$ .17	\$ .19	\$ .12	\$ .15	\$ .40	\$ .60	\$1.72	0.10%
ENDOWMENT INCOME	\$ .30	\$ .07	\$ .13	\$ .50	\$ .37	\$2.49	\$3.56	\$2.60	\$9.71	0.58%
REVOLVING FUND INCOME	\$1.39	\$2.38	\$2.98	\$3.56	\$2.73	\$4.58	\$4.45	\$4.70	\$25.38	1.52%

OTHERS SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$2.08	\$ .79	\$10.63	\$6.47	\$1.06	\$2.71	\$1.52	\$3.80	\$26.98	1.61%
CAPITAL PROJECTS	\$3.40	\$5.19	\$5.31	\$1.87	\$4.46	\$2.22	\$4.34	\$4.00	\$27.39	1.64%
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$28.27</b>	<b>\$24.66</b>	<b>\$45.05</b>	<b>\$33.13</b>	<b>\$56.78</b>	<b>\$73.20</b>	<b>\$50.35</b>	<b>\$47.00</b>	<b>\$330.17</b>	<b>20%</b>
%	10%	10%	17%	14%	22%	30%	22%	21%	20%	
<b>CONSOLIDATED BUDGET</b>	<b>\$269.78</b>	<b>\$240.47</b>	<b>\$257.96</b>	<b>\$229.53</b>	<b>\$253.32</b>	<b>\$243.70</b>	<b>\$225.15</b>	<b>\$221.80</b>	<b>\$1,671.92</b>	<b>100%</b>
Note: The UPR-RP does not consider the student grants received from PELL Grant revenue. Only tuition paid with PELL Grant is considered revenue and it forms part of the General Fund allotment.										

### Overview of Funding Sources & Revenues

Table 6.4 identifies the various funding sources and revenues that have supported operations and sustained the implementation of UPR-RP’s Strategic Plan from 2018 to 2023. Various combinations of fiscal resources have been maximized while managing financial adjustments and cuts to maintain operations, in compliance with university regulations.

### External Funds

Funds received from the CARES Act and ARPA, both associated with pandemic recovery, have proven noteworthy given that they assisted in formulating a response to budgetary shortfalls. These funds were used for purchases that strengthened areas such as technology, including improvements and adaptation of the physical and internet infrastructure, equipment for teaching and students, access to software, faculty training. They were also used to complete changes in course modality and support for the review of various on-site and distance learning academic programs.

For FY 2016-17 to FY 2023-24, the UPR-RP remained focused on obtaining federal grants for research (see Table 6.4, item line federal funds—grants and contracts), federal funds for financial aid to students, and income from summer activities, among others. Recently, proposals have also been submitted to federal and local agencies for additional funds to improve the energy infrastructure and other projects. Other activities meant to generate funds include DECEP professional development and online academic programs. In addition, the Chancellor’s Work Plan establishes that efforts to obtain donations and external contributions from alumni and citizens in general will be reinforced for strengthening institutional finances.

### 6.6: Comprehensive Planning for Facilities / Infrastructure: Repair & Maintenance (RA 8 & 10)

Since FY 2018-19, the UPR Governing Board established a budget allocation for infrastructure maintenance based on funds obtained from the maintenance fee charged to students. In UPR-RP this annual allocation has recently fluctuated between \$2.4 to \$2.6 million, an amount that is insufficient, so it has been supplemented with internal savings from the budget itself and with funds obtained from the pandemic, profits from DECEP projects, and other residual sources. The total combined regular maintenance funds used annually have ranged from \$5 to \$7 million and were augmented on a non-recurring basis by contributions from pandemic funds to support projects associated with the return to face-to-face teaching and operations following the health emergency.

Major repairs, permanent improvements and infrastructure projects are considered capital projects. For these, the UPR-RP submitted a funding request to UPR Central Administration in February 2024. Funds for these projects are allocated from the capital improvement plan, which is established and managed by the UPR Governing Board. Central Administration’s Office of Physical Development and Infrastructure manages, in coordination with the UPR-RP, the portfolio

of permanent improvement projects that are approved. In years prior to the UPR Fiscal Plan mandated by the FOMB, the UPR issued bonds and incurred in loans with the Government Development Bank to address system-wide permanent improvements. Since the implementation of the UPR Fiscal Plan in 2017, the institution continued with the payment of its bond debt but was forced to stop issuing new debt in the bond market that would have allowed it to finance its permanent improvement plan. In recent years, capital projects were serviced with the remainder of these funds along with other items from insurance policy claims, institutional set-aside funds, federal construction grant allocations, and funds allocated by the FOMB.

The capital permanent improvement fund for FY 2017 through FY 2024 reflects a direct allocation to the UPR-RP of \$30.7 million, including projects administered from UPR Central Administration on behalf of the UPR-RP. This amount does not include pending projects administered from Central Administration that received FEMA funds for Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Fiona recovery efforts.

In February 2024, the UPR-RP submitted to UPR Central Administration a funding request for an estimated \$99 million for capital improvement multi-year projects (not including FEMA-funded projects) and more than \$8 million for corrective and preventive maintenance. The outcome of this request depends on the FOMB funding request made by the UPR Central Administration, which will be part of the FY 2025 budget approval process.

Regarding FEMA funds claimed for hurricane damages, funds were received from Central Administration to begin the restoration of the student dormitories in the Resi-Campus building and the student medical services facilities. In addition, a review process for the restoration of the student dormitories in the Torre Norte building was implemented. These are important projects which are part of a plan to continue providing accessible housing facilities to local and foreign students.

Some projects have already been carried out with FEMA funds, such as the repair of the medical services building, the demolition of the now non-existent School of Communications building. Other projects (more than 130 projects with an estimated cost of over \$450 million) are awaiting evaluations of the design and permit processes and the identification of funds between the UPR Central Administration and the PR Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction, and Resilience (COR3).

In addition, the President's Office approved \$15 million from the UPR's capital improvement funds for two important projects: \$10 million for the first phase of repairs to the electrical energy infrastructure and \$5 million for the first phase of major repairs to the chilled water plant that provides air conditioning to several buildings.

Regarding technology, a topic also addressed in Chapter VII, the UPR currently has an agreement with the Puerto Rico Treasury Department that will result in the replacement of the existing financial information systems. The project responds to the consolidation of accounting platforms and practices to improve the completion of financial statements for the institution and the Commonwealth Government. Funds to finance this new system will be provided by the PR Treasury Department.

### **Preparing for New Metrics**

In January 2024, UPR Central Administration initiated a study to review its budget model using metrics for indicators such as funds allocated by the Government of PR, tuition revenues, number of students (FTE students), retention and graduation rates, the efficiency of academic offerings, and the efficiency of administration. The purpose of this study is to obtain input that will identify

modifications to the model used for determining the budget allocation of campuses within the UPR System.

Preliminary analysis of the proposed new model, conducted by the UPR-RP Budget Office, emphasizes the need to include an additional indicator that will recognize budgets needed for community service. Such need runs the risk of being overlooked or not considered if by the proposed model. Our campus hosts important community service programs that are central to its mission, which makes explicit reference to social awareness and responsibility. These include the operation of an elementary, middle and high school; the José M. Lázaro Library; the University Radio Station; the Museum of History, Anthropology, and Art; and the UPR Theater. These longstanding projects and institutions do not generate sufficient revenue to cover all of their operation costs and therefore depend on funds from the UPR-RP budget.

Additionally, the maintenance of campus infrastructure is left out of the model under the premise that the UPR will request additional and separate funds from the FOMB to address this component. The proposed new model does not recognize the budget insufficiency of the UPR-RP’s operational fund, which is estimated to be \$12 million. Given this scenario, our campus leadership is preparing for new budgetary and operational challenges in the coming fiscal years.

To address institutional concerns about funding and future budgets, in March and April of 2023, the UPR-RP administration presented documentation specifying operational needs and recurring accumulated budget adjustments to the UPR President Office, the University Board, and the UPR Governing Board. Thereafter, no response was issued nor has any commitment yet been made to address these concerns. The documentation included a proposal for an additional \$52.7 million to cover costs associated with campus operations. The line items included in this proposal are presented in Table 6.3.

**Table 3: UPR-RP Budget Requests for FY 24**

FY 2024 Operational Needs	Funds Requested
FY 2024 minimum operational needs, various budget line-item fund deficits: funds for physical facilities and infrastructure, graduate scholarship, library resources, private security services, and others	\$14,000,000
Funds to convert temporary appointments (including tenure-track faculty) to permanent positions: faculty and non-teaching staff	\$9,445,300
Colleges and Schools: Operational needs	\$6,295,103
Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs: Library, academic advising for students, administrative areas and academic support project for students with academic deficiencies	\$5,554,199
Office of the Dean of Student Affairs: Direct student services	\$318,186
Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research: Support for research	\$716,597
Office of the Dean of Administration: Various service offices and maintenance personnel	\$4,586,222
Regular and deferred maintenance of physical infrastructure and green areas	\$11,800,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$52,715,607</b>
UPR-RP budget FY 2023-24	\$174,798,725
Operational needs for FY 2023-24	\$52,715,607
Operational budget requested for FY 2023-24 onwards	\$227,514,332
Change over current budget - comparable level at FY 2017-18 total general fund budget	30.2%

**6.7: Annual Independent Audit (RA 11)**

The UPR financial statements have been issued on time for the past six years. The UPR issued its audited financial statements and the single audit for fiscal year 2023 before March 31, 2024, the

deadline established by the U.S. Department of Education. The work plan to achieve this objective is based on actions and initiatives that have been successful in the past. It includes a calendar of information-gathering activities to keep track of the progress made in preparation for the audit, integration of the necessary and appropriately trained human resources, face-to-face and virtual meetings with the UPR campus leadership and campus-level Finance Directors, and meetings with the UPR external financial consultants in charge of the three major campuses (Río Piedras, Medical Sciences, and Mayagüez) to resolve issues that will expedite the audit process. In addition, external professionals are hired to support completion of the financial management tasks related to internal compliance issues with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board and other specialized areas of the institution's fiscal matters. Going forward, these processes will continue.

UPR Central Administration will also continue with the practices and improvements implemented in the past few years related to accounting, in particular monthly and quarterly accounting. These practices allow it to keep up-to-date data and internal reports for cash flow statements, liquidity reports, budget to actual reports, among other areas related to financial matters. These reports are useful in responding to information requirements of the FOMB, as they form part of the evidence required under the UPR Fiscal Plan.

The UPR-RP has not had any findings in the Single Audit regarding the administration of federal funds. The UPR-RP Office of Finance Offices and the External Funds Division of Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research have made operational changes in accordance with all requirements related to the administration of federal funds.

The most important improvements that have been implemented by the Office of Finance to comply with the issuance of financial statements are:

- Completion of and adherence to accounting closing schedules
- Monthly bank reconciliations
- Quarterly General Ledger account closings
- Coordination by the Finance Director with officers and units to maintain the flow of documents and the recording of transactions in the accounting system.
- Digitalization of documents and supporting documents showing transactions
- Help desk for students and employees concerning student debt balancing processes, insurance claims, collections, and payroll, as well as student financial aid payments
- Provision of official information to users concerning their files and transactions in process

### **6.8: Strategies to Measure and Assess the Institutions Goals and Progress (RA 8 & 9)**

The UPR-RP has institutionalized uniform processes and instruments for the periodic measurement of progress made according to the indicators established for the strategic goals and objectives. Central planning documents have been assessed during the period under review in order to make them more meaningful and effective. Progress towards meeting the goals of the strategic plan has been monitored through a process that supports the unit's budget need assessments and responds to opportunities and challenges. Additionally, academic and administrative units are required to develop an Annual Achievement Report that documents assessment data, evidence of progress made towards the achievement of objectives, and ongoing actions that will lead to the completion of projects and, in turn, advance institutional improvement. Taking the five-year development plans as a starting point, these progress annual reports establish what actions need to be addressed at the level of the unit (e.g., a specific college or the Executive



Dean’s Office) in the next annual period. Specific ongoing initiatives or steps, as well as projects that may emerge from new opportunities are identified to advance progress towards strategic goals.

The periodic assessment data analyzed from academic and administrative units’ strategic development plans has served as a roadmap for decision-making during Commitment 2018-2023. As part of an institutional priority (Goal 1, Objective 1.1.2), a campus-wide policy and evidenced-based recruitment process was established to assess needs. For each of the three completed recruitment plans (a fourth is in process at the time of this writing), over 30 tenure-track teaching positions have been approved, representing 3% of the total campus teaching staff, which is currently capped at 1,000 positions, as demanded by external fiscal constraints.<sup>1</sup> Deans and directors of schools are guided to formulate these plans based on a program’s needs assessments and data-driven ordered priorities [e.g., indicators for program demand, opportunities for growth, trends, research and creation, accreditations outcomes in professional examinations, student experience and success, among others] for decision-making in resource allocation. Emphasis is consistently placed on maintaining resources needed for accredited programs, “unique” programs that do not exist elsewhere in Puerto Rico, as well as areas in which recruitment proves challenging. As a result, reports show a strengthening of academic offerings from AY 2019-22 to 2022-23, increasing programs from 124 to 131 (5 master’s and 2 doctoral programs), more robust distance learning and renewing academic programs (Goals 2.1 and 2.2); and unique programs increased from 18 to 23. As of mid-February 2023, all 49 programs subject to program level accreditation have been accredited, a demonstration of our ongoing institutional improvement, commitment to external peer evaluation, and compliance with professional standards that keep our programs attuned with new knowledge development and emerging opportunities in a wide variety of fields.

The assessment process has taken place in compliance with the policy for Strategic Planning, Resource Allocation, and Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness, as stipulated in the UPR-RP’s Administrative Board Certification 38, AY 2011-12.

During AY 2023-24, academic and administrative units submitted their five-year strategic evaluation reports for inclusion in the overall UPR-RP Strategic Plan Summative Evaluation Report for the 2018-2023 cycle ending June 30, 2023. The results included in these reports, which track progress at both the unit and campus levels, were analyzed and shared with the university community in a presentation to the UPR-RP Academic Senate on February 1, 2024. The report also includes recommendations for the next strategic planning period.

Results of academic and administrative units show significant advances in each of the current strategic plan’s four Priority Areas. Table 6.1 presents data from numerous academic units: five schools (Architecture, Law, Information Sciences and Technologies, Communication, and Planning) and six colleges (Business, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, General Studies, and Humanities). For each priority area, the number of proposals is juxtaposed with the number completed or achieved. The same is shown for our administrative units: the four Offices of Executive Deans (Administration, Academic Affairs, Students Affairs, Graduate Studies and Research); and the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DECEP in Spanish). Table 6.1 demonstrates significant advancements in all four Priority Areas of Strategic Plan. The preliminary overall campus-wide achievement for all Priority Areas is 81.45%.

## **6.9: Periodic Assessment of Strategic Planning Practices (RA 10)**

---

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Policy and Need Assessment Evidence-Based Faculty Recruitment Process\_February-2021

The UPR-RP assesses processes of planning at the campus and unit levels. Over the course of the five-year strategic planning cycle, these processes and practices have been enhanced by an integrated model of planning, resource allocation, management, and outcomes assessment. Performance is periodically monitored using measurable indicators and metrics, institutional research, annual /progress reports, and development-assessment plans.

A sequence of six main practices continue to guide our current processes:

- Formulation of goals and objectives: All academic, administrative, and support units prepare five-year development plans that are aligned with the UPR-RP mission, the unit's mission statement, and the new strategic plan.
- Allocation of institutional and supplementary resources based on alignment between goals and areas and the projects and objectives proposed by units.
- Identification of success indicators and performance metrics in strategic plan and units' development plans to ensure that progress toward outcomes is evaluated.
- Progress reports: Shortly before the end of the fiscal year, the DIIA collects units' annual reports and prepares a campus-level report on institutional effectiveness that documents overall progress and how the budget has been used. This monitoring practice reinforce the importance of the development plans, achievements, and reaching goals.
- Dissemination: The Chancellor presents the campus-level report to the Academic Senate Discussion and analysis of reports helps units connect their roles with broader campus-level goals and facilitate the identification of strategies for addressing challenges, including those that arise unexpectedly.
- Data-driven decision-making: Recently collected data are used to arrive at efficient and practical decisions about resource allocation and planning for the next operational period.

### **Further Improvement**

The implementation of our current integrated model of planning, resource allocation, management, and outcomes assessment has demonstrated that some practices can be improved for the more effective allocation of budgetary resources decisions. Efforts must be focused on more achievable-realistic long-term goals with tangible objectives in the next cycle. Baseline and target campus metrics for mid-term assessment must be established and disseminated. In addition, more emphasis should be placed on the discussion of annual achievement data reports at the unit level and campus governance, not only within the Academic Senate or Administrative Board but also in meetings of colleges and schools, to nurture awareness of challenges and opportunities for maximizing success. Specific actions could be proposed to more effectively achieve a particular goal. In addition, each unit should be assisted in determining resource allocation for specific goals more precisely, allowing them to focus on steps that deliberately drive progress towards strategic goals.

### **Planning & Improvement: The Documentation & Communication**

Progress toward the attainment of strategic goals and objectives is reviewed annually in terms of established measurable institutional indicators and unit metrics. Annual achievement reports provide evidence of the evaluation of the work of all units and the campus. The findings of these reports are used by the administration for the institution's annual planning and resource allocation. To keep the campus community informed and to promote a culture that values transparency, the Chancellor periodically communicates about planning and institutional improvement in reports to

the UPR-RP Academic Senate<sup>2</sup> and the Administrative Board.<sup>3</sup> In addition, assessment data and findings are shared with university constituents and the public at large through the DIIA's portal and data and statistics dashboard.

### **Institutional Improvement and Assessment**

To ensure that the UPR-RP and its diverse community focus and join efforts towards the achievement of common goals, a rigorous reflective, participatory, and integrative planning process was implemented. Representative groups reflected on institutional values and presented recommendations for validating strategic issues, turning strengths and challenges into academic and administrative opportunities for implementing the evolving strategic plan. As a result, since its conceptualization, the Campus's strategic plan responds to a dynamic environment of great challenges, which clearly and measurably defines the desired goals and objectives for the five-year period, based on its strengths and unique particularities. To make planning more impactful and successful within the life of the strategic plan, academic and administrative development plans holistically integrate innovative action strategies consistent with the strengths of the institution and its present and future challenges. Periodic outcome assessments of implemented strategies have enabled units to respond effectively to emerging opportunities to support the UPR-RP's continuous improvement. For the next plan, goals and objectives must establish a current baseline metric to pursue the advancement of the institution's development priority strategies.

### **Findings**

- While the budget established annually for UPR-RP has not covered all areas of need, a commitment to reducing expenses and smart decision-making concerning the use of available funds at the campus level has, on some years, allowed the campus to avoid anticipated budget shortfalls.
- The budget decision making process is centralized, limiting the required effective input mechanisms that allow for a more adequate consideration of the UPR-RRP needs.
- Progress has been made in the ongoing evaluation of strategic plans. Information about this progress has been assessed and shared with the Campus community.
- Annual budget has been adjusted dramatically on an annual basis in an attempt to responsibly cover minimal operational expenses and ensure the availability of resources needed to comply with the institutional mission.
- Federal funds (grants and contracts) have increased significantly in the period 2018-2024, totaling \$110.37 million dollars and averaging \$15.76 million annually during this same period.
- The restrictive use of funding has limited the capacity to recruit non-teaching personnel. The decrease in UPR-RP non-teaching personnel due to retirements has notably disrupted institutional operations and efficiency. This reduction has impacted both administrative

---

<sup>2</sup> Chancellor's Reports to Academic Senate, to be included in evidence inventory.

<sup>3</sup> Chancellor's Reports to Administrative Board, to be included in evidence inventory.

and academic services, leading to increased workloads for available staff and consequently slowing down processes.

## **Next Steps**

- Since the budget of the UPR-RP has been based on the fiscal plan approved by the FOMB, and once approved, the Central Administration allocates and distributes the budget to the UPR-RP; the Chancellor will continue to have periodic meetings with the President to request an increase in the distribution of the budget to reduce the shortfall caused by the PROMESA Act.
- UPR-RP must continue the analysis of opportunities initiated through an external consultant so that it can request the necessary support from the OTI for its implementation.
- Given that periodic outcomes assessments of planning strategies have helped units respond to opportunities for institutional improvement, the committee developing the next plan will establish baseline metrics to reinforce and guide the periodic measurement of indicators and thereby advance the achievement of goals.
- Improvements to the campus electric grid and water plant, projects for which funding has been made available, should be prioritized.
- Sources of revenue that come from sources other than the general funds should be increased. This project should consider bolstering the initiatives of DECEP, the Office of UPR-RP Alumni, and the external funding capacity of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.
- DECEP, the Theater, the Museum, the University Press (La Editorial UPR) and sports facilities have the potential to increase their revenues if they operate in a more flexible environment. UPR-RP must carry out the necessary feasibility studies to promote the development of university enterprises that achieve self-sufficiency while preserving and strengthening their social responsibility towards the community.