Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Requirement of Affiliation 8: *The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.*

Requirement of Affiliation 9: *The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.*

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

5.1: Clearly Stated Educational Goals at the Levels of Institution, Degree, & Program
UPR-RP's assessment of educational effectiveness is grounded in references to learning outcomes from the mission, which refers to "the integral development of students through study programs that promote: intellectual curiosity, critical capacity, continuous learning, effective communication, appreciation and cultivation of ethical and aesthetic values, participation in the processes of the campus, as well as social awareness and responsibility," and to "graduate education of the highest quality whose core elements are research and creation, that helps strengthen undergraduate education."

Academic programs, the units to which they belong, colleges and schools, are responsible for the assessment of student learning, the dissemination of findings, and transformative actions aligned with the eight undergraduate and six graduate learning outcomes or those objectives included on course syllabi.

Undergraduate learning outcomes are described in general terms in the list areas of competence included in the UPR-RP Undergraduate Profile (Certification 46, 2005-2006, of the Academic Senate): information competencies, effective communication skills, content of the discipline (integration of knowledge), research and creation (Intellectual curiosity, ability for independent study, teamwork), critical thinking (continuous learning), logical and mathematical reasoning, social responsibility (ethical and aesthetic sensitivity, appreciation of cultivation and commitment to the ideals of Puerto Rican society, the Caribbean, and international context), and technology. This list provides a basis for assessing undergraduate learning across majors and programs of study.

In similar fashion, areas of student learning outcomes at the graduate level are included in the Graduate Profile (Certification 104, 2016-17 of the Academic Senate): effective communication skills, research and creation, critical thinking (continuous learning), content of the discipline (integration of technology; teamwork), information competencies, social responsibility (ethical sensitivity, leadership). These facilitate the clustering of learning across graduate programs, each of which has an exit profile specifying the competencies students should achieve by the time of their graduation.

Learning outcomes provide a common foundation for the 123 academic programs, and are configured in the Online Learning Assessment System (OLAS) . Each year from 2016 to 2023, all learning outcomes met expectations established by the institution's assessment plan, as shown by data presented on the DIIA institutional website. It illustrates the levels of student learning outcomes by academic year.

Learning objectives and assessment data related to general education are key tools for assessing at the undergraduate level given that they identify levels of competency that should be achieved prior to coursework completed in the area of the major. The College of General Studies is the main unit responsible for general education; however, some coursework in this area is also offered by the College of Humanities. All of the syllabi for a general studies courses detail the learning objectives associated with general education that students achieve over the duration of their learning experience.

The College of General Studies is a space dedicated to the cultivation of knowledge about the arts and sciences. It promotes undergraduate education aimed at fostering the integral educational training of the student, providing a general core curriculum for all majors that assists them throughout the remainder of their undergraduate careers. In addition, the college is charged with enriching the cultural and intellectual environment through co-curricular activities, establishing service links with the community, and developing international consortiums and alliances.[1]

In general, the 123 schools and colleges disseminate their missions, visions, and goals to the university communities and the public through their webpages, catalogs, curricular sequences, curricular offerings, and brochures. In addition, each program or department has printed information regarding the curricular design, consistent with the mission, vision and goals of the Campus. Academic programs should present their entry and exit profiles on their websites and consider using the latter as a resource that assists users, whether potential applicants, current students, or future employers, in answering questions about the program and what it offers.

5.2: Organized & Systematic Assessment of Student Achievement

In most academic programs, student learning experiences at all levels and modalities of instruction have been assessed by faculty in a rigorous and consistent manner during most semesters of the period under review. The exception is during the pandemic (2020-2021) when these processes could not continue for reasons of public health. Assessment of student achievement has been completed in accordance with institutional policy, using a platform with the institutional learning outcomes and other objectives that are designated at the program level.

Assessment results have led to the identification of distinct levels of student achievement, serving as a basis for developing actions that will lead to improvements in teaching and more effective learning opportunities for students. Assessment results have also been used as a reference for faculty development plans, the institutional strategic plan, and the development of institutional regulations and policies. An example of the latter is the set of regulations developed during the period of the pandemic by a Special Committee appointed by the Academic Senate in 2020, for the purpose of promoting student learning using alternative modalities. This committee reviewed documents and institutional policy and administered questionnaires to learn about student and faculty experiences related to distance education in the context of the COVID pandemic. Its

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[1] https://generales.uprrp.edu/mision-y-vision-de-la-feg/

findings and recommendations are presented in the Academic Senate Certification 43, AY 2020-21.[2]

These findings have also been used as a reference for the development of circulars and regulations that establish the guidelines for the creation and offering of distance education courses, as well as the training and continuing education of professors and decision-making about the infrastructure and equipment necessary for making these offerings available later.

5.3: Units Dedicated to the Assessment of Student Learning

The Division of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIIA)[3] was created under the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs (DAA) in May 2019. The DIIA manages, receives, analyzes, safeguards, and disseminates data produced through three fundamental sources: institutional research, assessment of student learning, and the operational systems of the campus. This happens within the framework of the evaluation of programs and services. The range of actions of the DIIA supports the academic and administrative planning process at UPR-RP. In this way, it nurtures an institutional culture that is based on evidence, transparency, and accountability. The DIIA website centralizes the collection and dissemination of assessment data and information about transformative actions.

Each college and school has a distinctive structure to address the assessment of student learning in a way that is aligned with its areas of academic specialization. Assessment plans and reports are aligned with DIIA stipulations and institutional plans to ensure that all programs follow policies and procedures for effective assessment.

The DIIA builds on the work of the Office of Assessment of Student Learning (OEAE), which was in place from 2008 to 2019, coordinated and institutionalized assessment of student learning efforts through the implementation of the Institutional Student Learning Assessment Plan. The OEAE was responsible for collecting and analyzing data for assessment and for contributing to the development of an integrated student learning assessment process. This required identifying the attainment of competencies to be assessed as domains of learning, and the identification of transformative actions. This office promoted the culture of learning assessment by including educational efforts for the teaching community in workshops offered by the Center for Academic Excellence (CEA).

Tools

OLAS

The Online Learning Assessment System (OLAS) was implemented in May 2019 under the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs (DAA). This online platform facilitates the assessment process by collecting information on student performance through assessment rubrics developed by administrators, assessment coordinators, and teaching faculty. It allows for the collection of assessment data and automatically calculates the percentage of students who meet the minimum academic performance levels (passing expectations) for each learning outcome. OLAS also produces reports of outcomes at the student, course, program, school, and faculty levels. Access to OLAS is provided to all faculty, who are responsible for entering assessment data for their

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[2]https://senado.uprrp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CSA-43-2020-2021.pdf

[3] https://academicos.uprrp.edu/diia/avaluo-aprendizaje/

courses, which, in turn. are organized in the tool. Since 2018, the OEAE and subsequently the DIIA made available a guide so that the faculty could use it for each of the courses taught.[4]

Dynamic OLAS is the transformation of the OLAS program that began its testing phase during AY 2022-23 and continues in the process of calibration, dissemination, and training of members of the university community. This program provides information on student performance and compliance with the expectations of passing learning outcomes for the entire undergraduate and graduate populations. The analysis of this data is useful in the elaboration of development plans, curricular revisions, and proposals for new programs as well as academic management, among others.

The DAA and the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research have developed learning assessment plans, respectively. The goal of the student learning assessment is: To comply with the institutional research activity, the assessment of learning and the dissemination of data using accessible and reliable computer platforms. The data obtained enables academic and administrative planning and transformation that promotes institutional effectiveness and accountability. It is based on four regulations: Certification 50 Governing Board 2016-17 Strategic Issue: Technological Culture, which aims to strengthen the processes of assessment of programs and student learning to support their sustained improvement through the integration of systems and complementary technologies and the articulation between the levels of programs, undergraduate and graduate, academic units, and the UPR System. It is articulated in terms of the following aims:

- To develop the online assessment of programs and student learning, which articulates, at the level of programs, units and the UPR System, the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and performance reports, which should serve to make informed decisions and sustained improvement of programs and student learning.
- To integrate online audit mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of program assessment practices and student learning, articulated between the system level, units and programs, as evidenced by the strengthening of programs and complementary technologies applied.
- To strengthen the development of communities of practice with peer networks and online repositories that support the processes of assessment and sustained improvement of programs and student learning.

The goals of AS Certification 68, 2005-06, include, among other components, developing a continuous institutional system for gathering evidence that allows recognizing the degree to which the academic programs are achieving what they set out to achieve in relation to student learning. As stated earlier in this chapter, AS Certification 46, 2005-06 establishes the learning outcomes and the Profile of the Undergraduate Alumni, while Certification 104, 2016-2017 of the Academic Senate establishes the Learning Outcomes and the Profile of the Graduate Student.

The DIIA compiles the information on a semester basis and presents data derived from institutional research, learning assessment and institutional effectiveness assessment on its website, in addition to validated and calibrated rubrics and informative reference material for the

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[4] Guía para profesores: https://oeae.uprrp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Folleto-Avaluo-Guia-Profesor-rev-22oct18-Ingles.pdf

university community. DEGI, for its part, publishes its learning assessment plan[5] on a web page with access to the mission and vision of the Campus, a collection of rubrics; a collection of rubric models, presentations and reports; and a collection of satisfaction questionnaires. The web page also defines the assessment plan and its importance.

The process of implementing the institutional learning assessment is a priority for the institution despite the delay it has faced for three years. The reason for the delay is attributed to the passage of hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, barely a semester after the approval of the strategic plan. However, since 2019 the campus has benefited from OLAS. DAA and DIIA are coordinating for the preparation of an annual assessment plan for each program, whose guidelines are available online[6], and, as suggested above, the restructuring and transformation of the OLAS platform into what is now *Dynamic* OLAS.

Other ways in which programs report on student assessment include the publication of reports and self-studies. As an example, the Department of Mathematics in the College of Natural Sciences publishes its assessment reports on its website.[7] The School of Architecture conducted a self-study subject to external evaluation in 2019, to which assessment recommendations are suggested[8]. The Graduate School of Planning developed a strategic plan for the years 2018-23 in which it proposes improvements to the assessment.[9] For its part, the Program of Office Management at the College of Business Administration publishes its assessment data on its website.[10] The Department of Social Work, attached to the College of Social Sciences, also publishes its assessment data on its website.[11] Meanwhile, the Master's Degree in Information Sciences of the College of Communication and Information publishes an assessment rubric collection on its website and a student performance report since 2019.[12] As part of its accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the College of Education publishes annual reports that demonstrate how the college provides a successful life experience within the field of Education and uses direct and indirect assessment data to transform educational practices.[13]

Findings

It is evident that the learning assessment system is organized and systematic; it is carried out by the faculty and/or appropriate professionals who evaluate the achievement of institutional objectives and its programs. Faculty are trained through the Center for Academic Excellence and DIIA to comply with this task and identify the student learning as a useful tool.

The results obtained in the process provide the programs and the institution with a portrait of the student in terms of strengths and challenges. Consistent strengths include the fulfillment of disciplinary competencies, information literacy, ethical and social responsibility, critical thinking, communication, and research skills. Areas of challenge include logical-mathematical reasoning skills, among others that the programs continuous strengthening through student services, and

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[5] DEGI: https://graduados.uprrp.edu/asuntos-academicos/efectividad-academica/plan-de-avaluo-de-aprendizaje/
[6] Planes de avalúo: https://academicos.uprrp.edu/diia/avaluo-aprendizaje/student-learning-assessment-plans/
[7] Depto. de Matemáticas: https://math.uprrp.edu/assessment/
[8] Arquitectura: https://earq.uprrp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/INFORME-EVALUACION-EXTERNA-ESCUELA-DE-ARQUITECTURA-marzo-2019.pdf
[9] Planificación: https://planificacion.uprrp.edu/sobre-la-egp/draft-strategic-plan-gsp-pab-under-discussion/
[10] Gerencia de Oficina: https://fae.uprrp.edu/gerenciadeoficina/inicio/avaluo-assessment/
[11] Trabajo Social: https://sociales.uprrp.edu/trabajo-social/avaluo/
[12] MCI: https://faci.uprrp.edu/programas/maestria-ciencias-informacion/banco-de-rubricas/
MCI: https://faci.uprrp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Desempeno-Programatico-y-Logros-Estudiantiles.pdf
[13] CAEP: https://educacion.uprrp.edu/caep-2/

inclusion of new teaching methodologies among others initiatives established in the corresponding transformative actions.

The assessment data obtained also make possible the planning, academic and administrative transformation that promotes institutional effectiveness and accountability through periodic semi-annual and annual reports that can be accessed through the pages of the DIIA, the DAA and those of colleges and schools. Programmatic determinations take these results into consideration for academic management, program creation, curricular revisions, and fiscal determinations. It is a unique process for each program. During the self-study, because of student learning assessment, periodic program evaluations, and accreditations and reaccreditation processes from 2016 to 2021, multiple proposals were submitted. These were evaluated by the institutional instances and the majority were approved to add minor concentrations, new program creations, combined programs, and online professional certifications, among other initiatives Specifically, during the year 2021, 70 undergraduate and graduate proposals were submitted to the consideration of the institutional instances. Most of them were approved and others are in evaluation. All the accredited programs that were expected to submit their self-studies did it on time or for an extended period. All used the student learning and program evaluation results. It were used, useful and many cases determinants to justify their proposals. Although outreach activities are carried out, the DIIA web page is updated, and DIIA participates in congresses at a systemic level to establish dialogues about learning assessment results, the dissemination of the relationship of these results with learning assessment and programmatic changes should be improved to reach sectors of the university community that transcend academic management. This is an area that requires further calibration.

Next steps:

- Complete the transition to Dynamic OLAS.
- Continue faculty training on Dynamic OLAS in coordination with DIIA and CEA.
- Continue to train faculty and learning assessment coordinators to establish an explicit relationship between assessment results that are useful and used.
- Continue disseminate assessment results to each faculty on a regular basis.
- Disseminate the results of the campus annually in activities in which the university community participates and in national or international congresses.
- Integrate the student community in the evaluation processes, strengthen the indirect evaluation of the learning experience.

5.4: Use of Assessment Results for the Improvement of Educational Effectiveness

During the period 2016 to 2023, UPR-RP incorporated the curricular changes illustrated in the previous section at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These revisions respond to systematic processes of accreditation or reaccreditation of accredited programs and systematic evaluation of non-accredited programs. During the period of 2016 to 2021 66/68 programs programmed to be evaluate comply and all the graduate accredited programs too. Some determinations that result from this process include creation of minor concentrations, changes in curricular sequences, inactivation of programs, minor changes to programs and professional certifications, among others. For example, the College of Business Administration has submitted to the DAA multiple changes in its undergraduate programs such as changes in curricular sequences (Operations and Supply Marketing Management and Human Resources Management);

creation of minor concentrations in face-to-face and online modalities (Marketing, Human Resources Management, Entrepreneurship, Information Systems and Data Analytics); and the inactivation of the Office Management Program. It also submitted a proposal for the establishment of an accelerated online program for the Master's in Business Administration. The School of Architecture submitted the creation of Professional Certificates in Architecture and Landscape Architecture in Tropical Climates and in Conservation of Architectural and Urban Heritage, as well as a proposal to offer a dual program between the Graduate School of Planning and the School of Architecture. In combination with curricular changes, the results of the assessment have been used in conjunction with other initiatives, some of which are presented below.

Similarly, to help students improve their learning the DIIA and the Center for Academic Excellence (CEA), has developed workshops emphasizing the training of faculty and teaching assistants in the development of assessment activities, use and development of rubrics to help students improve their learning, teaching strategies and curriculum design. These workshops are offered to new faculty on a mandatory basis by provision of the Certification Number 101, 2000-2001, of the Academic Senate, whose purpose is to develop a teaching-learning curriculum for new faculty and the rest of the faculty through the CEA, that operates through the DAA. Examples of workshops include a Certificate in Student Learning Assessment; Strategies for Formative Assessment in the Classroom; and Educational Accommodations for Learners with Functional Diversity: Fostering an Inclusive Environment in the University Community; among others. The list of training offerings is included in the CEA annual reports[14]. An estimated total of 233 professors have successfully completed this trainings.

As previously indicated, the DAA and the DEGI periodically evaluate and review the academic programs. The institution also evaluates the student support services provided by the Deanship of Students and colleges and schools that have an impact on the process and academic success of students, emphasizing the factors that promote retention and improve their learning. There are several isolated initiatives developed by colleges, schools, and programs, but we lack a systemic accompaniment initiative. In the area of services, the need for more evening and distance support services has been identified. However, of the programs that have been successful, the Graduate College of Rehabilitation Counseling (CORE) stands out, which, with the purpose of improving the learning of its students, developed a Guide for the Student Learning Assessment Plan (2020). It presents a Personal and Professional Development Plan for students who score below the expected average on the learning assessment[15]. This program is already being applied to students who need it in a systematic and individualized manner with a professor acting as academic advisor. For its part, FaCI created an Academic Accompaniment Program ("accompaniment" as a musical metaphor for "peer mentoring"), which is active and accessible through an announcement on its institutional web page, and which publishes reports of direct evaluation of the mentoring and indirect evaluation of the experience[16], which have led to transformations in mentoring strategies[17]. The "accompaniment" method places graduate students and advanced undergraduates to offer individualized tutoring to students with identified needs in Effective communication skills, Critical thinking, Content of the discipline and other institutional learning outcomes. This is the result of a transformative action that was proposed in the 2018-2019 student learning assessment cycle and is coordinated within the Deanship of Student Affairs of the College of Communication and Information (FaCI). Other programs that have successfully developed initiatives or use mentoring,

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[14] https://cea.uprrp.edu/informes-del-cea/
[15] COMPRIMIDO-Guía-Avalúo-del-Aprendizaje-CORE-_compressed.pdf (uprrp.edu)
[16] https://faci.uprrp.edu/estudiantes/documentos/
[17] https://faci.uprrp.edu/estudiantes/documentos/

tutoring, or academic advising models include the College of Business Administration, College of Education, and College of Humanities; the School of Architecture; the Graduate College of Planning; and the Graduate Programs in Public Administration and Social Work, attached to the College of Social Sciences. Most of the academic programs from these units are accredited. These experiences can be the reference to develop a model that meets the needs of all the programs framed in the institutional reality and in accordance with the safeguarding of intellectual diversity contained in the institutional mission.

Other processes and procedures designed to improve the academic experience and that contribute to the success of our students include the creation of tutoring programs in the Colleges of Natural Sciences and Business Administration, changes in the assessment processes in accredited programs, modifications in the teaching processes at the classroom level as a result of the learning assessment, and implementation of new teaching-learning strategies and syllabus revisions, among others that are the result of faculty training and program evaluations. These achievements are the result of continuous, systematized, and sustainable efforts to assess and improve student learning, displayed on the undergraduate[18] and graduate[19] transformative action dashboards on the DIIA website.

Student assessment results are also used to plan, conduct, and support professional development activities, particularly through undergraduate and graduate internships and practicums that are guided by accreditation standards and learning outcomes. In addition, DEGI maintains a summer immersion program for undergraduate students who are about to graduate to strengthen research and writing skills, as well as to provide information on the graduate offerings available at the campus. Other programs derived from the assessment for the continuous improvement of the student experience are the Training Program for Master's or Doctoral Graduate Students, which is offered during the summer to provide students with the opportunity to develop the skills and competencies necessary to achieve success in their studies and professional development; and the internship program called *My First Work Experience*, which provides students with the opportunity to have their first foray into the world of work within the framework of their academic discipline, receiving a monthly stipend for it, among other particular initiatives developed by the colleges and schools. An example of these initiatives is illustrated at the College of Education, which generates professional development activities aimed at its students with the purpose of strengthening knowledge and skills that have been identified for improvement through the Teacher Induction Program (PIM). This College informs on its web page about the activities that are carried out per year, and the beneficiary students[20].

The DIIA web page also presents data on compliance with learning assessment goals, cohort profiles, retention rates, and graduation. Specifically, the Institutional Effectiveness Report contains comparative data for the years 2016-2020. Program websites, as well, present specific information on assessment results and graduation rates by faculty. Some programs include transfer and placement information. However, it is more common to locate these data on the pages of accredited programs.

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[18]https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMGE0YWJmODMtMmMzNi00ZDkxLThhNDUtZWFmNTI0ZTRhZmZkIiwidCI6IjBkZmE1ZGMw
LTAzNmYtNDYxNS05OWU0LTk0YWY4MjJmMmI4NCIsImMiOjF9&pageName=ReportSectionfd39e6fb1625d8bba042

[19]
https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZjQ1MGU1NzktZDk5MS00NTA1LTg3ODktNjAyZDQ0YTc3YWRhIiwidCI6IjBkZmE1ZGMwLTAz
NmYtNDYxNS05OWU0LTk0YWY4MjJmMmI4NCIsImMiOjF9

[20] 4.-Table-Participation-of-completers-and-co-sponsored-by-the-PIM.pdf (uprrp.edu)
CAEP – Facultad de Educacion (uprrp.edu)

With the desire to improve student success indicators, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates, the Campus, through the Academic Senate, has created Working Committees to conduct research and present proposals for improvement. One example is Certification 115, 2021-2022, of the Academic Senate, whose purpose was to request from the DAA and DEGI a study to establish viable readmission offers for students who dropped out of the university during the pandemic accompanied by a student mentoring plan that helps them to meet their academic and graduation goals. The findings established that the causes for dropping out of college were multifactorial, but to help them achieve their goals, systemic support initiatives and services outside of daytime hours are needed, in addition to other processes designed to improve programs. The achievement reports submitted to the Academic Senate, meanwhile, serve as an instance of verification of compliance with institutional goals at the Office of the Chancellor and at the Executive Deanships, that is, the Deanships of Administration, Academic Affairs, Students and Graduate Studies and Research, with a forum open to the university community for discussion and oversight whose information and data is made public and constantly updated (Academic Senate web page)[21].

At the curricular level, each program has a curricular committee in charge of ensuring the optimal functioning and continuous updating of the study plans for their courses. This committee, led by a coordinator elected by their peers, together with student representatives from the programs, has the mission of strengthening the graduation profile of students, thus guaranteeing that study plans are aligned with current trends and demands, both national and international. The curriculum committee has the responsibility of designing and reviewing the study plans, ensuring that they are in constant alignment and evaluation through systematic processes of measurement and adjustment. Likewise, it develops tools such as rubrics and evaluation matrixes, implementing actions that promote the achievement of the learning outcomes defined in the graduation profile.

For each accredited degree program, a specific graduation profile is prepared that clearly establishes the educational objectives, organizing the expected learning progressively and guiding the curricular activities involved in alignment with the institutional Undergraduate or Graduate Profile. This specific profile also guides the evaluation processes within the curriculum. Study plans are created collaboratively, defined as structured documents that precisely specify the sequence and subjects of the different areas of the training process. These plans seek to achieve the desired graduation profile for students in each program, detailing the structure of subjects and the organization of the curricular sequence. Fundamental aspects such as the contributing training areas, the prerequisites of each subject and the grading system are considered.

Analysis of the evidence suggests that the priority from 2016 to 2023 has been the use of the learning assessment results to improve the complementary educational experience, that is, the academic mentoring of students and the formative workshops for professors. Thus, in the next assessment cycle, the use of the results should be balanced to link more continuously and explicitly the evaluation of learning and effectiveness with the transformations in the curricula of the programs that go beyond the creation of online programs or the change of modality from face-to-face to online.

The Office of Institutional Transformation (OTI) of the University of Puerto Rico and the Vice President for Student Affairs favorably recommended the Río Piedras Campus to the Board of Governors to be the site of a student services renovation project to be implemented throughout the UPR system. The recommendation was achieved after presenting last Wednesday, April 17, to

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[21] https://senado.uprrp.edu/informe-rectoria/

OTI representative Delvin Caraballo Rodríguez; Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Mayra Chárriez Cordero; and Dr. Nereida Rodríguez Rivera, coordinator of the pilot, three emblematic projects of the Río Piedras Campus that are aligned with the transformation milestones of the Fiscal Oversight Board: the Academic Accompaniment Program (PAA) of the School of Communication and Information (FaCI), coordinated by Professor Amary Santiago Torres; the Title V Project: Strengthening STEM Careers, directed by Dr. Carmen Sara Maldonado-Vlaar; and the reformulation of the Educational Innovations Program (PIE) of the School of General Studies, coordinated by Dr. Ana Luisa Baca Lobera.

Of the Academic Accompaniment Program of the FaCI, the impact on the retention rate of the baccalaureate programs of that Faculty was highlighted, which between 2013 and 2018 maintained an average of 73%, and has gradually increased from the implementation of the project in 2019, with 89%, reaching 92% in 2021. In this accompaniment system, mentors from the master's degree - through the Formative Academic Experiences Program (PEAF) - and third and fourth year of bachelor's degree - Program of Study and Work (PET) - provide new students with individualized mentoring in the learning domains of effective communication, critical thinking and continuous learning. In this way, the program -conceptualized by Dr. Héctor Aponte Alequín and Dr. Jorge Santiago Pintor, and redesigned by Professor Amary Santiago Torres- relocates student talent to avoid budgetary impact.

Also, under the coordination of Dr. Carmen Sara Maldonado-Vlaar, the $3,000,000 five-year federal Title V grant obtained by the campus has been reconfigured to incorporate artificial intelligence models and increase the academic performance of the undergraduate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) student population. The relevance to student life of the activities organized from CRiiAS, a student success center located in the School of Natural Sciences, made a strong case for reflecting our campus's capacity for innovation.

Along with these projects, Dr. Ana Luisa Baca Lobera's new proposal for the PIE, which integrates social responsibility and sustainable development, earned the Río Piedras Campus its unique candidacy for the Board of Governors to provide support in maximizing student services. At the moment, we are waiting for this body to issue the corresponding certification in order to begin work. With these three initiatives and their inclusion in the OTI pilot project, the Campus has responsibly responded to the recommendations included in the Final Report Certification 115 SA-DAA-DEGI.

Finally, the monitoring initiatives of each academic unit will serve as a guide so that, in the next accreditation cycle, there will be a Monitoring Model at the Campus level that has the support of all those involved, as well as the human and fiscal resources to carry it out.

Assessment Services by Third-party Providers

The institution does not provide the funds to execute these external evaluations, so this criterion does not apply.

5.5: Periodic Assessment of Assessment Processes for Educational Effectiveness

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the DAA is responsible for periodically evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of academic programs, as well as the student learning assessment. This

shared institutional responsibility is carried out by the DIIA[22]. The results of these assessments are used and useful to improve programs, services, and to inform planning and resource allocation decisions. The effectiveness of an institution is based on the contribution of each of its programs and services to the achievement of its programmatic goals and objectives. Curricular changes are also evaluated by other bodies such as the Board of Postsecondary Institutions (Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias-JIP). Revised or newly created programs approved by the JIP are posted on the DAA and DIIA websites. Once approved, the Central Administration of the institution and academic programs are notified so that they can be offered at the institution. The JIP issues a certification that DAA and DIIA make available to the public. Non-academic programs offered through the DECEP carry out informal evaluation exercises. To demonstrate the excellence of their offerings, they are carrying out a market plan to develop a strategic plan for the Division and a formal plan for the assessment of student learning and evaluation of the programs they offer.

The development and changes of the two structures dedicated to the organization and systematization of the assessment previously described, OEAE and DIIA, show continuous improvement in the assessment processes. In addition, in particular, the collection and dissemination of data has been centralized on the DIIA web page. Even so, the institution has respected the spirit of intellectual diversity imbued in the mission of the UPR by maintaining, in the colleges and schools, the autonomy to propose key projects that link student services with the needs identified in the assessment of courses and programs, the use of assessment data to make curricular decisions, and the implementation and evaluation of transformative actions.

To complete the analysis on institutional compliance with this standard, a survey was conducted aimed at corroborating the student learning assessment initiatives and transformative actions implemented by academic programs during the AYs 2016-17 to 2022-23, which is a way to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment initiatives in comparison with the material found on the DIIA website. The findings are presented below.

The results of the consultation show a participation of 63% (5/8) of the 10 colleges and schools of the campus. The academic units that did so stated that they had conducted an assessment process during the years covered by the consultation (2017-18 - 2021-22) and that they disclosed their results. Almost all the colleges identified the need to implement transformative actions, additional to those reported on DIIA through OLAS, based on the data obtained. These actions, incorporated mainly in the areas of learning resources, courses and curricular sequences, caused successful and tangible results. Among them, it is noted an increase in the passing percentages that allowed, in some cases, the students to reach the expected achievements. The results of the transformative actions also allowed the revision, approval, and implementation of curricular sequences, as well as the drafting and progress in the evaluation and approval of new master's degree programs and professional certificates. The main challenge identified is technology and the lack of enough training to manage effectively the OLAS platform, which keeps the assessment data and reports. Changes in hiring conditions and adjustments in the academic program for regular and adjunct faculty were also mentioned, as well as the abrupt change of modality caused by the pandemic in

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[22] https://word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en%2DUS&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fsistemaupr-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fhector_aponte2_upr_edu%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F82d1211fcbb24f3ab51b57cc39c31178&wdenableroaming=1&wdfr=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=8F65F4A0-D08F-4000-7F77-921FFEB5F6C6&wdorigin=ItemsView&wdhostclicktime=1701682354380&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=3e03bd64-7b42-4c6e-abfe-772a5c8ab900&usid=3e03bd64-7b42-4c6e-abfe-772a5c8ab900&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Normal&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftn5

courses that already had their respective activities and assessment instruments designed for a particular modality.

Learning assessment survey and transformational actions implemented
Sample: 14 participants from five colleges: Humanities, General Studies, Natural Sciences, School of Law, Business Administration and Education.

Conducting assessment: between 78% and 85% of the sample (11-12 participants) claimed to have conducted learning assessment between the 2017-18 and 2021-22 academic years.

Implementation of transformative actions: During the period covered by the survey (2017-18 to 2021-22), four of the five colleges that conducted assessment stated the need to implement transformative actions every year (except for Education). The level of participation was variable; in years such as 2019-20, the incorporation of transformative actions amounted to 67%, while, in 2021-22, it dropped to 33%. The variation in the level of participation is evidence that not all departments in the same colleges saw the need to take transformative action. However, in the responses, it is not clear whether there was no implementation because the assessment yielded excellent results or whether the assessment is limited to a first part of data collecting without an analysis that would lead to transformative actions.

Areas of transformative actions: The areas of greatest implementation of transformative actions were, in descending order, learning resources, courses and curricular sequences. The other areas of action –curricular revision, learning activity modification, rubric revision, and information competencies– were only mentioned once each.

Types of transformative actions: The most frequently implemented transformative actions are directly related to modifications in the academic offerings of the programs. Curricular revisions were the most frequently implemented transforming action by the academic units, followed by the creation of new courses, professional certificates, as well as the modification of existing courses. For example, the College of Business Administration added a specialization and a new basic course in entrepreneurship to its undergraduate offerings. In addition, it implemented a 21-month accelerated iMBA program. In classes that were already part of the academic program, actions related to the improvement of teaching-learning strategies, the use of bibliographic resources and the enrichment of learning resources for students were also implemented. In some cases, the transformative actions were directly aimed at addressing deficiencies related to oral and written communication skills, as in the case of the School of Law, which implemented the elaboration of a written research paper as a requirement for the completion of its program. The College of Business Administration, for its part, developed new rubrics to reflect new competencies in diversity, equity and inclusion in ethics and communication courses, and to emphasize entrepreneurship in introduction to management, marketing and strategy, among other courses. It also created a mega rubric for its doctoral programs.

Results of Transformative Actions
The implementation of the transformative actions resulted in an increase in goals achievement (passing expectations). In the most notable cases, this increase caused students to reach the expected achievements in domains such as knowledge integration, critical thinking, and effective

communication. The results of transformative actions also allowed the revision, approval, and implementation of curricular sequences, as well as the drafting and progress in the evaluation and approval of new master's degree programs and professional certificates. Other concrete results of the implementation of transformative actions were compliance with accreditation standards in academic programs, greater communication scope between professors and students, consolidation of programs, and adjustments in their compliance requirements.

Challenges in Implementing Transformative Actions
The main challenges regarding the learning assessment process are related to technology and the OLAS platform, in which course data and departmental reports are recorded. Some academic units pointed out "accessibility and availability" as a recurring problem but did not specify whether they were referring to the instructors in charge of the courses subject to assessment, the assessment coordinators, the OLAS platform or DIIA. Changes in hiring conditions and adjustments in the academic program of regular and adjunct faculty were also mentioned by the participants, who indicated that, on occasion, the task of coordinating the evaluation falls to adjunct faculty who do not necessarily perform it on a continuous basis due to their employment situation. Another challenge noted was the change of modality caused by the pandemic in courses that already had their respective activities and assessment instruments designed for a particular modality. In the opinion of the respondents, these changes prevented the implementation of the strategies suggested by the transformative actions during the 2019-20 academic year.

Associate Deans for Academic Affairs also recognized as a difficulty the follow-up with faculty to complete this task and the lack of agility in the approval process for large-scale transformative actions in academic structures at the institutional level, which delays their implementation. Technological training for professors and support to improve the instructional design of complementary activities were some of the suggestions mentioned to overcome some of the challenges mentioned.

Disclosure of the assessment: Of the samples that carried out the assessment during the period, 100% indicated that they disclosed their results.

Disclosure strategies: The most used assessment dissemination strategies included departmental, program and faculty meetings, the sending of reports by e-mail and their publication on the web page of the academic units. In addition, participants indicated that meetings were held with the curricular and assessment committees to develop course content according to the learning objectives established, curriculum-based, on the assessment. Other dissemination strategies incorporated to a lesser extent were through the academic advisors, who transmitted the results to the students of the programs. Some responses pointed to the annual faculty reports and the semester and annual assessment reports.

Findings

- The UPR-RP complies with Standard V criteria.

- The institution conducts systematic and organized assessment processes, carried out by faculty members and other relevant professionals who evaluate achievement in the area of student learning with the aim of bolstering learning and effective teaching.

- However, UPR-RP faces three opportunities for improvement: the systematization of student evaluation of courses; the dissemination of assessment results for more consistent discussion; and follow-up on transformational actions in a systematized manner.

- As for student evaluations of professors, they are already being systematized in compliance with certifications 34, 2022-2023, of the Academic Senate (SA); 115, 2022-2023, SA; and the letter to the DAA by Chanchellor Varela dated August 11, 2023. Together with the Central Administration, the DAA achieved the entry of course section data into the UPR Next system, an access platform for faculty and students with service provision, in which the student community electronically evaluates their professors at the end of each semester. The results of the evaluations are available to department directors, deans and other academic management positions who can make decisions using this data.

Next Steps

- Regarding the dissemination, discussion, and follow-up to transformative actions, these will be addressed through the Learning and Academic Effectiveness Assessment Plan that DIIA will implement as part of the operationalization of the Strategic Plan that is being developed. This outline places the plan to attend these the first year of the assessment cycle.

- In April 2024 the first Meeting of Learning Assessment Coordinators took place, and in 2024-2025 it is planned to hold the first Meeting of Learning and Effectiveness Assessment of the Río Piedras Campus, in which each faculty will present its results to the community to gather input for the creation and implementation of transformative actions, with a date in the academic calendar.

- This meeting is expected to be held every academic year as a spearhead to design new strategies that will be implemented by each academic unit.

- The campus is committed to finalize the transition to OLAS *Dynamic*, the corresponding dissemination and training for its use, and to strengthen the competencies of all those involved to explicitly illustrate the relationship between the results of the assessment of student learning, the evaluation of programs, and the strengthening of student support services.