



MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680. Tel: 267-284-5000. Fax: 215-662-5501
www.msche.org

May 23, 2017

Prof. Sylka Torres
Interim Chancellor
UPR - Arecibo
P. O. Box 4010
Arecibo, PR 00614-4010

Dear Prof. Torres:

At its session on May 18, 2017, the Executive Committee of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted:

To accept the Supplemental Information Report. To place the institution on probation because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 (institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs) and 8 (documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability), and with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources). To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation. To request a monitoring report, due September 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 and 8 and Standard 3, including but not limited to (1) the institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs (Requirement of Affiliation 3) and (2) the institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability (Requirement of Affiliation 8 and Standard 3). A small team visit will follow submission of the report. To direct a prompt liaison guidance consultation to discuss the Commission's expectations. To remind the institution of its obligation to inform the Commission about any and all significant developments relevant to this action, including developments relevant to Title IV program responsibilities. To remind the institution of the Commission's request of November 17, 2016 for a progress report due April 1, 2018. Upon reaffirmation of accreditation, the next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2024-2025.

This action is a non-compliance action and includes a request for a monitoring report and a visit. An explanation of this type of action is provided in the Commission's policy *Accreditation Actions*.

For more information on submitting a follow-up report, please see Commission guidelines *Follow-up Reports and Visits*. The institution is obligated to make a full and honest disclosure in its reports.

If the request for a follow-up report includes Standard 3, the Commission requires that you include in or submit with the report the following data for the three most recent years: Title IV cohort default rates; USDE Financial Responsibility Composite Scores; and the status with regard to Heightened Cash Monitoring with USDE.

If the request for a follow-up report includes Standard 14, the Commission requires that you include in or submit with the report the following data for the three most recent years: 100%, 150%, and 200% normal time to completion graduation rates. For graduate-only institutions, please provide appropriate data on student outcomes such as normal time to completion rates.

Enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) for your review. If any of the factual information is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible.

A Public Disclosure Statement (PDS) has also been developed, consistent with the Commission's policy on *Public Communication in the Accrediting Process*. The statement provides an explanation of the nature of the institutional accreditation action that has been taken by the Commission. The PDS will accompany the institution's SAS and will be made available on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education website. In accordance with federal regulation, both documents will be made available to the public. If any of the factual information in these documents is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible. Also in accordance with federal regulation, your institution is invited to submit an official statement. The statement may be linked to the PDS from your institution's website or the Commission may include a web reference to your institution's website.

In accordance with the policy *Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*, the accreditation status of the institution must be accurately represented. Please ensure that published references to your institution's candidate status or accredited status (catalog, other publications, web page) are accurate and include the full name, address, and telephone number of the accrediting agency, and the effective date (month and year) when status was granted. Candidate for Accreditation is a status with the Commission that indicates that an institution has achieved membership and is progressing toward, but is not assured of, accreditation.

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Please be assured of the continuing interest of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in the well-being of UPR - Arecibo. If any further clarification is needed regarding the SAS or other items in this letter, please feel free to contact Dr. Tito Guerrero, Vice President.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary L. Wirt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gary L. Wirt, Ed.D.
Chair

c: Interim President, University of Puerto Rico Central Administration
Executive Director, Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education



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STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

UPR - ARECIBO
P. O. Box 4010
Arecibo, PR 00614-4010
Phone: (787) 815-0000; Fax: (787) 880-2245
www.upra.edu

Chief Executive Officer: Prof. Sylka Torres, Interim Chancellor
System: University of Puerto Rico Central Administration
Dr. Nivia Aurora Fernandez Hernandez, Interim President
G.P.O. Box 4984-G
San Juan, PR 00936
Phone: (787) 759-6061; Fax: (787) 759-6917

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Enrollment (Headcount): 4150 Undergraduate
Control: Public
Affiliation: Government-State - System of Higher Education
2015 Carnegie Classification: Baccalaureate Colleges - Diverse Fields
Approved Degree Levels: Associate's, Bachelor's;
Distance Education Programs: Not Approved
Accreditors Recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education: n/a

Instructional Locations

Branch Campuses: None
Additional Locations: None
Other Instructional Sites: None

ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

Status: Member since 1967
Last Reaffirmed: November 17, 2016

Most Recent Commission Action:

May 18, 2017: To accept the Supplemental Information Report. To place the institution on probation because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 (institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs) and 8 (documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability), and with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources). To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation. To request a monitoring report, due September 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 and 8 and Standard 3, including but not limited to (1) the institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs (Requirement of Affiliation 3) and (2) the institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability (Requirement of Affiliation 8 and Standard 3). A small team visit will follow submission of the report. To direct a prompt liaison guidance consultation to discuss the Commission's expectations. To remind the institution of its obligation to inform the Commission about any and all significant developments relevant to this action, including developments relevant to Title IV program responsibilities. To remind the institution of the Commission's request of November 17, 2016 for a progress report due April 1, 2018. Upon reaffirmation of accreditation, the next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2024-2025.

Brief History Since Last Comprehensive Evaluation:

November 17, 2016: To reaffirm accreditation and to recognize the institution for progress to date. To request a progress report, due April 1, 2018, documenting further development and implementation of (1) a financial planning and budgeting process aligned with the institution's mission and goals, and a plan that provides for an annual budget and multi-year budget projections (Standard 3); and (2) a procedure for the periodic objective assessment of the governing body in meeting stated governing body objectives (Standard 4). The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2024-2025.

May 2, 2017: Staff acted on behalf of the Commission to request a supplemental information report, due May 5, 2017, addressing concerns regarding recent developments at the institution which may have implications for current and future compliance with Requirements of Affiliation, Standards, or Commission Policies.

Next Self-Study Evaluation: 2024-2025

Date Printed: May 23, 2017

DEFINITIONS

Branch Campus - A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. The location is independent if the location: offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Additional Location - A location, other than a branch campus, that is geographically apart from the main campus and at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. **ANYA** ("Approved but Not Yet Active") indicates that the location is included within the scope of accreditation but has not yet begun to offer courses. This designation is removed after the Commission receives notification that courses have begun at this location.

Other Instructional Sites - A location, other than a branch campus or additional location, at which the institution offers one or more courses for credit.

Distance Education Programs - Fully Approved, Approved (one program approved) or Not Approved indicates whether or not the institution has been approved to offer diploma/certificate/degree programs via distance education (programs for which students could meet 50% or more of the requirements of the program by taking distance education courses). Per the Commission's Substantive Change policy, Commission approval of the first two Distance Education programs is required to be "Fully Approved." If only one program is approved by the Commission, the specific name of the program will be listed in parentheses after "Approved."

Commission actions are explained in the policy [Accreditation Actions](#).



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Public Disclosure Statement

University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo

May 18, 2017

By the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

This statement has been developed for use in responding to public inquiries, consistent with the Commission's policies on [Public Communication in the Accrediting Process](#), [Accreditation Actions](#), and [Standardized Language for Commission Actions on Accreditation](#). It should be read in conjunction with the *Statement of Accreditation Status* for University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo. The policies listed above explain what information the Commission makes public regarding its member institutions and what information remains confidential, describe the various accreditation actions the Commission can take, and define the terms used in the Commission's actions.

University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo, located in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, is a public university within the University of Puerto Rico System. UPR - Arecibo has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1967. The University offers Associate's and Bachelor's degrees. A summary of the most recent Commission actions relative to the institution's accreditation follows.

Current Accreditation Status

On May 18, 2017, the Executive Committee of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to accept the institution's Supplemental Information Report and to place the institution on probation because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 (institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs) and 8 (documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability), and with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources). To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation. The full text of the Commission's action is provided below. The Commission's accreditation standards are available online at <http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf>.

University of Puerto Rico -Arecibo remains accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education while on probation.

The Commission places an institution on probation when, in the Commission's judgment, the institution is not in compliance with one or more accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation and the non-compliance is sufficiently serious, extensive, or substantial that it raises

concern about one or more of the following: (1) the adequacy of the education provided by the institution; (2) the institution's capacity to make appropriate improvements in a timely fashion; or (3) the institution's capacity to sustain itself in the long term. Probation is often, but need not always be, preceded by an action of warning. The Commission may place an institution on probation at any time if it determines that the institution has failed to satisfactorily address the Commission's concerns regarding non-compliance with accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation in a prior action. A follow-up report, called a monitoring report, is required of an institution on probation to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance. A small team visit also is conducted to verify institutional status and progress.

Summary of Recent Commission Actions

The Commission's policy, *Public Communication in the Accrediting Process*, states, "If an institution conducts its affairs in ways which generate serious public concern, the Commission reserves the right to request additional information from the institution." On May 2, 2017, staff acted on behalf of the Commission to request a supplemental information report, due May 5, 2017, addressing concerns regarding recent developments at the institution which may have implications for current and future compliance with Requirements of Affiliation, Standards, or Commission policies.

On May 18, 2017, the Executive Committee of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted as follows:

To accept the Supplemental Information Report. To place the institution on probation because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 (institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs) and 8 (documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability), and with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources). To note that the institution remains accredited while on probation. To request a monitoring report, due September 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Requirements of Affiliation 3 and 8 and Standard 3, including but not limited to (1) the institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs (Requirement of Affiliation 3) and (2) the institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability (Requirement of Affiliation 8 and Standard 3). A small team visit will follow submission of the report. To direct a prompt liaison guidance consultation to discuss the Commission's expectations. To remind the institution of its obligation to inform the Commission about any and all significant developments relevant to this action, including developments relevant to Title IV program responsibilities. To remind the institution of the Commission's request of November 17, 2016 for a progress report due April 1, 2018. Upon reaffirmation of accreditation, the next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2024-2025.

Current Status and Expected Activities

University of Puerto Rico – Arecibo remains accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education while on probation.

Following receipt of a monitoring report on September 1, 2017, the Commission will conduct a small team visit to assess the institution's compliance with the Commission's requirements and standards. Following the on-site visit, a report by the visiting team will be completed. The monitoring report, the small team report and the institutional response to the small team report will be considered by the Committee on Follow-Up Activities, and then by the Commission.

Following review by the Committee on Follow-up Activities, the Commission will take further action, in accordance with the Commission's policy, *Accreditation Actions* (available at <http://www.msche.org/documents/P2.3-AccreditationActions.pdf>). If, based on the monitoring report and small team report, the Commission determines that University of Puerto Rico – Arecibo has made appropriate progress in addressing the cited concerns, the Commission may act to remove the probation and reaffirm accreditation. If the Commission determines that progress sufficient to demonstrate compliance with its accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation has not been made, the Commission may take further action as allowed under *Accreditation Actions*.

For More Information

The following resources provide additional information that may be helpful in understanding the Commission's actions and the accreditation status of University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo:

Statement of Accreditation Status for University of Puerto Rico – Arecibo (http://www.msche.org/institutions_directory.asp) provides factual information about University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo and the full text of the Commission's recent actions regarding the institution.

Media Backgrounder (<http://www.msche.org/documents/MediaBackgrounder2017.pdf>) answers questions about accreditation such as “What is accreditation?” and “What is the Middle States Commission on Higher Education?”