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*Report to the faculty, administration,  
trustees, students  
of the UPR-HUC*

*by*

*an Evaluation Team representing the  
commission on higher education of the  
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools*

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Office of the President

# Geneseo

December 3, 1999

Dr. Roberto Marrero Corletto  
Office of the Chancellor  
University of Puerto Rico-Humacao  
CUH Station  
Road 508 Bo. Tejas  
Humacao, Puerto Rico 00791

Dear Chancellor Marrero:

I enclose the final version of the Middle States Report for Humacao University College. I have made the correction you suggested in your message of December 1, and the report is now ready for reproduction and mailing.

Thank you for your assistance and the assistance of the many faculty and administrators at UPR-Humacao University College in carrying out our work as a visiting team. We deeply appreciate all you did, and, speaking for myself as chair, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with you, Dr. Scarrano, the members of your administration, and everyone who contributed to the self-study. Though our departure was hastened by the impending arrival of Hurricane Jose, we truly enjoyed the opportunity to visit your campus and meet the excellent faculty, students and staff at Humacao.

Cordially,

Christopher C. Dahl  
President

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students  
of the  
University of Puerto Rico-Humacao University College  
Humacao, Puerto Rico 00791

by  
An Evaluation Team representing the  
Commission on Higher Education  
of the  
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report  
and a visit to the campus on October 17-20, 1999

The members of the Team:

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Working with the Team:

Brunilda Principe Pabellon, Education Analyst, Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education.

This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution, and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

Date when instruction began:

1962

Year of first graduating class:

1964

President/CEO:

Dr. Roberto Marrero Corletto,  
Chancellor

Chief Academic Officer:

Dr. Luis O. Nieves Rivera,  
Dean of Academic Affairs

Chair of the Board of Trustees:

# EVALUATION TEAM REPORT

## THE UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, HUMACAO UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

### **Introduction**

In designing its self-study, The University of Puerto Rico-Humacao University College chose the model of a comprehensive self-study with a special emphasis on planning and outcomes assessment. Accordingly, the Team's Report is divided into two major sections. The first presents an overview of the main areas of the College's activities with observations on institutional effectiveness in each area. The second section provides a discussion of planning and outcomes assessment.

As will be evident throughout this report, however, the Visiting Team found itself somewhat frustrated in its task of determining institutional effectiveness on the basis of the self-study report and materials provided to the team. Because of the drastic effects of Hurricane Georges in September 1998, which caused \$3 million in damage and effectively closed the campus for a month, the team visit was postponed from March to October 1999. Neither the team members nor the team chair were able to see an English translation of the self-study document until mid-September; other materials (e.g., the English version of the College catalogue) were not available until a week or so before the visit, and the College's Strategic Development Plan was unavailable in English translation. These difficulties and problems in the self-study report itself hampered the team in determining whether the institution, in the words of the Middle States definition, "has established conditions under which [its objectives] can be achieved, that it is substantially achieving them now, and that it should be able to continue doing so for the foreseeable future."

Despite these difficulties—not the fault of particular individuals but a product of both the special circumstances of the past year and more general institutional factors—the Team believes it was able to get a relatively clear picture of the institutional effectiveness of the University College at Humacao and, within the limitations of a brief visit, reach valid conclusions on the general propositions suggested in the definition of accreditation. Because the self-study process and the self-study document are so central to the accreditation process, however, the main body of our report begins with a special section on the self-study process.

### **Institutional Self-Study: Process and Product**

For the process of accreditation to be as beneficial as possible, an institutional self-study needs to reach certain goals with a fair amount of success. It is the opinion of the Team that the process at Humacao, for some of the reasons listed above and others, did not fully achieve the desired goals of self-study. More needs to be done to perfect the process and realize the full benefit to the institution. The first chapter of *Designs for Excellence* (1998 edition) provides a good discussion of the goals and purposes of a self-study, and we direct the institution's attention

to the discussion. In general, the Middle States Association expects that an effective institutional self-study will have the following characteristics:

- It represents the collective effort of the entire college community: faculty, administrators, staff, students, and often alumni and community representatives.
- It analyzes, rather than merely describes, each aspect of the college, identifying the key strengths and weaknesses of each area and making recommendations for addressing major areas of concern.
- It concludes with a plan of action that addresses the major concerns and recommendations made in the self-study. The plan of action gives the college community a clear agenda and priorities for the coming years.
- While it is not possible to achieve universal consensus within any college community on the status of the college and what its future priorities should be, the self-study and its conclusions and action plans should represent the *general* consensus of the college community. There should be general, though not unanimous, agreement that the self-study identifies the college's major strengths and concerns. There should also be general, though not unanimous agreement, with the self-study's action plan to address areas of concern.

The Humacao self-study is the product of a great deal of work by a group of dedicated individuals, mostly faculty, who spent many hours studying particular aspects of the college. These people faced serious obstacles in completing the self-study, including a major hurricane that devastated the campus and the unexpected resignation of some key individuals (including the chief academic officer and the assistant dean).

Perhaps partly because of these obstacles, the self-study does not meet Middle States' expectations as outlined above. Some sections of the report are more descriptive than analytical. While some chapters identify strengths and areas of concern, there is no overall summary that prioritizes the college's strengths and areas of concern. What analysis there is in the self-study has not been used to develop a concluding analysis of the college's overall strengths and areas of concerns and to develop an action plan to address concerns identified in the self-study. Moreover, it is clear that the self-study does not reflect Humacao today. A repeated comment, from Board members to faculty members, during our visit was that Humacao is a far superior institution to that which is described in the self-study. There are major developments and initiatives that are given short shrift or not mentioned at all, including efforts to assess student learning outcomes, plans to initiate graduate programs, and plans to purchase and develop a large adjoining tract of land. Much of the data provided is several years old; some cited figures are from 1990.

While efforts were made to solicit comments from members of the college community on the draft, it is clear that participation in preparation of the self-study was not of the broad-based nature envisioned by Middle State. The team is particularly troubled that the draft was developed largely by faculty, with relatively little input from administrators, students, and others. Given that

the self-study emphasized planning and assessment, the team is especially concerned that the Director of University Development, who has led responsibility for planning, and the Coordinator of Institutional Research, Evaluation and Assessment had only minor roles in preparing the self-study.

Obviously, as pointed out above, a lot of work went into the self-study and we do not wish to denigrate the efforts involved, but the team believes that Humacao University College needs to do more as a community in order to realize significant benefits to the institution that a fully satisfying and effective self-study process is intended to produce. In a spirit of asking what is in many ways a strong and vibrant institution to mobilize itself and demonstrate, to both internal and external audiences, its quality and effectiveness, we make the following general recommendation:

**Seek to transform the self-study into the product envisioned by Middle States by:**

1. Reconfiguring the self-study team to include a broader representation of all elements of the college community: administrators, students, and others as well as faculty;
2. Reviewing the work of each chapter committee to arrive at an overall assessment of the major strengths and weaknesses in each area;
3. Formulating recommendations to address the major areas of concern identified in each chapter;
4. Using the recommendations to develop an action plan, with priorities and time line for implementation, that addresses the major concerns identified in the self-study; and
5. Seeking college-wide reactions to and consensus on the action plan.
6. Working over the next five years to accomplish the action plan.
7. Involving high levels of the administration more directly in this process.

## **PART I: CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Institutional Identity, Mission, and Goals**

Founded in 1962 as the first regional college of the University of Puerto Rico, Humacao University College has developed from a campus offering two-year transfer programs to an institution offering seventeen baccalaureate degree programs, eleven associate degree programs, and six transfer programs. It now takes its place as the most senior of the eight university colleges in the University of Puerto Rico system, having been granted administrative autonomy under its own chancellor in 1982. Humacao serves some 4500 students, most of them of traditional college age and the great majority of them from the Eastern region of Puerto Rico. Under its mission statement of 1984 (currently under revision), the College seeks “to contribute effectively and harmoniously to the full development of its students,” providing them with a

broad general education as well as professional knowledge; to become “an agent of change” as well as analyzing and helping to solve the social and economic problems of the region; and to “help achieve the ideals of a democratic society.”

On the basis of what we were able to ascertain during the visit, the Team believes that Humacao University College is carrying out its mission in a generally effective fashion. Humacao has played and continues to play a key role the education, economic and social development, and cultural life of the region of Puerto Rico it serves. All indications are that Humacao occupies a position of leadership among the university colleges in the University of Puerto Rico system in many respects. Though the Team had a few concerns about the College’s current mission statement (discussed under planning in Part II of this report) the institution appears to be working to implement the five major goals that accompany its mission statement, and nothing we observed led us to question the institutional integrity and distinct identity of Humacao.

## **Students and Student Support Services**

The Team was impressed by the friendliness and energy of the students they met and especially appreciated the opportunity to talk at length with members of the honors program and student government representatives on official college bodies. Looking at the data supplied by the admissions office, it is apparent that Humacao has been able to attract an adequate, and increasing, number of students who meet admissions criteria. In 1997-98, 1514 students applied and 977 (65 percent) were admitted; 95 percent of those matriculated. Faculty and some admissions officers expressed concern about the relatively large number of at-risk students among the matriculate, but the College has undertaken a range of programs to assist such students under local initiatives and federal grants. Retention from first to second year is currently 86 percent, but the six-year graduation rates in both bachelor’s and associate’s degree programs (averaging 42 percent in the past three years) give some cause for concern and indicate that enrollment management efforts should be focussed on increasing retention.

Under the Dean of Student Affairs, there are ten distinct student support areas<sup>1</sup> which address student needs holistically. The division provides personal, vocational and educational counseling, medical services, health education, financial aid, athletics, and cultural activities, among others. Its staff is well qualified and committed to providing these services in an effective way. In some instances cadres of motivated, bright student workers complement professional staffing, serving as student counselors, tutors, peer advisors and the like.

All but one of the offices have developed evaluation instruments within the past two years to determine student satisfaction with services and activities. Most survey results indicate student satisfaction with services delivered. Such is the case with the office of Financial Aid, for example, which received the first Office of Excellence Award in a recognition ceremony organized by students in the Quality of Life program.

In response to the College's Strategic Plan, the Financial Aid Office has initiated electronic filing of applications to simplify the process. While this is a time-saving mechanism, more computer assistance is needed to increase the entire offices efficiency. The provision of more technological resources is critical to this office as it is to many others in student affairs and throughout the campus

Assistive technology is of utmost importance for the office of services for student with disabilities, as well. Federal 504/ADA regulations mandate that adaptive technology be provided for the use of disabled students where warranted as long as it represents reasonable accommodations. The office just received its first TDD, but it has yet to be installed. It has no other special equipment. The Task Force on Quality of Student Services recognized the need here and strongly recommended that it be made an institutional priority. In recognition of the limited institutional resources, the director of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities intends to apply for a grant under a federal program which, if funded, would allow for the purchase of equipment for this population.

The Interdisciplinary Department for the Integral Development of Students (D.I.D.I.E.) obtained faculty status for its counselors by legislation passed in 1996. A social worker who deals with family issues and a representative from the Department of Labor round out the team of professionals. This department is to be commended for its outreach to students in the academic departments, on-going staff development and collaborative efforts with the faculty and other programs. Its goals and objectives are clearly stated, acted upon and evaluated in its action plan.

The Office of Health Services has plans to expand services and renovate its facilities through a Title X funded program. Since the medical director serves the entire campus community, responds to emergencies and engages in health education, the additional staff will be welcome. Purchase of an ambulance seems to be a valid priority since there are only two for the entire eastern region of the island. EMT services are planned for as part of the requirements for NCAA Division II membership.

Two other programs within Student Affairs are worthy of mention because of their activities: the employment of student volunteers from Americorps and use of external supplementary funds. The quality of life director evaluates all activities. Her students are to be commended for participating in social programs that impact on student life such as criminality and domestic violence.

In general, the Humacao University College offers student life and development. As a commuter campus, however, Humacao faces special challenge in providing cultural and co-curricular activities to its students and the issues of adequate parking space and student perceptions of campus safety are more significant than they might be in a residential college setting. To improve student services we offer several specific suggestions. The office of Services

for Students with Disabilities should explore with the telephone company the donation of several public TDD phones for general use and for deaf students. Students would also be able to use the phones in the evenings and weekends if placed in strategic locations on campus. This might enhance safety. The College might also compile further data on students with disabilities in order to take advantage of additional opportunities for grant funding. To build up exchange programs, the college might also consider the possibility of faculty and staff hosting exchange students on weekends, holidays, and vacations as a mutual learning experience.

### Recommendations:

- Humacao needs to give higher priority to funding for the Office Services for Student with disabilities. By most definitions “reasonable accommodation” which must be provided under 504/ADA federal regulation would probably include money for personnel and equipment in disability services. The College should address these requirements in a timely fashion.
- Carefully evaluate the Athletic Program, particularly in view of relatively light student involvement in sports activities and the pending application for NCAA Division II membership, and determine how it meets the strategic goals of student affairs and the College as a whole.
- Evaluate the quality of cultural activities and programs on campus to determine whether low participation is a function of the commuter school environment or other factors; revise or modify programming to reflect the evaluation.
- Assess the expressed concerns of students and staff regarding campus security. Explore the possibility of installing emergency phones in strategic places on campus.
- Improve communication with students so they are aware of campus issues and can provide input and feedback
- Develop a holistic and unified student affairs evaluation plan with priorities and time-frame. Directors can learn from each other in this exercise and see what is being done in other offices.

## **Faculty and Faculty Development**

Humacao’s faculty are generally well qualified. They are energetic and committed to their programs and students. Team members who interviewed faculty and department chairs in each of the three major academic divisions report, for example, that faculty are: “sensitive to new trends in their disciplines and committed to expanding the range of degree programs available to students at Humacao” (arts); strongly committed to the College and characterized by outstanding collegial interaction and cooperation within departments (sciences); and dedicated and consistently involved in curriculum review and revision (administrative sciences). During the past five years, the proportion of full-time faculty has increased from 85 to 91 percent; 76 percent of all faculty members are tenure-track. In the past ten years, the proportion of faculty

with doctorates has risen steadily, from 20 percent in 1989-90, to 28 percent in 1994-94 and 33 percent in 1998-99. According to the self-study report, faculty productivity has increased in the five years since the periodic review report as measured by a wide range of indicators: credit hours offered participation in committees, grant proposals submitted, professional publications, and research projects. Research productivity as measured by publication and external grants awarded is impressive in several departments, especially in the natural sciences.

Fostering and enhancing faculty development in both teach and research remains important if Humacao University, College is to continue its progress as an academic institution. The institution makes available release time and a sufficient number of sabbaticals, but there is evidence, according to the self-study, that not all faculty take advantage of these resources. The creation of faculty development committees in several departments is commendable--an initiative to be encouraged and replicated. In the past few years, the College as a whole and individual departments have succeeded in getting major grants for improving the quality of the teaching and learning under Title III (the so-called IDEAS program) and workshops for the development of independent study skills (the TADDEI program in Chemistry). These efforts are two commendable examples among a dozen or so programs on campus that illustrate faculty development that is linked with student development and retention activities. Along with some of the College's assessment activities, these and similar programs have led to serious consideration of the scholarship of teaching and pilot programs in classroom research and classroom assessment. Linked to the development of learning communities in the IDEAS program, there have been further possibilities for faculty development. All these are encouraging signs of faculty vitality and renewal.

#### Recommendations:

1. The College should pay sustained attention to faculty development, continuing to seek external funds—and encouraging faculty and individual departments to do so—for research and professional development; it should consider allocating additional internal funds to support research activities professional travel, and faculty development
2. Without abandoning the quest for external funding, the College should focus on the scholarship of teaching, and collaborative efforts to improve the teaching/learning climate as key means of fostering faculty development.
3. As the faculty evaluation process is reconsidered and revised in the next few years, relevant committees and administrators should bear in mind the need to enhance faculty development through a serious consideration of whole teaching process as a scholarly activity.

## **Curriculum and Academic Programs**

The curriculum at Humacao University College is delivered in programs in three major academic divisions: arts, sciences, and administrative sciences. Departments in the Arts include English, Education, Humanities, Communications, Social Sciences, and Spanish. The Division of Sciences includes not only departments in the physical and biological sciences (Chemistry, Physics, Biology) and mathematics but also health sciences departments (Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy). The Division of Administrative Sciences, which serves 35 percent of all students at the College, includes two departments: Business Administration and Office Systems Administration. Because of its development and history and in response to the needs of the area of the island it serves, Humacao offers a unique blend of professional and arts and sciences programs and degree programs at the associate as well as baccalaureate level. At the current time, the College is moving to replace some of its associate degrees with bachelor's degrees and to develop new degree programs in areas of comparative strength.

There is much to commend in the curriculum and academic programs at Humacao. Degree programs in the Division of Arts follow a rational structure, with specified prerequisites leading to mastery in the discipline. Some programs have capstone courses; several have internships and practica, connecting upper-division majors to the world of work and experience. In the arts, as in all programs in the College, academic counselors in each department guide majors through departmental requirements, but they also serve students from other programs within the College, other units in the system, private universities, and high schools. These academic counselors are a unique strength in Humacao's academic program.

Historically, the programs in the sciences have been the most fully developed on the campus. There is a high concentration of doctorally qualified faculty in the sciences, strong commitment to students in the major and significant inclusion of undergraduate student researchers in faculty grants. In fields such as physics and microbiology, a significant number of graduates have gone on to graduate study at universities in Puerto Rican and the continental U. S. Faculty members, especially in the sciences, have been active and creative in seeking external funding. In 1998-99, for example, successful grants brought in over 3.5million to support research, teaching and learning in the departments, and the recruitment of students from under-represented groups to careers in science. This activity represents a real strength for Humacao — and a significant trend for the future

In the health sciences programs, successful reaccreditation and high pass rates on licensing examinations suggest effective results, as do pass rates close to 100 percent in the teacher certification examinations for graduates of the Department of Education. The requirements of national accreditation have also led to careful review and continual updating of programs in the health professions. Similarly, in business administration, though the department has not sought national accreditation, there is evidence of consistent curriculum review and revision by faculty. Although it retains the associate's degree, the Department of Office Systems

Administration has also revised its curriculum in the past few years to reflect changes in the business environment and is moving to an emphasis upon the bachelor's degree program.

In both the arts and the sciences, promising new degree programs are under consideration. The Communications Department is developing a proposal for a B.A. in Information and Communication Technologies, and the Humanities Department, along with such other departments as Spanish and Business Administration, has proposed an interdisciplinary degree in Caribbean studies. A bachelor's degree proposal in Occupational Therapy has been presented to the system administration, and the Social Sciences Department is exploring a second degree program in social action research. All of these degree proposals seem appropriate, given the faculty and -resources available and we encourage the College to continue to advance them. Chemistry and Physics are also proposing master's degree programs in industrial chemistry and materials sciences, respectively. While great caution regarding availability of resources and staffing is warranted, the team encourages these departments to continue to explore the development of the programs, perhaps in partnership with the Rio Piedras, Mayaguez or medical campuses.

Undergirding any bachelor's degree in a college or university, there must be a sound general education program. Goal A of the College's Strategic Plan stresses the need "to ensure that all graduates possess a general and professional education of excellence," but the shape of the general education program at Humacao is hard to discern in either the self-study report or the College catalogue (where general education is not mentioned at all). After inquiry, we~ found that the general education program at Humacao consisted of a reasonably designed sequence of offerings covering English, Spanish, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. It appears that curriculum committees in various departments work regularly to review and revise their contributions to the general education program using such measures as student satisfaction surveys and alumni questionnaires. Faculty also report that participation in the college-wide assessment plan has led to revisions in general education courses.

This information did not allay all of the team's concerns, however. For example, specific outcomes for courses in the general education program or for the program as a whole have not developed. Not only is the catalogue silent on the general education program, but there is no administrative structure in place to monitor general education or coordinate changes. In this light, the College should seriously consider the creation of a special general education committee to administer this important facet of its curriculum to meet periodically to review general achievements against a set of desired outcomes.

In a related area, faculty in the arts and other fields express concern about the writing skills of their students. There is no writing-across-the-curriculum focus education, however; nor does there appear to be organized tutorial referral system for students with problems in writing who are not in special programs for at-risk students. The College should give consideration to developing such a referral system and possibly a writing/language skills center.

A final general concern involves computer support and availability. Almost every student interviewed indicated that computing facilities for student use were severely limited, and that the number of public access computing stations needed to be increased. Similarly, availability of computer facilities for faculty varies greatly from department to department and appears often to be dependent on the ability of individual departments to secure outside funding for computers and other equipment. Recommendations on this issue are contained in the section on computing and information technology below.

### Recommendations:

1. Continue to develop new bachelors degree programs in fields where Humacao has the requisite strengths and resources, such as Caribbean studies, communications, occupational therapy, and social action research.
2. Proceed with caution in exploring the development of master's degree programs in such fields as materials sciences, industrial chemistry, and physical therapy, bearing in mind the resource implications not only in the departments but also in such areas as the library and computing technology.
3. Continue to seek ways to improve the performance of students in courses where failure rates are high (e.g., biology, chemistry and mathematics courses) and in service courses in some science fields
4. Continue and expand the recent, vigorous (and highly commendable) efforts to increase levels of external grant funding and gifts-in-kind for academic programs and student development
5. Carefully study student and academic computing needs across the curriculum and develop a plan for creation of new public access student computing laboratories and computer facilities across the curriculum
6. Create an appropriate structure for administration, assessment, and review of general education (including writing and numeracy skills); define general education outcomes; publicize the general education program and promulgate its goals in the catalogue and other College publications.

## **Governance and Administration**

As a constituent campus of the University of Puerto Rico, Humacao University College is governed by a system-wide Board of Trustees. Four members of the Board met with the Middle States Team during its visit. Though the trustees are responsible for oversight of eleven campuses, it was plainly evident that they are quite knowledgeable about Humacao and

committed to its development as a center of excellence and vital contributor to the economy and culture of its region. The trustees hold Humacao and its administration in very high regard, find its Chancellor's budget requests and reports highly credible and illuminating, and take pride in the activities of its faculty and students. With more than five years in office, the Chancellor at Humacao is the longest serving chief executive of any campus in the University. In a system characterized by rapid turnover of chief executives, the relatively long tenure of the Chancellor has provided stability and continuity of leadership that has allowed Humacao to advance, according to the trustees.

Governance structures at the campus level are similarly long-standing and stable. The Academic Senate is well supported by the campus (each senator, for example, receives three hours in released time for service in this governance role), and the Senate appears to play an effective role in shared governance and decision-making, within the framework of University policies. The Senate is provided with appropriate opportunities for input on curriculum matters and college-level policies, and the Senate includes student representation as well as representatives of the library and administration.

Within the College itself, the administrative structure appears to be sound, but lean. Three senior administrators—the Dean of Academic Affairs (the chief academic officer, who has two assistant deans), the Dean of Student Affairs, and the Dean of Administration—report to the Chancellor. This is a basic and traditional structure that is appropriate for a campus the size of Humacao.

Administration and governance structures appear to function effectively, and the team had no recommendations in this area.

## **Library and Media Services**

The library at Humacao University College is a spacious facility that is more than adequate to house the collection of some 100,000 volumes. Seating for some 700 students is located throughout the building in a variety of configurations including several group study rooms. The atmosphere of the library is quiet and thus most conducive for study and research. The college has been most generous in providing a large staff—both professionals and support personnel—enabling the library to fulfill its mission.

A major strength of the library is the continued cooperation in sharing a common library software package among the libraries of the UPR system thus enabling the sharing of resources effectively and permitting growth in the area of shared purchase of databases. These networking agreements will go a long way in addressing the ever-persistent demands made of library budgets. The library's homepage contains a wealth of information and provides an excellent starting point in using the library. Concerns about limited periodical subscriptions can be addressed by using the CARL UnCover document delivery service that provides copies of

journal articles at no cost to patrons. This service is prominently displayed on the homepage as well.

The library is to be commended especially for the prestige it brings to the institution with CONUCO, the publication that indexes all of the more than 100 journals published in Puerto Rico. This is a major scholarly contribution to Puerto Rican scholarship. The library has also been very successful in securing the assistance of faculty in assessing and evaluating the library collection along with their recommendations for improvement. This project was accomplished with the assistance and support of the Academic Senate, which was an excellent way of dealing with a common problem in higher education—getting the faculty involved in collection development.

The bibliographic instruction program is another strength of Humacao's library, coupled with the fact that the library has its own computer lab for teaching students and faculty in the use of all the electronic resources available. More specifically, the library is also to be commended for its work and involvement (on a limited, but presumably increasing basis) with learning communities and the IDEAS program.

Despite the significant strengths of the library, the team identified several areas of concern. The first involved the assessment process in the self-study, which used the American Library Association's *Standards for Academic Libraries* as a guide rather than the criteria suggested in *Characteristics of Excellence* of the Middle States Association. Both the library and the institution would have been better served by the standards suggested in the latter document because they provide a library with the means to assess its own view of how well it provides services and programs.

Though the methodology chosen was not ideal, the library is to be commended for its assessment endeavors in connection with the self-study. It now needs, however, to evaluate the result of the surveys and use the information gathered to improve services. We recommend that surveys of library usage, satisfaction, and effectiveness be done on a regular and continuing basis so that patterns and trends identified may serve as improvement tools and enable the library to take the "pulse" of what users think and want. For this purpose, the library may wish to use the Association of College and Research Libraries spec kit entitled "Measuring Academic Library Performance," which provides several easy-to-use surveys along with software to tabulate and assist in making meaningful interpretations from data collected.

Another area of concern is the apparently low level of library usage by faculty and students. Use of the library is uneven and difficult to measure from the statistics provided. 58 percent of the circulation reported involves Reserve material, which apparently translates into use of textbooks located there for students to make photocopies from them. This is not genuine library usage and may lead to problems of copyright infringement. The use of the Reserve area is disproportionate to the amount expended for monographs and periodicals, which account for only 42% of items circulated.

A further concern related to usage is suggested by a statement heard from many of the students interviewed that they do not know how to use the library and find it confusing. The general layout of the facility does not lend itself to ease of use by “unknowing” individuals. Areas are distinct and separate; each has its own service desk. Even though most students expressed a high regard for the library as a place to study (and this is a strength), we remain concerned that the vast wealth of information located in the library itself, available at remote sites, or even electronically is not being tapped.

To address some of these concerns and to encourage and promote greater use of library materials, we make the following recommendations:

- Establish an information desk/kiosk at one of the main entrances to the library as a starting point for students to ask for help and assistance. This desk should be staffed at all times by a librarian or support staff member to direct students to the appropriate location for information or to intercede in making sure the area to which the student is being sent there is individual there who can be of assistance.
- Expand the existing bibliographic instruction program to reach more students in order to introduce students to the wealth of information available. As the library successfully used the influence of the Academic Senate to solicit faculty input for collection development and evaluation, so too might it use the same strategy to “grow” the bibliographic instruction program as well.
- In order to increase the use of the library’s print collections, consideration should be given to opening the stacks, thus providing students the opportunity to browse. Seeing additional books in a subject area could be an inducement for students to check out additional materials.

As in many academic units, insufficient access to computers is a problem. The library simply does not have enough computers available for public use. At various times in the visit, students were standing in line to use computers, and throughout the visit two out of three computers in the Reference Area were out of order. Students complained about the 20-minute limitation for those computers connected to the Internet. In the library’s defense, one can see why time limits have been established, but for an institution of Humacao’s size, at least 35 to 40 PC’s should be available for students to use the on-line catalog and databases, and access the Internet. All resources should be accessible from any PC located anywhere in the library so a student does not have to move from place to place depending upon which resource is used.

Along with the Library, the Communications Department also provides academic support services in the areas of media and technology. The College is to be commended for its generous staffing of this department. Some 20 staff members are involved in the areas of circulation and utilization of media materials and equipment, design of instructional materials, graphics, audio and video production, and teleconferencing. The enthusiasm and motivation of the director

comes through and he motivates his staff This area also provides equipment setups around the campus.

The communications department has an extensive collection of videotapes, which can be used and circulated, not only on campus but also to area school districts. This is a valuable educational asset and a source of strength in technology and information resources. At the same time, it raises a significant concern: both the library and the Communications Department are building videotape collections independent of each other. In light of the scant financial resources available for technology and media, we recommend

- that the Library and Communications Department coordinate acquisition decisions so as to eliminate unnecessary duplication, and,
- as the Communications Department develops a baccalaureate program and gets further involved in distance learning, the College consider placing the audiovisual resources under the auspices of the library.

## **Computing and Information Technology**

In today's university environment, library and media services must be supported by—and closely coordinated with—computing and information technology. Humacao University College's computing infrastructure is sound. Indeed, the College can take pride in its foresight in installing a fiber-optic infrastructure across the campus because it puts the institution in a good position to meet the informational networking needs and challenges of the coming century. The staff of the computing center is well respected by the campus community and is considered to be very helpful to the entire university community. Within the limitations of its resources, the computing center provides good service to various campus units. Out of a desire to enhance services, however, the academic affairs administration has recently decided to address instructional computing needs by establishing a separate Office of Academic Computing Services so that academic needs will not compete directly with administrative computing needs.

Like most public colleges and universities, Humacao faces challenges in providing computing and information technology to its faculty, administration, and students. The visiting team believes that the College needs to explore ways to address the challenges of new technology more systematically. In this vital area affecting all aspects of campus operations, we offer four observations, coupled with general recommendations.

Training and Technical Support. The College needs to develop and put in place a comprehensive training and technical support program for computing on campus. Training and support are uneven across the College. Faculty in fields such as the arts and humanities believe they have not received adequate equipment and support compared to that provided in more technical and scientific fields. Whether these perceptions are valid or not, the College needs to assess the provision of computing and information technology across all academic and

administrative units and determine practical, equitable levels of support. Adequate technical and support staffing to accommodate the exponential increase in the number of personal computers on campus is also essential.

Public Access Labs for Student Use. As pointed out above, most students interviewed by various members of the team were concerned with the lack of computing facilities for their use. Of the eight labs available, only one seems to be open to all students without restriction; the other labs, to a greater or lesser degree, are reserved for the use of students in particular departments. Regardless of the actual situation, the institution needs to make more public access computing facilities available to students and more clearly communicate the hours and policies of computing labs on campus.

Equipment Depreciation Plan. The College should consider developing and funding a plan for upgrading and replacing existing computer technology. As higher education continues to add more and more technological equipment, it must also plan for on-going replacement. This issue is faced by all colleges and universities and presents major challenges in planning and budgeting.

Academic and Administrative Computing. While the creation of an Office of Academic Computing will serve immediate instructional needs, the team suggests Humacao may wish to evaluate its decision to create such an office with great care. Computing and information technology is pervasive, and provision of resources in this area calls for an institution-wide approach. Rather than creating two separate computing operations, Humacao may wish to explore the administrative model of a “chief information officer.” As head of a unified computing and information technology operation, this person would be responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing all computing so that all areas are addressed; resources are not duplicated; uniform systems and procedures are in place across the institution; and personnel needs for training and technical support are met.

## **Physical Facilities**

Humacao University College is situated on 62 acres and includes 30 buildings with a total area of 498,144 gross square feet and 383,272 net square feet. Classrooms comprise 37,746 square feet and laboratories 55,764 square feet. Current construction will add approximately 12,000 more gross square footage. Outdoor facilities include athletic fields, a 300-meter track, an olympic-size swimming pool, tennis courts, and six parking lots with a total capacity for 1,000 vehicles.

Important facilities issues presented in Humacao’s self-study report include: 1) the need to expand the College’s present facilities if it is seriously to consider moving into graduate-level programs in the sciences as proposed; 2) need for additional parking space; 3) high utilization levels in some facilities, especially classrooms.

The managers of Humacao's physical facilities appear to be doing a very good job. They are knowledgeable and dedicated to the college, its faculty, and students. The director has only been at the college for one year, and the fruits of his expertise will not be fully realized for several more years, but he already appears to be making a difference. The managers were knowledgeable about technical areas of facilities operations, including HVAC, Americans with Disabilities Act provisions, and technology infrastructure. In fact, the College should be proud of some of its efforts in these areas such as the fact that all buildings are connected via fiber optic network thereby setting an excellent foundation for its future digital technology needs.

The facilities staff is comprised of 101 full-time employees and approximately 25 additional contractual full-time equivalents. The maintenance of the HVAC system is contracted out to a private service. The College's buildings and grounds are in satisfactory-to-good condition given the fact that the Humacao has had to deal with several recent problems that were beyond its control in the context of unmet deferred maintenance needs. In the early 1970s, the University of Puerto Rico declared a system-wide deferral of all building maintenance which lasted approximately twenty years. The only maintenance performed until the mid 1990s was for emergency health or safety projects. The College was trying to catch up on this neglect when Hurricane Georges struck the campus on September 21, 1998. The College suffered a good deal of water, wind, and structural damage. Three buildings had to be taken out of service because of the hurricane damage. At the time of the team visit, a \$2.4 million payment had just been received by the College as an insurance settlement for the damage.

Funding for major capital construction projects is approved by the University of Puerto Rico Board of Trustees. A Permanent Improvement or Master Plan is prepared, updated each year, and accepted by the Board. Major requests have to conform to this Plan. This process at Humacao is the responsibility of the Office of University Development. All indications are that this Office is carrying out this responsibility ably. As in many public university systems, however, the recurring lament is that approval, design, and construction of major projects frequently take many years, leaving campus constituents frustrated and suspicious of the process. For example, at Humacao, the Business Administration Building Renovation Project was approved in 1992; conceptual/feasibility funds were approved in 1994 and design funds in 1998. It is not certain when construction funds will be approved. Within these constraints the college's engineer and design officers work as well as can be expected.

As the College enters the new century, it is contemplating a major new initiative. The Chancellor has begun to assess the feasibility of acquiring 90 acres of property contiguous to the north end of the campus. This property is owned by a local family, and representatives indicate that it might be available under a lease-purchase arrangement. While extremely complicated financially, given the problem of doing state-funded capital construction on privately-owned land, this initiative would be a very creative—if not visionary—solution to Humacao's long-term space problems. At least six new buildings including Math and Physics facilities and a cultural center have been discussed for this site. It is remarkable that this major initiative is not

mentioned in the College's Self- Study, but its omission may be related to the early date at which the report was prepared.

On the basis of the report and the information supplied to team members during the visit, we make the following recommendations:

1. That a comprehensive study be undertaken to evaluate the HVAC systems at the College. Presently, air conditioning systems are a mix of window units (several hundred), central, and building systems. These units are a drain on maintenance resources, and the window units are unattractive in parts of the campus
2. A thorough classroom utilization study be undertaken to provide more detail on room use and determine if classrooms are being used widely throughout the day and especially in the evenings.
3. Continue pursuing options for additional parking spaces including the use of facilities in the city-owned sports arena. While parking is a persistent and sometimes unreasonable source of complaint on many campuses, parking space at Humacao needs to be expanded according to team members charged with evaluating student life as well as physical plant issues. During a walking tour of the facilities between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on a Tuesday morning, for example, not a single empty parking spot could be seen.
4. The College should review its present processes for evaluating space and construction projects needs. The Building Facilities Office and the Office of University Development appear to have a good working relationship and delegate their responsibilities as required. However, it is not clear that this sort of relationship extends into the academic planning done at the department level.
5. The Chancellor is to be commended for, and encouraged to pursue, the acquisition of the property north of the campus. This initiative has the potential to solve Humacao's space problems for decades to come and would be well worth the investment of time and energy to explore all possible avenues for acquiring this parcel of land. With the resolution of space problems, the resolution of many other programmatic issues will follow.
6. The College should review its operating budget priorities for other than personnel services. The Self-Study identifies that 85% of the annual budget is allocated for personnel and 15% for other than personnel services. The College has started to move more funds into repairs and maintenance (expenditures have doubled during the past three years). These funds have allowed the College, for instance, to create a second maintenance crew to do night repairs. Such budgetary review and decision-making should be continued.

## **Financial Resources**

The chapter on budget and finances in the Self Study Report does not identify a single recommendation or area in need of improvement. Hence, making recommendations in this area

was difficult because little direction has been provided to the Middle States Team. Nonetheless, a general review of the administrative and financial areas of the College was undertaken.

All of the fiscal areas in the College report to the Dean of Administrative Affairs. The directors of these areas (Budget, Finance, Human Services) appear competent and understand their role in the College. The dean also seems to have forged a “team concept” and all units appear to work well together.

The College has consistently received increments to its budget, most of which are needed to pay for mandated collective bargaining increases, increases in utility rates, and other essential needs. The budget (all funds = \$46 million in 1998-99) is constructed on a Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Recurrent Base (\$30.1 million) and Non-Recurrent Funds (\$2.4 million). The latter are one-year allocations based on College and University priorities. The remaining funds are derived from financial aid, donations, grants, etc. The increases to the Commonwealth allocation for the past five years have ranged between 7 and 15 percent. In terms of dollars, the College’s Commonwealth allocation has increased during the last five years from \$18.6 million to \$31.2 million or 68 percent.

The Self-Study identifies a participatory budget allocation process that involves all departments, administrative officers, and the Chancellor. This process appears to be working. Frustration among some constituents is based largely on budget constraints rather than the lack of a clearly defined allocation process.

The College has automated most of its accounting functions. While not always as graceful as one would like, these systems are able to generate all-funds reports as needed. It must be mentioned that practically all administrative computer software systems are developed or acquired centrally by the University of Puerto Rico System and distributed to the colleges. It appears that all administrative offices are using these systems routinely and without major difficulties.

#### Recommendations:

1. The College should conduct a more extensive Self-Study of its Finances and Resources, identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement and making recommendations for changes as needed.
2. Humacao University College should continue and intensify its efforts to seek external funding. The College has made an excellent start in increasing government grants. More needs to be done to solicit private funds and create a unified College development/advancement operation.
3. The College should review its operating budget priorities for other than personnel services. The Self-Study indicates that 85 percent of the annual budget is allocated for

personnel and 15 percent for other than personnel services. The Middle States team has observed that a number of departments are sufficiently staffed, but are in serious need of other than personnel (equipment, supplies, travel) funds. We repeat this recommendation because it is essential to solving problems mentioned in several sections of this report (e.g., computing and information technology, academic programs, faculty development, disability services).

## PART II: PLANNING AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

### **Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes/Planning Processes**

Analysis of institutional effectiveness, outcomes, and planning was hampered by the scant amount of information and analysis provided on these areas in advance of the visit. While the self-study described some institutional planning activities, the college's Strategic Development Plan was not included and was not available in English during the team's visit. Similarly, while the self-study described many surveys being conducted by departments and offices, it did not append the assessment plans developed by departments, and it did not discuss the many other assessment activities being undertaken across the college. Much of the team's time during its visit was therefore spent trying to locate and digest large quantities of information on Humacao's planning and assessment efforts and outcomes. It was impossible to absorb all this information during the team's short visit. The observations and conclusions that follow are thus based on an incomplete review of Humacao's planning and assessment efforts and may therefore be inaccurate.

#### General Strengths and Weaknesses

Humacao's planning and assessment endeavors truly seem to be recognized as a model within the University of Puerto Rico. Humacao staff have advised other colleges and the UPR administration on planning and assessment matters, and other colleges have copied the Humacao model. There is a long tradition of planning at Humacao, and vigorous and extensive assessment activities have taken place in most departments. Unfortunately, however, the self-study *described* some of the planning and assessment activities and results to date, but it did not *assess* the college's planning and assessment efforts. It did not conduct a rigorous analysis of what is working, what isn't working, and what changes might be made to improve planning and assessment at Humacao. The process did not bring all the disparate pieces together into a unified whole—or, in any event, such a unified whole was not reflected in the self-study document.

### General Recommendation

With broad-based participation of faculty and administrators, conduct an analysis of Humacao's planning and assessment efforts. Identify what is working well and what is not working well, and determine why. Use this analysis to make appropriate modifications to the college's planning and assessment efforts.

### General Suggestion

Identify and implement an array of incentives to help bring reluctant or resistant faculty "on board" and find creative ways to reward those faculty who are actively engaged in assessment. Such incentives might include released time and/or stipends to work on planning and assessment activities, consideration of planning and assessment service in tenure and promotion decisions, funding preference for initiatives developed in response to concerns identified through assessment—even a special reserved parking space!

## **Planning**

According to Middle States' *Characteristics of Excellence*, a college should be guided by well-defined and appropriate mission and goals and should have accomplished its goals substantially. It should engage in ongoing institutional self-study and planning aimed at increasing the institution's effectiveness. Its goals should be stated in terms of outcomes: the effects or results that its programs are designed to have.

Humacao has a mission, vision, a statement of values, and a Strategic Development Plan with five goals, numerous objectives, performance indicators, and strategic directions. These statements are well integrated with the University of Puerto Rico's system strategic plan. In addition to institutional planning statements, most or all departments have developed their own mission, vision, actual and ideal student profiles, operational goals and plans, and assessment design. Environmental changes and advice from Middle States has led to a revision of the Humacao mission; a draft is in the process of being reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate. The Institutional Planning Committee expects that a revision of the college's vision and Strategic Development Plan will follow, although it does not expect these documents to be fundamentally altered.

### Planning Strengths

The team commends Humacao University College for its recent review and revision of its mission. The current mission is a positive statement but so broad and general that it could serve as the mission of virtually any institution in Puerto Rico. It is therefore not as effective as it might be in driving institutional plans. An ideal mission statement would state clearly Humacao's essential functions, its primary constituents, its fundamental values, and what

distinguishes it from other Puerto Rican institutions of higher education. The draft of a revised mission available at the time of the team visit is a great improvement.

The team also commends Humacao for recently revising the Strategic Development Plan to narrow the number of goals from nineteen to five. This helps the college community focus on major priorities rather than diffusing its energies in many directions. While the goals are generally very clear and their objectives are phrased in terms of intended outcomes, phrases such as “possess the abilities appropriate to the general education component,” “necessary critical skills,” and “higher education processes” are vague and can be interpreted differently by different people.

Humacao has a well-delineated process for reviewing and revising its curricula that stems from the Strategic Development Plan, and progress has been made in reviewing curricula.

### Planning Concerns

While the college has an impressive array of activities designed to achieve Goal A and is undertaking a variety of activities to achieve the other four goals, there does not appear to be an integrated, institutional plan to achieve each goal.

Despite Humacao’s extensive planning efforts, the team did not find evidence that the Humacao community has a clear vision of where it will focus its energies over the next few years. There appear to be at least five agendas that are not fully integrated with one another:

1. The goals and objectives in the Strategic Development Plan;
2. The concerns and recommendations identified in the self-study (Middle States intends that the self-study process be a significant component of a college’s planning activities, helping it to clarify its goals and set its agenda.);
3. The “Future Agenda” section written by the Chancellor and appended to the self-study (but not stemming directly from the self-study);
4. Four priorities identified by the Chancellor in interviews (increasing first-year retention, increasing graduation rates and reducing the time to graduation, improving the faculty evaluation process, and addressing physical plant issues); and
5. Priorities identified by the academic dean and associate deans in an interview (including improving the registration process, establishing a virtual campus and a graduate school, and strengthening academic and administrative computing by separating them).

Some of these agendas appear to be laundry list of ideas with no apparent effort to prioritize the most pressing areas of concern or develop a time line for addressing them.

While significant efforts have been made to review and revise curricula, Humacao does not appear to have a college-wide process of program review. Most programs have not been comprehensively reviewed and updated since the 1980s. Most programs (except those with

specialized accreditations) do not appear to use benchmarking or appraisals from external sources to help them judge the effectiveness of their efforts.

### Planning Recommendation

Combine the agendas outlined above into a new, integrated action plan. Share the action plan with the entire University community--administrators, students, and others as well as faculty--and seek reactions to and consensus for the plan before beginning its implementation.

### Planning Suggestions

Review, from a college-wide perspective, plans to achieve Goals B-E of the Strategic Development Plan and decide if more comprehensive, college-wide plans are needed to achieve them.

Consider developing a college-wide program review process that includes benchmarking and external appraisals.

## **Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment**

Middle States' policy statement on outcomes assessment and its *Framework for Outcomes Assessment* clearly state that colleges must assess overall institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Evidence of student academic achievement must be collected. Assessment must be ongoing, and assessment information must be used to improve the institution and the teaching/learning process. Assessment must be linked to planning and budgeting. The college should determine whether its programs and services meet the needs of entering students and whether graduating students meet both the college's and the public's expectations.

### Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Strengths

The team applauds Humacao for its ongoing focus on assessment and its multi-year efforts to create a culture of assessment throughout the college. While assessment has not permeated all areas of the college, there is truly a culture of assessment throughout both academic and administrative operations. The great majority of faculty and administrators understands and appreciates the importance of assessment and has undertaken initial efforts to assess programs and services. The positive outcomes of many surveys have boosted morale in many departments and offices. Great efforts have been made to have planning drive assessment.

Particularly impressive are the efforts of many student services to gauge "customer satisfaction" through surveys. IDEAS has done an excellent job assessing the results of its efforts, documenting an increase in associate degree graduation rate, increased retention of

students involved in learning communities, and increases in College Board test scores. A number of faculty members are using contemporary tools, such as portfolios and classroom assessment techniques, to assess student learning in their classes, but it was not possible to gauge the extent of this in the short amount of time that voluminous materials were available to the team.

The team commends the Office of Institutional Research, Evaluation and Assessment and the Assessment Committee for their tremendous effort to guide, promote, and support the college's planning and assessment activities. The Student Tracking System is the only such system in Puerto Rico and is a model for collecting and disseminating key information on student progress. The surveys of students conducted by the office have impressive response rates, often over 70 percent. The Tracking System and other studies make much data and information readily available to help departments evaluate their programs and services. Several documents clearly and succinctly summarize department goals and assessment efforts.

The team further applauds the ambitious plan outlined in the self-study design: to provide information on graduates' strengths and weaknesses, as well as the effectiveness of the institution in different areas; to develop and analyze profiles of ideal and real new students and graduates; and to design an assessment plan to gather information on various skills that students should be developing. If Humacao even partly implements this plan, it will be a model not only for Puerto Rico but also for the entire United States. The team was disappointed that efforts to date to implement this model, no matter how incomplete they are, were not reported in the self-study.

### Concerns

Assessment results are being directly used to bring about substantive change in some programs. A notable example is the Chemistry department, which has used the results of its assessments to launch TADDEI to increase the success of its students. Other examples include the Biology and Nursing departments and other programs with specialized accreditation. This practice could be emulated more widely. For example, surveys have found that students would like additional help with English and Spanish writing and speaking skills, but there appear to be no institutional plans to address this.

Most of the assessment activities undertaken to date have been surveys of student satisfaction. Some of these surveys are several years old and/or of very small numbers of students (less than 30). This makes it difficult to use the results with confidence to bring about change. The self-study often only reported overall student satisfaction results of these surveys. The team did not have time to determine whether these surveys also assess student areas of concern and suggestions for improvements, which would be critical to bringing about change.

Humacao has been slower in developing assessments of student learning outcomes (except in professional programs that require such assessment for certification, licensure, or accreditation). Because of this, at this point Humacao does not know how well it is achieving

significant components of its mission and Strategic Development Plan. This is a serious concern. Some faculty seem apprehensive that there might be negative consequences for poor results of student learning outcomes assessments, so they are reluctant to engage in such assessments.

Most assessment activities are done at the departmental level. Many individual departments, for example, have designed and administered their own surveys. In the library, each operation has conducted its own assessment. While this decentralized approach gives departments a greater sense of ownership of assessment activities, the results have not been aggregated to draw an institutional picture of college strengths and weaknesses and where it should focus its efforts to improve itself

The team did not identify a clear link between assessment and budget decisions. While the Chancellor uses the budget process to reward those who participate in assessment by funding them at higher rates, there is no clear evidence that budget decisions are directly tied to assessment results. For example, we found no evidence that priority is given to funding efforts to address shortcomings identified through assessment.

### General Recommendation

Increase efforts to assess student learning outcomes, and use results to improve student learning and better meet the needs of both students and employers.

### Further Suggestions

Place a high priority on planning, funding, and implementing improvements that stem from the results of assessments to date.

Develop mechanisms to aggregate Humacao's assessment results and arrive at holistic conclusions about institutional effectiveness. Use these conclusions to develop institution-wide plans for improvement.

## **Conclusion**

Because planning and outcomes assessment was the special focus of Humacao's self-study, we have looked at the processes and results in this area in considerable detail. We have held Humacao University College to high standards, but we wish to reiterate that the College has made good progress in developing and implementing planning processes, and it was evident to the visiting team that assessment activities have advanced in most, if not all academic departments and other units of the College. There is indeed a nascent culture of assessment. Humacao has paid attention to the need for planning and outcomes assessment, and there is much to commend in terms of individual initiatives. All these assessment and planning activities, however, need to be brought together more coherently. At the present time, the whole process of

planning and assessment at Humacao is somewhat *less*, rather than *more*, than the sum of its parts. This is not necessarily a discouraging conclusion, for we believe that Humacao has most of the pieces in place for an exemplary institutional planning and assessment program. The self-study process simply did not bring the College to the desired final result.

For the members of the visiting team, the “bottom line” is that Humacao University College is a sound institution that appears in many respects to be effective in carrying out its mission, but it still needs to do more to demonstrate this bottom-line conclusion. It needs to perfect its self-study, both as document and as process. It needs to move planning and assessment to a new level at the institution in order to achieve a leadership position in this area in Puerto Rico. We challenge the whole College community to work together to achieve these goals. We are confident in the institution’s ability to do so in the next few years.