NATIONAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SELF-STUDY REPORT

Submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education on August 31, 2018
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACEN</td>
<td>Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing</td>
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<td>ADN</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Nursing</td>
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<td>BOD</td>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
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<td>BOT</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
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<td>BSN</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree in Science in Nursing</td>
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<td>CAEP</td>
<td>Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly TEAC)</td>
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<td>CAPTE</td>
<td>Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education</td>
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<td>CDA</td>
<td>Spanish acronym for Center for Academic Development</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>Campus Effectiveness Plan</td>
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<td>Center for Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
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<td>ENACTUS</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial ACTion for others creates a better world for US all</td>
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<td>PRCE</td>
<td>Puerto Rico Council on Education</td>
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<td>REMA</td>
<td>Spanish acronym for Retaining Students with Desires of Maximizing their Efforts to Achieve Success</td>
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<td>University Environment Seminar course</td>
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<td>Standard Operating Procedure</td>
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<td>SVPAA</td>
<td>Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs</td>
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<td>VPAAE</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPCRA</td>
<td>Vice President of Compliance and Regulatory Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPNP</td>
<td>Vice President of Nursing Programs</td>
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Preface

About National University College:

National University College (NUC) was founded in 1982. In March 2007, NUC was acquired by Leeds Equity Partners IV, LP. NUC is a career-focused, private, for-profit institution of higher education located in Puerto Rico and Florida, with six (6) campuses including Arecibo, PR; Bayamón, PR (main campus); Caguas, PR; Mayagüez, PR; Ponce, PR; and Rio Grande, PR.

The mission of NUC is to “develop educated and enterprising individuals, competent in their professional area, with an attitude to continue learning throughout their whole life, proud of belonging to National and capable of inserting themselves successfully in the labor market to contribute effectively to the economic, social, and political progress of their environment”.

NUC is licensed and regulated by the Puerto Rico Council on Education (PRCE), and was initially accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in 2013. Several programs have programmatic accreditations or are in the process of candidacy, including the Associate’s Degree in Nursing (ADN) and the Bachelor’s Degree in Science in Nursing (BSN), accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); the Associate’s Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant, candidate for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE); and the Master’s Degree in Education with major in Educational Leadership, accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), formerly TEAC.

NUC has an enrollment of 12,700 undergraduate students in associate, baccalaureate, and master’s degree programs, as of fall 2017. The typical NUC student is traditionally a high school graduate, whose age is between 18 and 21, from a low socioeconomic income level, first generation, and predominantly female.

NUC offers thirty-five (35) undergraduate programs including fourteen (14) at the associate level and twenty one (21) at the baccalaureate level and six (6) master’s degree programs in business administration, criminal justice, education, health sciences, nursing, and technology. 40.9% of the student body is enrolled in associate’s degrees, 50.5% in
bachelor’s degrees, and 8.6% in master’s degrees. The institution also offers fully-online degree programs.

NUC employs 663 faculty members of which 173 are full-time and 490 are part-time and 394 staff members of which 368 are full-time and 26 are part-time.

**About the Self-Study Process and Report:**

NUC selected the comprehensive self-study design as its approach to self-study. It did so since this is the college’s first self-study following initial accreditation five years earlier. Moreover, this comprehensive model provided an opportunity for the college to examine itself holistically, identify current and future needs, and assess progress regarding the key institutional priorities including academic quality; service, development, and student experience; organizational development; strengthening and positioning the NUC brand; and financial strength.

NUC began its self-study process in earnest, in fall 2015, with the selection of an eleven (11) member steering committee led by the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs (SVPAA). The process was overseen and guided by an executive committee.

Seven (7) working groups were established to address the seven (7) MSCHE standards of accreditation contained in *Characteristics of Excellence*, and the chapters within the self-study mirror the MSCHE standards of accreditation.

- **Chapter One:**
  - *Standard I: Mission and Goals*

- **Chapter Two:**
  - *Standard II: Ethics and Integrity*

- **Chapter Three:**
  - *Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience*

- **Chapter Four:**
  - *Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience*

- **Chapter Five:**
  - *Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment*

- **Chapter Six:**
  - *Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement*

- **Chapter Seven:**
  - *Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration*

In addition, the NUC self-study includes an addendum that addresses progress to date on the acquisition by NUC of three other EduK (*now NUC Corporate*) entities,
namely Florida Technical College (FTC) (8 campuses), Instituto de Banca y Comercio (IBC) (14 campuses), and Ponce Paramedical College (POPAC) (2 campuses). This acquisition was approved provisionally by the Commission at its session on June 22, 2017, pending receipt of all necessary approvals and effective July 1, 2017. The only pending final regulatory approval for the merger approval is from the US Department of Education. As of August 24th, 2018 it is expected that this approval should occur by late fall 2018. The addendum also provides further documentation and analysis demonstrating that the institution (1) has a process in place for ensuring that students receive accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds (Chapter IV) and (II) operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy with (a) a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the institution who has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staff the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission and (b) an administration of an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the CEO in fulfilling institutional responsibilities, consisting of members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles and who have the skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties (Chapter VII).

NUC embraced the self-study process with intentionality and with the seriousness that such a process commands. Furthermore, the process was embraced broadly as evidenced by the number of faculty, administrators, staff, students, and NUC’s Board of Trustees (BOT) that were involved in the process.

It is also important to mention that on September 20, 2017 Hurricane María, a powerful Category 4 hurricane struck Puerto Rico wreaking catastrophic damage throughout the entire island including to its electrical power grid, infrastructure and telecommunications systems. On October 27, 2017 MSCHE directed NUC and all Puerto Rico institutions to submit a Supplemental Information Report due December 1, 2017 regarding the operating status of the institution as well as the damage and impacts to all campuses and locations caused by the hurricane. In this Self-study Report are included
adjustments made by NUC to address the impacts of the hurricane as they relate to each standards.

Prior to the reaccreditation visit, the MSCHE Staff Liaison, Dr. Sean A. McKitrick, visited NUC on April 8, 2016 to discuss the Commission’s expectations for self-study. In addition, the Team Chair, Dr. Meg Benke, Professor at Empire State College, visited the institution on May 17 to 21, 2018 to start with the Team Chair’s Preliminary Visit. During the visit, she met with diverse groups and individuals to gain a better understanding of the institution and to assess the institution’s readiness to host a reaccreditation visit including the President, President’s Cabinet, Steering Committee, Faculty, Staff, Students, and the NUC’s BOT; reviewed the penultimate draft of the self-study; and toured the hotel facilities and the Bayamón Campus facilities.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter One: Standard I Mission and Goals

NUC complies with Standard I. The institution has a clearly defined mission statement and goals that have been developed, evaluated and revised with the participation of the broader institutional stakeholders, through direct, intentional and meaningful deliberations. Through the years, the mission has been periodically revisited, reviewed and revised as needed, mostly responding to specific milestones, such as change from certificate to associate, to bachelor, and to master degrees. It has also been revised for a more comprehensive focus. The mission, approved by NUC’s governing bodies, addresses both internal and external constituents as it intends to develop educated and enterprising individuals, capable of inserting themselves successfully in the labor market, thus contributing effectively to the economic, social, and political progress of their environment. A set of core values complement the mission and guides the institution’s conduct and behavior as well as its relationship with its stakeholders.

NUC’s mission is operationalized through a systematic and structured strategic planning-budgeting-assessment process that is tightly embedded. NUC established five priority areas in its most recent revision of the Mission, each one with its strategic goals and objectives, as well as deliverable outcomes. These priorities are: Academic Quality, Service, Development, and Student Experience, Organizational Development, Strengthening and Positioning of the NUC Brand, and Financial Strength.

Through time, NUC has become more aware of how its Mission is deeply rooted in all its administrative, educational and student support services. Through the continuous assessment of learning outcomes and data collected, the groundwork to design, plan, and implement the improvement measures are established. Therefore, the Mission and Strategic Goals guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resources allocation, program and curriculum development, and the development of program outcomes. The departmental action plans based on the priority areas and strategic goals are translated into measurable indicators to provide a necessary foundation for the needed analysis in order to accomplish the goals and improve the daily operation and educational efforts.
Every two years, NUC administers at all of its campuses Student, Faculty, Staff and Employer Satisfaction Questionnaires, all aligned in order to perform a triangulation between these groups, whenever appropriate. The findings suggest how successfully the institution conveys the Mission and Goals to its constituents. One of NUC’s strengths through the years has been how the governing bodies, administration, faculty and staff make decisions based on NUC’s Mission, Goals and Core Values to implement improvement measures that benefit the university community, considering its priority areas. NUC’s Mission, Goals, and Core Values respond to the current demands of the labor market.

As part of the self-study process, it was determined that the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan demands close monitoring in order to achieve the expected results and follow-up to the action plans and effectiveness in achieving the established results and thus, continue complying with our Mission.

Chapter Two: Standard II Ethics and Integrity

NUC complies with Standard II. It follows through with all the federal, state, regional, institutional, and programmatic accrediting agencies’ regulations and requirements. NUC reports the institution's data to the National Center for Education Statistics through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); in this way they are accessible to the public.

NUC has policies covering integrity, conflict of interest, compliance and ethics in all matters of university life and are aligned with our institutional mission and values and are further strengthened to respond to social changes that occur. The administrative structure is responsible for the quality and integrity of its operations and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being fulfilled.

The institution undergoes annual external compliance audits with regard to its administration of student financial aid funds; no major findings have been cited. For the most recently completed compliance audit 2014-15, NUC obtained a clean audit with no findings.

One of the most significant strengths of NUC is its high level of ethical values, supported by well-established policies, norms, and procedures, including a whistleblower policy and an ethics line, distributed to its related stakeholders, and discussed and applied
uniformly among all of its campuses. A Vice President of Compliance and Regulatory Affairs (VPCRA) ensures their proper application as well as providing regulatory interpretation and recommendations to comply with the external agencies. Students, faculty, and staff satisfaction and commitment to NUC’s ethics and integrity is evidenced in the continuous assessment process, which results are used for improvement and decision-making.

At the same time, this strength is a constant challenge and demands continuous training to staff on federal, state, and institutional regulations. NUC proposes, as part of its action plans, to include ethics and integrity as a permanent criterion for all faculty and staff professional development plans, and consider additional ethics and integrity related topics in the institution’s portfolio of professional development activities. NUC will continue directing its efforts in monitoring and assuring the satisfaction of its students with the academic services offered and promoting a quality service culture in which the human resource is conscious of the importance of the contribution towards the achievement of the institutional effectiveness in the operations, processes, and outcomes.

**Chapter Three: Standard III Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

NUC complies with Standard III. The student learning experiences and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout all its educational offerings, regardless of degree level or delivery and instructional modality. The thorough process of transformation that NUC has undergone since 2013 in the academic area, through its strategic planning, ensures that the Institution complies with its Mission, Institutional Learning Goals (ILG) and higher education expectations. NUC's educational conceptual framework, which includes its educational philosophy, allows to operationalize and achieve its Mission, Vision, Values and Learning Goals.

NUC has a core faculty, qualified for the position held, and other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to assure the continuity, rigor, and coherence of the institution’s academic programs and effectiveness in teaching and learning. NUC’s Faculty Development Plan (FDP) guides professional development and is a key component to achieving teaching and learning excellence.
The ILGs which are aligned with the mission, values and institutional vision, as well as with all the NUC’s academic programs, are developed mainly through general education courses as well as integrated into the academic disciplines. The ILGs identify the competencies necessary to build a solid foundation for the academic experience at the undergraduate as well as graduate levels and assures that the students develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes for future employment, to continue graduate studies, responsible citizenship, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Support services, such as: SEMI 1001: University Environment Seminar course, academic mentoring, tutoring, counseling, workshops, extracurricular activities and service learning further reinforce the general education competencies and complement the general education courses.

Through NUC’s Institutional Integrity Policy, the Institution ensures that the academic programs are revised periodically and updated as appropriate. Also, through the Program Development and Evaluation Model, NUC ensures that the revision and evaluation of all the academic programs are aligned with all the pertinent components (Mission, Priority Areas, Strategic Goals, ILG, Program Competencies, and Expected Learning Outcomes, amongst others). The academic deans, academic department directors, program coordinators, and faculty of all campuses and the National University College’s Online Division/Bayamón Campus (NUC-Online Division), under the supervision of the SVPAA, are in charge of the revisions through a Curricular Revision Committee.

Assessment is a core academic activity and an essential component of the learning process. It encourages student learning, help make judgments about student achievement, and monitor the effectiveness of the learning environment. The results of the assessment process also provide information to establish if the desired outcomes are being achieved and to revise the syllabi and programs curricula to adopt changes for continuous improvement.

NUC identifies as its most significant strengths the delivery of academic programs that are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning; a strong leadership in PR in offering academic programs in the health sciences, especially nursing and pharmacy technician; and the integrity of its
academic offerings through all its campuses, through clear and thorough policies, norms, and procedures; the programmatic accreditations; and the sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution’s programs of study and students’ academic progress. NUC has in place effective mechanisms to identify at risk students, including those with special needs, and strategies are implemented to serve this diverse population in specific ways, responding to identified student needs.

NUC has a highly qualified faculty evaluated regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures, as well as its evidenced professional development plan.

Through its periodic and systematic assessment process, NUC has identified as one of its challenges to continue to train the faculty about the educational model, teaching strategies, assessment and information literacy. In order to meet the challenge, faculty evaluation criteria should be reviewed, according to the expectations of the 21st century professor profile and Outcomes Based Education.

Chapter Four: Standard IV Support of the Student Experience

NUC complies with Standard IV. The institution propitiates students’ integral experience from the first contact in the Admissions Office until their integration into the labor market. NUC has very well organized and structured student services as required for a higher education institution. These services are supported by systematic and clearly stated Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) implemented in all campuses. The student services model is theory-and research-based and is supported by a well-grounded culture of compliance by monitoring, evaluating and continuously improving, thus fulfilling students’ expectations. Students are impacted in all areas of their needs: academic, social, emotional, and environmental, considering their diversity and special needs including students with disabilities; through a Students’ Service Model, systematically applied in all campuses.

Programs and services that promote student success include admissions, financial aid, bursar, registrar, tutoring, counselor and orientation, psychological services, placement and special services, ERC, to name a few; each having its procedures in order to comply with regulations as well as with student needs and expectations. NUC developed a comprehensive Retention Model with a set of strategies aimed to encourage
students to achieve their academic goals throughout the course of their studies. The model has academic, social, emotional, and environmental components, through which strategies and teams provide mechanisms to detect areas of concerns, or barriers to success, and subsequently assist in the development and implementation of specific interventions to address such areas, particularly with its at-risk student population. Activities may vary by campus according to specific student needs. All services, strategies, and student activities are periodically assessed (sometimes even daily) in order to ensure a proper accountability process and use results for immediate action and decision-making.

NUC has established an institutional assessment cycle process that observes and documents the fundamental student service processes in and out of the classroom.

Some of the strengths identified in the student experience area are: the diversity of services rendered to students, including follow-up to the new student population; and analysis and early identification of their needs, including the voluntary identification of students with disabilities, particularly those at high risk. Policies and protocols are continuously developed and reviewed considering the federal and state regulations as well as students’ needs and assessment of services. Students express a high level of satisfaction with the services received. NUC has also integrated additional human resources to render services to students. In addition, NUC has a known impact in the community with projects such as community programs of health, the ENACTUS project, Sábados Dinámicos, Autism curriculum, Health Fairs, and Oasis of Healthy Life, among others.

NUC’s most significant challenge in the support of the student experience is the necessity of continuously assessing the diverse and increasing needs of students in order to better serve them while achieving their academic goal and struggles.

As part of the self-study process, NUC proposes to optimize the reports improving the speed in the processes of academic offices and administrative as well as maximize the use of reports for early identification and early impact to high risk students. This implies the continuous update of the technological resources.
Chapter Five: Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment

NUC complies with Standard V. NUC has an assessment tradition reinforced throughout the years. It has validated its commitment to the institutional effectiveness and its assessment. The model in place has contributed to the reinforcement of a well-grounded assessment culture. The results of the assessment and the evidence-based analysis have allowed NUC to improve its programs and services, thus complying with the Mission and Goals.

The growing number of changes and improvements at NUC illustrate that results of assessment activities are shared and utilized to support the decision-making and improvement process. Furthermore, NUC’s continuous improvement processes do in fact lead to continuous institutional renewal at NUC.

The assessment and accountability culture is a significant strength in NUC. Direct and indirect measures are used to assess effectiveness and deepen the knowledge and accountability in Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment, as well as the effectiveness of its academic, administrative and services areas. NUC has strengthened its academic offering and assessment processes through programmatic accreditations to enhance the quality of education and promote the NUC brand within the community. The accountability culture as well as the direct mandate through the years from the Board of Directors (BOD) and BOT has led NUC to reinforce the structured and sustainable assessment of its effectiveness. NUC has implemented a standardized electronic grade book template for the course assessment report that provides uniform data collection and analysis making the institutional assessment summaries easier to prepare. These achievements are fostered by a lean non-bureaucratic academic and administrative structure that leads to rapid changes as a result of findings and the implementation of pilot projects. Students feel that they belong to NUC, that they are well served, and that their program leads them to a needed career, thus complying with the career oriented mission. Although students withdraw due mostly to economic reasons, many return later to finish their degree reflecting their satisfaction with NUC, its academic programs, services and faculty. NUC also continues to attract transfer students, who come in good academic standing either from the largest universities as well as the smallest institutions, which makes NUC an option for higher education.
The challenges identified are assumable and already are given the needed analysis to reinforce the institutional assessment efforts. Although the institution has a standardized electronic grade book template for the course assessment report that provides uniform course data collection and analysis, further improvement is needed to allow for electronic data collection, management and analysis. NUC needs to continue analyzing the reasons why students decide not to continue in their programs and leave without reaching for support. This will allow taking assertive actions to increase the percent of program retention and completion rates. Additional systematic training for faculty teaching at graduate level should be enhanced in order to improve retention for students in these programs.

Chapter Six: Standard VI Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

NUC is in compliance with Standard VI. NUC has a long and rich planning tradition enhanced through the years with a very effective participation of its stakeholders at all departments and levels in the comprehensive planning-budgeting-resource allocation and assessment process. This process is followed from its development through its implementation. NUC’s strategic plan revision process and the resulting five priorities were established with the corresponding Strategic Goals and Objectives for the 2016-2010 five-year period.

Professional training, regular and systematic meetings, continuous and effective communication as well as a knowledgeable and experienced workforce have led the institution to encounter its challenges successfully. NUC has developed through the years the needed SOP’s in order to ensure that all of its campuses and departments are aligned. The Academic Program Matrix (APM) ensures that a timeline is followed in the academic program development and revision, as well as following the external governmental and accrediting agencies requirements. A roadmap for the Planning and Budgeting Process establishes the specific annual timeline. Each department develops its own action plan aligned to the Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP). As part of this well-organized process, NUC has developed a thoughtful master plan and accompanying yearly capital expenditure budgets in order to ensure that all facilities are in optimum conditions, and that respond to the academic programs development and revisions, and needed student services. A Technology Development Plan is also revised regularly in
order to be aligned to new programs development and curriculum revisions, as well as to provide staff with continuously updated technology. Satisfaction surveys are systematically administered to students, faculty, staff, employers and the results are used for continuous assessment and institutional renewal. All of these efforts are aligned with each other, thus ensuring the fulfillment of the mission and strategic goals.

As part of NUC’s responsibility, NUC has a checks and balances process through which regular internal monitoring is carried out in order to reassure that all campuses and departments follow the established procedures in aspects such as faculty and staff records, student records, and other systematic procedures. In addition, NUC undergoes annual external compliance audits with regard to its administration of student financial aid funds. Results show that NUC is in compliance with the integrity processes of the Institution.

As part of NUC’s planning and operation, the institution has enhanced the review process aligned to assess the activities established in the Institutional Strategic Planning. Annually, a meeting is held to discuss the achievements and pending goals in order to plan for the next year. This serves as part of the periodic assessment of results in order to determine the resource allocation and reevaluate the priorities that will be addressed the next year.

As part of NUC’s strengths, it continues to strengthen the strategic planning process and its alignment with the annual budget allocation. This contemplates enrollment growth and the establishment of priorities to ensure academic quality and student services. The Strategic Plan is used for prioritizing resource allocation, and institutional renewal. Both the Institutional Strategic Plan and the Academic Program Matrix are revisited each year in accordance with the departmental action plan. The decision-making process and institutional development and renewal are aligned to NUC’s Mission and Goals and operationalized by the departmental action plans. NUC’s academic offerings are properly supported by the financial resources and controls that ensure the institutional financial stability. Through the systematic and periodic assessment process, students continue to express satisfaction with the physical facilities and technological resources. Continuous investment for facilities renewal and expansion is carried out in accordance with the agreed priorities between campuses, programmatic
accreditations, and enrollment growth. Each campus has been empowered through a more intense participation in the budgeting process making each department responsible of managing their own budget and automation of expense control processes. Rational and consistent policies and procedures are used to determine allocation of assets, evidenced through the annual budget memoranda, as well as meeting minutes. Therefore, educational programs, student learning and services are adequately supported by financial, technological, facilities, and educational resources.

In the current economic situation and Puerto Rico’s negative demographic growth, NUC encounters a challenge in achieving its population growth goals. The institution must continue to search for opportunities or economical means to generate additional financial resources to supplement students’ financial aid as well as continue optimizing the human, technological, instructional, and other resources between campuses.

**Chapter Seven: Standard VII Governance, Leadership and Administration**

The institution complies with Standard VII. The governance structure and corresponding process of decision-making is clear, transparent, and supportive to all the various stakeholders and allows NUC to carry out its stated mission and goals. The BOT has a high level of commitment and enthusiasm, and the depth and breadth of experience and expertise to contribute to NUC’s improvement and fulfillment of its mission and goals. NUC has processes in place to assess the BOT and to evaluate the President, VP’s, Institutional Directors and Chancellors. The governance responsibilities are clear and available through the BOT bylaws, staff and faculty manuals. Very well defined reporting lines are understood by the faculty and staff that facilitate ongoing communication and necessary discussion related to daily operations and progress made toward strategic objectives.

The NUC Executive Committee (EC), which has been in existence for over twenty years and meets periodically to review institutional priorities, monitor operations, and address matters of concern, provides the appropriate leadership and oversight of NUC. No major challenges have been identified for this standard. NUC will continue to develop and strengthen staff in executive functions as part of succession planning, as well as expand professional level opportunities for staff.
Part I: Self-Study Standards

Chapter One: Standard I - Mission and Goals

The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Introduction

NUC has a clearly defined mission statement and institutional goals that have been developed, evaluated and revised through collaborative participation. Its mission statement defines its purpose and the institutional goals define what NUC intends to accomplish. NUC’s mission and goals are instrumental in establishing stakeholder expectations and behaviors, academic programs and services, infrastructure and environment, financial stability, learning outcomes, and in more general terms, the strategic direction of the institution including continuous improvement.

The purpose of Standard I is to analyze how effective NUC is in committing itself to the Mission and Goals; and how effective are the strategies used to convey its Mission, and Institutional Goals to its constituents in order for them to be aware of their breath and depth to address all academic levels and modalities.

Vision

NUC’s Vision complies with the educational commitment in the Mission and establishes the future aspirations of the institution. The vision was last revised in 2016. It reads as follows:

To be recognized as a university community where the students receive an education of excellence which promotes their continuous integral development through diverse learning modalities.

Mission

NUC’s Mission was first developed in 1982, when the institution was founded. Through the years, it has been revisited, reviewed, and revised as needed, mostly responding to specific milestones. NUC’s current Mission cascades from the vision statement; it states that:

At National University College, we develop educated and enterprising individuals, competent in their professional area, with an attitude to continue learning throughout their whole life, proud of belonging to National and capable of inserting themselves successfully in the labor market to contribute effectively to the economic, social and political progress of their environment.
Appendix 1 shows the evolution of NUC’s Mission and Goals since its establishment. It has been updated as the institution grows according to the strategic plans and innovative academic offerings.

In 2016, NUC’s mission which had been in place since 2009 underwent a slight revision/rewording. The essence of the mission was retained and the slight change reflected the institution’s career focus which required better clarity to NUC stakeholders. It maintains its student centeredness and its educational commitment to the student. During its revision process, internal and external constituents participated. Focus groups with students, faculty and administrative staff were held. Whenever the mission and goals have been revisited, evaluated and revised, there has been participation of the broader institutional community through direct intentional and meaningful deliberations. Meetings have been facilitated in which recommendations have been submitted by stakeholders for consideration.

Academic programs and student’s services are driven by NUC’s purpose, as expressed in the Mission statement. Today, the revised Mission statement is visible and prominent at all campuses including the student portal, Institutional Catalog, NUC web page, Strategic Plan, in hallways, common spaces and other accessible public places.

Appendix 2 (Correlation between the elements of NUC’s Mission and Examples of Compliance) highlights some examples of how NUC actualizes the five specific elements of its Mission.

**Core Values**

NUC has in place seven (7) Core Values that support and complement the Institution’s Vision and Mission statements and priorities. Furthermore, these Core Values guide the institution’s conduct and behavior as well as its relationship with its stakeholders. As NUC continues to grow as an institution of higher education, it has become more self-critical in explicitly defining its Core Values from which it develops its culture, its brand and its priorities and strategies. NUC’s core values include:

- **Respect.** The willingness to understand and accept the different ways human beings act and think. It is a feeling of acceptance of diversity and the need for tolerance, kindness, and compliance with the established rules and regulations that ensure harmony among human beings.
- **Social Commitment.** Shared institutional decision to promote the social welfare of our university community and Puerto Rico by participating in research, orientation, and the solution of the pressing problems in the community, represented mainly by students.
- **Responsibility.** Moral action that allows us to make commitments, reflect, and value the consequences of our actions in a personal, community and workplace environment.
- **Service.** A permanent attitude that moves us to help others in a spontaneous manner to achieve their immediate or long-term goals. This attitude is present and is expressed in all areas of life.
- **Quality.** Degree of excellence with which all institutional actions and services will be carried out, whether they be academic or administrative. As a result, the level of satisfaction will be high, thus reflecting the acceptance of efforts well done.
- **Innovation.** An evolving process that allows the increase of competitiveness in the institution to meet the dynamics and challenges of a changing scenario.
- **Compliance.** It is the performance of a particular obligation in accordance with the requirements set by regulatory agencies. It contributes us to achieve, acquire commitments, conclude them responsibly, and act accordingly to them.

## Strategic Priorities

As part of the most recent revision of the Mission, the strategic goals were also recouched into five (5) priority areas to address more specifically the Mission’s elements in operational and measurable terms.

The priority areas are defined as follows:

1. **Academic Quality** - Reaffirms the importance of academic quality through systematic assessment and the continuous improvement of the institution’s academic offerings. Also, to provide academic offerings based on learning outcomes and the personal values directly tied to the labor market. Student services complement the learning process, contribute to the development of student’s experiences and NUC’s focus on service demonstrates its commitment to quality student services that support the teaching-learning process and foster educational excellence.

2. **Service, Development, and Student Experience** - Provide a college experience centered on student experiences, development and services, which prepares graduates to lead and excel in the local or global geographic area where they decide to live.

3. **Organizational Development** - Fostering a service-oriented organizational culture of the highest quality to all customers. It is characterized by an attitude towards collaboration, participation and a sense of commitment from all participants. Toward this end, all administrative staff that occupies key positions and faculty complies with all the competency and performance requirements.

4. **Strengthening and Positioning of the NUC Brand** - The NUC brand (institutional identity) must be recognized in the market as one of the top private universities in PR, FL and through distance education.

5. **Financial Strength** - Achievement of key financial metrics levels established in each year’s annual budget.

These priorities show the institution’s commitment to the quality of educational offerings, student services, its brand and financial stability. This commitment flourishes, in part by an agile organizational structure with sound financial practices that further strengthen the brand and positions the institution while emphasizing the performance of NUC graduates in the job market.
Strategic Goals

To further support these five (5) institutional priorities, NUC has developed a series of strategies goals specific to each priority.

To address the priority area of **Academic Quality**, the following strategic goals were developed:

1.1 Provide an innovative academic offering based on learning outcomes and personal values pertinent to the labor market.
1.2 Facilitate a satisfactory integral student learning experience.
1.3 Achieve a 5% increase in the pass rate of the licensing exam in all programs for professions that require so.
1.4 Strengthen the evaluation and continuous improvement culture of academic programs and services.

To address the priority area of: **Service and Development of the Student Experience**, the following strategic goals were developed:

2.1 Achieve the minimum student satisfaction level of 90% in the different annual and biennial institutional surveys.
2.2 Achieve a minimum retention rate of 70% at institutional level.
2.3 Achieve the minimum graduation rates established in the annual budget.

To address the priority area of: **Organizational Development**, the following strategic goals were developed:

3.1 Achieve that 100% of the administrative personnel that occupies key positions and all the faculty complies with the established requisites of competencies and performance.
3.2 Keep updated the administrative and faculty files, in compliance with the institutional requirements and accrediting agencies (PRCE, MSCHE, ACEN, CAPTE, TEAC).
3.3 Institutionalize a working culture centered in the institutional values.
3.4 Promote and incentivize innovation initiatives in the academic and administrative areas that allow an academic offering aligned with the student population needs and based on an assessment system.

To address the priority area of: **Brand Strengthening and Positioning**, the following strategic goals were developed:

4.1 Increase and maintain the market recognition of NUC brand (institutional identity), as one of the first private universities of the country.
4.2 Duplicate the amount of students outside of PR studying in the distance education modality.
4.3 Participate actively in professional, entrepreneurial, and university organizations in and out of PR.

To address the priority area of: **Financial Strength**, the following strategic goals were developed:

5.1 Achieve the EBITDA level established in the annual budget.
5.2 Achieve the population growth goals established in the annual budget in the on ground and distance education modality.
5.3 Achieve the retention goals as established in the budget.
5.4 Comply with the federal requisites of not utilizing more than 90% of federal funds as income for enrollment concept (better known as 90/10).
Appendix 3 presents the alignment between each priority area, strategic goals and key indicators of achievement.

The priority areas give direction to the implementation of processes that bring to life NUC’s Mission. The contribution of the graduates to society, excellence of academic offerings, and quality of student services and organizational structure, as well as a positive collegiate environment are a result of the implementation of the strategic goals. All efforts are conducted under the scrutiny of sound financial practices.

**Link between Mission, Planning and Action**

Through time, NUC has become more aware of how its Mission is deeply rooted in all its administrative, educational and student support services and how it addresses all of its stakeholders. It provides direction to institutional strategic planning and decision-making process. Moreover, the quality of the service directly provided to students by faculty and staff is one of its most important assets.

The systematic and interrelated processes of planning, budgeting, assessment, and evaluation, strongly support the educational offerings and all related activities. These processes bring with these challenges and opportunities as a way to advance campus conversations about issues related to the continuous improvement, learning of new models, trends in the educational planning process and tie them to the Institutional Mission.

The internal community (faculty, staff, administration, students and BOT) is well aware of the impact that Mission, Priority Areas and Strategic Goals have on student learning, in order that all academic levels and modalities reflect the aforementioned constructs and stakeholders are held accountable for the collaborative efforts and the sound and ethical practices in which the operations must be directed. Through the continuous assessment cycle of learning outcomes and data collected, the groundwork to design, plan, and implement the measures of the improvement are established (Please refer to Standard V-Educational Effectiveness Assessment and Standard VI - Planning Resources and Institutional Improvement, for details). As such, the Mission and Strategic Goals guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resources allocation, program and curriculum development, and the development of program outcomes. The departmental action plans based on the priority
areas and strategic goals are translated into measurable indicators to provide a necessary foundation for the needed analysis in order to accomplish the goals and improve the daily operations processes and educational efforts. The necessary resources are identified and contemplated in the budget plan.

These processes bring with them challenges and opportunities as a way to advance campus conversations about issues related to the continuous improvement, learning of new models and trends in the educational planning process.

As an example, to develop new programs, the SVPAA and the Research and Development Office analyze the feasibility of new programs proposed by faculty and by other internal or external stakeholders. Then, the proposed program is considered by the Academic Board and once approved, it is sent to the State and appropriate accrediting agencies. Appendix 4 (Link with the Strategic Goals and Strategic Objective), shows how this process is carried out in a planned manner, following the Institutional Strategic Planning.

NUC guides all its efforts in compliance with its Mission, and its faculty and staff are aware of its importance. All personnel receive a copy of NUC Mission, Vision and Values. These are discussed in faculty and staff meetings and new faculty is oriented with respect to the meaning of these statements and the need to abide by them, among other strategies used. Each department has its own mission which articulates its functions and contributes to the implementation of the academic and administrative services. The personnel translate their efforts in a manner that the community being served experiences a service-oriented environment.

NUC Mission, Vision and Values are posted in the NUC web page so that all stakeholders can access these documents. As well, NUC campuses distribute the Mission, Values and Vision across hallways, classrooms and offices.

**Periodic Assessment of Mission**

Annually, NUC administers at all of its campuses a Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ) to a stratified sample of each campus’ student population, proportionally distributed by program and day/evening sessions. The last administration of this survey was in March to June 2016-17. Although the SSQ has been administered since 2003 and has been an excellent tool to improve the academic programs and
services, the institution lacked the needed systematic feedback of faculty and staff on issues that may affect not only them but also the students. The Faculty Satisfaction Questionnaire (FSQ) and Staff Satisfaction Questionnaire (StSQ) were revised and in November 2011, the survey was administered to faculty and staff in which some of the questions were aligned to those included in the SSQ in order to perform a triangulation between students, faculty, and staff, whenever appropriate. Questionnaires were administered electronically. The FSQ was successfully administered again in 2014 but the StSQ was wrongly administered to all personnel. Therefore, the data collected was not valid to assess the satisfaction since it included the faculty. The FSQ’s survey was revised, and administered in November 2016. In this questionnaire, the faculty satisfaction on the awareness of the Mission, Vision and Core Values reflected that 99.7% were satisfied with the revised Mission and agree with it. Following are the areas directly related to the way in which students understand NUC as related to the mission and goals. A more thorough comparison between the two most recent administrations of the SSQ as well as between campuses is presented in Chapter VI Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

In terms of students, the last satisfaction questionnaire administered in 2014 illustrated that the most important reasons for students to enroll at NUC were to Obtain a Job (99%), Economic Situation (98%) and Vocation or Personal Interest (99%). These reasons are consistent with the elements present in the Institution’s Mission, such as Developed, educated and enterprising individuals and capable of inserting themselves successfully to the labor market, to contribute effectively to economic, social and political progress of their environment.

Based on 2015 employment services, 87% of the students that had used those services indicated that they were very satisfied, which represents an increase from previous results. Therefore, these professionals comply with students’ expectations of their services and could make even better contributions to help students select their best career. To validate this effort, the aggregate placement rate of NUC was 71.64% in 2016. This is noticeably significant since unemployment has risen significantly in Puerto Rico during the last years. It demonstrates that the efforts made to improve the strategies used
in these offices and changes implemented have resulted in more effective ways to prepare students for a competitive job search.

Students’ satisfaction with NUC’s academic offerings and services implies that, from their perspective, NUC is complying with its mission of academic programs of excellence and quality of service. In terms of the overall satisfaction of students with NUC, the percentage has increased or remained constant in most areas. This reflects that the Institution’s educational commitment is highly regarded by students.

Another aspect surveyed was the importance of NUC location when making the decision to enroll at the university. In the last survey administered to students, the results reflect a 96%, which demonstrates that location is an important factor and that the institution mainly serves students from surrounding areas. The campuses are located in strategic points that serve the northern, eastern, south, and center areas of the Island. In consonance with this element, NUC has extended its services with the opening of a campus in Mayagüez in 2017 to serve the western geographical area. The possibility of reaching communities further out by means of promotional and marketing campaigns may be explored.

**Faculty**

Faculty assessed NUC’s compliance with the Mission and Goals through the FSQ administered during the November 2016 academic term. This questionnaire was distributed to 627 faculty members (97.0% of all faculty) and 529, and submitted their responses which represent 84.4% of participation. Using a Likert scale, from totally agree to totally disagree, faculty were asked about NUC’s compliance with its Mission and Goals. Almost all faculty (99.8%) appear to be knowledgeable about the Mission and Goals. The opinion of the faculty suggests that NUC has been very successful in conveying the Mission to the faculty.

**Students**

Students assessed NUC’s compliance with the Mission and Goals through the SSQ administered during the March to June 2016-17 academic term. The survey was distributed to 6,934 students and 4,171 responded to the questionnaire, which represents a 60%. Again, using a Likert scale, from totally agree to totally disagree, students were
asked about NUC’s compliance with its Mission and Goals. Almost all students (99.8%) seem to be aware of the Mission and Goals, and are knowledgeable about its purpose.

Staff

The StSQ was incorrectly administered to all personnel in 2014; therefore, the data collected was not valid to assess the satisfaction since it also included the faculty altogether with staff. This survey was revised, and administered to staff in November 2016. Results reflect that 97.7% knew about the revised mission and agreed with the mission. 97.4% knew the Vision of NUC and agreed with it. These opinions are consistent with those expressed by the faculty, which confirms that NUC is successful in conveying its mission and goals.

Board of Trustees (BOT)

The governing body has the responsibility of assuring that the Mission and Goals of the institution are assessed and accomplished successfully. (See Chapter 7).

Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC’s continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from the work group have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the department or group to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.

Strengths

1. Faculty, administration, staff, and governing bodies make decisions based on NUC’s Mission, Goals and Core Values to implement improvement measures that benefit the university community. Planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and program outcomes are aligned with the Mission, Goals, and Values. (See Appendix 3)
2. Mission, Goals and Core Values have been revised with participation of the university community. Strategies of promotion and disclosure have been executed. (See Appendix 3)
3. NUC’s Mission, Goals, and Core Values respond to the current demands of the labor market. These are aligned with the five priority areas. (See Appendix 2 and Appendix 3)
4. NUC’s Mission directs the institutional efforts to the commitment of educating our students and becoming competent professionals in their respective areas with a continuous learning attitude. (See Appendix 2)

Challenges

The 2016-2020 Strategic Planning demands close monitoring in order to achieve the expected results and follow-up to the action plans and effectiveness in achieving the established results and thus, comply with our Mission, Strategic Priorities, and Goals.

Suggestions

NUC should be more intentional and consistent in executing surveys annually, so as to provide longitudinal information about stakeholder satisfaction.

Recommendations

Create policy to review NUC Mission.

Summary

NUC complies with Standard 1: Mission and Goals and demonstrates fulfillment of Requirements of Affiliation #1, 2, 4, and 7. NUC has recently undergone a revision that has allowed the institution to focus its efforts in five priority areas and corresponding strategic goals that are aligned to the future plans of NUC to strengthen the academic, student and administrative areas. This allows the institution to continue offering services of excellence and quality.

The institutional commitment to ascertain that it has carried out its effort in agreement with the standards set for higher education institutions serves as an effective tool to look into NUC’s operation critically and convey into the institutional community a sense of responsibility in the quality service, continuous innovation, social commitment and compliance that are addressed in the interweaving of synergetic team work that characterizes the Institution’s performance.
Chapter Two: Standard II - Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Introduction

Led appropriately by three significant governing bodies (the BOD, the BOT and the EC) and a qualified administration, NUC seeks to achieve its mission and goals in a manner characterized by ethics and integrity. Indeed, integrity is observed in all processes and finds expression in the policies and procedures that guide the day-to-day activities of the institution. These policies and procedures address a wide range of issues and areas including grievances, human resources, conflicts of interest, academic inquiry and engagement, admissions, marketing, academic progress, honesty and truthfulness in curricular and co-curricular activities, among others.

Standard II addresses Ethics and Integrity, which is a direct result of the implementation of the mission and goals in a way in which all the educational programs and internal and external activities are conducted in compliance with high ethical and integrity standards. Here, the Institutional Integrity Policy (Appendix 5) is discussed. Ethics and integrity are also analyzed as they relate to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, advertisement, and compliance with the regulatory agencies, management of information, professional appearance, and the hiring, evaluation, discipline and dismissal of employees. These documents clarify NUC’s expectations and standards regarding many issues of interest to the higher education community. Rules and regulations applicable to students are contained in the Students Handbook (Appendix 6), while the Human Resources Code of Conduct and Compendium of Policies includes policies related to issues such as the Progressive Discipline, Non Discrimination and Inclusion, and Sexual Harassment in Employment among others. All of these resources are available to employees on an internal Intranet Web page.

Evidence is also provided regarding how NUC promotes ethics and integrity to its constituents. The procedures and strategies utilized to convey institutional integrity and other related policies will be described, as well as those who are responsible to oversee the compliance and implementation of these policies and how effectively NUC ensures
that its constituents are knowledgeable of their responsibility. The application of the NUC grievance policy is also discussed.

Finally, strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations, related to the Standard are discussed and a summary presented.

**Institutional Integrity Policy**

NUC conducts its efforts in observance of high ethical standards and institutional policies in a way that personnel translate them into a highly ethical management of processes and information. These high ethical standards are driven by *NUC’s Institutional Integrity Policy* (Appendix 5) established in 2000 as a founding guideline for all personnel in the execution of their roles and responsibilities. The document is also available in the NUC Web page.

The purpose of this policy is to strengthen the institution using procedures that promote uniformity and compliance with fundamental aspects of our administrative duties. It is intended, in addition, to encourage creativity and initiative of each component as well as maximize the use of all the resources of the institution. This is accomplished within the construct of a nimble organizational structure that promotes collaborative decision-making, delivery of quality services and effective and positive action. Also, it includes guidelines and procedures by which the administrative and academic policies are established, implemented and revised, and to whom each of these responsibilities corresponds. Fair and impartial application of norms and procedures as well as the allocation of resources based on agreed upon needs and criteria allow for non-discriminating decisions. The most recent revision of this policy was made in 2013 and included the change of the institution’s name to National University College. This occurred in 2010. In this last revision of the policy some administrative and academic titles were also changed. In addition, all parts of the policy were reviewed ensuring that there was no outdated information or processes that had changed, as well as structural reorganization of some of sections. Among the changes made, it also includes a section aimed at all written communication either in internal or external correspondence, so as to maintain a formal vocabulary and sense of professionalism, while maintaining the integrity and essence that distinguishes NUC at all times.

The organizational climate reflects the values and beliefs that guide the institution
with a clear mission of service and excellence. The staff is committed to confidentiality and the security of records and information in compliance with the accreditation and regulatory criteria and requirements. There have been no reported cases of any violation of NUC’s Institutional Integrity Policy (Appendix 5).

**Academic Freedom**

Faculty members exercise academic freedom within the parameters established in the Academic Freedom Policy (Appendix 7) as stated in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix 8) especially, in the courses thematic guides and syllabi. The document is available in the NUC Web page.

Faculty promotes critical thinking and intellectual creativity within the student community framed by high ethical standards and values. In the last assessment made by faculty through the satisfaction questionnaire, 86% felt that NUC supports their academic freedom. In recent years, NUC has received no complaints in terms of violations of the Academic Freedom Policy (Appendix 7).

**Conflicts of Interest**

A fundamental element of integrity at NUC is the avoidance of conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts in all of its activities and among all its constituents. Conflict of Interest policies can he found in the Bylaws of the Board Trustees and in the Faculty Handbook. In the Bylaws of the BOT, the Conflict of Interest Policy

“addresses actual, potential and/or perceived conflicts of interest relative to the role and responsibilities of all persons serving as members of the Board of Trustees of National University College (NUC).” The policy also specifies certain conflicts of interest including: “Interests or concerns of any Trustee, or of such person’s immediate family, or any party, group or organization to which said person has allegiance, which could be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of the College or otherwise affecting his/her ability to exercise independent, unbiased judgement in the discharge of his/her responsibilities to the College”

Here are some applications:

1. **In the Board Trustees**
   As part of the requirements of the BOT of NUC, each member must sign the Policy of Conflict of Interest annually, also included in Article VIII of Bylaws. It is determined that each member of the Board must report any action or situation that may be perceived as a conflict of interest. If the member understands that there is a conflict of interest he should abstain himself from the discussion and from voting on any matter under consideration of the Board or its Committees related to that subject. If a member is found to have a conflict that violates this policy, may be subject to removal from office on the Board.
2. Faculty Handbook:

Outside employment and conflict of interest

NUC has a procedure in place that allows faculty to disclose outside activities and financial interests. It is required that if any faculty member expects to engage in any outside activity which may create a conflict of interest or plans to engage in outside full or part time professional activities for which they will be paid, they must complete and submit an official form to report on services offered in other educational institutions.

Fraternization Policy

In order to maintain a campus environment that fosters mutual respect, promotes and supports our educational goals, NUC encourages faculty members to conduct themselves in a professional manner that will maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Avoiding situations which may generate complaints of favoritism, supervision problems, security problems, ethical problems, questions regarding academic evaluation, and possible claims of sexual harassment, faculty are strictly prohibited from fraternizing with students, including but not limited to, dating, pursuing to date, and pursuing or having romantic or sexual relationships with students. Faculty who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination or dismissal from employment.

These examples of policies that address conflict of interest further establish the permitted ranges of conflict that may exist in different academic settings within the culture of NUC. No conflict of interest issue has been addressed since the previous MSCHE Self-Study.

Hiring, Evaluation, and Separation of Employees

Ethics and integrity are a hallmark of NUC’s employment process, as evidenced by its hiring, training, and evaluation practices for faculty and staff. By insisting that its human resources processes be equitable and consistent, NUC reinforces its expectation that those who form its community conduct themselves with integrity, as framed by the institutional mission and goals.

The description of duties and responsibilities provides guidance in the performance of tasks and offering of services. All members of the institution have a clear knowledge of their duties and responsibilities and to whom they report as evidenced through the employee job descriptions. Organizational hierarchy is well known by employees and included in NUC Catalog.

Upon hiring new staff, employees are provided with institutional policies and procedures, organizational charts, job descriptions, and an orientation by their immediate supervisor. The job description is discussed in depth and a copy is provided to the employee. Also, the decision-making process and hierarchy is well known and followed
by staff and management. In the FSQ administered in November 2016, employee opinions validate support of NUC’s fair and impartial human resources policies and procedures. When the faculty was asked if the criteria of the faculty evaluation system are clearly discussed, 87% of respondents felt satisfied, while 79% of the administrative staff felt satisfied. When faculty was asked whether the supervisor provides timely feedback on their work, 90% say they were satisfied, and the 85% of the administrative staff felt satisfied, which shows that employees have a work climate of respect and opportunity.

The structured, systematic and uniform procedures in the hiring, evaluation and separation of employees ensure the application of fair and impartial practices. During the last two years, a total of 49 employees have been dismissed, representing 3.4% of all employees. Of the 49 employees dismissed, 65% were due to eliminated jobs, 14% did not comply with the probationary period, and 20% were involuntary termination through dismissals which demonstrates the positive environment of the Institution.

Table II.1 presents some State and federal policies that are part of the protection of NUC employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the policy in NUC</th>
<th>State and federal laws applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Policy against sexual harassment in employment | • Ley Núm. 17 del 22 de abril de 1988: Ley para prohibir el hostigamiento sexual en el empleo: imponer responsabilidades y fijar penalidades de 1988  
• Violence Against Act of 1994 (VAWA)  
• Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”)  
• American with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
• Ley Núm. 100 de 30 de junio de 1959, según enmendada (29 L.P.R.A. sec. 146 et seq): Ley contra el discrimin en el empleo del 1959  
• The Civil Rights Act of 1991  
• 34 CFR Part 86: Drug Free Workplace Act: 1990 |
| No Discrimination and Inclusion | • Ley Núm. 100 de 30 de junio de 1959, según enmendada (29 L.P.R.A. sec. 146 et seq): Ley contra el discrimin en el empleo del 1959  
• The Civil Rights Act of 1991 |
| Safe and Respectful Workplace | • Ley Núm. 379 del 15 de mayo de 1948 Ley de Jornada de Trabajo  
• Ley Núm. 180 del año 1998: Ley de Salario Mínimo, Vacaciones y Licencia por Enfermedad de Puerto Rico  
• Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 |
| Licensing | • 34 CFR Part 86: Drug Free Workplace Act: 1990 |
Intellectual Property Rights

The Intellectual Property Rights Policy (Appendix 9) complies with Title 17 of the federal code. It establishes the acts that constitute violation to copyright, prohibitions, and sanctions. Announcements on the copyright law are available near photocopier machines, among other areas of the institution. In the academic year 2016-2017, four student complaints about the copyright policy were filed. These cases went to the Disciplinary Committee and they had a written reprimand accompanied by guidance on the APA style. There were no reported recurrences in this behavior. This policy is also accessible to the entire university community in the NUC web page.

Grievances Policy

NUC has an internal Grievance Policy (Appendix 10) that applies to students, employees, and other interested parties. It includes the process used to place a complaint as well as the investigation process. Students are guided in the admissions process on how to file a complaint. This procedure is part of the Students Handbook (Appendix 6). Employees are oriented in the hiring process; they receive and sign the Code of Conduct and Compendium of Policies and it is part of the policies found in the Faculty Handbook. NUC community is informed that if an update occurs for this process, it will be available on the website. This policy is available in the Catalog, and the Students Handbook accessible to the entire university community in the NUC web page. Table II.2 presents Student Complaints to NUC Staff 2016-2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrative</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Environment in the classroom</td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC - Arecibo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC - Bayamond</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC - Caguas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC - Ponce</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC - Río Grande</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC-Mayagüez</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Academics: related to academic processes such as: evaluation, rubrics, thematic guide
Environment in the classroom: offensive or inadequate conduct Services: lack services

Whistleblower Policy

The Whistleblower Policy was established in 2010 as an initiative of the BOT. The President of the BOT and the President of NUC are the officers in charge of
receiving any complaint. The BOT has in its agenda template the discussion of any complaints received. The ethics line has replaced the Whistleblower Policy.

**Publications/marketing materials**

The *Institutional Integrity Policy* (Appendix 5) includes a section on institutional imaging in which guidelines are given for the use of the official logo, promotional material, name, forms, and correspondence. In addition, a policy on the use of the information and communication resources specifies all requirements on the use of this media. NUC places much care in ensuring that all communications in form of publications, media electronic, materials of public relations or reports to agencies external are accurate. The offices producing the information also assume the responsibility of the quality of the information produced and disseminated. However, before approving a communication, publication, media and electronic, material of public relations and reports to external agencies, it is evaluated by the Compliance Office of NUC. This ensures compliance with the regulations of external agencies, the accuracy of the information and the correction that should have any communication. There is detailed process for the review of marketing information at both the corporate and institutional levels. The corporate office prepares the marketing and advertising material; it is forwarded to the institution where Academic Affairs and Compliance reviews it. These managers evaluate the disclosure requirements and the alignment of the material with the strategies and goals of the institution as well as the relation to the mission and institutional values.

**Promoting, Affordability and Accessibility**

NUC is quite proactive in promoting affordability and accessibility so students can make informed decisions regarding the cost and funding of studies. NUC has in place at each of its campuses a Financial Aid Office with a Director and Officers that follow the institutional standard procedures guidelines and financial aid application guide. Students receive an initial orientation regarding Title IV funds which includes application process and eligibility, loan options and the documents they must complete: such as entrance interview and master promissory note. Each office offers students printed materials provided by the Department of Education, such as:

- Federal Student Loans: Basics for Students
✓ Federal Student Loans: Be a Responsible Borrower
✓ Federal Student Loans: Direct PLUS Loan Basics for Parents
✓ Federal Student Loans: Repaying your Loans
✓ Federal Student Loans: Repaying your Loans- Updated Income driven repayment plans chart

Information is also available on the NUC website and Students Handbook (Appendix 6). Students that have a loan and complete a program, leave college or reduce the academic load to less than half time receive an electronic or regular mail notification to complete the exit interview. Such notification includes the official Exit Counseling Guide for Borrowers of Direct Loans and Federal Family Education Program Loans published by the Federal Department of Education. The Institutional Default Prevention Coordinator follows up with students with loans in default through electronic and regular correspondence and phone calls. Assistance is provided to students who need to contact their loan server to devise a repayment plan if needed. Assistance is also provided to students who need to contact their loan server to devise a repayment plan (if needed). Different initiatives for loan orientation and direct assistance are provided to students as needed. NUC has a delinquency prevention service contract with Inceptia that provides guidance and alternatives to students in default.

Compliance with applicable federal, state and commission reporting

The institution has a Compliance Office which partners with appropriate colleagues to develop, maintain and operationalize policies and procedures in support of compliance standards and in alignment with the institutional mission and values. In addition, NUC has compliance, accreditation and licensing personnel who work with the state licensing processes along with the academic vice-presidency and who report to the university community information regarding the status of licenses and accreditations through the NUC website. Other important information disclosed is the placement rate for the last three years which is reported annually by the VP of Student Affairs and Effectiveness (VPSAE) office through the institutional website. In addition, in compliance with the Students' Right to Know Act, graduation rates, retention and placements are published. This document is also published annually on the NUC website available under the name of Students Right to Know Act. (Appendix 11)
In addition, NUC’s VPCRA is responsible for ensuring compliance with federal, state and accreditation agencies requirements as well as developing, organizing, and managing the functions of compliance and providing leadership for a wide variety of regulatory, accreditation and internal standards compliance. At the corporate level, a VPCRA works as an internal auditor to monitor all actions that need to be taken in order to comply with the institutional integrity.

In all of NUC’s EC meetings, a continuous and permanent item on the agenda is a Federal Accreditation Update. The VPCRA is in charge of this topic and presents the members an update of the latest regulatory changes as well as the status of all pending actions with regulators. The Compliance Office also works in collaboration with Human Resources Office and Vice-presidency of Academic Affairs Office to keep the university community informed about changes in any accreditation requirements or changes in policies and procedures related to compliance with federal and state laws.

**Assessment related of ethics and integrity**

NUC uses satisfaction surveys as a data collection tool for assessment processes. In the questionnaires of satisfaction of the employee, faculty and students there are questions related to ethics and integrity such as academic freedom, criteria of evaluation, clear communication of policies and alternatives for expression opinions and preoccupations. Another form is the Ethics Line. The data of surveys are initially collected and evaluated by the Office of Effectiveness and Human Resources. These offices share this results and the Compliance Office, and other offices develop staff training, policy making, changes and other decisions for improvement. Another process that is used as assessment is the internal compliance audits. NUC’s Compliance Office conducts internal monitoring visits of all NUC campuses on a yearly basis. The purpose of these monitoring visits is to verify campuses compliance with certain administrative, academic and regulatory requirements. Among the documents verified are: samples of faculty, administrative staff and student records, physical facilities permits, compliance with the Campus Security Act, Constitution Day, drug & alcohol prevention and academic related policies. The process consists of a team of subject matter experts with expertise in compliance, administrative and academic related matters visiting each NUC campus for the monitoring. Within a week or less after the visit a formal report is sent to
the campus chancellor requesting a corrective action plan regarding the findings and recommendations. Once the corrective action plan is received, it is verified to ensure that it includes the appropriate responses and documentation.

The self-studies that are carried out as part of the accreditation processes are also used as an assessment tool. The recommendations made by the evaluation teams are included in the improvement plans of the institution.

Following are examples of policies created as a result of the assessment in the past two years.

- *Creation of the Institutional Office of Specials Services to educate and support the compliance with the law American Disabilities Act and laws associated.*
- *Creation of a Placement Policy with the formula for calculating the placement percentage.*

**After Hurricane María**

Maintaining operations after Hurricane Maria has been a challenge, but the integration of the support staff with the student and the faculty has allowed maximizing the resources for handling the situations that have been presented "post María". The strengthening of relations between NUC and collaborators has allowed it to unify its efforts. At the academic level, the varied offer of modalities has allowed to offer alternatives to the student to maintain his/her academic objective.

Hurricane Maria brought challenges of all kinds. Employees were activated in phases according to the need of each Campus, *(for more information about this please refer to Chapter 7)*. NUC’s goal was to resume operations in the shortest possible time to help its students and the Commonwealth. NUC created the "Oasis of Hope" initiative with the goal of satisfying basic needs, including hot food; In addition to emotional support and health services. These activities were carried out on all campuses with the collaboration of other agencies such as the Red Cross, FEMA and other campus neighborhood agencies.

During the "Oasis of Hope" initiative, integrity was promoted by surveying the needs of students and the community. Information was collected in an instrument that listened to the need of the participant in a way that allowed being fair and equitable in the distribution of articles and being effective in the coordination of the necessary services. These processes provided reliability to the integrity partners in the process.
Evidences of NUC’s advancement of Ethics and Integrity

The EC, the senior management as well as supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with ethical and integrity standards and policies. NUC has several publications, policies and procedures that promote ethics and integrity, such as:

- **Student regulations along with policies, rules of conduct and sound practices** are published in the General Catalog and Student Regulations Handbook. These regulations guarantee a fair and impartial process that addresses diligently and extensively any violations and complaints from students with the promptness they require.

- The **Student Regulations Handbook** includes policies and procedures for establishing student organizations, student grievance procedures, rights and disciplinary action. The Student Regulation Handbook is evaluated periodically to assess its proper application with clear procedures. These regulations foster consistent treatment of constituencies, respect for diversity of ideas, perspectives and experiences among students, faculty, administration and support staff. Processes for addressing student grievances, including institutional policies, are also described in the General Catalog. These include procedures for student complaints about grades, grievance procedures, nondiscrimination policy and standards of satisfactory academic progress. For more specific information on student complaint resolution please refer to Chapter IV Support of Student Experience.

- The **Academic Integrity Policy** establishes the standards of academic integrity that the Institution upholds. It clearly establishes the acts of intellectual dishonesty that are not tolerated and the procedures to be followed. The applicable sanctions for academic integrity violations are categorized and defined. An appealing process is established to provide this opportunity to the students.

- NUC has other protocols and procedures related to students including the Violence against of Women Act (VAWA), Suicide Prevention protocol and Service Manual for students with disabilities.

- NUC has a **General Catalog** available through its webpage that is updated every other year and is accessible to the college community. It presents an overview of the mission, goals, organizational structure, curricula, student services, course descriptions, and financial aid available, rules and procedures, policies and procedures for the registrar, bursar and other services. Specific standards on academic progress for students are also published in the General Catalog. The changes that are made in the academic area and student services are included regularly as addendums and available on the Web page.

- The **webpage** provides links to information of all kinds concerning the institution. It provides a wide gateway for all visitors and prospective students and contains links to information about the institution’s history, basic facts, and administrative structure and units. The admissions and financial aid sections provide links to a comprehensive set of materials concerning the admissions, and financial aid processes. In another section it provides consumer information for online students.

- The **Institutional Code of Conduct and Compendium of Policy and Faculty Handbook** provide policies and procedures for recruitment, evaluation, dismissal or removal of employees. These documents include: Code of Ethics, Institutional Integrity Policy, Copyright Policy, Code of Conduct, Sexual Harassment Policy, Equal Employment Opportunity and employee corrective action measures, among others.

- NUC has in place a staff and faculty recruitment and evaluation procedure that ensures fair and impartial practices and dismissal of employees.

- NUC considers academic freedom as a fundamental basis to promote and foster the values framed within the concept of loyalty to the ideals of a democratic academic community. Academic freedom is framed within parameters described in the Faculty Handbook.

- The **academic and administrative staff** is evaluated regularly to encourage growth and professional development, as part of the process of assessment of human resources. The Performance Management Program is implemented and focuses on an employee evaluation process that emphasizes a continuous process of planning, communication, evaluation and development.
- The NUC Web page includes information on retention, graduation rates, and examination boards passing rates for academic programs requiring licensure.
- NUC has a process of monitoring all campus to assure compliance with internal and external regulations.
- As part of its growth and development process, NUC invites students to assess the performance of the institution through the "Student Satisfaction Survey". For general findings and results of this survey please refer to Chapter IV Support of Student Experience and Chapter V Educational Effectiveness Assessment. This instrument is used to assess quality of service and student satisfaction with respect to different departments.
- A copyright policy addresses plagiarism violations thus protecting intellectual property rights. NUC considers and recommends the ethical use of university resources through various policies on the use of electronic communications and Internet. These policies include information on the use of these resources and the associated guidelines for network use and copyright.
- The Faculty Handbook presents healthy practices, fair and consistent to responsibly address the process of recruitment, evaluation, or dismissal of faculty as well as the policies that follow the teaching-learning process. This document, available to all faculty members, is aligned to the regulations and standards that regulatory agencies establish as healthy practices in the academic environment. It provides a mechanism for addressing, controlling and avoiding conflicts of interest in academic activities. The Faculty Handbook includes a comprehensive description of faculty, duties and responsibilities, benefits, licenses and policies to be observed in the educational process.
- An Ethics Line was launched on September 16th, 2011 via e-mail to all employees. It is an additional communication channel for employees to report known or suspected illegal, unethical or unsafe behavior. Employees can report via the web or phone, in Spanish or English. The service is available 24 x 7 x 365 and is provided by a third party provider. A confidential and anonymous option, including follow-up communication, is also available. Training was provided at each campus.
- The course schedule allows students to graduate within the published program length as evidenced by each term’s courses offered, required and electives. The SSQ (2016) includes three questions that can explain indirectly student’s perception of the course scheduling. (1) How satisfied is the student with the curriculum of the program, 94% (daytime) and 94% (evening), (2) How satisfied is the student with how faculty complies with the syllabus, 94% (daytime) and 96 (evening) and (3) How satisfied is the student with the institution’s commitment with the excellence of the academic programs, 92% (daytime) and 91% (evening). These results evidence that NUC complies with its responsibility in the course offerings, although there is space for improvement.
- NUC also provides a secure environment to all its stakeholders. The complexity of being part of an open environment in an inner city location and a high density population for the Bayamón, Arecibo, Ponce and Caguas campuses, and on the other hand, a disperse typical open one as the Río Grande campus, bring hazards that need to be addressed with well-structured security plans and resources. As of today, NUC has not experienced incidents that could negatively affect the security and well-being of students and personnel. In addition, when asked students in the SSQ to assess the security level, 91% (daytime) said to be very satisfied, while 87% (evening) be answered very satisfied. The institution, in compliance with the Crime Awareness and Jeanne Clery Act reports, the annual incidence of crimes. This information is accessible in the NUC website.
- The institutional community is kept informed about changes and issues affecting them through general communications usually issued through the President’s office.
- Matters related to changes and issues affecting institutional mission, goals, sites, programs, operations, and other material changes are disclosed appropriately and submitted in applications to licensing and accrediting agencies. As examples, NUC submitted to the PRCE and to the MSCHE, in the last two years, various new academic programs, such as: Master in Business Administration (General), Master in Business Administration with major in Digital Marketing, Master Business Administration with major in Planning and Strategy, Master Degree in Science in Nursing in Education Curriculum, Bachelor on Sciences in Nursing (RN to BSN), Master Degree in Education with major in Educational Leadership, Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice with major in Cyber Crimes, Bachelor’s Degree In Criminal Justice with major in Forensic Investigation, Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice with Major in Homeland Security and Associate Degree on Physical Therapist Assistant.
Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC’s continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from the work group have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the department or group to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.

Strengths

1. In NUC, faculty and staff members are properly oriented in their duties and responsibilities, and about the institution’s culture.
2. NUC has well-established ways in which faculty, students and staff members express their concerns.
3. There are several procedures for the handling of complaints across all stakeholders.
4. NUC has a compliance office, with an experienced VP and director, that works hand in hand with the different directors of sensitive departments such as Financial Aid, Bursar, Human Resources, Registrar and Admissions, to ensure the proper application of policies, norms, and procedures as well as providing regulatory interpretation and recommendations to comply with the external agencies.
5. NUC has an ethics line, which demonstrates the interest of the institution to assure in ethical manner of all the processes and compliance of the institutional policies.

Challenges

One of the strongest distinctions of NUC is its high level of ethical values. Also, as a higher education institution, all staff should understand the nature of these regulations and the implementation procedures in order to comply. This aspect is a constant challenge and implies offering continuous training to staff on federal and state regulations. These trainings help to understand those regulations and processes to be followed and the implications for the institution, reaffirm our values, and ensure a high level of integrity and no tolerance to any disruptions that might endanger institutional integrity.

Suggestions

1. Include in the upcoming satisfaction surveys of students, faculty and administrative staff specific questions about a climate that fosters respect among a wide range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.
2. Revisit the Institutional Integrity Policy since it was last reviewed in 2013.

Recommendations

1. Consider additional ethics and integrity related topics in the institution’s portfolio of professional development activities.
Summary

NUC complies with Standard 2 Ethics and Integrity and the institution fulfills all requirements under the PRCE to operate in Puerto Rico as well as the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation. NUC complies with all policies, regulations and requirements requested by the U.S. Department of Education as for example the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including Title IV Program responsibilities as for example Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy 34 CFR 668.34. NUC reports to the National Center for Education Statistics through the IPEDS the institution's data; in this way they are accessible to the public.

NUC has in its administrative structure, composed of BOT and EC, how the institution is responsible for the quality and integrity of its operations and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being fulfilled. NUC has policies covering integrity, conflict of interest, compliance and ethics in all scenarios of the university community who are aligned with our institutional values and are strengthened to respond to social changes that occur.

NUC will continue stressing the importance of conducting all its efforts in compliance with high ethical standards and observance of social and moral values. As part of the continuous evaluation processes, the NUC Human Resources Department is currently developing and revising policies and procedures in the areas of communications and technology, dress code, flexible work arrangements and safe and respectful workforce, among others. The institution undergoes annual external compliance audits with regard to its administration of student financial aid funds. When these audits have been conducted, no major findings have been cited. This illustrates that NUC is in compliance with the integrity processes of the Institution.

As part of the continuous improvement process, satisfaction surveys are systematically administered to faculty and staff in order to assess the effectiveness in the delivery of services and implementation of processes. The results provide evidence to triangulate satisfaction within students, faculty and staff. NUC will continue directing its efforts in monitoring and assuring the satisfaction of its students with the academic services offered and promoting a quality service culture in which the human resource is conscious of the importance of the contribution towards the achievement of the institutional effectiveness in the operations, processes, and outcomes.
Chapter Three: Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Introduction

Through the analysis of Standard III, NUC will demonstrate how its student learning experiences and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout all of its educational offerings, regardless of degree level or delivery and instructional modality. Beginning 2013, NUC has undergone a thorough process of transformation in the academic area in order to better ensure and evidence that it complies with its Mission, ILG and higher education expectations.

This Standard III chapter begins by explaining how NUC meets the higher education expectations. As well, NUC describes its educational conceptual framework and how the ILG are aligned with the mission, values, and institutional vision, and with all the academic programs. Likewise, through the discussion of the standard, NUC demonstrates how its Strategic Plan is aligned with the priority of academic quality. Program development, program review, and programmatic accreditation are also discussed as part of the strategic priorities. Additionally, NUC explains the process for the design, delivery and evaluation of student learning experiences, including the role of the faculty in this process in order to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote a synthesis of learning.

Following, NUC explains how the faculty profile, recruitment process, opportunities for professional growth and innovation, and the evaluation plan process are appropriate for a rigorous and effective teaching environment and the assessment of student learning. Also, NUC offers a summary about its assessment process and gives examples of periodic assessment of the programs in order to provide student learning opportunities. Finally, assessment results of student and faculty satisfaction with the design and delivery of the student learning experience are presented.
Educational Offering Leading to a Higher Education Credential

NUC’s academic programs are appropriately rigorous in their content, breadth, and depth. As stated in the General Catalog (2018-2019, p.12):

*National University College is licensed by the Puerto Rico Council of Education to offer Master’s, Bachelor’s and Associate’s Degrees. The Institution is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (267)284-5000. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.*

The Strategic Plan priority, *Academic Quality*, establishes the Strategic Goal I.1:

*Provide an innovative academic offering based on the learning outcomes and the personal values relevant in the labor market.*

Undergraduate Offerings

NUC currently offers thirty-five (35) undergraduate programs of which fourteen (14) are associate level programs and twenty one (21) are bachelor level programs. These programs are distributed among five (5) academic departments: Nursing, Health Sciences, Education, Criminal Justice, and Business Administration and Technology. Slight variations in the academic departments’ structures may be found in some campuses, depending on the number of students enrolled in specific programs. Of the undergraduate academic programs, those with the largest enrollment (as of August 2017 and based on a total enrollment of 12,700 students) are: Associate’s and Bachelor’s degrees in Nursing (41.4%), Associate’s Degree in Pharmacy Technician (11.4%), Associate’s and Bachelor’s degrees in Criminal Justice (6.3%), Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice with major in Forensic Investigation (4.8%), Associate’s Degree in Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions (3.1%) and Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with Major in Accounting (3.1%). These programs represent 70% of the total enrollment.

Graduate Offerings

At present, NUC offers nine (9) graduate programs that are distributed among three (3) of the academic departments: Education, Nursing, and Business Administration and Technology. These programs include a Master’s Degree in Education with major in Educational Leadership, Master’s Degree in Education in Curriculum, Master’s Degree in Education in Assessment and Effectiveness, Master’s Degree in Business Administration,
Master’s Degree in Business Administration with Major in Digital Marketing, Master’s Degree in Business Administration with Major in Planning & Strategy, Master’s Degree in Business Administration with Major in Human Resources, Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing in Education and Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing in Medical-Surgical and Role in Education. These programs represent 9% of the total enrollment.

Thirty-three (33) of the undergraduate and graduate programs are offered through the online mode of delivery. The General Catalog provides academic programs objectives, credit distribution, courses descriptions, and further information about all of NUC’s degree programs (please refer to the General Catalog 2018-2019 available at NUC’s website: http://www.nuc.edu/index.php/conocenos/catalogo). Please, refer also to Appendix 12 Table of Programs by Level, Department, Campus and Delivery Mode. 28% of students are enrolled in online degree programs.

Design, Delivery and Evaluation of Student Learning Experience

**NUC’s Educational Conceptual Framework**

NUC has a humanistic educational philosophy which emphasizes the dignity and value of the person, and the capacity that he/she possesses in himself/herself to find the truth and practice the good. The humanistic approach highlights the qualities that make a person a thinking, creative being capable of acting with intentionality and assuming responsibility for his/her actions. Through this philosophy, human beings have the freedom to choose and make decisions, and he/she is the one who builds his/her own life. At NUC, all students are different, and the maximum achievement of education is the self-realization of students in all facets of their personality. This humanistic approach is reflected through the Institutional Mission, Values, Philosophy and ILG.

NUC has a constructivist approach where students construct their own understanding by reflecting on their personal experiences, and by relating the new knowledge with what they already know. Through this approach, the student must create his/her own interpretation of the world of information. The purpose of instruction is not to teach information but to create situations where the student interprets and synthesizes the information to understand it. Likewise, through the constructivist approach, the methodology used by the instructor should be challenging in such a way that students can
experiment, solve real problems in the world around them, and discuss all those issues that hold them to the use of critical thinking and understand the change in knowledge.

This constructivist approach is reflected in Strategic Objective I.2.4:

*Update the practice experiences and the seminars of all programs, based on research and development processes, to align with the new labor market tendencies.*

For example, in the NURS 4021P course (Practice in Nursing Interventions with Families and Communities), nursing students will apply their knowledge of nursing, as well as their communication, interpersonal relationship and humanistic care skills. Students will also put their leadership, management, teaching, and critical thinking knowledge into practice when assessing healthcare, planning, coordinating, implementing and evaluating the care given to populations and groups. Some of the expected learning outcomes of this course are the following:

- Design effective leadership strategies based on research and public policy for the benefit of the community health.
- Create nursing care plans according to the priorities of groups or communities.
- Construct community care plans according to the three levels of prevention, using the concepts and principles of public health for health promotion and risk control for groups and populations.

As another example of NUC’s constructivism approach, through the JUST 4000 course (Social Research and Methodology), students from the Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice program apply and demonstrate their acquired knowledge through the development of a research proposal in the area of Criminal Justice.

The educational model is Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in which learner outcomes (the result of student learning) are specifically identified in discipline-based courses and units. According to Spady (1994), the three components that comprise this outcome-based approach to learning are: (a) an explicit statement of learning intent expressed as outcomes which will reflect educational aims and purposes, (b) the process or strategy to enable the intended learning to be achieved and demonstrated (curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment and support); and (c) criteria for assessing learning which are aligned to the intended outcome. Planning, teaching, and assessment should focus on helping learners achieve significant outcomes to high standards.
Outcomes Based Education changes the focus from the content to the student. It provides an approach to curriculum decision-making based on the competencies students should demonstrate at the end of their educational program. As a result, NUC considers that the assessment process must be an explicit alignment between the outcomes learners should achieve and the methods used to assess and report the learning. This competency-based model redefines the view of learning and teaching and represents a new paradigm whose priority is to learn to do, learning to learn, learning to be and learning to live together, which is the main challenge for the education of the 21st century.

Through the curriculum review cycle, established in the Institutional Integrity Policy (Appendix 5), the syllabi of the academic programs have been revised considering the three components of the Outcomes Based Education Model. Figure III.1 shows NUC’s educational conceptual framework:

**Figure III.1 NUC’s educational conceptual framework**

![Diagram of NUC’s educational conceptual framework]

**Institutional Learning Goals (ILG)**

In order to operationalize the institutional mission, NUC has established ILG aligned with the mission, values, and institutional vision, as well as with all the academic programs of NUC. The General Education Program adopted ILG as its own competencies. These competencies are developed mainly through general education courses, and there is a correlation between them. However, they are also integrated into the academic disciplines. ILG identify the following basic competencies that are necessary to build a solid foundation for the academic experience at the undergraduate as well as graduate levels and assures that the students develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes for future employment, to continue graduate studies, responsible citizenship, and a commitment for continuous learning throughout their whole life:
1. Professional Competency and Technical Skills
2. Communication Skills
3. Critical and Creative Thinking
4. Logic Reasoning
5. Information Literacy and Technological Competency
6. Ethical and Moral Behavior
7. Respect to Diversity

Appendix 13 (Institutional Learning Goals) shows the purpose of the ILG and the definition of its competencies and Appendix 14 illustrates the alignment between NUC’s Mission and the ILG.

Once the General Education Program adopted the ILG as its own competencies, the faculty and Directors of this program undertook a thorough review of the course syllabi in order to align the expected learning outcomes with the seven competencies.

Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Designed to Foster a Coherent Student Learning Experience

NUC ensures that the undergraduate and graduate programs are congruent with its mission and the level of higher education through explicit and clear objectives, set by program and aligned with the mission. For each program, NUC develops a description statement and a list of competencies, taking into consideration the ILG, the mission statement, and the professional skill sets of the career. These competencies are integrated into courses or are included within courses in order to comply with the needed learning experiences (Appendix 15: Examples of Correlation between the ILG, Program Competencies and Program Courses). The ILG together with the program competencies are part of the program portfolio for each academic program.

Program Portfolio

The program portfolio tracks the development of the academic program, gathers critical information concerning student outcomes, encourages assessment of courses and programs and uses the assessment information to foster and increase the program capacity for instructional effectiveness and assists faculty and administrators in decision making such as reviews or discontinuance of the program. The program portfolio is used to ensure that the assessments are conducted in a systematic way. It is also used for internal control and monitoring for compliance. The program portfolio includes the following documents:

- Official name of the program
• NUC’s Mission, Vision, Values, Priority Areas and Strategic Goals
• Certifications and letters of approval of the program by the accreditation agencies
• ILG, program competencies, courses distribution and curriculum sequences
• Retention, graduation and placement rates
• Assessment plan, documented evidences of assessments, and all course syllabi of the program.

In order to facilitate and streamline internal monitoring processes, NUC is in the process of developing electronic academic program portfolios. For further information about Program Portfolio and Program Reviews, please refer to Chapter V.

Undergraduate Programs

The associate’s degree and bachelor’s degree program objectives statements are differentiated in the complexity level and in the approach to the thinking skills that the student should have developed at the end of each level. For example, the objective statements for the associate’s degree and bachelor’s degree in the Criminal Justice Program are:

• The **Associate’s Degree Program in Criminal Justice** will develop in the student the basic knowledge necessary to understand and identify the functions of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, it will enable the student with the fundamental concepts applicable to Criminal Law, procedures, evidence, and knowledge of the criminology theories so that the student can develop himself in different work scenarios.
• The **Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice** develops in students a professional attitude, while acquiring the fundamental knowledge of the components of the criminal justice system and its functions so that they can effectively perform in different work scenarios. The student will analyze the causes of crime, antisocial behavior of an individual, and the application of penalties to behavior considered deviant; while safeguarding the rights given to the accused and protecting the victim of a crime in a way that meets current and emerging needs, related to security issues of their country.

The curricula of the associate’s degrees include general education, core, major and elective courses that establish the necessary foundation for the bachelor’s, which intensifies the level of complexity and adds more specific content advanced courses. For example, Table III.1 illustrates the difference in number of credits for general education, core, major and elective courses for the Associate’s and Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice:

**Table III.1 Number of credits for general education, core, major and elective courses for the Associate’s and Bachelor’s Degrees in Criminal Justice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate’s Degree in Criminal Justice</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Credits in General Education</td>
<td>38 Credits in General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Credits in Core Courses</td>
<td>12 Credits in Core Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Credits in Major Courses</td>
<td>61 Credits in Major Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Credits in Elective</td>
<td>9 Credits in Electives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>71 Total Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>120 Total Credits</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The strong emphasis on laboratories and internships/practica further assist students in developing into highly skilled paraprofessionals and professionals geared toward the competencies necessary to enhance their careers as well as to reinforce their integral development. For example, in order to prepare the students with the knowledge and skills needed in the workforce, the Associate’s Degree in Network Technology and Applications Development curriculum provides the students with 12 laboratory courses and the Bachelor’s Degree in Network Technology and Applications intensifies the level of complexity by adding 6 laboratory courses (for a total of 18 laboratory courses).

The length and number of credits of each program is determined by taking into consideration compliance with PRCE regulations in conjunction with the requirements of programmatic accreditors or agencies that regulate certain professions, and certainly the labor market needs. A thorough emphasis is directed to the laboratory and practicum experiences and seminars. NUC also takes into consideration all the practicum hours needed in order to take the board exams in certain professions, adjusting the number of credit hours in the academic programs as needed.

**Graduate Programs**

NUC began offering graduate programs in 2011 with the Master’s Degree in Education with Major in Educational Leadership. This program, under the supervision of the Education Department, is designed to provide students with the unique blend of leadership, organization, management, and educational knowledge and skills needed to lead diverse educational scenarios. Its curriculum is based on the six standards for educational leaders adopted by the “Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium” (ISLLC), published in 1996 and revised in 2008. It is offered through both the on-ground and distance education modes of delivery and incorporates the design of academic activities that encourage interaction between participants and integration of theory and practice. Graduates from this program qualify to opt for the certification awarded by the PR Department of Education to work as a school director in public or private schools. Currently, the Master in Educational Leadership Program, of NUC-Online Division, was awarded accreditation through CAEP for a period of five years (2015 – 2020).

In order to diversify the academic offering at NUC, the graduate program has added four (4) master’s degree programs in the Business Administration Department,
(2) master’s degree in the Nursing Department and two (2) additional master’s degree in the Education Department. All of these programs are offered through both the on-ground and distance education modes of delivery in modules of seven weeks each. Table III.2 shows the graduate programs added, total credits, date in which it was offered, and its academic department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Program</th>
<th>Total credits</th>
<th>First time offered date Year</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree in Education with Major in Educational Leadership</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree in Education in Curriculum</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree in Education in Assessment and Effectiveness</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree in Business Administration (General MBA)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>Business Administration and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree in Business Administration with Major in Digital Marketing</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>Business Administration and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree in Business Administration with Major in Planning and Strategy</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Business Administration and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree in Business Administration with Major in Human Resources</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Business Administration and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing in Education</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing in Medical-Surgical and Role in Education</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All master programs curricula provide opportunities to develop research skills that can be achieved in the research methodology courses such as EDUC 5100 and REME 5100. For example, the descriptions for the research methodology courses are:

- **EDUC 5100 (Educational Research Methods)** - In this course, the student will discuss and analyze paradigms and types of research in education. The student will also emphasize on research methods and techniques and their application, design, and applied statistical concepts.

- **REME 5100 (Research Methodology)** - In this course the student will discuss and analyze paradigms and types of research in business administration. The course makes emphasis on methods and techniques of research and its design, application, interpretation and results presentation.

In addition, these programs provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their critical and independent thinking through all program courses, mainly in the EDUC 6045 and MBA 6000 courses. The course descriptions of the integrated seminars are the following:

- **EDUC 6045 (Integrated Seminar in Educational Leadership)** - In this course the student will analyze educational scenarios in several public and private organizations, where the student will demonstrate the competencies and acquired abilities in their educational formation. Will also evaluate situations in the work environment to develop skills for effective decision making in diverse organizations and educational institutions with multicultural environments. Furthermore,
will prepare oral and written reports about the influence of the effective leadership in an educational working environment.

- **MBA 6000 (Business Administration Integrating Seminar - Capstone)** – In this course the student will analyze inputs coming from the functional areas of the organization and will integrate them into a strategic plan. This analysis will lead the student to make financial, operational and market decisions to generate sustainable competitive advantages. In addition, the student will prepare oral and written reports about the performance of a business.

Further information is available in Chapter V.

All graduate faculty usually have a doctorate degree in the field of business administration, medicine or education. All graduate programs are offered through the distance education mode of delivery and incorporate the design of academic activities that encourage interaction between participants and integration of theory and practice. Also, each campus offers several of the graduate programs.

**Academic Integrity, Rigor, and Coherence of Degree Programs**

At NUC, there are a series of checks and balances, policies, procedures and norms that ensure academic integrity, the rigor, and coherence of its academic programs. They include planning, particularly the institution’s mission and priorities (specifically, the priority of academic quality); program development and evaluation; the Institutional Integrity Policy (Appendix 5) and the program review process that follows; requirements by programmatic accrediting agencies where appropriate; and results from regulatory agencies like PRCE and MSCHE.

**Planning and Institutional Priorities**

Beginning in 2013, with the MSCHE accreditation, NUC began assessing the results set out in the five-year strategic planning objectives 2010-2015. Then, in February 2014, NUC went through a strategic planning process that included the participation and contribution of the faculty and other members of the institutional community. Through this process, NUC developed a new strategic plan that would serve as a guide for the next five years (2016-2020), and as such, the mission, vision and institutional values were also revised.

At NUC, strategic planning at its core has five institutional priorities (Academic Quality, Service and Development of the Student Experience, Organizational Development, Strengthening and Brand Positioning, and Financial Strength) that guide
planning, resource allocation, and ultimately the delivery of educational programs and services. One key institutional priority is Academic Quality:

> NUC reaffirms the importance of academic quality through systematic assessment and the continuous improvement of the institution’s academic offerings. These academic offerings are based on learning outcomes and the personal values directly tied to the labor market. Student services complement the learning process, contribute to the development of the student’s experience and NUC’s focus on service demonstrates its commitment to quality student services that support the teaching-learning process and foster educational excellence.

Here are some examples of how NUC achieves academic quality:

1. All distance education and onground courses contain at least two assessment activities to identify students' progress and understanding.
2. Through the course planning process, the activities included in the distance education courses are aimed at achieving the Expected Learning Outcomes corresponding to each module of studies. In turn, Expected Learning Outcomes are aligned with the ILG.
3. Through the Academic Progress Report-Midterm, counselors can identify any particular needs that will not allow the student to maintain satisfactory academic progress. In order to contribute to the achievement of their academic quality, the following support services are provided: tutoring, counseling or psychological services.
4. The ERC provide resources in diverse formats which support all academic programs. The collections are developed with faculty recommendations of new resources and syllabi revisions. The ERC provide access to books, journals, and audiovisual resources to support student research; computers with internet access and current software, where students are able to complete their assignments; study rooms for collaborative work between students; and individual and group orientations concerning information literacy competencies. On the other hand, through the results of the surveys, the Directors of the ERC better understand the students' satisfaction about a variety of issues and are able to make decisions that improve student outcomes. For example, through 2015 and 2017, the students were surveyed about their satisfaction with the following issues:
   - ERC’s service hours:
     - In terms of the center’s hours of service, students were satisfied (93% in 2015 and 95% in 2017).
   - ERC’s quality of service (new item):
     - Students were satisfied with the ERC’s quality of service (95% in 2017).
   - Availability of books and other updated instructional materials (new item):
     - Students feel that the books and other instructional materials are updated (94% in 2017).

As observed, students are satisfied with the ERC. However, during the 2015 survey, the students indicated concerns regarding the ERC’s service hours at some campuses. These concerns about the ERC’s service hours were resolved and it is reflected in the outcomes of the SSQ in 2017.

5. The curricular sequence is designed so that each academic term is a building block for the next one with the purpose of contributing to the development of the competencies required for each academic program.

Furthermore, in order to accomplish the priority of academic quality, NUC established the following four strategic goals (Strategic Goals 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4):

1.1 Provide an innovative academic offering based on learning outcomes and personal values relevant in the labor market.
1.2. Facilitate an integral and satisfactory learning experience for the students.
1.3. Achieve a 5% increase on the revalidation approval of all programs which professions require an exam.
1.4. Strengthen the evaluation and continuous improvement culture of the programs and academic services.

With the aim of achieving the strategic goals related to the priority of academic quality, NUC established one or more strategic objectives. Appendix 16 illustrates examples of some of the results obtained during the 2016 year for several of the strategic objectives.

**Program Development and Evaluation Model**

The institution has established throughout the years a *Program Development and Evaluation Model* (Figure III.2) to ensure that the development of new undergraduate or graduate programs, and the revision and evaluation of existing programs are aligned to their related components: mission and goals, ILG, program competencies, courses expected learning outcomes, learning experiences, assessment and evaluation. This Model serves as the necessary framework to ensure the continuous update and revision of all the Institution’s undergraduate and graduate programs. The Program Development and Evaluation Model guarantees the use of qualitative and quantitative measures to evidence student learning such as program assessment results, analysis of board pass results, placement results, graduation rates, satisfaction questionnaire results, among others. Nevertheless, as a result of the strategic planning process, NUC revised the *Program Development and Evaluation Model* so that each component is aligned to new priority areas and strategic goals of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020.
Role of the Faculty in the Design, Delivery and Evaluation of Student Learning Experiences

NUC’s undergraduate and graduate programs are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience that promote a synthesis of learning in order to fulfill its institutional mission. The SVPAA together with the VPNP, works directly with academic deans and faculty to design and assess all academic and learning processes, including program revisions and the development of new programs. Student learning experiences are designed, delivered and assessed by a highly qualified faculty. The faculty is responsible for guiding the curriculum within the context of NUC’s mission and goals.

Development and Implementation Process for New Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

The Academic Affairs Office of the institution is responsible for managing and overseeing the development and implementation process of all new degree programs. When the SVPAA submits a new academic program, she must ensure that it meets the needs and identified opportunities using set criteria. The criteria can be obtained from: results of institutional research, public policy, state or Federal laws, advances in the discipline, employment opportunities, market needs, programmatic accreditation requirements, and feasibility studies, among others. Some of these criteria include:
a. Employability/Long term labor needs  
b. Faculty availability/Expertise  
c. Cost - effectiveness  
d. Laboratory/specialized equipment needs.  
e. Professional accreditation requirements.  
f. Employer feedback/internship availability  
g. NUC-Online Division requirements.

For further information, please refer to **Appendix 17: Process for Academic Offering Approval and the Requirements for New Program Development.** Additionally, as a result of continuous improvement, NUC created a SOP for the development or revision of syllabi (**Appendix 18: SOP for Syllabi Development or Revision**). Once the program proposals are approved, they are submitted to the Academic Board and the Compliance Office to ensure that all accreditation and regulatory requirements are met. Once approved by the Academic Board and the President, the application is submitted to the PRCE. If the program is to be offered at a higher or lower credential level and is considered to be a substantive change then it should be submitted to MSCHE for review and approval. **Table VI.2 at Chapter 6** shows the Academic Programs Development Plan to be Sent to PRCE.

**Academic Programs Reviews**

NUC’s **Institutional Integrity Policy** (p. 2) establishes that:

> Each program will be reviewed in its entirety (including its feasibility thereof in the broad sense of enrollment trends, student achievement, employability, physical, fiscal & human resources, etc.) within a period of 3-5 years. The Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs (SVPAA) will be responsible for putting in place a plan for the achievement of this policy.

Through this policy, NUC ensures that the academic programs are revised periodically and updated as appropriate. Also, through the **Program Development and Evaluation Model**, NUC ensures that the revision and evaluation of all the academic programs are aligned with all the pertinent components (Mission, Priority Areas, Strategic Goals, ILG, Program Competencies, and Expected Learning Outcomes, amongst others). This significantly contributes to the planning and improvement of NUC, as part of the process of accomplishing its mission. The Academic Program Matrix provides an inventory of all academic programs and their status. (**Appendix 19**).

The purpose of the periodic program review is to evaluate every aspect of the academic programs, including program outcomes and curriculum, academic services, policies, resources, and employers’ perceptions of the program in order to ascertain
strengths and weaknesses in these areas and propose changes and improvements as deemed necessary (Figure III.3 shows the audit processes established to review the quality of the program).

Figure III.3 Program Requirements Review

The academic deans, academic department directors, program coordinators, and faculty of all campuses and the NUC-Online Division, under the supervision of the SVPAA are in charge of the revisions through a Curricular Revision Committee. The nursing programs are supervised by the Vice President of Nursing Programs (VPNP) that works in close coordination with the SVPAA for program review purposes. Please, refer to the General Catalog for the Institutional Organizational Chart and for the Nursing Program Organizational Chart.

Once an agreement of the changes to the curriculum is reached, a full proposal is prepared, submitted to the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Board, which then validates the curriculum structure and policy issues. The curricular review is then submitted to the Academic Board, as evidenced in the Academic Board agendas and meeting minutes, and then to the Compliance Office to ensure that all accreditation and regulatory requirements are met (please refer to Appendix 20: Composition of the Academic Board). Once approved by the Academic Board, if the changes are so substantial in the nature and scope, that the academic program will no longer be the same since last evaluated, it must be submitted to the PRCE and MSCHE for review and approval (if applicable). Table V.1 in Chapter 5 includes the most recent program reviews at NUC, some of its findings and the decisions taken during the revision process.
Examples of Academic Programs Review

As an example of academic programs revision, since 2012, NUC updated the academic programs as established in the review cycle. Through this process, total credit hours for several of the academic programs were evaluated and reduced (according to recommendations made by the faculty, students, employers, and due to market trends). Table III.3 shows some of the undergraduate programs that reduced the number of credits through the review cycle. The analysis of the reduction in the number of credits included the revision of courses in order to ensure that all the program’s competencies were incorporated.

Table III.3 Undergraduate programs that reduced the number of credits through the review cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Program</th>
<th>Credits Before the Program Revision</th>
<th>Credits After the Program Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Criminal Justice</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Pharmacy Technician</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Nursing</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Network Technology and Applications Development</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree in Science in Nursing</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As another example of the academic program revision cycle, at the beginning of the 2012 academic year, NUC initiated the review process of the nursing programs (ADN and BSN). Thus, faculty began a thorough review of the nursing program curriculum to ensure currency and rigor, reflections of professional nursing standards, and the needs and expectations of their communities of interest. The following quality indicators (according to the institutional program review process) were used to assess the nursing program: curriculum coherence, relevance, sequence, content emphasis and depth, and frequency of course offerings; compliance with the institutional mission and goals as well as program objectives; evaluation of instructional delivery; adequacy and quality of physical facilities; technological and other equipment; laboratories; library resources; results of the licensing exam; student/faculty portfolios; enrollment trends; course and program withdrawal and placement rates; marketing needs and competence; employer satisfaction with graduates; new, continuing, and graduated students’ needs; student
credit hours; student/faculty ratios; average class size; faculty credentials; and, the use of direct student.

Through this process, the faculty reviewed the program mission, vision and philosophy; program outcomes; differentiation of the SLO for the ADN and BSN programs; redefined program credits/length; and, updated course syllabi. During this program revision, the Nursing faculty recommended the following changes:

1. Changes in programs competencies – The faculty found that there were many competencies in the programs that do not necessarily correspond to the student profile, or the nursing community needs. The seven competencies identified in NUC’s ILG were translated into 7 SLO for both the ADN and the BSN program.

2. Changes in syllabi – The faculty found that the syllabi contained some outdated curriculum content and references, course objectives did not reflect progression, and evaluation methods were not consistent within courses across campuses. As a result of this syllabi revision, the following changes were made: a) the courses were strengthened and updated with new content, references to evidence-based practice and curriculum standard guidelines, b) the course objectives were changed to SLO which reflected the seven NUC competencies and were worded, using Bloom’s Taxonomy, to reflect progression (cognitive and/or psychomotor), and c) evaluation assessments were standardized for each course and across all campuses.

3. Changes in the number of credits and length of the programs – The faculty found that the number of credits and length of the programs were not comparable with other institutions offering the same programs in Puerto Rico. This is based mainly on local/regional research related to: a) required credits by programs, b) addition of societal content to curriculum, and c) consideration for articulation of the BSN student into MSN programs.

This process was completed in October 2014, and in November 2014, a newly designed curriculum was implemented.

In order to maintain an updated curriculum, NUC will continue to revise academic programs every three to five years to ensure that the students develop industry standard concepts and skills that are required for professional licensure and required career success, and in order to achieve at least a 5% increase of board exams pass rates, in all programs whose professions require the examination (Strategic Goal 1.3). In the coming two years, the following programs are scheduled to be reviewed:

- Associate’s Degree in Criminal Justice
- Associate’s Degree in Electrical Engineering Technology with Renewable Energy
- Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration with major in Accounting
- Bachelor’s Degree in Network Technology and Application Development
- Bachelor’s Degree in Office Systems Administration
- Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice

Programmatic Accreditation

As a high quality driven higher education institution, and in order to enhance rigor and coherence, NUC has established specific goals to achieve higher quality standards for
some of its programs through programmatic accreditation. Currently, NUC has two academic programs with initial accreditation granted and an academic program with a status of Candidacy for Accreditation. Recently, in April, 7 2017, the Board of Commissioners of ACEN granted initial accreditation to the ADN and BSN programs and scheduled the next evaluation visit for fall 2021.

Also, initial accreditation was achieved for 5 years under the quality principles of the CAEP Accreditation from October 2015 to October 2020 for the Master’s Degree in Education with Major in Educational Leadership of the NUC-Online Division.

In addition, effective November 11, 2015, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program of Bayamón Campus was granted Candidate for Accreditation status by CAPTE. Candidate for Accreditation is a pre-accreditation status of affiliation with CAPTE that indicates that the program is progressing toward accreditation and may enroll students in technical/professional courses.

It is clear that these peer review processes provide a benefit to NUC and its educational programs, and form a major component to its assessment activities. These processes support and advance the culture of assessment, strengthen academic rigor, and thus promote continuous improvement and innovation at NUC.

**Regulatory Processes**

NUC is licensed by the PRCE to offer Master’s, Bachelor’s and Associate’s Degrees. The PRCE reviews each educational program offered by NUC during the process of initial program registration and during re-licensure. Also, MSCHE accredits the Institution, a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the CHEA. As well, the Institution is certified by the United States Department of Education as an eligible institution to administer Title IV Federal funds.

As a result of the licensing and accreditation processes, and through the continuous assessment process, NUC has been able to reflect about the effectiveness of its academic and administrative processes in order to comply, improve and innovate. For example, NUC has established its own internal procedures, such as Policies, SOP, handbooks, among others, in order to make sure that the Institution complies with internal and external requirements and with the purpose of enhancing rigor and coherence of its academic programs. Additionally, NUC has improved its planning processes; for
example, the institution’s mission was reviewed, five institutional priorities were established, and new academic programs were created.

*Academic Board*

The Academic Board serves as the faculty governance structure at NUC. The purposes of this deliberating and decision making body are: (a) to promote and maintain the highest standards in teaching and research and safeguard the academic freedom of the institution, (b) review policies, guidelines and procedures regarding academic affairs, and (c) provide constructive feedback and advice on the quality of educational services for faculty.

The academic board is composed of faculty from all campuses, deans, one librarian, one registrar, one representative from the student affairs area, and the following non-voting members: President, SVPAA, VPSAE and VPNP. Appendix 20 shows the current composition of the Academic Board. The Board has the following responsibilities:

1. Continuous improvement of the quality of academic programs, both existing and new.
2. Ensure coherence of the curriculum with the mission of NUC.
3. Curriculum development and review proposals for new and existing programs.
4. Revisions of the academic offerings for the proper development of the institution, taking into account the particular needs of students and communities it serves.
5. The improvement in the quality and effectiveness of teaching and the programs that are offered, to ensure learning, retention and placement of students.
6. Policies related to general admission requirements, transfer credit, course substitutions and graduation of students.
7. Continuous improvement of policies and activities to enhance academic welfare of students, such as tutoring, counseling and academic advising, and mentoring among others.
8. Policies and procedures related to the institutional and programmatic evaluation.

*Distance Education*

NUC-Online Division is the distance education division of the Institution. In 2009, its first hybrid programs (ADN and BSN) were offered. Furthermore, in 2011, NUC received approval to begin the following fully online programs: Associate’s Degree and Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration (Accounting), Associate’s Degree and Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice, Associate’s Degree and Bachelor’s Degree in Network Technology and Applications Development (IT), Associate’s Degree in Business Administration with a major in Entrepreneurship, and its first Master’s Degree (Master’s degree in Education with a Major in Educational Leadership). Currently, NUC-Online
Division offers thirty-three (33) academic programs. Table III.4 shows the programs distribution by level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Level</th>
<th>Programs Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree programs</td>
<td>7 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree programs</td>
<td>19 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree programs</td>
<td>7 (21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All online academic offerings are delivered either in a fully online or blended learning format. The number of students taking distance education fully online programs has grown from 239 students to 2,475 students between 2010 and 2017 (as of August, 2017). For students in hybrid programs, the growth for the same period was from 398 students to 1,123 students. Distance learning offerings meet institution-wide standards for quality of instruction, articulated expectations of student learning, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness. The same institution-wide standards apply to both on-ground and online offerings. Furthermore, a distance education coordinator is available at each campus to provide assistance to hybrid students or students with online or blended courses, where distance education courses are part of the academic offering.

Since student services in the online modality are more challenging, the Corporate Online Division (COD) has created an Academic Advisor Team that provides support to students during their academic life.

NUC uses Canvas as the selected Learning Management System and meets accessibility standards. Students get involved with the platform because it is easy to use, mobile-friendly, trustworthy, enhances the learning, and is intuitive to use. NUC users authenticate into the platform with the same username/password which helps them to remember and use the institutional email address. The integration to the SIS (Student Information System) runs every two hours which helps add or drop courses faster for a better experience.

Users can download a mobile app either for tablet or smartphone to access their courses on-the-go, they are able to participate in discussions, submit assignments, and read all the content inside the course from the app. Recent reports sent by the vendor reflect that about 25% of the population uses the mobile app and this number is growing fast. Instructors also have an app specifically for grades and for polls.
The live virtual sessions take place in a simple to use platform called *BigBlueButton*, students are not required to download or install any specific software besides the recommended web browser. During the live sessions, instructors can share their screen with the participants, upload presentations, use an intuitive whiteboard, manage polls, and also use sub-groups during live sessions. This platform is very reliable and consistent. Instructors are required to record their live sessions for future reference to the students who can’t attend to the live session.

**Ensuring Academic Integrity and Consistency Between Online and On-ground Offerings**

The following actions are taken in order to ensure the academic integrity between the online and the on-ground offerings:

1. NUC ensures that all the programs have the same academic rigor and quality following the same institutional assessment processes under the Institutional Assessment Policy. NUC has clearly articulated statements of expected SLO, at all levels and for all programs in all the modalities. The expected learning outcomes are stated in behavioral terms and published and made available to all students in their syllabi. Expected learning outcomes are reflected in each description and degree program requirements, and also the ILG are published in the NUC General Catalog.

2. For the purpose of implementing the assessment plan in all the programs, NUC employs a wide variety of assessment strategies to measure whether the curriculum objectives are being achieved and assess the student performance and skills development through the learning process in all the courses. The data collected improves awareness of how well students can integrate content, skills, and attitudes resulting in the enhancement of the teaching-learning process.

3. To demonstrate the quality of the student experience in a program, NUC has in place a series of SOP and Policies that address the areas of Program Quality, Quality of Student Learning and Faculty Quality, Facilities, Fiscal and Administrative Processes. The program’s assessment process is used to document the success and improve student learning and curriculum. Appendix 21 is a visual representation of the *Quality Control System for the development of Master’s Degree programs*. The diagram illustrates all the components that interact with the student learning process and defines the student learning quality. Each hexagon represents a part of the procedure that guaranties the quality of the program and the rectangle represents the stakeholders that give guidance to the process.

4. In order to determine if the program courses have all the requirements to comply with the program quality, a SOP of Online Courses Revision has been created within the Curriculum Department. The Online Courses Revision SOP sets the parameters to review each course and determine that each one meets the quality and standard requirements established by the institution.

5. NUC has the Institutional Integrity Policy (Appendix 5) that guarantees that each program is reviewed in a determined time frame. NUC recognizes the importance of fulfilling the Institution’s mission by offering academic programs that are responsive to the students’ needs and demands of the marketplace. In order to demonstrate that the academic programs continuously improve and result in high quality education, a comprehensive assessment plan is in place at all levels, institutional and departmental.

**Students with Disabilities**

NUC is committed to providing higher education to students with disabilities. The institution offers online programs, activities, and facilities accessible to all students. All accommodations for students with disabilities are handled through the Academic Advisor.
and a procedure is established in the Students Handbook/Regulations (Appendix 6). The NUC–Online Division’s instructional design model is inclusive and takes into account students with disabilities through the content in a variety of formats: audio, video, text, and templates in HTML that the optical readers can detect. Appendix 22 Number of Students Who Requested Reasonable Accommodation during the Years 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, shows the number of students who requested reasonable accommodation during the past three years.

The objective of NUC is to be inclusive and to provide equal opportunities to students with disabilities. The Special Services Office provides such support. Through this Office, NUC created the institutional policy and regulates the procedures for students with disabilities, consistent with the provisions of law. Through the granting of reasonable accommodations, NUC ensures that the student can participate in all educational aspects in an inclusive, accessible and comparable manner. The process of granting reasonable accommodation is set in the Service Manual for Students with Disabilities (See Disability Policy), and is disseminated to students through NUC’s Web page (http://www.nuc.edu/index.php/servicios/acomodo-razonable). As an example of reasonable accommodation, NUC offers students technological assistance through the JAWS program. JAWS is a software which serves for reading the blind screen.

**General Education Program**

NUC’s General Education Program offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with NUC’s mission, the general education program also includes the study of values and ethics. As stated in the General Catalog (p. 209):

> The General Education Program is comprised by a core of courses that are required in all of our undergraduate programs. They are designed to develop in our graduates the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to function as responsible citizens in contemporary society, and with a commitment for continuous learning throughout their whole life.

Since 2013, the General Education Program adopted the ILG (formerly known as NUC’s Graduate’s Profile) as its own competencies. As previously mentioned, the ILG are aligned with the mission, values, and institutional vision, as well as with all the academic programs of NUC. These competencies are developed mainly through general
education courses. NUC has a correlation between them (Appendix 23: Table of Correlation between General Education Courses and the ILG). However, they are also integrated into the academic disciplines. For each of the undergraduate programs, there is a table of Correlation between the ILG, Program Competencies and Program Courses (Appendix 15: Examples of Correlation between ILG, Program Competencies and Program Courses).

NUC’s ILG are necessary to build a solid foundation for the academic experience at the undergraduate level. Appendix 24 shows an example of the correlation between NUC’s ILG, General Education Program Courses, Expected Learning Outcomes, Unit Content and Skills. The General Education Program includes 21 courses. For further information, please refer to NUC’s General Catalog or to Appendix 25 (General Education Program Courses). The number of required courses and credits for the undergraduate programs depend on the level and expectations of the academic program. Generally, NUC’s academic programs have between 16 and 40 credits in General Education courses (Appendix 26: General Education Credits by Programs).

Each program includes Key Courses that have been selected to determine what and how the educational program is contributing to the learning and developmental of its students at determined time intervals. Of the twenty one (21) courses associated with the General Education Program, nine (9) are considered the Key Courses of the program for assessment purposes.

For each of these Key Courses, NUC has established a timetable for assessment and a table that shows the correlation between the competencies of the ILG, the Key Courses of the General Education Program, the expected learning outcomes, and activities of assessment and instruments (Appendix 27: General Education Program Assessment Activities and Instruments). This correlation was established through meetings with General Education Directors, faculty and the SVPAA (Appendix 28: General Education Meeting Evidences).

Through the ILG and the Key Courses of the General Education Program, NUC ensures that the students acquire and demonstrate essential skills, and the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives. As well, through the ILG and the Key Courses of the General Education Program, NUC ensures that its General Education
Program offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments within their academic field. For example, through the expected learning outcomes and Key Courses assessments established for SPAN 1020 (Basic Spanish II), ENGL 1020 (Basic English II) and SOSC 1020 (Social Sciences II), NUC ensures that the students acquire essential skills such as oral and written communication, demonstrate the communication skills competency (established in the ILG) and students are guided to an intellectual experience.

Appendix 29 shows a correlation between NUC’s Mission, Essential Skills of the General Education Program, NUC’s ILG, Scope of the General Education Program and the Key Courses of the General Education Program. The ILG (General Education Competencies) are also integrated into the academic disciplines. For example, through the Nursing Program revision process, NUC ensured that the ILG are integrated into the discipline.

Through this revision, the nursing faculty identified seven (7) SLO for each level (ADN or BSN) of the nursing program and established a correlation between the Nursing Program SLO and the ILG (Appendix 30: Relation between NUC’s Competencies and the Nursing Program SLO). Additionally, the Nursing faculty prepared a table that shows the distribution of general education credits of the Associate and Bachelor’s Degree Programs and their contribution to the achievement of the nursing student profile (Appendix 31: Contribution of Core and General Education Courses to the Nursing Curriculum).

Moreover, through the following activities, the faculty together with the General Education Directors, ensure to provide students with sufficient learning opportunities in order to develop the expected learning outcomes in students:

- **Classroom assessments** – NUC requests the faculty to provide evidence of two classroom assessments per course in order to identify the strengths and skills to improve student outcomes.
- **Out of class activities** – NUC establishes a minimum amount of work hours outside the classroom per contact hours (in each syllabus). This allows the student to reinforce or apply the skills learned (Appendix 32: Example of the out of class rubric).
- **Curricular Activities** – The faculty establishes activities in their courses that allow students to apply knowledge and skills acquired (Appendix 33: Examples of curricular activities).
- **Co-curricular activities** – The faculty together with their General Education Directors provide students with activities such as Commemoration of the Constitution of the United States of
America, conferences with external resources, visits to museums, plays, among others (Appendix 34: Examples of co-curricular activities).

- **Tutoring** – The faculty together with the Tutoring Center Coordinator, offer students the opportunity to reinforce skills learned in the classroom.

Furthermore, the Students Affairs Department offers students a variety of cultural, social, educational, prevention related and recreational activities, all of which promote an environment conducive to the student’s growth and personal development in order to expand the students cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside of their academic field. Please, refer to Standard IV for further information.

As a means for developing a sense of belonging in all phases of college life cycle, NUC has an institutional plan of activities to impact the students (National Senior Boutique, National Bazaar, Oratory Competition, Chess Competition and sports activities, among others) (Strategic Objective: 2.2.1). Also, in order to actively participate in professional, business and university in and out of PR organizations (Strategic Goal 4.3), NUC has established the following strategic objective:

- Represent NUC in competitions and educational presentations as HETS showcase, ENACTUS, business skills, and others.

From 2013 to 2017, a total of 133 NUC professors have participated in the educational events of the Puerto Rico Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (PRASCD), and 53 professors have participated in the Congress of the Puerto Rico Private Education Association.

As evidenced, NUC offers a General Education Program integrated into academic disciplines, which offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field.

**Academic Program Requirements and Expected Time to Completion**

NUC ensures that the program requirements and the expected time to completion are clear to all faculty and students mainly through NUC’s Website and the General Catalog. The General Catalog includes the institutional mission, academic program description, statements of objectives, credits distribution, and courses pre-requisites and co-requisites. It is available in the academic departments, administrative offices and on
NUC’s Web page (http://www.nuc.edu/index.php/conocenos/catalogo). For example, page 93 of the 2018-19 General Catalog, the Institution describes the average length of degree programs. Moreover, from page 87-89 the Catalog illustrates the maximum credit attempts and the minimum grade point average to complete a program.

Furthermore, through its Webpage, NUC makes public all information related to its policies and about consumer information. For example, in the Student Right to Know link, NUC shows the graduation and retention rates (from IPEDS), and the placement rates to the students (http://www.nuc.edu/index.php/conocenos/politicas-institucionales-y-consumer-information).

As part of continuous improvement, and as it is established in the strategic plan NUC, training will be offered to all academic staff in the use of retention metrics by campus, program and course (Strategic Objective 2.2.2). The purpose of these trainings is to achieve a minimum retention rate of 70% at the institutional level (Strategic Goal 2.2), and ensure that academic staff understands the expectations about retention and completion.

**Organizational Structure of Academic Affairs**

The SVPAA is the chief academic officer of the institution and has the responsibility of managing the academic programs, faculty, support staff, and learning resources. NUC also has a VPNP who works directly with the Nursing Faculty in coordination with the SVPAA. Both Vice Presidents report directly to the President, and work closely with Chancellors who are responsible for the operation of their respective campuses. Additionally, NUC has created other positions at the institutional level to support and monitor various academic processes including the Institutional Director of Assessment and Retention, Effectiveness Officers, and the Institutional Coordinator of Distance Education.

At each campus, the Academic Affairs Department operates with a dean, department directors and program coordinators. Some programs have practicum coordinators, liaisons for clinical experiences, laboratory technicians, academic advisors, tutoring coordinator, among other positions, depending on the enrollment and complexity of the different programs. Please refer to NUC’s General Catalog for the Institutional Organizational Chart: http://www.nuc.edu/index.php/conocenos/catalogo.
Faculty Profile

The institution has a core faculty and other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity, rigor, and coherence of the institution’s academic programs and effectiveness in teaching (Appendix 8: Faculty Handbook). All faculty duties and responsibilities are included in the Faculty Handbook.

Currently, the total faculty is 625 members of which 161 (26%) are full time and 464 (74%) are part time. 428 (68%) of faculty is female and 197 (32%) are male; all are Hispanics. 10% have a bachelor degree; 69% have a master’s degree; 19% have a doctoral degree (Appendix 35: NUC Faculty Profile Summary). A total of 134 faculty belongs to the Bayamón campus, 111 faculty to the NUC-Online Division, 89 faculty to the Arecibo campus, 86 faculty to the Río Grande campus, 88 faculty to the Ponce campus, 76 faculty to the Caguas campus and 41 faculty to the Mayagüez campus.

At NUC, the full-time faculty has an academic load of 15 credits or more and part-time has less than 15 credits. However, the normal teaching load in NUC is 15 credits, regularly five (5) courses of three credits each term for undergraduate courses and six (6) credits for graduate courses in the seven week terms. This criterion is comparable with other private universities in PR. In special circumstances, undergraduate faculty can offer more than 15 credits with the approval of the Academic Dean and the SVPAA. Nevertheless, as part of a regulation of the Nursing Program accreditation agency (ACEN), the full-time faculty works 30 hours and the part-time works 20 hours or less.

NUC has sufficient faculty to serve the student population and develop and carry out the required learning experiences. Since 2011, NUC’s faculty has increased from 454 to 625. This represents an increase of almost 30% and the institution’s commitment is teaching and learning. This significant increase in the recruitment and hiring of faculty is consistent with the development and increase of academic offerings and student enrollment. In August 2017, NUC has approximately 12,700 students, an increase of 19.3% compared to 2014. Although there has been an overall growth in NUC’s population, the Nursing and Health Sciences programs have the largest enrollment (Appendix 36 shows the number of active students by program and campus from 2014 to 2017 as of August 31). Student/faculty ratio and teaching loads are assessed to ensure
Appendix 37 presents student-faculty ratios over the last three years (2014-2017).

NUC professors are qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do. In order to teach courses at the undergraduate level, a minimum of a master’s degree in the teaching field or the equivalent professional degree is required. To offer graduate courses, the qualifications are a master degree in the field and a doctorate degree preferably in the field or related field Appendix 35 (NUC Faculty Profile Summary) shows the current composition of the faculty. In cases of difficult recruitment, the Institution may recruit instructors who do not meet the requirements established above, provided that they have the capacity, level of expertise, knowledge and professional experience to teach the courses. This requires the written authorization of the SVPAA.

NUC faculty is classified by the following ranks: Lecturer, Instructor, Associate Professor, and Professor. The classification criteria of faculty include teaching experience at a higher education level; academic load; performance evaluation results for the previous three years; participation in professional development and continuing education activities; academic achievements; and participation in institutional activities. Most of the faculty is under the Instructor rank (88 %), Associate Professor rank (11 %) and Professor (1%). The Instructor’s rank usually is part-time faculty.

Faculty is responsible for keeping their records updated with information related to professional licenses, professional development evidence and any other document to demonstrate excellence in teaching and scholarship as well as continued professional growth as stated in the Faculty Handbook (pages 29-30).

NUC established the following two strategic objectives, in its Strategic Plan, in order to maintain complete administrative and faculty files, meeting the requirements of the institution and regulatory agencies (Strategic Goal 3.2):

- The SVPAA annually updates an orientation document for faculty with all information related to policies and procedures regarding the delivery of academic credentials. (Strategic Objective 3.2.2).
- The Compliance Office will coordinate annual monitoring visits to all campuses and will evaluate the level of compliance of the academic and administrative file requirements (Strategic Objective 3.2.3).
Table III.5 shows the achievement of these two strategic objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Areas</th>
<th>Strategic Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Development</td>
<td>3.2 Maintain up to date documentation in faculty and administrative personnel files required by the institution and the regulatory agencies (PRCE, MSCHE, ACEN, CAPTE and TEAC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.2 The SVPAA annually updates an orientation document for faculty with all information related to policies and procedures related regarding the delivery of academic credentials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.2.2 The SVPAA annually updates an orientation document for faculty with all information related to policies and procedures related regarding the delivery of academic credentials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.3 The Compliance Office will coordinate annual monitoring visits to all campuses and will evaluate the level of compliance of the academic and administrative file requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.3 Carry out internal annual monitoring visits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objectives (5 years)</th>
<th>Activities and Deliverable Outcomes within the First Year 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>1. Update and incorporate annually the new processes and policies in the Faculty Manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Revise annually the official records to reassure the fulfillment of required documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.3 Carry out internal annual monitoring visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3</td>
<td>1. Internal monitoring was carried out at each campus by the Compliance Department, obtaining positive results in the audits carried out on the faculty and administrative staff files as required by the accreditation agencies (ACEN, MSCHE, CAPTE, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The audit of files of the faculty of the Nursing Program was carried out by ACEN obtaining a favorable result in the accreditation process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty Recruitment Process**

In order to comply with the *Federal Equal Employment Opportunity* (EEO) Policy, the process of faculty recruitment is guided by the Affirmative Action Policy through an Affirmative Action Plan. Each campus academic dean and department directors oversee the faculty recruitment process. If a campus needs to fill a faculty position, the academic dean and the chancellor request authorization to the Human Resources Department through the "Personnel Requisition Form". This process includes
the evaluation of academic credentials and the work experience of the candidates by the department director and program coordinator, who recommend candidates for vacant teaching positions to the academic dean for review and approval.

As mentioned earlier, in order to teach courses at the undergraduate level, a minimum of a master’s degree in the teaching field or the equivalent professional degree is required. To offer graduate courses, the candidate must possess a master’s degree in the field and a doctorate, preferably in the field or related field. Similarly, the faculty recruitment process in the NUC-Online Division follows the same procedures as the on-ground campuses.

New faculty members are oriented initially in meetings in which the mission and other relevant aspects of the institution, such as policies, procedures and organization, are discussed to ensure that faculty members are committed to all aspects of the college and of the students’ success.

Faculty duties and responsibilities are clearly defined in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix 8) which provides a clear statement of the scope of faculty responsibilities, including the development, monitoring and evaluation of curricula. Compliance with these requisites is validated through the annual faculty evaluation plan.

As an opportunity of continuous improvement, NUC will develop training modules to new personnel on Values, Mission and Vision of NUC and institutional policies established in the Code of Conduct and Compendium of Policies, to facilitate a standardized process of immersion in the institution (Strategic Objective: 3.1.2).

Opportunities for Professional Growth and Innovation

Professional development is a key component to achieving teaching and learning excellence. Every year, NUC’s faculty completes a FDP that guides professional development. Based on training needs, each Campus plans and provides in-service workshops that occur throughout the year to address topics as a result of the FDP assessment. The faculty is also encouraged to attend to workshops, seminars, conferences and other activities sponsored by external organizations, agencies, professional groups or by the institution. NUC requires its faculty to participate in a minimum of three workshops and two professional growth activities (seminars or workshop provided by
external organizations, usually outside NUC, or paid by the faculty) during the academic year. The FDP is part of the faculty file documents required for their evaluation.

Usually, faculty’s professional growth activities are focused on topics related to education, assessment, integration of technology in to the classroom or directed to the faculty’s area of specialty. For example, nursing faculty is required to complete thirty (30) contact hours in continuing education during the three (3) years prior to license renewal and further, six (6) contact hours in continuing education from specialty areas for recertification in order to maintain their specialty licenses. These continuing education courses of the Nursing faculty are used as part of the evidence of professional growth of the faculty and are kept in the faculty files. Appendix 38 shows the list of professional growth taken by faculty through 2014-2017.

The application of knowledge of the discipline or specialty area in the teaching/learning process is demonstrated through faculty participation in activities such as: curriculum revision; development of specialty course content and appropriate instructional materials; integration of technology; and, revisions to course outlines/thematic guidelines to identify current best practices. Faculty also participates in scholarly activities through the assessment and analysis of data for the evaluation of the SLO. In addition, every year, NUC invests in professional membership fees, professional conventions, conferences, workshops and other activities sponsored by internal and external resources for the faculty development. As an effort to contribute to the professional development of the faculty, NUC has established in its strategic plan that the institution will maintain its participation in university and business organizations (Red Técnica, HETS, PR Chamber of Commerce, Boards of Directors such as and COBAC, CODECA, ASCD, PR Private Education Association, and CECU, among others) developed in Puerto Rico and internationally (Strategic Objective 4.3.2). Moreover, another effort to contribute to the professional development of the faculty, is the purchase of books and journals, to which they have access in the ERC on each campus.

Furthermore, NUC keeps its faculty members up-to-date by providing economic assistance to those faculty members that want to improve their professional knowledge, and/or to complete a degree, especially at the graduate level; paying the fees for professional conferences and seminars both inside and outside Puerto Rico, among
others. Currently, 10 faculty members are receiving these benefits and are working toward obtaining terminal degrees so as to strengthen their qualifications to provide instruction in graduate courses. The budget provides the resources for these endeavors.

The recipient of this assistance has to keep rendering services to the institution for at least the equivalent time of his/her financial assistance. If for any reason the person decides to leave the institution before completing the required time for the assistance received, he/she will have to pay back to the university the corresponding amount of money invested in such credits. Table III.6 shows the amount of budget invested in professional development activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Growth</th>
<th>Actual 2013</th>
<th>Actual 2014</th>
<th>Actual 2015</th>
<th>Actual 2016</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Budget 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Conferences Faculty</td>
<td>$27,843</td>
<td>$8,478</td>
<td>$20,680</td>
<td>$24,925</td>
<td>$81,926</td>
<td>$61,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Activities</td>
<td>24,334</td>
<td>24,171</td>
<td>20,144</td>
<td>16,193</td>
<td>84,842</td>
<td>17,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees Education</td>
<td>16,462</td>
<td>11,224</td>
<td>83,535</td>
<td>13,574</td>
<td>124,795</td>
<td>63,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Conferences</td>
<td>64,481</td>
<td>56,840</td>
<td>54,915</td>
<td>40,812</td>
<td>217,047</td>
<td>26,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations &amp; Memberships</td>
<td>68,459</td>
<td>58,301</td>
<td>58,910</td>
<td>47,374</td>
<td>233,044</td>
<td>54,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National University College</td>
<td>$201,579</td>
<td>$159,013</td>
<td>$238,183</td>
<td>$142,879</td>
<td>$741,654</td>
<td>$222,869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Employees Education actual and budget investment are mainly directed towards Faculty.

Special efforts have been made to prepare faculty to integrate technology in the teaching and learning process and to deliver distance learning courses. The institution is committed to develop the faculty competencies needed to deliver distance education courses effectively as it is stated in the Strategic Objective 4.2.1 of its Strategic Plan: *Train and certify all faculty to use various forms of distance education*. To be considered to teach via distance learning, faculty must be certified in that modality. This certification entails online modules in which faculty assumes both roles as teacher and learner.

As part of the efforts of NUC to support academic excellence, since August 2011, NUC has adopted a new rank system going from Lecturer to Professor. This system promotes the continuing eagerness of improvement to achieve the highest quality standards for faculty that NUC promotes. This rank system considers a salary scale. When a faculty member is promoted to a new rank, their salary is adjusted at the new rank salary. As an example, activities in which faculty participate, considered in the new
rank system are, among others: examination board reviews, as resources on different activities such as health fairs, conventions, trainings, and community initiatives.

Also, as part of faculty recommendations, NUC established the recognition of Distinguished Professor. This recognition, among others, encourages faculty to continue providing an education of the highest quality to our students. NUC gives this distinction to the faculty whose accomplishments show their vocation for teaching, student services, and professional and ethical responsibility. For this recognition, each campus selects a distinguished professor. Then, between the faculty selected in each campus, a Distinguished Professor at the institutional level is chosen. All these teachers are recognized at the Annual Convention of the Puerto Rico Private Education Association.

Similarly, NUC gives this faculty the opportunity to participate in various professional development activities (conventions and workshops in or outside of Puerto Rico, certifications or graduate studies).

**Support for the Faculty of the NUC-Online Division**

The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) provides an array of opportunities to fulfill the needs of the faculty, in order to guarantee their success and achieve quality online teaching and learning. The CTL is an interactive and integrated space that provides the faculty with a variety of services, resources and workshops that support teaching and improve learning.

The virtual space of the CTL promotes learning through guidance, providing effective skills and better practices. By setting up a virtual community, the faculty is able to participate in discussions and find updated information about academic topics and virtual education strategies.

Faculty from the NUC-Online Division can conduct the following types of consultations:

- **Customized**: The consultations focus on specific teaching or learning context, as well as specific questions and needs. CTL help faculty find solutions, resources and the necessary feedback to answer their questions.
- **Collaborative**: This type of consultation focuses on the faculty field of specialization, answering questions and targeting the needs of each field by providing effective instructional strategies in a specific educational context.
- **Based on Evidence**: Information from research about educational topics is compiled in order to provide a consultation and help faculty make the best decision regarding teaching practices.
With the purpose of facilitating a comprehensive and satisfying experience of student learning (Strategic Goal 1.2), NUC established the following strategic objectives in its Strategic Plan:

- Establish a formal training program and faculty development with emphasis on the assessment model and new techniques for teaching and learning (Strategic Objective 1.2.1).
- Design and implement an effective model that integrates emerging instructional technology in the classroom along with an annual evaluation process that fosters improvement of results. (Strategic Objective 1.2.2).

Table III.7 shows the achievement of these Strategic Objectives 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

Table III.7 Achievement of Strategic Objectives 1.2.1 and 1.2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Areas</th>
<th>Strategic Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Objectives (5 years)</th>
<th>Activities and Deliverable Outcomes within the First Year 2016</th>
<th>Results Obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Quality</td>
<td>1.2. Facilitate an integral and satisfactory learning experience for the students.</td>
<td>1.2.1. Establish a formal training and development program for faculty with emphasis on the assessment model and new teaching and learning techniques.</td>
<td>1.2.1 1. Assessment of needs. 3. Develop a training plan for the faculty on every program.</td>
<td>The &quot;Professional Development Faculty Needs Analysis&quot; was completed for each campus and tabulated at institutional level, based on the following three priority areas: • Need for training on Assessment, • Integration of Technology into the classroom and • New learning techniques NUC offered a total of 23 training sessions about Assessment, 33 training sessions about Technology Integration to the Classroom, and 23 sessions on Teaching Strategies. The Committee will be established during 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Quality</td>
<td>1.2.2 Design and implement an effective model that integrates emerging instructional technology in the classroom along with an annual evaluation process that fosters improvement of results.</td>
<td>1.2.2 2. Establish a committee to develop a proposal for the integration of technology with a set intention in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, as an opportunity for continuous improvement, NUC established as Strategic Goal 3.4, in its Strategic Plan, to promote and encourage innovation initiatives in the academic and administrative areas that will allow an academic offering aligned to the needs of the student population based on an assessment system.
**Faculty Evaluation Plan**

NUC has an institutional policy to carry out a continuous process of evaluating the performance of faculty and staff. To this end, NUC has developed a plan of evaluating professors and other administrative staff. All faculties are evaluated in accordance with the provisions of the *Faculty Handbook* (Appendix 8).

All academic program coordinators, department directors and academic deans are evaluated annually. Those faculty members and other personnel deemed as faculty members, but that has academic/administrative functions, are evaluated by the Performance Management Evaluation System for administrative personnel in their administrative functions and by means of the Faculty Evaluation Plan for the courses offered.

Full-time faculty members are evaluated annually by their department director, program coordinator or academic dean relative to their professional duties and activities. Part-time faculty is formally evaluated on three specific occasions. This evaluation plan ensures that NUC has carefully articulated equitable procedures and criteria for evaluating all individuals who are responsible for the educational programs in the institution. The evaluation plan includes evaluations by students, the academic program director, through classroom observations and a self-evaluation. Collectively, these diverse means of evaluation offer an opportunity to examine methods of instruction and overall teaching performance and effectiveness.

First, each year every regular faculty member is given an annual review by the program director or academic dean. Second, formative evaluation is conducted every time a new course is assigned. Third, the evaluation process is applied to all rank promotions. Improvement plans are developed if necessary. Also, part-time faculty members are evaluated every academic term for contract renewal. This evaluation process is based in part on judgments made upon the review of regularly administered end-of-course student questionnaire and upon program director or dean reviews. The evaluations are discussed with each faculty member and methods of improvement are identified, discussed and implemented.

Appendix 39 summarizes the overall performance of a random sample of 25% of faculty members of all campuses during the last three evaluation cycles.
During 2017, faculty obtained a total performance index of 2.82 on a 3.0 scale. The overall performance of faculty during the last three years is 2.86 on a 3.0 scale. Consistently among the last three years the faculty was evaluated by the students with at least a 2.85 performance index. Classroom observation evaluations during the last three years resulted in a 2.85 performance index and department directors’ evaluation with over 2.86 performances. The self-evaluation instrument reflected a performance index of 2.90 by the faculty.

With the aim of achieving that 100% of the administrative staff in key positions and all faculty meet the requirements of competence and performance (Strategic Goal 3.1), NUC has established the following strategic objectives in its Strategic Plan:

- Design and implement a competencies management and development model for faculty and key positions within the institutional structure along with a follow up and evaluation plan (Strategic Objective 3.1.1).
- Fortify training protocols to faculty and administrative personnel (Strategic Objective 3.1.5).

Table III.8 shows the achievement of these Strategic Objectives 3.1.1 and 3.1.5.

Table III.8 Achievement of Strategic Objectives 3.1.1 and 3.1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Areas</th>
<th>Strategic Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Objectives (5 years)</th>
<th>Activities and Deliverable Outcomes within the First Year 2016</th>
<th>Results Obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Organizational       | 3.1 Make sure that 100% of the administrative personnel and faculty comply with  | 3.1.1 Design and implement a competencies management and development model for faculty and key positions within the institutional structure along with a follow up and evaluation plan. | 3.1.1 2. Identify the needs for key personnel training by campus.                                                           | The Personal Profile System (Profile X) was administered in the recruitment process for the Admissions and Marketing staff. This system evaluates the following areas:  
  - Learning Index  
  - Verbal Ability  
  - Verbal Reasoning  
  - Number Skill  
  - Numerical Reasoning  
  - Energy Level  
  - Assertiveness  
  - Sociability  
  - Manageability  
  - Determination  
  - Adaptability  
  - Independence  
  - Objectivity |
| Development          | the established requisites and performance competencies.                        | 3.1.5 Fortify training protocols to faculty and administrative personnel.                     | 3.1.5 1. Diagnose the actual technology used in all administrative areas and in the Learning Management System.                | The diagnostic tool will be designed for 2017.                                      |
As evidenced previously and in Appendix 39, NUC has sufficient faculty in number, qualification, experience, and expertise in all academic programs, on all campuses, in order to ensure and support the achievement of student learning and program outcomes.

**Learning Opportunities and Resources for Students and the Programs**

NUC offers sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution’s programs of study and students’ academic progress. From the time students are admitted in NUC, they are guided by a process that allows them to better understand the expectations of their academic program so they can plan their studies. This process includes the following activities:

1. **Distribution of curriculum sequence** - The admissions officers distribute to a new student the sequential curriculum for the selected program in order to show all courses and credits that he or she needs to complete the degree program.

2. **University Environment Seminar (SEMI 1001) course** - During the students first academic term, through the SEMI 1001 course, that is included in all academic programs, the student is provided with the opportunity and tools to adapt appropriately to the new environment and for the effective transition toward university life. This is a one credit course required for all new students covering an overview of NUC and the services available, study habits and attitudes modules, self-esteem, as well as information literacy, among others.

3. **Distribution and discussion of the thematic outline** - The faculty distributes the thematic outline to the students in every course. The thematic outline includes the office and tutoring hours of the faculty, course description, time distribution of the course content as stated, resources available for the learning process, specifies the appropriate evaluation criteria and assessment techniques to be utilized to assure the achievement of the expected SLO, and the amount of hours for out of class activities (the credit hour regulation of the US Department of Education that establishes a minimum amount of work hours outside the classroom per contact hours during the week).

4. **Mentoring** - Professors are assigned to facilitate adaptation of the newly admitted student to the institution and provide support to students in the achievement of their academic goals.

5. **Tutoring services** - Tutoring sessions are offered by the student’s professor, by other professors that teach the same course or through student tutors. Each campus has a Tutoring Center in which students receive support in the areas of greatest difficulty, equipped with computers and access to internet, as well as a study area. Tutoring from professors or students are important because it can help to improve the skills and knowledge acquired in the course. Please, refer to Chapter IV for further information about tutoring services.

6. **Academic Progress Report** – In the middle of each academic term, the faculty informs students about their grades. If a student has a low grade, the faculty offers alternatives to improve it. The Academic Affairs Department of each campus has evidences of this process through Student Academic Progress Portfolios.

7. **Student Academic Progress Policy** – The Professional Counselors works closely with the Registrar’s Office in the direct counseling of students regarding the standards of academic progress.

8. **Workshops offered by the ERC** – Information Literacy is a skill set vital to the development of a well-rounded individual. The ERC play an important role in the development of information literacy competencies. The Center actively participates in bibliographic instruction to students through the University Environment Seminar. The instruction is delivered through workshops or conferences and its main goal is to teach students how to identify the best information and
resources available. For example, the ERC offers the students the following workshops in order to develop the skills related to literacy information:

- APA style
- Databases
- Web OPAC – Educational Resources Catalog
- How to do a monograph?
- Effective presentations

Please refer to Chapter IV for further information about the support of the student experience.

**Support for Students of the NUC-Online Division**

Students can use a variety of tools inside and outside the platform to enrich the learning process. Inside the Canvas platform they can chat with their classmates, they can check their assignments for plagiarism or authenticity, as well, they can use the Online Library which has resources for research and book collections. Furthermore, students from technology degrees have access to DreamSpark which is the entire collection of software from Microsoft to be downloaded and installed on their own computers. These students have access also to Lynda.com which is an online collection of video-tutorials and step by step guided tours of up-to-date software. In addition, the Help Desk service is active 24/7/365 with a web portal and the following resources:

1. **Knowledge Base** – This service is available through the menu located on the left side of the page. It has the objective of providing users with information to address their questions about the institutional email, the platform where they access the online courses, and the communication tools at their disposal, among other services.

2. **Help Desk** – This service provides users with the means to create an account and open a service request ticket in which they can document with the technical support staff any problems they may be having with their institutional email account, the platform where users take the online courses and the communication tools at their disposal, among other services. By documenting their service request, they will be able to follow up on its solution and have evidence of their requests and the actions taken to My Support.

3. **Live Chat** – The Live chat service puts users in contact with a technical support representative who will provide them with immediate assistance.

4. **Toll Free Line** – The toll free line is available to provide assistance to users 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Likewise, for online and hybrid students, technical support is available 24/7. Through the Student Services or the Learning Management System (LMS), the student reports issues with the LMS or the Campus Portal. If the student calls Student Services directly, the advisor will help the student with questions related with his/her courses or will direct the call to the correct department for support (FA, Registrar, Bursar’s, etc.). If
the student requests technical support or support with the LMS the advisor will create a 3 way call to LMS Support and wait on the line until LMS Support assists the student. A ticket is created to document the effort.

**Support for Academic Programs**

NUC has the space (classroom and laboratories) and the instructional equipment needed to support its educational activities and contribute to the implementation of the institution’s mission. Each campus has an inventory and a budget item for the equipment, materials, books, and other resources (Please refer to Chapter VI for further information).

Since NUC academic offerings include, in their curriculum, at least one information technology course which involves the use of a computer laboratory, the IT Director, together with the program director or coordinator is in charge of these learning resources. These personnel conduct needs assessments based on existing materials or equipment and those projected for use in the courses offered during the year. Similarly, equipment and materials recommended by faculty and students are reviewed by each program’s coordinator in order to identify the need and importance in the teaching-learning process.

**Educational Resources Centers (Libraries)**

NUC’s ERC provide a variety of learning support services to promote student achievement and success for all on ground and online students. Each campus center is supervised by a qualified professional staff person with a Master’s Degree in Library Services and several professionally trained individuals, who hold at least a Bachelor’s Degree (Table III.9).

**Table III.9 Staff of the Educational Resources Centers by campus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Bayamón</th>
<th>Arecibo</th>
<th>Río Grande</th>
<th>Ponce</th>
<th>Caguas</th>
<th>Mayagüez</th>
<th>Total NUC Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NUC’s ERC provide services regularly from Monday to Thursday from 7:00am to 9:00pm, Fridays from 7:00am to 6:00pm and Saturdays from 7:00am to 4:00pm. Service
hours can vary depending upon the needs of the community of students, and, for instance the hours can become more frequent at final exam time or be reduced during the vacation period. Any ERC change to its operations is posted within the physical area.

NUC’s learning resources reflect its commitment to providing students with access to the best possible resources needed to support the academic programs and promote student learning. ERC’s total allocation for all programs in 2017 was $400,925. Table III.10 indicates NUC’s annual allocation for library funding for each campus library for the last four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Resources</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>$23,299</td>
<td>$18,573</td>
<td>$29,880</td>
<td>$21,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC-Online Division</td>
<td>$105,469</td>
<td>$127,516</td>
<td>$191,550</td>
<td>$292,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>$22,535</td>
<td>$16,390</td>
<td>$28,284</td>
<td>$21,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande</td>
<td>$33,647</td>
<td>$20,819</td>
<td>$32,810</td>
<td>$25,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>$22,601</td>
<td>$17,931</td>
<td>$29,053</td>
<td>$22,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>$24,654</td>
<td>$26,206</td>
<td>$45,129</td>
<td>$16,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$232,204</strong></td>
<td><strong>$227,434</strong></td>
<td><strong>$356,706</strong></td>
<td><strong>$400,925</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NUC’s ERC have a variety of resources in diverse formats (paper and electronic) that include textbooks, academic journals, periodicals and data bases. The resources are divided into collections: Reserve, Faculty, Reference, Circulation, Puerto Rican Collection, Periodicals, and Audiovisuals among others. Reserve Collection includes textbooks which are included in the course syllabus. Faculty Collection includes textbooks included in the course syllabus and reference books for faculty use, available for loans throughout each term.

The reference collection includes a series of dictionaries, guide books on medications, etc.; while Circulation Collection includes books listed as reference in the course syllabus and general subject resources. The Puerto Rican collection includes resources published by Puerto Rican authors. Also, the periodicals collection includes academic journals and publications in both English and Spanish, and Audiovisuals Collection includes CD’s and DVD’s included as supplementary materials to textbooks and other general subject resources. Table III.11 below indicates the number of resources on all campuses.
Table III.11 Library Collection (Educational Resources Center)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Bayamón</th>
<th>Arecibo</th>
<th>Rio Grande</th>
<th>Ponce</th>
<th>Caguas</th>
<th>Mayagüez</th>
<th>Total NUC Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>14,167</td>
<td>7,901</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>14,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals, Magazines &amp; Trade Publications</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscription Databases</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14,190</td>
<td>7,922</td>
<td>3,704</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>2,457</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>30,061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to interlibrary loans is provided between NUC’s ERC and other institutions. The changes in the 2016 numbers are reflective of the recurring process of resources evaluation and discard. Also, all ERC’s provide access to Faculty Reserve and Faculty Online Reserve, where faculty can situate resources available to students online or physically at the ERC.


All campus ERC have a minimum of ten (10) computers available to students; at least one (1) study room; photocopy and printing service; and wired and wireless internet connection. Library resources are available online through the institutional web page (http://www.nuc.edu), library page (http://www.nuc.edu/cre/), or in the Learning Management System and they include dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers, e-books, some library connections via Internet, the databases, translators, grammar, and education resource areas.

All the ERC’s maintain a Collection Development Policy and a Deletion Policy which gives direction to the librarians in charge of the centers and the educational
collections. The material that is added to the collection is mainly the result of periodic course syllabi revision, library evaluation, faculty recommendations, thematic outline revisions, suggestion boxes analysis, etc. According to this policy, most literature may be maintained five years on the shelves.

Statistics regarding the use of library are available on a daily, monthly or term basis. Likewise, all the ERC’s maintain monthly statistics of use, regarding book and periodical loans, internet access, database use, and study room loans. This assessment of the library resources utilization assists in the identification of those resources consistently used or to be discarded and areas for further development.

Faculty participates in the selection of library resources during curricular and syllabi revisions. Representatives of faculty, according to their specialization area, recommend the resources which are to be utilized within the time frame of the course. At other times, faculty can request library resources by submitting a “Recommendation of Resources Request” which is then evaluated by the campus librarian.

Also, collaboration between librarians, faculty and other personnel is promoted through various ways. For instance, one (1) ERC Director is a member on the Nursing Resource Committee. Another library director participates as an Academic Institutional Committee Member. The librarians may participate in faculty meetings and make recommendations of necessary and complementary educational resources.

All ERC’s create an annual action plan that incorporates assessment data, such as statistics of use of all resources and library services. Likewise, library Directors perform an annual inventory of all resources. To assess library services all ERC’s conduct a student satisfaction survey at least once a year. Worth noting, ERC’s Directors created a Procedures Manual, this manual standardized procedures and forms used on all ERC’s. All statistics on usage as well as other assessment data is obtained similarly.

It is important to discuss the library in the context of the institution’s educational offerings. Information Literacy is a skill set vital to the development of a well-rounded individual. The ERC play an important role in the development of information literacy competencies. The Center actively participates in bibliographic instruction to students through SEMI 1001. The instruction is delivered through workshops or conferences and
its main goal is to teach students how to identify the best information and resources available.

The workshops are tailored to the user’s needs in collaboration with the faculty. Library workshops assist the student develop information literacy competencies, and, are available upon faculty or student request. Students on all campuses have access to current copies of the courses syllabus, databases, online catalogs, journals/magazines, etc. either physically during posted hours or online 24/7.

NUC uses the following strategies to ensure that the ERC support the institution’s educational programs:

1. A systematic procedure is used by the faculty to recommend texts and other acquisitions.
2. The faculty provides a thematic outline for every course in which the use of a variety of information and learning resources is evident.
3. The ERC conduct periodic evaluation of the academic programs courses syllabi.
4. Campus librarians make recommendations for acquisitions to strengthen and diversify the institution’s collections, especially reference resources.
5. The librarians perform periodic evaluations to the collections and other materials to ensure that they are up to date in the information.
6. For every new program or revised program, a list of resources to be acquired is budgeted.
7. A representative of the ERC is a member of the Academic Board.

In order to provide services that meet the needs of people with disabilities and in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Law 63 of PR, the ERC acquired additional assistive technology, based on student’s needs. The following list shows the resources available for assistive technology:

- Computers
- 26-inch monitors
- Big keys Keyboard
- Ergonomic mouse
- Clear View
- Braille Embosser
- Software:
  - Dragon Naturally Speaking
  - Duxbury Braille Translator
  - Jaws Screen Reading
  - Magic Screen Magnification

Please refer to Chapter VI for further information about Description of the Facilities and Instructional Equipment at the campuses.

**Periodic Assessment of the Academic Programs Providing Student Learning opportunities**

Assessment is a core academic activity and an essential component of the learning process. Its primary purposes are to encourage student learning, to make judgments about
student achievement, and to monitor the effectiveness of the learning environment. In order to demonstrate that the institution’s academic programs continuously improve and result in high quality education, a comprehensive assessment plan is in place at all levels, institutional and departmental, and an Assessment Policy was establishing based on the nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning of the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) (Appendix 40: Assessment Policy).

Furthermore, over the years, NUC has created a timetable for assessment process, activities and instrument for all of its academic programs. Through the analysis of the classroom assessment and Key Courses assessments, the Academic Directors and Deans prepare the Program Assessment Summaries.

The student learning assessment process involves the faculty, directly through classes, courses, and program evaluation. The program assessment plan elaborated for each program includes Key Courses that have been selected to determine what and how the educational program is contributing to the learning and developmental of its students at determined time intervals.

The instruments used for the evaluation process of student learning are the following:

1. **Classroom Assessment Instrument** – Used by each faculty member with the purpose of evaluating the development of skills and knowledge thought the course.

2. **Course Assessment Instrument** – Faculty members teaching Key Courses as identified in the Program Assessment Plan are required to complete the course assessment and make the recommendations to be used in the Program or course evaluation and curriculum revision process. It is the responsibility of the program coordinator and the department director, to compile the course assessments, analyze and recommend to the academic deans for actions to be taken and the support needed to improve the course and the program. Faculty and department portfolios include evidence of classroom and course assessment for previous years. This action plan must be submitted and discuss with the Academic Dean.

3. **Program Assessment Summary Results Instrument** – It is the responsibility of the program coordinator and the department director to compile and submit the assessment report at the end of the academic year to the Academic Affairs Deans. Based on assessment of students learning and other elements the Academic Affairs Dean, in the context of the campus level takes actions to improve the program.

4. **Institutional Program Assessment** - The Dean of Academic Affairs submits the results, analysis, recommendations and action plans of the Program Assessment to the Institutional Director of Assessment and Retention and to the SVPAA. Then, both of them prepare an assessment of the programs assessments submitted by each campus and through the findings, they identify the strengths and areas of need in common for each academic program and make recommendations for curricular revision purposes, faculty development activities, curricular and co-curricular activities, support services for students, allocation of resources, among others.
Consequently, the assessment results and information are used to facilitate continuous programmatic improvements. This is done through the discussion of the results about relevant issues that can impact academic programs and student learning at departmental faculty level and with other decision-makers such as coordinators and academic directors, among others. For example, the faculty uses findings to recommend syllabi revision and curricular changes necessary to prepare students with the skills and knowledge to advance in their respective majors. The results of programmatic assessment are used to enhance programmatic goals, objectives, and curricula design.

**Examples of Assessment Results, Recommendations and Actions Taken**

The following are some examples of course assessments results, its findings, recommendations and actions taken for different academic programs:

**A. Basic Mathematics course (MATH 1010)** – MATH 1010 course is a key course for the General Education Program, and it is offered in almost all academic programs as part of the general education component. For NUC, this course is very important since this is where students begin to develop the logical reasoning competence established in the ILG. Table III.12 shows the findings, recommendations and actions taken, due to the assessment process result:

**Table III.12 Findings, recommendations and actions taken for MATH 1010 course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Learning Goal</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logic reasoning - Capacity to utilize quantitative and qualitative information in logical the decision making and problem solving process.</td>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>*Basic Mathematics (MATH 1010)</td>
<td>Through the assessment process, the faculty of MATH 1010 and the General Education Directors found a decrease in retention rates and increase in course failure of MATH 1010.</td>
<td>The faculty of the different campuses recommended that it was necessary to work with two issues: 1. <strong>To review the course syllabus</strong> – this review was aimed to adjust the Expected Learning Outcomes and content of this course, in order to align it to the needs of the academic programs. 2. <strong>Select a different assessment activity and instrument</strong> – the faculty recommended an assessment activity that is more aligned to the Expected Learning Outcomes of the course and more agile to monitor the student learning process in the classroom.</td>
<td>As a result of these recommendations, several meetings with faculty of mathematics and General Education Directors of all campuses were performed, and the syllabus expected learning outcomes, content, assessment activities and instruments of MATH 1010 were reviewed and aligned to the needs and expectations of the academic programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key course for the General Education Program*
B. Pharmaceutical Mathematics course (PHAR 1100) – Through the Pharmaceutical Mathematics course, students continue to develop the Logical Reasoning competency and develop the fourth competency required for the Associate’s Degree in Pharmacy Technician. Table III.13 shows the findings, recommendations and actions taken, due to the assessment process result:

### Table III.13 Findings, recommendations and actions taken for PHAR 1100 course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Learning Goal</th>
<th>Program Competencies</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logic reasoning - Capacity to utilize quantitative and qualitative information in logical the decision making and problem solving process.</td>
<td>Associate's Degree in Pharmacy Technician</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical Mathematics (PHAR 1100)</td>
<td>Through the assessment process, the faculty of the Associate’s Degree in Pharmacy Technician found that: 1. The students from the Pharmaceutical Mathematics course (PHAR 1100) needed to strengthen math skills in order to perform pharmaceutical calculations. 2. The faculty realized that the content of the course was very extensive for a single course.</td>
<td>Due to this finding, during the program curriculum review, the faculty of the program recommended adding a review of mathematical skills needed to perform pharmaceutical calculations in the PHAR 1100 course syllabi, and divide the content of the course into two courses, in order to promote better learning outcomes.</td>
<td>As a result of the assessment and the curriculum review process, the content of the PHAR 1100 course was divided into the following two courses: PHAR 1150 (Pharmaceutical Mathematics I) and PHAR 1160 (Pharmaceutical Mathematics II).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Information Technology Practice (INTE 4161P) – The Information Technology Practice is a key course for the Technology and Applications Development Program. Table III.14 shows the SLO and the direct or indirect assessment measures for the course:

### Table III.14 SLO and the direct or indirect assessment measures for INTE 4161P

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Institutional Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - To demonstrate professional competence, leadership, ethical and moral behavior in a professional work environment setting.  
- To demonstrate synthesis of knowledge, theory and practice during the development of their program of study.  
- Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution | Externship Supervisor’s Evaluations for Course 4161P  
Percentage Pass or Fail INTE 4161P  
Retention (I) |
Student, supervisors and employer satisfaction are all related to the ILG and the strategies for student retention and success. Since satisfaction directly relates to the community’s perception of the program success and the student’s ability to perform in the real world, it is an excellent indicator of the quality of the program. The externship supervisor assesses the students’ performance based on the program competencies or SLO’s required for level. The survey, therefore, presents the supervisor’s perception of the level of achievement demonstrated by the students in their final externship. As observed in Figure III.4, General Satisfaction of Network Technology and Applications Development Program, in the professional skill the supervisor’s satisfaction increased from 88% in 2014-2015 to 95% in 2016-2017. In Initiative and Leadership Skills the supervisor satisfaction increased 11% between 2014-2015 (88%) and 2016-2017 (99%). In terms of Ethical Moral Behavior, the range was from 90% in 2014-2015 to 98% in 2016-2017. These results are indicative of high levels of satisfaction with the student’s general performance in their externships and evidence that students are meeting the expected learning outcomes of the course. Besides, they clearly demonstrate NUC’s commitment to its mission and educational philosophy.

**Figure III.4 Percentage Externship Supervisor Satisfaction INTE 4161P**

Another example of a direct measure of assessment for the INTE 4161P course is the end of course evaluation. As observed in Figure III.5, 93% of students completed the course satisfactorily in 2014-2015. The results for the 2015-2016 year were lower than 2014-15 (82%). Meanwhile an improvement plan with special activities was developed to monitor the administration of the course to improve passing rates. An increase by 3% in 2016-2017 was observed. This reflects the effectiveness of the action plan for that
year and that most of the students of INTE 4161P are meeting the expected learning outcomes of the course.

**Figure III.5 Percentage Pass or Fail INTE 4161P 2014-2017**

On the other hand, an indirect assessment measure at the course level is the course retention. For INTE 4161P retention has remained high with 92% for 2014-15 and 91% for 2015-16. For the academic year 2016-2017, retention decreased by 3% (88%), still remaining above the 70% benchmark established by the institution (Figure III.6). A constant retention decrease in the course can be observed for the last three years, even retention strategies have been in place for the program for the last two years. More analysis is needed to identify initiatives that may lead students to complete their program successfully.

**Figure III.6 Percentage Retention Course INTE 4161P 2014-2017**

As mentioned above, in NUC the assessment process is necessary and vital for the continuous improvement of academic programs. Therefore, in order to strengthen the culture of evaluation and continuous improvement of the academic programs and services (Strategic Goal 1.4), NUC established the following strategic objective:
• Develop plans for continuous improvement based on the results of the "assessment" of the academic programs and services offered in the institution (strategic objective 1.4.1).

For further information about NUC’s assessment process and academic program assessment results, please refer to Chapter V.

Assessment of Student and Faculty Satisfaction with the Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

At NUC it is very important to evaluate the levels of student and faculty satisfaction regarding all aspects that affect the students' learning experience in order to improve or strengthen it. In general terms, faculty and students are satisfied with the design and delivery of the student learning experience, according to the results shown in the satisfaction questionnaires. Tables III.15 and III.16 show the satisfaction level of students and faculty:

### Table III.15 Students Satisfaction Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL AND ACADEMIC ASPECTS</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organization of my concentration courses (curricular sequence).</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with thematic guide or syllabus by the professor.</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for student evaluation (grade).</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the faculty.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor organization to deliver the units.</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional information to enrich the topics.</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor clarity in explaining the course topics.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation environment.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to complete course assignments.</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching quality</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The follow-up that the professor gives me about my progress in the course.</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor's willingness to provide reasonable accommodation to the student.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring service</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring service</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution's commitment to academic excellence.</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige and recognized quality of NUC.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table III.16 Faculty Satisfaction Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNICATION PROCESS</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the mission, vision, values and philosophy of the institution.</td>
<td>96.37%</td>
<td>99.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different alternatives are offered to express my ideas, opinions and concerns.</td>
<td>70.36%</td>
<td>85.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The existing level of communication with supervisors in my area supports the achievement of learning objectives.</td>
<td>74.33%</td>
<td>90.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Facilities and Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECTS</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have the basic equipment and materials for the proper development of my functions.</td>
<td>73.23%</td>
<td>84.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Databases, textbooks and other educational resources available in the library are sufficient and accessible.</td>
<td>83.94%</td>
<td>90.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The facilities are adapted for users with special needs.  

**Professional Development**  
The institution provides me opportunities for my professional development 83.67% 89.84%  
I comply with the annual training plan required to keep me updated in the professional field.  

**Planning, Academic Programs and Curriculum Review**  
The organization of the academic offering (schedules, calendar, etc.) is effective. - 86.65%  
I have participated in the planning processes, whether institutional or for the program in which I work. 67.26% 80.87%  

**Performance Evaluation**  
The supervisor provides timely feedback on my work. 85.47% 89.65%  
My participation in the achievement of the objectives of my program is valued. 63.14% 85.28%  
I feel I can exercise my academic freedom in the classroom. 85.74% 87.19%  

Please refer to Chapter IV for further information about the assessment of student satisfaction and refer to Chapter VII for additional information about the FSQ’s results.  

**Actions taken to restart the academic term, after the passage of Hurricane Maríá**  

The effort of the Institution to preserve or enhance the academic quality does not stop during the moments of difficulty; this commitment is validated day by day. For this reason, after the passage of Hurricane Maríá, NUC decreed an academic recess from September 19 to October 14, 2017. Classes resumed on Monday, October 16, 2017. In order to compensate for the time that the students were in academic recess, NUC implemented several measures, among which the following can be mentioned:  

1. **Adjustments in the class schedule** - The daytime courses were offered from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM and the evening courses from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM.  
2. **Task replacement plans** - Task replacement plans were worked in a reasonable and flexible way, and according to the reality that Puerto Ricans confronted where there was no electricity, access to Internet and Wi-Fi was limited, among other conditions. These tasks consisted of completing study guides, modules, and special assignments so that students could meet the instructional time of those courses in which the time was reduced. The students were provided with reference material and printed assignments. NUC eased certain penalties such as not removing points for late delivery of assignments and offering additional time for the removal of provisional (incomplete) grades. The replacement activities were duly documented and the necessary evidences are kept in each campus.  
3. **Tutoring** - The CDA offered tutoring services for those students who needed assistance in a course or assignment.  
4. **Adjustments to the academic calendar** - NUC adjusted the academic calendar and holidays were eliminated. In some campuses there were different beginnings, these were on October 16, 2017 and October 23, 2017. In the case of the campuses that resumed their classes on October 16, its academic term ended on November 30, 2017. While the campuses that resumed their classes on October 23, its academic term ended on December 2, 2017.  

The new academic term began on December 6, 2017 for all campuses.
Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC's continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from students and faculty have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the department or group to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.

Strengths

1. **NUC’s undergraduate and graduate programs are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning** - The 2017 SSQ results revealed that 95% of the students believe in the institution's commitment to academic excellence and 96% of the students are satisfied with the prestige and recognized quality of NUC. As a result, NUC continues with a strong leadership in PR in offering academic programs in the health sciences, especially nursing and pharmacy technician. (Priorities 1 and 4: Academic Quality and Brand Strengthening and Positioning).

2. **NUC’s branch campuses follow the same basic organizational structure, academic and student policies, norms, and procedures, which better ensures the achievement of NUC’s mission and goals** – The 2017 FSQ’s results demonstrated that 99.80% of the faculty is aware of the mission, vision, values and philosophy of the institution. Also, the 2017 SSQ results validated that 97% of the students are satisfied with the compliance with thematic guide or syllabus by the professor and 97% of the students are satisfied with criteria for student evaluation, or grade. Furthermore, the initial accreditation to the associate and baccalaureate of NUC’s nursing programs granted by ACEN confirmed that the Institution follows the same basic organizational structure, academic and student policies, norms, and procedures. (Priority 1 and 4: Academic Quality and Brand Strengthening and Positioning)

3. **The Institution offers sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution’s programs of study and students’ academic progress** - Recently, NUC has invested in improvements in technology labs, skill labs, and in the acquisition of equipment for its academic programs. The 2017 FSQ’s results revealed that 84.19% of the faculty is satisfied with the basic equipment and materials for the proper development of its functions. Also, 90.78% of the faculty believes that the databases, textbooks and other educational resources available in the library are sufficient and accessible. As well, the 2017 FSQ’s results shown that 91.94% of the faculty indicated that the facilities are adapted for users with special needs. Furthermore, the 2017 SSQ results revealed that 95% are satisfied with the follow-up that the professor gives them about their progress in the course. (Priority 1 and 2: Academic Quality and Service and Development of the Student Experience)

4. **NUC continues with effective mechanisms to identify at risk students, including those with special needs, and strategies are implemented to serve this**
diverse population in specific ways - The 2017 SSQ results demonstrated that 95% of the students are satisfied with tutoring service, 93% are satisfied with mentoring service and 96% of the students are satisfied with the Professor's willingness to provide reasonable accommodation. (Priority 1, 2 and 5: Academic Quality, Service and Development of the Student Experience and Financial Strength)

5. NUC systematically and regularly updates its educational offerings - The 2017 FSQ’s results showed that 80.87% of the faculty has participated in the planning processes, whether institutional or for the program in which they work. Also, 85.28% of the faculty feels that its participation in the achievement of the objectives of its program is valued. (Priority 1 and 4: Academic Quality and Brand Strengthening and Positioning)

6. One of the most significant assets of NUC is its faculty - The 2017 SSQ results demonstrated that 97% of the students are satisfied with the knowledge of the faculty, 97% are satisfied with the professor organization to deliver the units, 97% are satisfied with the Professor clarity in explaining the course topics, and 99% are satisfied with the teaching quality. (Priority 1 and 3: Academic Quality and Organizational Development)

7. The Institution adheres to academic freedom principles consistent with its mission properly stated in official documents, and faculty is very conscious of these principles as evidenced by their own perceptions - The 2017 FSQ’s results validated that 87.19% of the faculty feels that they can exercise their academic freedom in the classroom. In addition, 85.19% of the faculty is satisfied with the different alternatives that are offered to express its ideas, opinions and concerns. (Priority 1 and 3: Academic Quality and Organizational Development)

8. NUC’s Faculty is reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures - The 2017 FSQ’s results demonstrated that 89.65% of the faculty is satisfied with the timely feedback of its work that its supervisor provide. In addition, 90.6% of the faculty is satisfied with existing level of communication with supervisors in order to support the achievement of learning objectives. (Priority 1 and 3: Academic Quality and Organizational Development)

9. The Institution continues with a well-structured, systematic, and evidenced professional development plan in which all faculty participate. In addition, NUC endorses and supports financially faculty teaching and scholarship – The 2017 FSQ’s results revealed that 97.16% of the faculty complied with the annual development plan required to keep them updated in the professional field, and 89.84% of the faculty are satisfied with the professional development opportunities that the institution provides. (Priority 1 and 3: Academic Quality and Organizational Development)

Challenges

Higher education is moving towards a model in which professors and students are expected to be lifelong learners and curricula based on new knowledge and technologies. For this reason, and also due to the development of new programs and curricular revisions, it is necessary to continue to train the faculty about the educational model, teaching strategies, assessment and information literacy.
Recommendations

1. In order to meet the challenge mentioned above, it is suggested to review faculty evaluation criteria, according to the expectations of the 21st century professor profile and Outcomes Based Education.

Summary

NUC complies with Standard III *Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience* and addresses # 2, 8, 9, 10 and 15 of the Requirements of Affiliation. The student learning experiences and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout all its educational offerings, regardless of degree level or delivery and instructional modality. Furthermore, assessment is a core academic activity and an essential component of the learning process. Its primary purposes are to encourage student learning, to make judgments about student achievement, and to monitor the effectiveness of the learning environment. The results of the assessment process provide information to establish if the desired outcomes are being achieved, to revise the syllabi and programs curricula in order to adopt needed changes and to make action plans for continuous improvement.
Chapter Four: Standard IV - Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Introduction

NUC established a mission that propitiates a student’s integral experience, from the first contact in the Admissions Office until his/her integration into the labor market. Through a model of support services, it is expected that the student will experience a satisfactory university life achieving the competencies established as a NUC graduate, notwithstanding are in concert with the institutional mission.

In general terms, the important issues addressed by the standard are NUC’s programs and services that promote student success including admission, financial aid, bursar, registrar, tutoring, counselor and orientation, psychological services, placement and special services, to name a few; their procedures and how it complies with the students’ expectations and needs, regardless of the mode of delivery; and how they are disseminated.

NUC’s typical student is traditionally a high school graduate, whose age is between 18 and 21, from a low socioeconomic income level, a first generation student in the family, and predominantly female. In August 2017, the newly admitted students accounted for 32% of all enrolled students. Females represent the majority of the newly admitted students, comprising 69% of the enrollees at all campuses, 71% for online students, and 6% of students enrolled in blended learning in master degrees. An estimated 68% of the newly admitted students are enrolled in the day session. The distribution of the newly admitted students by program at the institutional level is the following: 67.8% health sciences, 18.8% business administration and technology, and 13.4% criminal justice and education. The newly admitted on-ground students reside in municipalities surrounding their corresponding campus while students enrolled online are from towns throughout Puerto Rico.
**Student Services**

To serve this large and diverse student population, NUC has strengthened its organizational structure of student services assigned to the VPSAE’s Office.

NUC has in place clearly stated, ethical process to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of its students. The NUC *College Catalog* and website provide admissions requirements for prospective, new and transfer students; information on advanced placement, national exams, armed forces credits, and prior learning; and financial aid information. NUC also provides detailed information on academic policies and procedures that guide student success including SAP, withdrawals as well as student support services including advising, counseling, tutoring, and student activities to name a few.

NUC implemented a Student Services Model, in a context of Quality and Service to positively enhance its students. Figure IV.1 presents the Student *Services Model*, that includes the student’s process: Admission, Retention, Graduation and Placement, with diverse services that NUC offers to students, in a frame of institutional values: Responsibility, Compliance, Service, Innovation, Quality, Respect and Social Commitment.

**Figure IV.1 Student Service Model**

![Student Service Model Diagram](image)

**Admissions Office** - Provides information about the available academic offerings, as well as guidance on the requirements for applying to NUC. This office processes the admission of new students.
The Admissions Office promotes new student’s retention by implementing a series of activities under the concept of National T Days, (Teaching Talk Technology Together) with technology immersion workshops to university life, such as the creation of an institutional email account, access to the student portal, MS Office, and access to library resources and occasionally, teaching activities or workshops as an immersion to specific skills in the student’s academic program; for example, phlebotomy for new nursing students. For online students, the academic advisor establishes the first contact with the new students in order to provide the Initial Orientation (group or individual) about the Student Portal, and Distance Learning Platform (Canvas). Also, advisors address questions and doubts of the newly enrolled/future start student.

The Admissions Office promotes early identification of student needs. Some of the most significant findings of the Needs Assessment survey conducted in August 2016-2017 include:

- Reasons that motivate students to study at NUC: have a profession, reach a goal, referred by other, programs offered.
- 90% of the students surveyed are single.
- 67% of the students surveyed are female and 33% are male.
- The average age of students surveyed is 18-21 years.
- 50% indicated that the highest academic grade achieved by the father is high school.
- 49 % indicated that highest academic degree achieved by their mother is university.
- 50% indicated that their high school grade point average fluctuates between 2.50-3.49 points.
- 47% indicated that they had studied at another institution after graduating from high school.
- The most significant problems for which students may not continue their studies are: economic problems, conflict in work hours and transportation.
- Students indicated the areas of greatest needs: preparing for an oral presentation, study habits, tutorials, how to manage stress, how to prepare a monograph, and the decision-making process.

The admissions office refers to the Admission Committee or Interview with the Director, as required by the Program, those students who are not adequately prepared for college-level works, or do not meet the admission requirements. Admitted students with academic deficiencies are referred to the Counseling office and the CDA (acronym in Spanish for Center for Academic Development) in which offers tutoring.

As a sample of the productivity of the Admissions Office, Figure IV.2 presents the comparative data of the number of student applications, enrollments and starts, for the last three years. Also, Figure IV.3 illustrates comparative data between new and transfers students for the last three years and, Figure IV.4 presents a Gender Comparative Data for the last three years.
Financial Aid Office - Provides to students, according to the applicable regulations, with options for the maximum amount of financial aid for which they are entitled. To promote compliance with Institutional, State and Federal regulations, this office issues periodic reports on the status of academic records and its impact on the disbursement of financial aid or student loans. These reports promote follow-up to the
Admissions Office for complete documentation of the students’ records in each start. Table IV.1 shows, a report of the activities of this office:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Students served</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Emails Follow up</th>
<th>Call Follow up</th>
<th>Documents Follow up</th>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Notifications</th>
<th>Delinquency Prevention Follow up</th>
<th>Exit Counseling</th>
<th>Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>20,391</td>
<td>6,409</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>1,931</td>
<td>2,929</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>3,014</td>
<td>3,854</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>Arecibo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>51,062</td>
<td>19,211</td>
<td>6,537</td>
<td>3,322</td>
<td>2,240</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>11,040</td>
<td>3,792</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>Bayamón</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>17,953</td>
<td>3,306</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>5,682</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>Caguas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COD</td>
<td>88,955</td>
<td>29,896</td>
<td>16,312</td>
<td>13,461</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>2,194</td>
<td>18,221</td>
<td>3,387</td>
<td>2,158</td>
<td>COD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>4,627</td>
<td>2,041</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>40,496</td>
<td>27,215</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>4,838</td>
<td>3,016</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>Ponce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A student can be served more than once.

Registrar’s Office - Remains the gatekeepers of policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student’s information and records. The Registrar’s Office safeguards all former and current student academic files, handles transcript requests, validates all required vaccinations, and facilitates all third party requests, i.e., subpoenas. In addition, Registrar’s Office pays strict adherence to the federal FERPA law that provides for the privacy of student education records.

In addition, the Office of the Registrar works in the preparation and analysis of required student population required reports to corporate, institutional and managerial level for decision-making, audits and reports to federal, government, and private agencies. Table IV.2 shows a list of services offered during 2015-2016 year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Quantity Served Students</th>
<th>Transcriptions</th>
<th>Certifications</th>
<th>Official Withdrawals</th>
<th>Withdrawals by absent</th>
<th>Partial Withdrawals</th>
<th>Graduation Applicants</th>
<th>Veteran Services</th>
<th>Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>2346</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Arecibo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>4981</td>
<td>1489</td>
<td>1684</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Bayamón</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Caguas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>2407</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Ponce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Río Grande</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students Records Policy

Predicated by FERPA guidelines, NUC is required to conduct an authentication for student’s identification when students call or when they are called by the institution. The method used to authenticate a student is through question verification like birthday and/or their address. Students must also authorize in writing, permission for relatives, friends or other people to receive their academic information. The individual must submit an updated written consent signed by the student. In addition, the person must present a photo ID. The consent must indicate the documents to be shown, the purpose, and
identify the person or entity to which the record will be shown. Appendix 41 includes the FERPA Brochure.

1. Institutional faculty, staff and administrators with a legitimate educational interest.
3. Organizations conducting studies for NUC.
4. Accrediting agencies.
5. Audits or evaluations related to compliance with educational programs.
6. The Financial Aid process.
7. A court order.
8. A medical or security emergency.

At the State level, the regulations for licensing higher education institutions in Puerto Rico establish that a transcript must contain the information necessary to verify and transcribe the academic work done by each active or inactive student. It also establishes the necessity to keep records that show how each student meets the requirements for admission and graduation. In order to be in compliance with federal and state guidelines, NUC has a checklist with a breakdown of the contents of the academic file, which is signed by the Integrated Services Officer of the Admissions Office when it proceeds to hand it in to the Registrar’s Office, to be certified as a complete file.

NUC has also established the following process in order to protect the student academic records:

- Backing up student data
- Maintaining electronically the student’s permanent academic record in the student record database
- Maintaining in the Registrars’ Office hardcopies and electronic files (School Docs Application)
- Keeping records in fireproof vaults in the Registrar Office.

The Student Record Figure IV.5 graphically depicts the process for maintaining student files.

**Figure IV.5 Student Record Maintenance**
NUC is committed to the security of the storage, access and transmission of student electronic and print information, in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in offices of Orientation and Counseling as well as Psychology services.

**Bursar’s Office** - Maintains the financial information and accounts of each student within an effective and efficient structure that offers appropriate payment alternatives to minimize financial loss. One of the President’s initiatives is the National Bazaar implemented in the Bursar’s office, to help students with debt to generate income in an activity on campus, which allows them to sell products and services. There is a formula of distribution of income with a percentage of the contribution to debt and one percent for student to cover the cost of investment. Table IV.3 presents the results of National Bazaar in years 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

**Table IV.3 National Bazaar- Results Comparisons 2015, 2016 & 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4,042.95</td>
<td>3,856.75</td>
<td>5,525.7</td>
<td>742.53</td>
<td>1,133.34</td>
<td>842.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4,823.05</td>
<td>3,825.05</td>
<td>4,789.7</td>
<td>1,922.59</td>
<td>2,118.00</td>
<td>2,713.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4,592.01</td>
<td>3,113.00</td>
<td>2,485.3</td>
<td>1,209.88</td>
<td>413.25</td>
<td>258.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,052.50</td>
<td>2,485.25</td>
<td>1,452.0</td>
<td>865.63</td>
<td>821.25</td>
<td>773.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,398.25</td>
<td>5,533.75</td>
<td>2,830.5</td>
<td>506.75</td>
<td>2,711.38</td>
<td>1,349.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>16,987.76</td>
<td>15,327.80</td>
<td>17,083.33</td>
<td>5,291.38</td>
<td>7,197.22</td>
<td>8,593.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Admission and Financial Services Process**

As part of its continued best practices, NUC has developed through the years institutional policies and procedures that ensure the systematic and consistent application of protocols and procedures that guide decisions and actions. These policies incorporate quality standards that are consistently applied from the student admission process with information on procedures through all campuses, programs, and departments, and, thus, preventing discriminatory decisions.

NUC admission’s policy specify the general requirements for all candidates as well as specific criteria for some academic programs such as nursing, education and master’s degree. Table IV.4 shows NUC admission requirements for undergraduate programs.
Table IV.4 Admission and Transfer Requirements for Undergraduate Programs
(NUC Catalog, Pag.68)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential Level</th>
<th>Admission Index (HS graduation index)</th>
<th>Transfer Admission Index</th>
<th>Other requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Pharmacy Technician</td>
<td>2.00/220 points</td>
<td>GPA 2.00 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>1. Meet all general admission, transfer requirements and specific program requirements as applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Nursing</td>
<td>2.00/220 points</td>
<td>GPA 2.00 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>2. Read and sign the Special Requirements Orientation Certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant</td>
<td>3.00/300 points</td>
<td>GPA 3.00 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>1. Meet all general admission, transfer requirements and specific program requirements as applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree in Education Programs</td>
<td>2.25/225 points</td>
<td>GPA 2.25 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>2. Read and sign the Special Requirements Orientation Certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree in Science in Nursing</td>
<td>2.25/225 points</td>
<td>GPA 2.25 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>1. Meet all general admission, transfer requirements and specific program requirements as applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN to BSN (on-line)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>GPA 2.25 Associates Degree Conferred and Active RN License</td>
<td>2. Have a permanent RN License in the United States or Puerto Rico and evidence that such license is active. All students must keep their license active during their time of study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ALL OTHER UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential Level</th>
<th>Admission Index (HS graduation index)</th>
<th>Transfer Admission Index</th>
<th>Other requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Associate’s Degree Programs</td>
<td>1.76/176 points</td>
<td>GPA 2.00 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>1. Meet all general admission, transfer requirements and specific program requirements as applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Bachelor’s Degree Programs</td>
<td>1.76/176 points</td>
<td>GPA 2.00 Minimum 1 approved course</td>
<td>2. Read and sign the Special Requirements Orientation Certification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some programs have specific criteria attributable to examination board requirements in order for the graduate to sit for the exams and to enter the profession. Among the general requirements, students must evidence having earned a high school diploma. Requirements are also established for special populations, such as non-degree seeking students, diverse educational modalities and graduate students. Therefore, the admissions policy and procedures responds to one of the five priorities of the Strategic Plan: Service, Development, and Student Experience.

The student recruitment process is carried out with the integration of emergent technologies, for example, the marketing and admission officers use IPads for orientation of academic programs, and virtual tours of NUC’s and labs facilities. and through diverse activities, such as orientations at public and private high schools, exhibitions in shopping malls, community activities, newspaper, TV and radio media, education fairs, through the NUC website, and via social networks. In addition, many students apply for admission through referrals from a friend or a relative that is currently enrolled or is a graduate of...
NUC. Admissions officers, who are responsible for providing information regarding all academic offerings at NUC, orient the prospective students about the institution and student expectations. Students interested in studying in the online modality are oriented by the admissions and marketing officers of the COD. Once the student shows interest in studying at NUC, he/she is offered information regarding the admission requirements, academic programs, the potential employment opportunities upon graduation from each program, the admissions process and, special requirements for specific programs.

**Orientation Process**

Orientation for new and transfer students is provided through an *Information Guide Form*. When a prospective student completes the form *Career Questionnaire*, the admissions officer begins the orientation using some key points as part of the questionnaire. Some of the highlighted points that the officer discusses with the prospective student include: NUC’s accreditations, programs available on campus, modalities, services, policies and different schedules. Once the prospective student selects a program of interest, the officer shows the curricular sequence and explains in general terms what the prospect can expect to learn in the major courses of the selected program. As part of the orientation process, the prospective student’s questions are addressed and answers are provided. Additional information is offered regarding the services available, such as tutoring, mentoring, placement, among others.

A tour is provided, so the prospective student can see the facilities firsthand, emphasizing the laboratories where the prospect will take the lab courses for the selected program. For transfer students, additional information is provided regarding the *Institutional Policy for the validation of courses from higher education institutions and non-university postsecondary level institutions to university level (Appendix 42)*, as well as the process to request the transferability of credits.

Once the orientation process is completed and the student presents the documents required for admission, the enrollment process begins.

The student’s admission process also includes intervention from the Financial Aid and Bursar’s offices. In order to facilitate services to students of diverse needs and interests, as well as provide a continuity of services, the Admissions, Financial Aid, Bursar, and Registrar offices operate under the concept of a “One-Stop Service Center” to
provide on each campus a centralized and accessible service for all new and regular students. The Center is located in one space with academic representatives from financial aid, bursar, and registrar offices, and it is generally open on all campuses from 8:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m.

As part of the initial orientation, the prospect student signs the “Student Consumer Information Form” certifying that the student was informed about the policies and admissions criteria and was notified of the availability of these documents on the Institution’s Web Page. Students receive material related to their academic interests, such as program fact sheets, Information Form and the Curriculum of the program to which they are applying. Also, the student is oriented about the graduation, transfer, retention, and employment rates that are available to students through the institutional website. Other documents available are the Students Handbook (Appendix 6), the Financial Aid Student Guide, and other institutional applicable policies. The Information Form summarizes the competencies that the student will master upon completion of the academic degree, possible employment opportunities, among others. The curriculum sequence details all the courses that the student must complete to fulfill academic degree requirements.

During the admission process, students receive material from the U.S. Department of Education with information on available grants, loans and general eligibility requirements. The Financial Aid Office orients students about the available financial aid opportunities should they qualify, and the application requirements. Financial aid officers interview students individually to discuss their concerns, review their financial aid history, and inform them about the applicable policies. In addition, financial aid officers assist prospect students in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to determine eligibility. Students applying for loans must complete an entrance interview and master promissory note prior to the first disbursement and an exit interview before graduating.

Students that have not defined their vocational interest may be referred to a professional counselor, who conducts an interview and evaluation to help them define their academic interests. Students that do not comply with the required admission index are referred to the Admissions Committee for all programs, except the nursing programs.
which require an interview with the Nursing Program Director, following the procedure established in the *General Catalog*. All students that are under-aged (under 18 years of age) are admitted through the Admissions Committee.

NUC has a Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with the US Department of Education authorizing it to participate in HEA Title IV student financial aid programs. It is also authorized by the PRCE for students to participate in the state-funded financial aid programs of this state licensing agency. The publication entitled *Manual of Procedures of the Financial Aid Office* (Appendix 43) is the written plan for NUC that ensures that the processes comply with federal and state regulations and are carried out uniformly. The person responsible for monitoring these processes is the Institutional Financial Aid Director. The *NUC Student Guide* is the student version of the *Manual of Procedures of the Financial Aid Office* developed in accordance with current State and Federal regulations governing student financial aid. The purpose of the guide is to inform and guide students about their rights and responsibilities, financial aid programs available, the application process for financial aid, refund policy and other related topics. The *Guide* is available on both the NUC web site (http://www.nuc.edu/index.php/servicios/asistencia-economica) and at http://online.nuc.edu/asistencia-economica/formularios/ (online). It is revised and updated at least annually. If the students need a printed copy of this publication, they may request one from the Financial Aid Office of their campus.

At the Bursar’s Office, students are also oriented about the tuition per credit, other applicable fees, and installment payment plans. When the prospective students have received the corresponding information from all the student services offices, they are ready to make an informed decision about their intent to study at NUC.

**Counseling Office**

The Counseling Office provides support to Admissions Office specifically with students that have not defined their vocational interest, by conducting an interview and evaluation to help them define their academic interests; attends to the referrals of students who are absent identifies their needs and seeks help inside or outside the institution; guides the student who does not comply with SAP and participates in the development of the academic plan and follow-up; and collaborates in the implementation of security protocols, VAWA, Suicide Prevention and Bullying, among others.
**Academic Services**

NUC has developed a comprehensive *Retention Model* with a set of strategies aimed to encourage students to achieve their academic goals throughout the course of their studies. These strategies provide mechanisms to detect areas of concerns, or barriers to success, and subsequently assist in the development and implementation of specific interventions to address such areas of concern, particularly with at-risk student population. As shown in Figure IV.6, NUC’s Retention Model consists of four components: academic, social, emotional, and environmental.

![Figure IV.6 NUC’s Retention Model](image)

The academic component of the retention model aims to establish strategies and the development of the cognitive skills of students, allowing them to have an active, relevant and functional experience in each of the courses that make up their program, minimizing the achievement gap because of the backlog in competencies basic to university life. Within the academic component, interventions include *University Environment Seminars*, tutoring, other instructional activities, and the integration of technology in the classroom experience. Most campuses work with mentoring projects.

**Tutoring Services:** These are offered in the Center of Academic Development (CDA) with the coordination of tutoring sessions by subject, individual and in small groups, offered by tutors and professors. The CDA also offers make up exams, as required. In this office, the staff works on the analysis of the number of students served in
the CDA that will increase their academic performance and enroll successfully in the next term, in a continuous process throughout the academic year.

**Student Advisement Services:** this service is assigned to the CDA, with tutoring functions particularly in the Campuses and Centers. To serve students online, the institution has a Call Center with academic advisors, who offer a variety of services to the student, such as enrollment and follow up to potential withdrawals. The Academic Advisory Team work with a strategy for serve to students diverse like your need promoting a Welcome Call, Follow up to all students with a LDA (Last Date of Attendance) near to 14 days, among other activities.

The social component of the retention model proposes a series of periodic activities with the aim of strengthening the social skills of the student, fostering their sense of belonging to the institution and promoting university persistence through social integration with professors, administrators, and fellow students. Within the social component, interventions include student associations, artistic groups (theater, choir, dance, and others), student activities, sports and other recreational activities, and personal development workshops addressing emotional intelligence, resilience, and leadership. For example, with the objective of promoting the student integral development, a series of activities were implemented under the concept of *Healthy University*, impacting the active students’ population, prospective students and the community in general such as health and security fairs. Another institutional initiative, *Healthy Life Oasis*, was developed to provide prevention material to address the health crisis on the island, including the Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika.

Other activities include Psychological Support Workshops, Institutional Chess Tournament, employment fairs, suicide prevention campaigns and alerts against AIDS. Campaigns against domestic violence were organized, integrating NUC to the campaign of the Peace for Woman Coordinator, and a collaborative agreement was signed with the Women’s Advocate Office.

The Río Grande Campus and the Ceiba municipality signed a collaborative agreement for serving the eastern region by means of the *Proyecto ESCUDO* (Shield Project), creating an office in the institution that addresses crime victims, particularly domestic violence. During the academic year 2015-2016, eleven (11) students were
impacted by the project in the campus and in 2016-2017, seven (7) students have been impacted. The project services include: counseling, psychological therapy, accompaniment and advocacy in the Court, among others. Students also receive specific sessions on areas of interest or necessity.

The emotional component of the retention model proposes a series of projects and activities with the aim of strengthening the emotional skills of the student, their self-concept and self-esteem. With the emotional component, interventions include counseling, support groups, external professional referrals and services, and additional resilience and emotional workshops. All the campuses offer psychological support services one or two days weekly.

The environmental component of the retention model proposes the creation of a university environment that promotes the self-management, business and technological development of the student as well as social responsibility. With the environmental component, interventions include providing excellent customer service, clean and well-lit facilities, business micro-incubators (cooperatives, National Bazaar), technological development (National T Days), and meaningful activities that promote social responsibility. Several initiatives were developed by the Admissions Office in all campuses, for promoting activities directed to prospective students and community in general, integrating the initiative of Healthy Life Oasis, food collection for the Puerto Rico Food Bank, pet’s vaccination clinics, organic market, among others. These activities, named “Sábados Dinámicos” are held especially on Saturdays, in all campuses with institutional support.

NUC will continue monitoring the effectiveness of its retention strategies by utilizing the results of the assessments and expects to make further improvements with respect to retention. Since 2013, retention has been adscript to VPSAE, with an institutional campaign that has a slogan: Retención somos todos (Retention is everyone) and a SOP used by the Retention Committee to work with absent students immediately they present problems to assist. This committee meets weekly at all campuses to discuss follow up and status of absent students, “partial shows” (enrolled in one or more courses, but not attending all of them), administrative withdrawals, status on reentries, and actions
to be taken to work with this population for the next week. Members of the Retention Committee are:

**Permanent Members**
1) Chancellor  
2) Academic Dean  
3) Student Affairs Director  
4) Academic programs Directors or Coordinators  
5) Effectiveness Officer

**The Ad Hoc members are:**
6) Counselor  
7) Financial Aid Director  
8) Bursar Director  
9) Registrar  
10) Placement Officer

After 2015, through the assessment process, retention was mainly a focus in the classroom, continuing with the slogan: *Retención somos todos* (Retention is everyone), and its structure assigned to the Academic Affairs Department in charge of the Retention Committee following the Retention’s SOP and in compliance with NUC’s theoretical framework and its approach about the faculty as a key resource in the retention process. An example of implementation of Alan Seidman’s Retention Formula is a REMA Project. (Alan Seidman, is one of the authors who supports the theory of the NUC Retention Model)

\[
\text{RET} = \text{E ID} + (\text{E} + \text{IN} + \text{C}) \text{ IV}
\]

*Retention is equal to early identification plus intervention. But, intervention has an equation that indicates that such intervention must be early, intense and continuous. All activities proposed in the NUC Retention Model in each of the components promote the implementation of the formula for student retention.*

This project, REMA (*Spanish acronym for Retaining Students with Desires of Maximizing their Efforts to Achieve Success*) impacts the high-risk population, identified since the admissions process, also with academic and service personnel. REMA’s objective is working an action plan directed to retention and persistence of high risk students. A leader is assigned to implement the work plan following the effectiveness indicators established for each identified and assigned a high risk group. Each leader establishes a series of strategies to follow-up to support students to fulfill their goals, specially during their first academic term. The REMA leader will refer the student to the Student Services Department for further assistance with situations detected during their
interventions. Leaders meet regularly with the Academic Dean to report and follow up on the status of the groups. Some of the at risk groups identified are: students less than 18 years old, adult population over 50, students admitted through the Admissions Committee, online students, re-entry students, late enrollment students, vocational rehabilitation students, withdrawals with less than 180 days out, unsatisfactory academic progress, total withdrawals. In addition, all new high school students are assigned to participate in the Mentoring Program, where a faculty member will be a mentor for their first academic term and their first year if needed. Results of the retention of the different at risk groups are then discussed with leaders, faculty and administrative personnel to plan based on the results for the upcoming academic term.

For each group, effectiveness indicators are established and goals identified and measured in various instances during the academic term. To guarantee effectiveness, these groups are monitored by the SVPAA, the VPSAE and the Institutional Assessment and Retention Director. Table IV.5 shows the composition of the high-risk population in a specific term:

| Table IV.5 High Risk Population by category for the August-November 2017 term |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| High Risk-Students              | Arecibo| Bayamón| Caguas | Mayagüez| Online | Ponce  | Río Grande|
| Students under 18 years of age  | 3      | 19     | 3      | 2      | 1      | 8      | 10      |
| Students with late enrollment   | 85     | 144    | 56     | 85     | 76     | 101    | 82      |
| Students with unsatisfactory    | 143    | 228    | 113    | 0      | No     | 154    | 89      |
| academic progress               |        |        |        |        | reported|        |         |
| Total                           | 231    | 391    | 172    | 87     | 77     | 263    | 181     |

Note: Includes the number of students classified at risk according to category.

Another academic service offered is the ERC (Libraries) of NUC, vital in the teaching-learning process. NUC’s ERC provide a variety of learning support services to promote student achievement and success for all on ground and online students discussed in the previous chapter.

Special Services for Graduated Students

Certificate and degree completion

Students who complete the requirements for a degree at NUC must visit the Registrar’s Office to be evaluated academically and validate that they have completed all graduation requirements. These students complete the Graduation Request, pay the fee, and visit the Placement Office. Once the student has completed the process, the
Registrar’s Office determines if he/she complies with graduation requirements and the degree is posted as well as honors in the Student Management System (Campus Nexus).

**Transfer to Another Institution**

Students who have graduated and are continuing their studies at another institution, must request from the Registrar’s Office an official academic transcript to be sent to the institution they are applying for continuing studies.

**Transfer of Credit and Other Learning Approaches**

NUC has in place the following policies: *Transfer Students Policy, Institutional Policy for Validation of courses from higher education institutions and of non-university post-secondary level institutions to university level, Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Disabilities, and Non-Degree Seeking Students Policy*. The *General Catalog* clearly outlines the admissions requirements, as does the NUC Website. A brief description of each policy follows:

1. **Institutional Policy for the validation of courses from higher education institutions and non-university postsecondary level institutions to university level (Appendix 42)** – This policy, available at NUC General Catalog, 2018-2019 (pages 69-70) applies to students from a non-university postsecondary level certificate program duly accredited and to higher education institutions duly accredited that apply for validation of courses and credits whenever these courses are within the academic offerings in effect at NUC. The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform process that facilitates the decision making, student services offering and speeds the courses and credits validation to undergraduate students from higher education and non-university level postsecondary institutions to university level that apply transfer to NUC.

2. **Non-degree Seeking Student Policy** – NUC receives students who seek to take courses without any interest in obtaining a degree; others who have been authorized from other universities in which they are officially enrolled to take courses at NUC; and those interested in obtaining a certification as teaching personnel in the PR Department of Education. These students receive credits and a final grade. Therefore, they have to comply with all the course requirements. This policy is available at NUC General Catalog, 2018-2019 (page 71)

3. **Reasonable Accommodation for students with disabilities** - NUC supports students who self-identify a disability from an appropriate source in terms of learning, mobility, or class access. It is incumbent upon the student to contact the Student Services Office and provide this information. The facilities are essentially barrier free and include ramps, elevators, and handicapped accessible bathrooms. Table IV.6 shows the number of students applying for reasonable accommodation for year 2014-2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th># of Students Who Requested Reasonable Accommodation</th>
<th>% Identified as R A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

%Identified as R A = Reasonable Accommodation Students/Total Active Students

All students are handed the consumer information where all the institutional policies related to student services appear, in reference to their location at *NUC Webpage*. 
Transfer credits

NUC has a policy for the “Convalidación de cursos provenientes de instituciones de educación superior y de instituciones de nivel post-secundario no universitario.” The maximum amount of credits to be validated will be 50 percent of the total credits that the student must take to meet the graduation requirements of an academic program at NUC.

Table IV.7 presents the amount of Transfer students (2015-2017) according data reported to TORS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>1413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2482</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: TORT Report.*

Competency Exams

In NUC, undergraduate students can apply for and take competency exams for any course in their program of study, subject to academic evaluation, availability and depending upon the regulations and/or the accreditation standards of those academic programs. Not all program courses will be available for competency exams. Only those students who understand that they have the necessary knowledge of the course material for which they are interested in taking a competency exam should apply for it. This exam will be authorized to students after they have been officially enrolled in the institution and active in the term in which they apply for the exam. Competency exams will only be offered to students in courses in which they have never been enrolled. If the student passes the exam with a grade of 70 per cent or higher, he will obtain the value in credits assigned to that course. No grade will be assigned for competency exams. The competency exam may be taken up to a maximum of two times, which means that the student can only repeat the exam once. Each attempt requires a new application and payment. The student may only take two competency exams per academic term, and up to a total of four tests in his academic life at NUC, while not exceeding the amount of allowed transfer credits as stated in the transfer credit policy. If the student should fail the exam on both attempts, the student must enroll and take the course.
Table IV.8 presents the amount of Competency Exams administered in Academic year 2016-2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NUC Competency Exams 2016 - 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>243*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>583</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Online Students represent the most population of the NUC Bayamón campus, with respect to students attending the same campus and other campuses, which is why the number of competency exams is greater. To this is added the particularity of the profile of the online student who seeks to maximize their time, reason for which they choose this modality of studies and request competency exams within the framework of the policy.

All students are handed the consumer information where all the institutional policies related to student services appear, in reference to their location at NUC Webpage.

**Placement Services**

The role of Placement Office of each campus is to support the active and graduated students of the NUC academic programs of all the modalities in the preparation and placement in the work scenario. Every academic year, activities of professional development are coordinated addressing the development of skills such as resume writing, simulated interviews and how to carry out the job search. Likewise, employment fairs are coordinated with employers that have available job offers or visits to a determined employer to carry out the interview process on campus. NUC’s baseline for measuring effectiveness in academic programs with difficulty in placement will be 60% while the acceptable rate will be 70% in other academic programs.

Throughout the year, the bulletin board is kept updated with available job offers. The students employed are identified in the Student Management System (Campus Nexus) where the necessary information is documented to monitor the placement rate, on a month by month basis until the achievement of the annual goal. To observe the performance quality of the NUC graduate, an Employer Satisfaction Questionnaire (ESQ) is administered to the active employers.


**Extracurricular Activities**

NUC coordinates and develops an activities plan directed to address and accomplish the mission, vision and institutional values, encompassed in NUC policies. The activities plan of each campus is implemented with the objective of channeling the student to culminate his/her academic degree, offering the necessary tools to integrate to the labor market. The plan integrates activities of (1) motivation for strengthening the empowerment of students, leadership and focus in university life; (2) social community impact for the improvement of the life quality in the surrounding areas; and (3) prevention for promoting healthy lifestyles in the university community.

The activities plan program, among others, offers a Student Welcoming event that is a motivational activity for the integration process of the student to his/her university life. As part of the prevention plan, workshops are offered to strengthen the students’ emotional health. Prevention activities on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use and violence are carried out. Also, fairs and simulations to orient the population about how to proceed facing different events such as tsunamis, earthquakes, fire and situations that put at risk the security of the individual or the community in general as the entrance of an active shooter are worked with.

In addition, NUC promotes the development of sports activities such as basketball intramural tournaments, beach volleyball and chess; artistic activities as Students Choir, Dance Group and Theater Group to offer students an alternative of free expression and recreation through art. In December, the Christmas Party and Art Crafts Fair are carried out with the objective of highlighting the island traditions and culture and promoting social union in the season of the year.

The Students Associations carry out their own activities including leadership development and focus in charity work and altruist activities. ENACTUS (entrepreneurial action for others creates a better world for us all) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to inspire students to improve the world through entrepreneurial action (Enactus.org). This organization is a community of students, academic and business leaders committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action in the transformation of lives to make a better, more sustainable world. ENACTUS provides students a platform
to create community development projects that put their talents to improve their livelihoods.

At the NUC Arecibo Campus, a strong Enactus team has developed a unique community project for the development of technological skills for individual with Syndrome Down, implementing their project for two years with a group of seven young adults, getting their project to recognize as semifinalist in 2016 Enactus Puerto Rico Competitions. The seven participants have been developing their technological skills two day a week and have already practiced their skills at different office scenarios, validating the research done in this area.

At the Bayamón Campus, the Enactus team has developed a project to establish the first K-12 school with curriculum for children with Autism in Puerto Rico in alliance with the private sector to impact this growing population. The Enactus Team is committed to providing meaningful entrepreneurial experiences to students, viable resources for empowerment and community economic development opportunities. For the past four years, they have empowered the lives of more than 800 residents of Puerto Rico, to participate in economic life across all sectors, essential to build stronger economies, achieve goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life of their community, with projects such as “Guakia” and “Autism 360”. As an ENACTUS Team, the Bayamón students are well aware that an educated community is successful and sustainable. That is why they established the “Technology and Educational Center of Puente Blanco”, a Center developed to offer a tutoring program coordinated and structured to strengthen and develop the potential of each of the kids from this community in Cataño. The Team is determined to lead and guide communities to live “EMPOWERED” lives.

Both Enactus Teams from Arecibo and Bayamón Campus have been recognized nationally by business organizations that support ENACTUS organization and the development of social innovative projects in Puerto Rico. In 2017, a third NUC Enactus Team from the Río Grande Campus signed with Enactus Puerto Rico to start developing social and entrepreneurial projects in the east side of the island where there is a very strong need for such projects directed to address and accomplish the mission, vision and institutional values, encompassed in NUC policies.
Services by Third-party Providers

With the objective of offering quality services and meeting the needs of the population served, external services are contracted to adequately enhance existing services. These are:

1. **Ground Advertising**: Creative Agency.
2. **LIH Group**: Media Agency.
3. **Thief**: Consultants of the digital marketing area for leads generation.
4. **Psychology Services**: NUC contacts an independent contractor for offering professional services as Psychologist, in the specialization area, which includes, but it is not limited to the following:
   a) Counseling and therapies: by means of interviews to participants, he/she identifies and intervenes in different situations that affect students. After the sessions, he/she recommends measures to be taken.
   b) Consultations: Offer to the Student Affairs Directors and Professional Counselors of the Campuses advice in situations and events with students, as it may be required.
   c) Works with high-risk groups, as they are referred, for analyzing, recommending and implementing retention strategies.
   d) Offers workshops and trainings to the university community.
   e) Takes care of student’s referrals of the Campus.

The student files are kept at all times in the campus where the psychologist offers the service and he/she signs the contract that contains a clause where he/she is committed to keep absolute confidentiality about the information, and documents that he/she may have access, under the custody of Student Affairs Director of each campus.

5. **MMI Consulting (Placement validation)**: MMI Consulting is a service contracted by the EDUK corporate offices (now NUC Corporate) to verify the students’ placement process in an employment. MMI Consulting issues applications of the copies of the graduated students’ authorization in order that the employer can verify the employment status information. For these purposes, the student’s release is used. MMI proceeds to contact the employers or searches for information in the campuses and completes the Individual Verification Report to document the verification. These documents become part of the student’s placement file, selected in a sample.

6. **Security and Maintenance**: Private Corp. Security and Perfect Clinic are third party vendors that provide security guard services and maintenance services, respectively to the institution and its campuses.

**Assessment of the Effectiveness of Programs Supporting the Student Experience**

NUC has established an institutional assessment cycle that observes and documents the fundamental student service processes in and out of the classroom. At the beginning of August, the student profile is identified, as well as the new students’ population is surveyed to learn about their needs.

A SSQ is administered every two years. Table IV.9 shows the general results by Campus of the 2017 administration.
Table IV.9 Results of the 2017 Student Satisfaction Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>% of Student Satisfaction 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional (Total Mean) 94%

The new administration of SSQ will be administered again in August to November 2019 academic term.

NUC continues with effective mechanisms to identify at risk students, including those with special needs, and strategies are implemented to serve this diverse population in specific ways - The 2017 SSQ results demonstrated that 94% of the students are satisfied with accessibility of services tutoring, 94% are satisfied with the follow-up that the professor gives them about their academic progress, 98% of students are satisfied with the professor's treatment of the student, also, 95% of the students are satisfied with the Professor's willingness to provide reasonable accommodation. (Priority 1, 2 and 5: Academic Quality). On the other hand, the responses of students to reactive premise about The veracity of the information and data offered by the several offices to the student. (Student Satisfaction Survey 2017) is exhibited in Table IV 10.

Table IV.10 The veracity of the information and data offered by the several offices to the student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAMPUSES</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>Financial Aid</th>
<th>Registrar</th>
<th>Bursar</th>
<th>Student Affairs</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resource: Data of Student Satisfaction Survey 2017

The established processes are evaluated in the EC meetings, the chancellors work team, and the administrative offices directors with institutional leaders, among others.

Some of the changes that have occurred as a result of institutional and campus assessments include:

a. Retention Model.
Since its creation, the model proposed a distribution of responsibilities between the academic area and student services and when monitoring results, a division was created with a retention
leader and an organizational restructuring took place. The results are reaffirmed with theories that establish that retention is a responsibility of all the institutional community, but it fundamentally occurs as a result of the student experience in the classroom. Therefore, a change was carried out assigning the retention leadership to the academic dean of each campus. In 2016, an Institutional Assessment and Retention Director was appointed who is carrying out the validation of the model processes implemented since 2012 in each one of the campuses.

b. **Admissions Assessment**

To improve the admissions process and comply with Federal laws requirements, various revisions of the Admissions Application Form have been carried out. In the first revision, the acknowledgement receipt of Student Consumer Information was integrated. This form provides a summary about the general information of the Institution that the prospect must know and how it can be accessed. Likewise, a receipt was integrated where NUC is authorized to utilize text messages to communicate with the prospect and the active student. In the second revision, the student with disabilities self-identification was added as well as the reasonable accommodation orientation. These revisions are realized with the purpose that the admissions application process is carried out with agility, always complying with the internal processes of the Institution, as well as federal regulations.

c. **Use of Assessment Results in the Registrar’s Office**

1. **Enrollment Certification Process**. Has been revised with the objective of certifying students, having reliable data in the population reports by carefully correcting the databases in each start.

2. **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP)**. New policy implemented in July 2017 according to new regulations. This policy integrates new and simpler tables and it is expected that the configuration in the system will facilitate the work of the registrar offices. Also, this office completed the revision of several Registrar’s forms for updating with the processes in effect in July 2016; such as Academic Transcript Request, Graduation Request, Diploma Delivery Request, Program Change Request, Competency Exam Request, Enrollment / Withdrawal Request, NS and PS Appeal Request, Request for Continuing New Course, Enrollment Elimination Request, and Creation of the Academic File Certification’s policy.

d. **Assessment in Student Affairs**

This office has complied with several objectives of improvement: Implementation of Policy and procedures in the Placement Office, Modifications to SOP of the Student Advisory Committee, Creation of VAWA Protocol and Suicide Prevention Protocol, review of Security Policy to respond to Consorcio de Recursos Universitarios Sembrando Alianza de Alerta a las Drogas, el Alcohol y la Violencia (CRUSADA), as well as reinforcing the service to student with disability.

Explicitly, NUC recognizes as a legitimate institutional interest facilitating the protection of life, property and security of personnel and students and preventing the occurrence of delinquent acts in the physical facilities of the educational system. The State and Federal laws impose to the educational institutions the responsibility of promoting an environment that facilitates the protection and security of the members that compose the educational community. Since 1990, the Institution has established a Security Institutional Policy that has been in effect. The present declaration of public policy is promulgated in tune with Public Law 101-542 known as “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” or “Clery Act”, Public Law 113-4 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) and other federal and state laws that require the adoption of clear institutional norms. All this with the purpose of promoting an environment that facilitates the prevention of criminal acts and the attention of personal security of our Institution.

Also, the Institutional Security Policy (updated, including the criminal acts table) is a requisite of the federal regulation, and it has to be handed to personnel and students of NUC. In the case of new students, the policy is posted on the NUC Website. Evidence must be kept (in the file) of the acknowledgement receipt to every student and employee since the policy delivery is audited annually in the compliance audit (SFA Compliance Audit). The policy is sent to all campuses separately, since the table of crimes statistics varies depending on the area. The Human Resources Office is in charge of handing it to the administrative personnel and faculty members.
Activities for Students and Community after Hurricane María

The administration worked an academic calendar with 2 dates to resume operations, after Hurricane María’s impact: October 16 or 23 and a schedule adjusted for evening session students. Collection centers were opened with clothing, basic essential provisions, water and non-perishable food items in all the Campuses, to provide students based on their diverse needs.

Several activities were programmed with the collaboration of employees, entities and the community in accordance with institutional values, such as Social Commitment, Responsibility, Service and Quality. Approximately 300 Management of Emotions Workshops were offered to the student population of NUC’s Campuses and Centers.

NUC created an initiative called Oasis of Hope that consisted of training, provision, celebration of Christmas and health clinics for students and community. Table IV.11 below shows a Calendar of some of the Oasis of Hope’s activities to impact the neediest students and communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campuses</th>
<th>Business workshop</th>
<th>Bazaar</th>
<th>Christmas dinner or Christmas lunch</th>
<th>Delivery of provisions</th>
<th>Health clinics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>December 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 20</td>
<td>December 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>December 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>December 20</td>
<td>December 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>December 19</td>
<td>December 19</td>
<td>December 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Student Satisfaction Survey in Student Affairs

After the dissemination and detailed discussion of the results of the student satisfaction survey in each of NUC’s Campuses, the directors of the administrative offices of student services, proceed with the development of an improvement or maintenance plan, according to the achieved result. The Chancellors compile all the plans in a campus action plan to optimize student service and maintain compliance with the institutional mission. This discussion process also applies to the results of other periodic surveys and focus groups, in which the students' input is collected to monitor the service and update the action plans in order to meet their needs which can be diverse and changing.
Summary

NUC meets the criteria established in Standard IV for the self-study process and addresses #8 of the Requirements of Affiliation. NUC has very well organized and structured student services as required for a higher education institution. These services are supported by systematic and clearly stated Policies and SOP’s implemented in all campuses. The student services model is theory and research based and is supported by a well-grounded culture of compliance by monitoring, evaluating and continuously improving, thus fulfilling students’ expectations. Students are impacted in all areas of their needs: academic, social, emotional, and environmental, considering their diversity and special needs including students with disabilities.

Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC’s continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from the work group have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the departments or groups to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.

Strengths

1. Diversity of services rendered to students from the admissions process to follow up after graduation and placement in job.
2. Follow-up to the new student’s population: analysis and early identification of their needs, including the voluntary identification of students with disabilities, particularly those at high risk.
3. Continuous development and review of policies and protocols considering the federal and state regulations as well as students’ needs and assessment of services.
4. Establishment of the Institutional Specials Services Office to educate and support the compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and laws associated to those students with disabilities.
5. Diversity of extracurricular and recreational activities.
6. Level of student satisfaction with the services received.
7. Impact to the community with projects curricular and extracurricular as kinds of community programs of health, the ENACTUS project, and the Strategy of Oasis of Healthy Life.
8. Tutoring services.
9. Integration of academic advisors at most of campus and for the different modes.
Challenges

There is a necessity of continuously assessing the diverse and increasing needs of students in order to better serve them while achieving their academic goal and social, emotional, and environmental struggles.

Suggestions

1. Maximize the technological resources of the University community in the academic and student services offices.

Recommendations

No recommendations have been identified for this standard.
Chapter Five: *Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment*

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

**Introduction**

NUC has clearly established its mission, priority areas and strategic goals as a solid foundation for a deep review of the assessment process and a discussion for the improvement of educational effectiveness and self-renewal. A Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) for each one of the units outlines the procedures for the assessment of its educational delivery, services, and administrative processes and results, in terms of its mission, priority areas, institutional strategic goals and objectives.

NUC evaluates its operations and assesses the process for improvement of educational effectiveness using the various departmental action plans and the outcomes of the effectiveness indicators established for each department. Some of the direct and indirect measures reviewed to validate the educational effectiveness for student learning at NUC include licensing passing rates, student retention, placement in the related field of study, level of satisfaction of enrolled students, graduates and employers, the employee performance evaluations, and the program and course assessment results, among others.

**Mission Statement, Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness**

The mission statement of NUC provides the logical starting point for self-study, as discussed in Chapter I, but more importantly, it defines the institution and its purpose within the context of higher education and within the context of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The NUC mission is relevant and meaningful. Moreover, its development and implementation is collaborative in nature and is periodically assessed, and it clearly states the relevance of educational experience.

While the mission statement provides the foundation for all institutional activities, it is the Institutional Strategic Plan and planning processes that bring the mission statement to life. As previously stated, the Institutional Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is based on five priority areas:

a) **Academic Quality**, reaffirming the importance of academic quality through systematic assessment and the continuous improvement of the institution’s academic offerings;

b) **Service**, providing a college experience centered on student experiences, development and services, and the student experience;
c) **Organizational Development**, fostering a service-oriented organizational culture of the highest quality to all customers.

d) **Strengthening and Positioning of the NUC Brand**, recognizing institutional identity in the marketplace as one of the top private universities in PR, FL and through distance education.

e) **Financial Strength**, achieving of key financial metrics levels established in each year’s annual budget.

These priority areas serve as a guideline through which NUC will identify and analyze institutional strengths and opportunities for continuous improvement.

The priority area related to the academic experience contains strategic objectives and the expected results for the achievement of the educational experiences, the results of SLO, and the assessment of the educational process. Other priority areas also contain strategic objectives that contribute to fulfillment of the SLO.

**Planning, Academic Assessment, and Evaluation Process**

The process for the assessment of institutional effectiveness is fully articulated within its planning process. Each academic program develops its own action plan and recommends budget allocation for implementation, and the assessment strategies are incorporated within this process in order to ensure accountability. The planning process is as follows:

1. The strategic plan covers a five-year period, and a comprehensive evaluation of the plan is conducted towards the end of that time frame.
2. Periodically, each academic program prepares its action plan and budget derived from the goals and priorities delineated in the strategic plan. For each academic program, the department’s assessment plan becomes part of its portfolio. The assessment plan includes, but is not limited to the following elements:
   - An evaluation of the previous year’s assessment plan and an examination of the performance results of strategies implemented within that time period.
   - Articulated objectives for each program, using the mission and institutional strategies goals.
   - Identified expected outcomes (or objectives), using effectiveness indicators: (a) profile of graduates and competency of program to be addressed in the assessment, (b) course or educational activity, (c) assessment strategies, (d) instruments/evidence, (e) frequency of the assessment, and (f) process. It is anticipated that the outcomes assessments will generate changes in course content and teaching strategies. In addition, students have been encouraged to be more conscious of and actively involved in their own learning.

**Educational Assessment**

NUC has clearly articulated statements of expected SLO, at all levels and for all programs. At the program level, goals for student learning are adopted by the faculty and further articulated in the CEP, Faculty Handbook, and NUC General Catalog.

As stated previously, at each stage in the student’s academic life cycle, the following aspects are determined: effectiveness indicators, assessment objectives and
strategies, instruments and methodologies, evidence, and use of assessment results to make improvements and informed decision-making.

The assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness. In this section, the cycle and the model for the process of the assessment of educational effectiveness is analyzed. Figure V.1 represents the Institutional Academic Assessment Cycle (IAAC):

![Figure V.1 NUC Assessment Cycle](image)

NUC operational definitions of assessment terms include:

1. **Assessment measures** are the procedures or methods used to measure or demonstrate student learning outcomes. These processes are grouped in two categories: direct and indirect measures. Best practices recommend the use of both measures when determining the degree of student learning that has taken place.
2. **Curriculum** refers to the program sequence and also the academic content taught in a specific course or program.
3. **Expected outcomes** are statements that describe specific behaviors a student is expected to demonstrate upon completion of a course and program.
4. **Goals** are a broad statement about the types of learning expected and facilitated within all academic programs at the institutional level.
5. **Objectives** are target metrics and measures that demonstrate achievement of academic programs goals.
6. **Results analysis and action plan** is the process of organizing and searching for possible reasons to explain the results and determine what measures should be put in place to accomplish the expected course or program outcomes. Includes a brief discussion of the implementation of change, the activities that must be taken to improve and achieve expected student learning goals.

At the program level each discipline has articulated a series of measurable learning goals that cascade from the NUC mission and priorities. They can be found the NUC website and General Catalog.

At the course level, SLO are stated in behavioral terms as course objectives that are published and made available to all students in their Courses Planner (online courses)
or Thematic Guide (on ground courses). Learning goals at the course level, as reflected in course descriptions, and degree program requirements are also published in the NUC General Catalog.

**Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP)**

The Campus CEP, as it is known, and its corresponding processes, is systematic, sustained and, thorough in its use of multiple qualitative and quantitative measures. The process maximizes the use of existing data and information, and thereby minimizes the administrative burden necessary to be effective. The data utilized is clear and purposefully related to the goals they are assessing. As such, all constituents are able to readily understand the connections between data and goals. The data collected by NUC is not necessarily overwhelming but it is relevant in quality and quantity so that the results can be used with confidence to inform the decision-making process. The CEP were reviewed for the new 2016-2020 period, as well as the Strategic Plan. The CEPs integrate the five (5) priority areas of the Institutional Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

The CEP is similar in structure at all NUC campuses. The Plan includes an introduction about the institution and the campus, as well as the intent of the Plan. It also includes the institutional mission statement; institutional goals; operational definitions; beliefs and principles; purpose; priorities; the campus effectiveness assessment model and its five stages; characteristics of the student population; effectiveness indicators; program development evaluation, assessment, and review model; planning, assessment, and means of assessing SLO; assessment of the effectiveness; and characteristics of programs offered.

The CEP provides a framework to support and fulfill the goals and strategies delineated in the Institutional Strategic Planning. Therefore, the Institutional Strategic Planning, the CEP, the SLO, and assessment of outcomes in student services and administrative areas, are integrated throughout the institutional mission and goals. The purpose is to establish the extent to which the institution meets its expected outcomes and institutional goals.

NUC has developed a Campus Effectiveness Assessment Model (Figure V.2) based on the continuum of the student’s academic life cycle based on five stages:

a) **First stage**, before admitted, and once admitted;

b) **Second stage**, at enrollment;
c) **Third stage**, at the end of the first period and throughout students’ academic life;
d) **Fourth stage**, in the last academic period or in relation to the academic progress criteria;
e) **Fifth stage**, once graduated, and within the first year after graduation

Figure V.2 NUC Campus Effectiveness Assessment Model

At each of these stages, the unit responsible for tracking the related data is also responsible for implementing the appropriate assessments and actions for improvement. This analysis is visualized in a continuous cyclical process.

In the CEP, each stage further consists of an assessment objective, effectiveness indicators, an assessment process, instrument/evidence, frequency, leaders (providing oversight), and intended results. For example, in the first stage, *Before Admitted/Once Admitted*, NUC would analyze, assess, and respond to the following:

1. **Assessment Objective**: Determine the effectiveness of marketing and recruitment processes in attracting new students (total enrollment, by program, by level, and by modality).
2. **Effectiveness Indicator**: (a) Number of leads per appointment, interviews, admitted, and enrolled students; (b) projected number of admitted students (total, by program, level, and modality).
3. **Assessment Process**: Analysis of the proportion of leads per prospects and statistics of admitted and enrolled students. The admissions directors gather and submit to the EC the statistics, during enrollment and at the conclusion of each term. These statistics are analyzed, actions taken to improve the current and/or the next enrollment period. Evidence of actions taken and their effectiveness are maintained by the admissions director and are reflected in the EC minutes.
4. **Instrument/Evidence**: Projected and actual statistics of number of leads, prospects, students admitted and enrolled.
5. **Frequency**: Each academic term or periodically-as required for follow-up purposes.
6. **Leaders**: Admissions Director and Chancellors.
7. **Results**: During each academic term, an analysis is conducted of the number of leads using an array of variables, such as period in which students are admitted and enrolled during the academic calendar as well as the admitted and enrolled conversion rates. Evidence of this analysis is available in the campus Admissions Department.

The implementations of the CEP, its assessment results and the analysis of various statistics have prompted NUC to take the following actions during the last year or so:
1. In order to track possible withdrawals early enough to reduce attrition, a Retention’s SOP was developed in order to contact students absent immediately following the start of courses and during all academic term.

2. A Register Enrollment Summary is prepared daily previous to any start and during the late enrollment period to follow up on new and regular enrollment goals, attendance and monitoring tendencies that could affect enrollment goals.

3. A collaborative effort involving the registrar, retention and academic personnel, and counseling officers is in place to address any identified student concerns as soon as possible.

4. Special cases are assigned since the beginning to an appropriate official for follow-up. As a result, direct services to students have improved.

5. The evaluation of the enrollment process has prompted changes that have been implemented within the last several years, for example, the identification of high risk students and their attention throughout the REMA Retention Project. This project has allowed the personnel to impact more students resulting in increase in retention over the last years.

6. Tutoring has been strengthened with the selection of tutoring coordinators and the special recognition given to students who serve as peer tutors, and the emphasis in the faculty roles and responsibilities for specific tutoring time during the week.

Model and Plan of Assessment of Student Learning

NUC considers institutional effectiveness as the integrated, systematic and documented process of measuring performance for the purposes of continuous improvement of academic programs and to validate the Mission. The academic indicators are identified in the effectiveness continuum at several levels, as shown in Figure V.3. Once the student is admitted; at enrollment; at the end of the first period and throughout the students’ academic life cycle; in the last academic period or in relation to the academic progress criteria; and, once graduated and also within the first year after graduation.

Figure V.3 Academic Indicators in the Effectiveness Continuum
At Stages 1 and 2, when the student is admitted and at enrollment, a student profile is created by examining high school student’s GPA, transfer student’s GPA, admissions test passes rates, students admitted by the admissions committee, minors and, other high risk student’s characteristic. This information is used to track students during their first term of studies to ensure transition and success in this early stage of their university life. Students are referred to a tutor, interviewed by a mentor, and monitored by the faculty and leaders to ensure academic success.

After completing this first term of studies and through college life, other components are evaluated such as tutoring results, academic progress, results in Key Courses, retention of students by program, course and faculty, among others. All these elements are used to assess student learning and plan for their academic success. Action plans are developed to ensure that students are meeting learning standards established for each program of study. In the last academic period, the evaluations of clinical practical and integrated seminars are assessed to ensure that the student meets the graduation requirements established for each program. After completing their program of studies, board examination results, placement, and Employee Follow Up Surveys are utilized to ensure that students have developed the necessary skills and are performing to the satisfaction levels expected by the institution for each program.

Levels of Student Learning Assessment

NUC has clearly articulated statements of expected outcomes and utilizes a well-documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning. The use of assessment results serves as a means of validating the NUC Mission and Institutional Learning Goals. Please refer to NUC’s Institutional Learning Goals Outcomes Assessment Summary 2015-2018. (Appendix 44).

Program Level. Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) for student learning at the program level are also clearly articulated and further published in the College website, and CEP, among others. NUC offers fourteen (14) associate degree programs, twenty one (21) bachelor’s degree programs, and six (6) master’s degree programs. Indirect and direct measures of program level assessment include new program development reviews; periodic cycles of program review; regulatory reviews; persistence and graduation rates; placement rates; licensure pass rates, and capstone course results. Following are samples
of the Program Learning Outcomes and direct and indirect assessment measures for various programs.

**Master’s Degree in Education with Major in Educational Leadership Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deepen their knowledge on the overall performance of educational institutions and in particular on the roles of the school director in the areas of school life.</td>
<td>Percentage of students approving Capstone course: EDUC 6035 (Field Experiences in the Educational Scenario) [D]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to think logically, critically and make judgments appropriately weighted to enable them to contribute to the continuous improvement of education in Puerto Rico.</td>
<td>Percentage of students demonstrating mastery of Capstone EDUC 6035 SLO through rubric assessment (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the expectations of retention (70%) and placement established by the program</td>
<td>Percentage of students approving Capstone course: EDUC 6045 (Integrated Seminar in Educational Leadership) [D]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Master of Education with major in Educational Leadership is offered in Arecibo and Río Grande Campuses, and in the NUC-Online Division. Two courses have been assigned as Capstone Courses: Field Experiences in the Educational Scenario I (EDUC 6035) and the Integrated Seminar in Educational Leadership (EDUC 6045). Capstone projects are designed for students to demonstrate the achievement of program learning goals having completed the coursework required for a major/degree. Different instruments are used to collect the information in capstone courses, for example: rubrics, portfolios and analysis of the classroom assessments. The rubrics used to evaluate the program courses were revised in 2014-2015 to comply with the CAEP programmatic accreditation agency. As a result, the student’s evaluation process is now more rigorous in all program courses. As shown in Figure V.4, 92% of students approved the capstone course EDUC 6045 for the academic year 2014-2015, 94% in 2015-2016, and 96% in 2016-2017 periods. The results show that students performed better in the course, demonstrating fulfillment of program learning goals after the assessment measures were revised. As shown in Figure V.4, the capstone course EDUC 6035 students perform at a higher level in 2016-2017 with a 100% approval, an 8% increased from 92% in 2015-2016.
According to the syllabi provided, the capstone course EDUC 6035 should be the maximum achievement for compliance with the program learning goals since it provides the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills acquired in a real school scenario. Thirty-nine (39) capstone portfolios were assessed according to the fulfillment of both capstone-specific learning goals as well as MA in Education with Major in Educational Leadership program goals.

Capstone course learning goals are:

1. Evaluate different forms and documents referred to in the practice manual for the monitoring of the development of the portfolio which compiles the academic life of students in their understanding and learning of future administrative leader in an educational setting.
2. Demonstrate ability as a leader to make decisions and issue judgments well weighted, on topics related to the problematic and controversial issues of education.
3. Reflect on the relationship between: school director and teaching staff, school director and non-teaching staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, student teacher and master student, and how this contributes to the achievement of an excellent education for all students.

The portfolios were evaluated using the rubric provided. The rubric was rated in scales of 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest) and four major criteria were selected from the rubric, since it was very extensive. Through the final evaluation of the EDUC 6035 course portfolio, students embodied the compilation of the different activities carried out in the virtual classroom and clinical practice, which is carried out in educational public, private or community environments, reflecting what they have learned and executed on different administrative and pedagogical processes. As shown on Table V.1, the results of the capstone assessment, students were able to demonstrate clear understanding of the importance of the functions of the educational leader, showing thus that they meet the competencies of the program. It should be noted that the majority of the students showed
a high sense of responsibility, critical analysis and professionalism when it comes to carry out the clinical experience process. This is validated as well, from the evaluations of the directors participating directly with the students while they were on school setting.

Students performed better in three of the four criteria in 2015-2016 except for the criteria of Sustainability of the information which they executed better in 2016-2017. Action plans were developed to address situations from students and faculty that could be affecting the mastery of the capstone course learning goals thus expecting improvement for the 2017-2018 year.

### Table V.1 Percentage Approval Capstone Course EDUC 6035 Final Rubric 2015 - 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubrics criteria</th>
<th>Capstone Learning Goals</th>
<th>Program Learning Goals</th>
<th>Excellent 5</th>
<th>Good 4</th>
<th>Adequate 3</th>
<th>Limited 2</th>
<th>Deficient 1</th>
<th>Incomplete work 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self presentation and introduction</td>
<td>2, 3 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>77 69 0 15 0 3 0 0 0 0 23 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the Information</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>70 69 1 8 0 8 0 0 0 0 23 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and conclusions</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8</td>
<td>54 36 23 28 0 20 0 4 0 0 23 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability of the information</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>54 77 23 4 0 4 0 0 0 0 23 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown on Figure V.5, 62% of students were placed at work in 2014-2015, while an increase to 93% was reported for the academic year 2015-2016, and 86% for 2016-2017. While there is a 7% decrease in placement, the program is still over the 70% benchmark for NUC. In this program, the retention rates need to be closely monitored.

As observed the retention rate was 72% for the academic year 2014-2015, was 63.83% for 2015-2016, and 71% for 2016-2017. As a result of these findings, a Retention Improvement Plan was developed in 2016 to start addressing closely this concern at the master’s level. As part of the plan, it is necessary to make an analysis of the reasons why the student decide not to stay in the program, the faculty evaluations completed by the students, and the satisfaction with the program that students express during their program of studies. This will allow the personnel to take assertive actions to increase or maintain the program retention.
Figure V.5 Percentage Placement and Retention MA in Education with Major in Educational Leadership

| Percentage Placement and Retention Master Degree Educational Leadership 2014-2017 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                 | Placement       | Retention     |
| 2014-2015                       | 62%             | 72%           |
| 2015-2016                       | 93%             | 64%           |
| 2016-2017                       | 85.5%           | 71%           |

Master’s Degree in Master of Business Administration Program

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

- Perform efficiently using ethical reasoning, knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make decisions and implement optimal solutions, contributing to the development and implementation of strategic plans.
- Apply their knowledge and skills in organizations of different levels of complexity, capable of establishing and defending their arguments from the institution that serve as verbal and written form.
- Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the program

Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures

- Percentage approved Capstone course MBA 5990 (Seminar On Global Business Strategies) [D]
- Percentage approval of rubric criteria in Capstone course MBA 5990 (Seminar On Global Business Strategies) [D]
- Retention rates (I)

In the Business Administration Master Degree Program assessment data is gathered from the results of the MBA 5990 capstone course, Seminar on Global Business. Different instruments are used to collect the information, which include: classroom rubrics, special projects and the capstone project Global Business Challenge with results presentation rubric and the classroom assessment analysis. All simulation work is done through the Capsim tool which provides real-world scenarios of fictitious companies. This Simulator provides financial and operational results for the analysis of the various components by students. With these reports, students can do their analysis and recommendations at the end of the final round.

Capstone course learning goals are:
1. Analyze the information that will be useful for strategic planning and decision making within an organization.
2. Make individual or group decisions to lead efforts in each functional area of the organization.
3. Prepare reports on the performance of an organization or company.
Students are required to create their business concept, develop their company and operate it competing with other companies for a simulated period of five years demonstrating how the decision making process in all areas of the operation affected their performance. 75% of students completed the Global Business Challenge activity satisfactorily in 2015-2016. Analysis of the results led to changes in the strategies used in the course, as well as the evaluation criteria and rubrics used in the final evaluation, resulting in a 92% of students completing the activity satisfactorily in 2016-2017.

The final projects were evaluated using the rubric provided. The rubric was rated in a scale of 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest) and three major criteria were selected from the rubric, since it was very extensive. A total of 87 projects of the MBA 5990 students were evaluated. Of the total, 41 students took the course in the academic year 2015-2016 and 46 in the academic year 2016-2017. Evidence gathered through the final evaluation of the projects led to evidence that all the activities students completed during their MBA course work, are reflected in this final task. Professional competency, creativity and communication skills are well demonstrated by the final results of the Capsim Simulator which are assessed in the Executive summary requested, as well as the strategic analysis of the results. One of the sensitive areas of the annual report are recommendations made at the end of each round of the Simulator. These recommendations are the result of a critical analysis of the problems facing the company conducted in the Simulator. In this particular student is facing decision-makers to find optimal solutions to the problems presented in the company. These problems are of variable complexity and the report allows the students the opportunity to argue and defend the proposed decisions.

As shown in Table V.2, of the 87 students who completed the capstone course over 95% demonstrated proficiency expected from a student completing an MBA for 2015-2016 and for 2016-2017. Special attention has been placed on the strategic analysis aspects of the Project since it showed a decrease of 4% in the rubric from 2015-2016.
Table V.2 Percentage Approval Capstone Course MBA 5990
Final Rubric for 2015 - 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Criteria</th>
<th>Capstone Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Excellent 5</th>
<th>Good 4</th>
<th>Adequate 3</th>
<th>Limited 2</th>
<th>Deficient 1</th>
<th>Incomplete Work 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Executive summary presents the main achievements of financial and operational strategies obtained at the end of the fourth year number in comparison with the position of the Company at the starting point in round zero.

Performs an analysis of the strategy chosen at the beginning and on the subsequent phases making changes in strategy and simulation using qualitative and quantitative data.

The strategic analysis includes an explanation indicating if he won or not a competitive advantage and whether it was or not sustainable throughout the rounds.

Direct measures such as passing rates for the course, as shown in the Figure V.6, demonstrate that 100% of students mastered program goals for the academic year 2015-2016 and 98% for 2016-2017, by successfully completing all requirements for this capstone course.

Retention rates for this program are in NUC’s range as stated in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020. The retention for graduate programs has represented a great challenge for NUC, since this is a new level. Retention strategies were revised and tempered to the ILG of the graduate student. Figure V.7 presents, evidence of this increase of 10% in retention from 2015 to 2016. However, retention in this program continues to be a challenge; example of this is a decrease of 8% for academic year 2016 to 2017, compared with the previous year. More aggressive action plans will be developed to identify specific opportunity areas to improve the retention of this program.
Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing (BSN)

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

- Perform independently, with attention to leadership, management and research, in all health care settings and within the legal and ethical limits of the scope of practices for the baccalaureate degree nurse in Puerto Rico.
- Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution
- Meet the expectations of Licensure Examination Pass Rates established by the program

Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures

- Placement rates (I)
- Retention rates (I)
- Licensure Examination Pass Rates (D)

Traditionally NUC, as a career college, has evidenced high placement rates. Job placement rates may vary by campus according to various internal or external circumstances, such as: (1) general employment rates by a region- a labor statistic that is contingent on the region; (2) hospital/center availability; (3) student interest/need for obtaining employment near their residence, (4) number of students actually seeking employment, etc.

During the past three years, the student job placement rate has been a great challenge for NUC. (Figure V.8) The economic crisis, the closure of businesses, closure of healthcare facilities and the decline in population, are just a few of the problems the staff of the placement office at NUC face to place students in jobs. In Puerto Rico geographical areas vary greatly. There is easier student placement from campuses such as Arecibo and Ponce. It is more difficult for other campuses such as Bayamón and Caguas, which are in a metropolitan area and the competition is higher. Since the
western area of the island is an area of high poverty and increased incidence of social problems, the placement at the Rio Grande campus is a great challenge.

Efforts will continue to encourage students to remain working in places where they completed clinical experiences. Since a great number of NUC students relocate to the United States upon program completion, NUC will continue to support students to meet the licensing and job requirements for the States.

**Figure V.8 Percentage Placement Rates for BSN Nursing for 2015 - 2017**

Retention rates for the program have increased slightly from 68% to 70% for the 2014-2017 periods (**Figure V.9**). Different strategic actions, such as strengthening student services for nursing students, addition of new personnel to nursing units, redefined job roles and responsibilities for Clinical Liaisons, Nursing Academic Advisors and Mentors, have been taken to improve, identify, and solve situations that can lead students to exit the program.

Institutional assessment results of examination pass rates for the Examining Board of Nursing also demonstrate students are fulfilling the program competencies for the years 2014-2015 (80%) and 2015-2016 (79%), surpassing the pass rate for Puerto Rico for both years (**Figure V.10**). However, a decrease of 8% in examination pass rates was seen for 2016-2017 leading the VNP and her staff to develop an *Institutional Examination Pass Rates Improvement Plan* to reinforce those specific areas where students are showing greatest difficulties. The plan is in place in all campuses and is going to be evaluated at the end of every academic term.
Bachelor’s Degree in Network Technology and Applications Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To demonstrate in his practice that he possesses moral ethical behavior; initiative and leadership; and professional competence.</td>
<td>Percentage approved Capstone courses INTE 4200 [online] and INTE 4161P [on ground] (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop an application with a database and a page using the skills acquired in all previous concentration courses.</td>
<td>Percentage Approval Rubrics to evaluate Capstone course INTE 4200 [online] (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution</td>
<td>Retention rates (I)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The INTE 4200 course provides students who choose the option of studying online the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned by completing a capstone project which includes specific exercises such as: system analysis, design and implementation of systems, programming using different languages and database management, among others to get the desired results. This experience is equivalent to activities to which students are exposed on ground in the INTE 4161P when they attend a practice center and similar responsibilities are assigned.
Between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, an increase of 10% in students approving the rubrics in the INTE 4200 course was observed, for the most recent year all students approved (Figure V.11). As referred to the pass rates for the INTE 4200 course, it ranges from 82% approval in 2016-2017 for online students to 100% approval for unground students in 2016-2017 (Figure V.12). The approval rates for capstone project and on ground practice and retention rates in both courses are assessment measures that demonstrate students are mastering the program learning goals when they graduate in both modalities. In terms of retention, in the INTE 4200 course 100% of students approved the course, maintaining a constant trend in the three years period. In the INTE 4161P course the retention rate has decreased slightly in the three years period although still in the Institutional range requirement (Figure V.13).

**Figure V.13 Percentage Retention Course Comparison**

**INTE 4200 (Online) and INTE 4161P (On-ground)**

2014-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTE 4200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTE 4161P</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Associate’s Degree in Pharmacy Technician**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It will solve exercises similar to those presented in the professional certification exam to practice as a pharmacy technician.</td>
<td>Percentage approved Mock Test PHAR 2920P (D) Licensure Examination Pass Rates (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the expectations Licensure Examination Pass Rates established by the program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown on Figure V.14 the continuous improvement in the licensure examination pass rates for the past three years demonstrates the results of rigorous assessment through the program. During the program revision process in 2014, the PHAR 2920 course was created and a Mock Test was developed to better assess content domain before licensure examination. The Mock Test is a simulation of the Board
Examination Test in which students have the opportunity to experience the same rigorous circumstances they will encounter during the professional test. (Figure V.15). In addition, departmental exams for Key Courses were developed, and the program was completely revised. Thus, board examination pass rates have been increasing during the past three years and action plans are in place to guarantee the institution maintains the rates over the Puerto Rico results.

**Figure V.14 Percentage State Performance on Licensure Exam – Pharm TECH Aggregate 2014-2017**

**Figure V.15 Percentage Mock Test Approval PHAR 2920 2015-2017**

### Associate’s Degree in Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

- It will show the domain achieved in the development of their skills, knowledge and professional skills in the area of restorative.
- Meet the expectations Licensure Examination Pass Rates established by the program
- Meet the expectations for retention (70%) established by the institution

**Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures**

- Percentage approved Capstone course: Capstone course DEAS 2061P (D)
- Licensure Examination Pass Rates (I)
- Program Retention Rate (I)

The Associate’s Degree in Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions has several Key Courses including DEAS 2061P. This course is the last clinical practice of students before graduation. As shown in Figure V.16, the percentage of pass and failure has decreased 3% since 2014-2015 and has remained constant during 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 at an 88% passing rate. This course was revised in 2014 as part of the program complete curriculum revision and all evaluation rubrics also revised to better evaluate the professional aspects of the student as well as emphasize the development of communication and critical thinking skills, moral and ethical behavior, and respect to diversity. An action plan has been developed to work closely with students in their last clinical experience to better serve their needs and their preceptors in order to strengthen completion in the course.
As shown in Figure V.17, Retention in the Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions Program has been a challenge in past years and still remains below the standards of a minimum of 70% established by the institution for the retention of their programs. A decrease in program retention rate has been seen in the past two academic years, from 68% in 2014-2015 to 66% in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Since 2015-2016, action plans have been in place to monitor absences from the beginning of the program. This action allows to monitor students since their first laboratory and external practice to give them tutoring and mentoring to support their academic and personal needs in order for them to finish their program. The retention evaluation includes the consideration of faculty, clinical supervisors and administrative personnel input through questionnaires and personal intervention with the students at different instances during their academic life.

Course Level Assessment.

At the course level, SLO are also clearly articulated in behavioral terms, stated in each syllabus provided to students on the first day of classes. These learning goals are also reflected in course descriptions and can be found in the General Catalog and the institutional website: http://www.nuc.edu/, and all syllabi. Furthermore, this process
empowers faculty to better determine the assessment measures that are most applicable to their educational goals and objectives. NUC utilizes a variety of direct and indirect measures of student learning at the course level including classroom participation, assignments, homework, individual and group projects, quizzes, tests, standardized exams, and term and research paper to name a few.

Course level learning goals are linked to program level outcomes through behavioral objectives. Following are some examples from specific courses.

**EDUC 5230: Instructional Leadership in Educational Scenarios**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Institutional Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the importance of standards for educational leaders and its implications in creating environments where all its components have the opportunity to learn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess innovative teaching strategies and models, as well as develop professional development programs, which have scientific base, appropriate to the educational community that directs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution</td>
<td>Rubrics to qualify critical essays (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage approved course: EDUC 5230: Instructional Leadership in Educational Scenarios (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retention (I)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A direct measure of assessment in this course is the use of a rubric to measure if the student met expected learning results in the formal assessment activity. Figure V.18 shows that for 2014-2015, 72.73% of students demonstrated mastery of course expected learning outcomes with 80% or more, while in 2015 - 2016 it was 84.06%. This reflects an increase of 11.33%, evidencing mastery of the knowledge, skills and competencies expected. Some of the changes made as result of the assessment were the revision of the rubrics for this course and all the courses in order to comply with the standards of the TEAC programmatic accrediting agency.

*Figure V.18 Percentage Approval Rubrics to evaluate critical essays*  
**EDUC 5230 2014-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>72.73</td>
<td>27.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>84.06</td>
<td>15.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another example of a direct measure of assessment for the EDUC 5230 course is the end of course evaluation. As observed in Figure V.19, 93% of students completed the course satisfactorily in 2014-2015 with 89%. The results for the 2015-2016 year were lower than 2014-15 at 89%. Meanwhile an improvement plan with special activities was developed to monitor the administration of the course to improve passing rates managing to increase by 4% by 2016-2017. This reflects the effectiveness of the action plan for that year and that most of the students of EDUC 5230 are meeting the expected learning outcomes of the course.

Figure V.19 Percentage Approval Capstone course EDUC 5230 2014-2017

Retention represents an indirect measure of assessment for this course. As shown in Figure V.20 for the period 2014-2015 this course had 100% retention, 96% in 2015-2016 and it increased to 99% in 2016-2017. This statistic exceeds the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 goal of at least 70%. Retention plans are being developed by each campus to address specific situations than could affect retention at this level.

Figure V.20 Percentage Course Retention EDUC 5230
### NURS 4021P: Practice in Nursing Interventions with Families and Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Generate effective leadership skills through the use of research and public policy for the benefit of the health of groups and populations.  
• Determine the student satisfaction level with their course, faculty and clinical experience.  
• Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution | Percentage approval Capstone Course 4011P 2014-2017(D)  
Students Satisfactions Questionnaire (I)  
Retention rates (I) |

An example of a direct measure of assessment in the course NURS 4021P is the End of Course Evaluation. Figure V.21 shows that for 2014-2015, 93% of the students approved the course satisfactorily (C or more), 82% for 2015-2016, and 85% for 2016-2017, a slight increase since 2015. During this time, all nursing courses for the BSN were revised to meet standard requirements of ACEN enhancing course content, classroom and clinical rubrics, laboratory manuals, among others. This revision had a positive impact in this course allowing students a more structured syllabi and content thus helping students to better demonstrate mastery of the SLO in this course.

**Figure V.21 Percentage approval Capstone Course 4011P 2014-2017(D)**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

Student satisfaction is linked to the nursing unit goals and the strategies related to student retention and success. Since satisfaction directly relates to the student’s perception of their success and their ability to perform in the real world, it is an excellent indicator of the quality of the nursing programs. Since all data, prior to candidacy, was aggregated by campus, a nursing student specific satisfaction survey with the courses and the program were developed and first implemented in March 2015. This 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was administered to nursing students who were completing their program and NURS 4021P. Its purpose was to gather information about their experience in the course, with their faculty and the clinical experience.
The Survey Monkey online platform has been used to gather information from 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years. As observed in Figure V.22, students were more satisfied during the 2016-17 academic years than the previous year and their satisfaction is higher with their course and their clinical experience. Satisfaction with faculty remains the lower percentage of satisfaction, indicating the need to strengthen the monitoring and support given to the nursing faculty. Students also comment about the student services, the quality of services in general and their satisfaction with the course content, facilities and resources. This information allows us to continue efforts in making the student experience a highly satisfactory one.

**Figure V.22 Percentage Student’s Satisfaction of Course NURS 4021P**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Clinical Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another indirect assessment measure at the course level is the course retention. As observed in Figure V.23, NURS 4021P retention has remained high with 97% in both 2014 and 2015 academic years and 98% for the 2016-2017 academic year. A completion and retention improvement plan was developed in 2016 to monitor closely the different circumstances that can cause a student to drop from a program. Special attention is given to new starts and to students completing their programs to reassure their efforts and help them succeed.

**Figure V.23 Percentage Retention Course NURS 4021P 2014-2017**
**PHAR 2920 Pharmacy Integrated Seminar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)</th>
<th>Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It will solve exercises similar to those presented in the professional certification exam to practice as a pharmacy technician.</td>
<td>Percentage approved Mock Test PHAR 2911P (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution</td>
<td>Retention Rates (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet the expectations Licensure Examination Pass Rates established by the program</td>
<td>Licensure Examination Pass Rates (I)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the continuous improvement in the Pharmacy Technician Program several measures have been implemented during the past three years. Close attention has been placed in the licensure examination pass rates that are the result of rigorous assessment through the program. As part of the 2014 program revision, one very successful measure has been the creation of the PHAR 2920 course; an integrated seminar which provides review of all the main areas tested in the professional licensure exam. In addition, a Mock Test was developed to better assess content domain before licensure examination. The Mock Test is a simulation of the Board Examination Test in which students have the opportunity to experience the same rigorous circumstances they will encounter during the professional test. Mock Test results for the past two years have been 99% for 2015-2016 and 96% for 2016-2017, which relates to the increase in board examination results during this period (Figure V.24). Thus, board examination pass rates have been increasing, and various action plans are in place to guarantee the institution maintains the rates over the Puerto Rico results.

Another assessment measure is the course retention which is over 98% for the two years after implementation (Figure V.25). Continuous support is given to the students at the end of their program in this course and in the externship course to assure that students are meeting their expectations and taking care of the situations that can be a burden to the student and prevent them to finish their program.
During the program revision process in 2014, the Pharmacy Technician program reinforced the courses that prepare students for professional examination. An additional Pharmaceutical Math was created, course content for Posology was updated and course content for Pharmaceutical Legislation enhanced and updated. A new course PHAR 2920 was created and a Mock Test was developed to better assess content domain before licensure examination. In addition, departmental exams and specific assessment strategies were developed for Key Courses, strengthening the program and the areas to be tested in the professional examination test. Thus, board examination pass rates have been increasing during the past three years, continuous action plans are in place to guarantee students are mastering their student learning goals and the institution maintains the licensure exam rates over the Puerto Rico results (Figure V.26).

**Figure V.26 Percentage State Performance on Licensure Exam, 2014-2017**

| Percentage State Performance on Licensure Exam - Phar TECH Aggregate 2014-2017 |
|---------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Stated Expected Achievement                  | 38%      | 50%      | 47%      |
| NUC PHAR TECH Students performance License Exam Pass Rate | 47%      | 62%      | 62%      |
DEAS 2061P Expanded Functions Restorative Science Clinic Practice

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

- It will solve exercises similar to those presented in the professional certification exam to practice as a pharmacy technician.
- Determine the level of satisfaction of Externship Preceptor of the course DEAS 2061P 2014-2017
- Meet the expectations of retention (70%) established by the Institution

Direct (D) and Indirect (I) Assessment Measures

| Percentage approved Capstone Course DEAS 2061 P (D) |
| Percentage Externship Preceptor Satisfaction DEAS 2061P 2014-2017 |
| Retention Rates (I) |

An example of a direct measure of assessment for the DEAS 2061P course is the results of the end of course evaluation. This is a key course in the Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions program that allows the students to experience different scenarios within the dental office to apply the knowledge acquired through the entire program. This course uses different direct and indirect measures to assess the performance of students. They include rubrics, assessment activities, portfolio, externship preceptor satisfaction, and faculty and preceptor evaluations, among others. As shown in Figure V.27 for the 2014-2015 academic year 91% of students approved the course satisfactorily and in 2015-2016 there was a decrease of 3% in course approval, 88%. Retention for the course has been above the 70% benchmark, at excellent ranges of 94% for 2014-2015 and 95% for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years. (Figure V.28) These findings led to a close revision of the assessment strategies, course requirements and SLO. For 2016-2017 the rate was 88% approval, same as the previous year. This information generally leads to the conclusion that changes made to the assessment measures in the course help students demonstrate mastery of SLO for the program.

Figure V.27 Percentage Approval Capstone Course DEAS 2061P 2014-2017

Satisfaction is an effectiveness indicator that directly relates to the ILG and the strategies for student retention and success and is an excellent indicator of the quality of
the program. The externship preceptor assesses the students’ performance based on the program competencies or SLO’s required for level. The survey, therefore, presents the preceptor’s perception of the level of achievement demonstrated by the students in their final externship. General satisfaction of preceptor with students from Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions Program was 93% in 2014-2015, 91% in 2015-2016 (Figure V.29). Preceptor recommends students work on punctuality, responsibility and compromise with the work assigned, areas included in action plans for the next years. In general, the results presented are indicative of high levels of satisfaction with the student’s general performance in their externships and evidence that students are meeting the expected learning outcomes of the course.

**Figure V.29 Percentage Externship Preceptor Satisfaction DEAS 2061P 2014-2017**

![Percentage Externship Preceptor Satisfaction DEAS 2061P 2014-2017](image)

**MATH 1010: Basic Mathematics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)</th>
<th>Test Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Explain the characteristics of number systems and their application to everyday life.</td>
<td>Practice Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply the order of operations to solve problems involving whole and rational numbers.</td>
<td>Applied Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Differentiate between fractions, ratios and percentages and their representation.</td>
<td>Practice Exercises and Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determine the solution of an equation and inequalities in a variable and write the whole solution in various forms.</td>
<td>Applied Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain the difference between the existing metric systems.</td>
<td>Practice Exercises and Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determine the area of a geometric figure</td>
<td>Applied Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The theory of polynomials in the solution of problems.</td>
<td>Applied Exercises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 2013-14, the Math 1010 courses faculty were involved in the Curriculum Review Committee and actively working with concerns of student low achievement in this course. Consensus was made to design assessment instruments that allow to monitor the academic progress of students at all times, develop adequate practice exercises (in and out of class) that appeal to the interest of the student and provide information for their
particular needs, monitor and detect deficiencies in time, design support strategies (tutorials-face-to-face and online mentoring), design content according to their needs and develop appropriate tasks to prepare the student to continue their professional education and the challenges that each program requires.

In the academic year 2014-2015, Basic Mathematics syllabus was revised to reflect the study of mathematics from the daily life application point of view, while responding to the institutional profile. Two specific assessment strategies were design to assess development of the general education student learning outcomes at two specific instances during the course. The results of these assessment strategies, aligned with the content revision resulted in students’ performance improvement from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. Faculty is very pleased with the results and are continuously focus in the detection of difficulties to respond assertively in time.

![Figure V.30 Institutional Score for GE Course: Math 1010 (2014-2017)](image)

**ENGL 1020: Basic English II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)</th>
<th>Institutional Learning Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Formulate sentences with different structures and verb tenses.</td>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Differentiate between and compose various types of paragraphs.</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organize ideas to develop paragraphs of different types.</td>
<td>Logical Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate different pieces of literature.</td>
<td>Professional Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create an original piece of literature that incorporates figurative language.</td>
<td>Ethical and Moral Behavioral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compose well-written essays to narrate, expose or defend positions on issues and topics discussed in class.</td>
<td>Computer Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate positions, opinions and feelings effectively regarding a variety of topics.</td>
<td>Respect to Diversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 2014 a comprehensive review of the course of ENGL 1020, Basic English II started to strengthen the expected outcomes and demonstrate a direct alignment of the course to the mission and institutional learning goals. The course content was revised
with the expectation to enhance the skills of General education students mostly aimed at the development and application of skills-based, rather than focus on content. An institutional committee was in charge of the revision, including faculty ascribed to the General Education department from all campuses.

As an essential part of the review, two assessment strategies were developed at the institutional level aligned to general education competencies and institutional learning goals. These assessment activities aim to identify difficulties at earlier time that may be having students in developing their skills and offer support services so that they can complete their courses with mastery of skills in time. After the implementation in 2015-2016, three of the campuses demonstrated domain of the course learning goals while two of the campuses showed decrease in the domain of the identified skills when completing the first assessment activity. Action plans were developed at both campuses to meet the needs of students and to achieve major domain for the next academic year.

**Figure V.31 ENGL 1020 Course comparison of student learning outcomes domain after first Institutional Assessment Activity per Campus (2015-2017)**

![Figure showing comparison of student learning outcomes domain](image)

Program faculty at NUC utilizes a wide-range of direct and indirect measures of student learning at the course level. Each behavioral objective is accompanied by performance indicators and skill sets required to demonstrate proficiency in the professional areas. Some examples that allow to measure each behavioral objective of the course are: homework assignments, examinations and quizzes, standardized tests, term papers and reports, observations of field work in internships, externships, service learning projects, and clinical experiences, class discussion participation, rubrics, course evaluations, and grade distributions, to name a few.
Regulatory Reviews

As a high quality, driven higher education institution, NUC has established specific goals to achieve high quality standards for some of its programs. For example, in 2015 CAEP awarded accreditation to the Master Degree in Education major in Academic Leadership. In 2016, ACEN visited the institution and found that the institution fulfilled the six standards they set for both Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees at all five NUC campuses and programmatic accreditation was granted on March 28, 2017. In 2016, CAPTE approved candidacy application and set accreditation evaluation for Fall of 2017.

These peer review processes provide a benefit to NUC and its educational programs, and form a major component to its assessment activities. These processes support and advance the culture of assessment at NUC. These accreditation processes have led some programs, for example, Nursing Program and the Master in Education Program to adopt assessment techniques that allow for the improvement of the educational experiences. An example of this was the development of rubrics for the specific assessment of the competencies of all the core courses in the nursing specialty for the Nursing Programs and the development of the End of Course Assessment Summary with the objective of gathering quantitative and qualitative input from students at different levels and courses to ensure the development of competencies in all courses. All the rubrics for the Master in Education with Educational Leadership were also revised in order to better demonstrate compliance with the Program Learning Outcomes.

Program Portfolios and Program Reviews

Program Portfolio also plays a role in the assessment process at NUC. Program Portfolios contain vital information including the NUC mission, vision, philosophy and strategic goals; certifications and letters of approval of the program by local licensing agency and accreditation agencies; program competencies; course distribution by type of course and credits; course sequencing; academic credit analysis; retention graduation and placement rates; profile of its graduates; program assessment plan; documented evidence of assessments; and syllabi for all courses in the program. The Dean of Academic Affairs at each campus is the custodian of Program Portfolios and the responsible for internal processes to maintain them up to date. Faculty has access to Program Portfolios at all
time following the processes established. **Each academic program is required to maintain an updated Program Portfolio about its program of study.** These portfolios are particularly effective in tracking the development of the academic program, gathering valid information concerning student outcomes, encouraging assessment of courses and programs and use the assessment information to foster and increase the program capacity for instructional effectiveness and assisting faculty and administrators in decision making such as reviews or discontinuance of the program. They are also used for internal control and monitoring for compliance.

The Program Portfolios have been very relevant for curriculum changes and programs revisions. For example, in 2014, the analysis of results of enrollment, retention reports, Key Courses findings and Board Examination Pass Rates included in the portfolio of Pharmacy Technician were essential to review the program length from 84 credits to 76 credits, rearranging course sequencing and content revision, and strengthening courses with specific content to be found on professional certification exams. Specific assessment strategies for the Key Courses were developed and action plans to impact faculty development in assessment, and a Mock Board Test all of which have resulted in an increase in Board Examination Pass Rates from 47% in 2014-2015 to 62% in 2015-2016 and 62% in 2016-2017. The Bachelor Degree in Education with major in Preschool Education and the Bachelor's Degree in Office Systems Administration were discontinued in 2015-2016 since they were unable to attract students, and retain the active enrollment, even when the State Professional Certification pass rates where at satisfactory levels for the Bachelor Degree in Education with major in Preschool Education and placement within the compliance rates at NUC for both programs. In addition, the Associate Degrees in Criminal Justice, Network Technology and Applications Development, and Instrumentation have been closely monitored for the last two years since enrollment, retention and placement are areas of concern for these programs. A complete assessment process guided the decision to discontinue the aforementioned programs and monitored the Associated Degrees and evidence of the process can be found on their respective program portfolios.

As a result of the continuous assessment process the need to digitize the program portfolios was identified to make these more accessible to all those who work with them.
An action plan was developed to work the electronic templates in a share point beginning with the program portfolio for the Associate's Degree in Pharmacy Technician and Dental Assistant with Expanded Functions; Bachelor's Degree in Network Technology and Application Development and, Nursing programs. These program portfolios will be completed by 2018 with the expectation of all programs by 2019.

At NUC, each academic program goes through a comprehensive review every three to five years. The programs are assessed using the following quality indicators: curriculum coherence, relevance, sequence, content emphasis and depth, and frequency of course offerings; compliance with the institutional mission and goals as well as program objectives; evaluation of instructional delivery; quality adequacy of physical facilities; technological and other equipment; laboratories; library resources; result of licensing exams; student/faculty portfolios; enrollment trends; course and program withdrawals, completion, graduation and placement rates; marketing needs and competence; employers satisfaction with graduates; new, regular, and graduated students’ needs and satisfaction; student credit hours; student/faculty ratio; average class size; faculty credentials; and the use of direct student services. These program reviews, like the peer review processes, highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Subsequently, action plans are developed and implemented that further strengthen these programs. Chapter III presents more detail about the process. Table V.3 shows the programs schedule for reviews within the next 3-5 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>EXPECTED DATE FOR REVIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Electrical Engineering Technology with Renewable Energy</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Business Administration with Major in Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice Major in Cyber Crimes</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice Major in Forensic Investigation</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice Major in Homeland Security</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice Major in Human Services</td>
<td>August, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Business Administration</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Business Administration Major in General Business</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Business Administration Major in Human Resources</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Accounting</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Business Administration Major in Accounting</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree in Business Administration General</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Business Administration Major in Healthcare Management</td>
<td>August, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table V.4 summarizes the most recent program reviews at NUC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>SOME FINDINGS</th>
<th>REVISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Pharmacy Technician 2014-15</td>
<td>Low licensure passing rates</td>
<td>Pharmacy Integrated Seminar was created to review in more detail the knowledge to be tested in professional certification. Mock Test developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Retention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty finding practice centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of failures in Pharmaceutical Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Dental Assistant 2014-15</td>
<td>Learning outcomes of Oral Anatomy, Head and Neck course were not achieved</td>
<td>One credit was added to the course to provide additional time and the Histology, Embryology and Oral Pathology content was used to create a new course (DEAS 2700)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dental Anatomy and Nomenclature course was a lecture course not providing for enough practice time</td>
<td>An integrated lab course was created to provide the student with practice and experience in dental anatomy (DEAS 1101L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Medical Insurance Billing was not providing the students with all necessary knowledge to perform administrative duties at the dental office (MESE 2031L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree in Education with major in Educational Leadership 2015-16</td>
<td>Externship sequence, content and rubrics were below benchmark for TEAC Accreditation</td>
<td>A complete program revision was completed, candidacy approval and Programmatic Accreditation granted in 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubrics for all courses were not aligned with learning outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Nursing</td>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes and curricular sequence and content were below benchmark for ACEN Accreditation</td>
<td>Both program were revised, candidacy approval and Programmatic Accreditation granted in 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant 2015-2016</td>
<td>Program Learning Outcomes and curricular sequence and content were below benchmark for CAPTE Accreditation</td>
<td>A total program revision was completed, candidacy approved and accreditation visit is schedule for Winter 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some course syllabus showed outdated learning outcomes or did not include new concepts or trends in technology.</td>
<td>All syllabus learning outcomes and concepts were reviewed and updated based on the new trends in network technology and software applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of industry trends found new technology applications of better use in the labor market.</td>
<td>New programming languages were included to meet industries standards: JavaScript, C# and Python.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not enough time for content domain in the NUC-Online Division</td>
<td>Changes were made in the following courses: INTE 350L - Reduce the Web development languages from 4 to 2 (PHP, MySQL) and add additional content. Merge content of Visual Basic programming courses into a new redesigned course. Create new elective courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM</td>
<td>SOME FINDINGS</td>
<td>REVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree in Business Administration Major in Business Intelligence</td>
<td>The objective of the academic program did not reflect fundamental aspects of the business intelligence. When studying the labor market for a business analyst we realized that the academic program did not include the opportunity to work with any BI tool. Need to eliminate courses less relevant to Business Intelligence and include new ones aligned to the revised program objective.</td>
<td>Change from two to three credits the introductory programming course to match the amount of credits from the other core courses. The objective of the academic program was refocused to give greater emphasis to the development of a business administration professional capable of collecting, extracting, analyzing and visualizing data. Power BI, a business analytics service provided by Microsoft, was included as the main tool that the student will have to do practical exercises during their studies. Developed four new major courses aligned with the business analyst approach: • BUIN 2010 Business Analytics, • BUIN 3000 MS Excel for Business Intelligence • BUIN 3010 Web Analytics • BUIN 4010 Analytics Applications for Business. Developed two new core courses: • BUAD 1020 – Business information Systems (to reinforce the technology competence) • ACCO 3520 – Managerial Accounting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment of the Assessment Process**

One of the most significant gains of this self-study was the evaluation of the assessment process. Although through the years there has been a process for the assessment of SLO, still there was a need to evaluate its effectiveness. At the beginning of 2016, the President appointed an Institutional Assessment Committee to assess the institutional assessment process. Members appointed to the Assessment Committee are representatives from faculty, administration, and institutional staff who oversee different aspects of the institutional assessment process. In May 2016, the Institutional Assessment and Retention Director position was created to work directly with the SVPAA to improve the assessment processes of the educational experience. As a result of the committee’s work, various weaknesses were observed: (a) not all the faculty had a common basic knowledge of the assessment process used at NUC; (b) the instruments were not used in a systematic way through all the academic departments; (c) the assessment cycle loop was not completed in all programs; and (d) not all evidence was memorialized, even though the faculty remembered using the assessment and evaluation.
process to improve learning. During the self-study, the evaluation of the assessment process was a high priority. One of the most significant achievements was the profound analysis of the assessment processes used in the different programs, the direct and indirect assessment measures used and the Key Courses previously identified to serve as an assessment point during the student academic life. Among the strategies used and changes made were the following:

1. Inventories of the assessment process and evidence were gathered.
2. The course, classroom, and program assessment instruments were revised.
3. Some Key Courses were changed and assessment instruments revised.
4. The electronic gradebook was revised and the course and classroom assessment summary instruments were added to be electronically completed.
5. General Education Key Courses were revised and specific assessment techniques identified for each course.
6. Various trainings and orientations were offered to the faculty on assessment techniques, electronic gradebook and technology integration.
7. Meetings were held to discuss the changes to the assessment process.
8. The program assessment plans were evaluated and revised.

Thus, a better SLO assessment process has emerged, as evidenced throughout this standard, NUC is fully committed to comprehensive assessment. The Academic Board has been restructured, and an Assessment and Curriculum Committee were appointed. As a result of the establishment of the Academic Board Assessment Committee, campus Assessment Committees were appointed, their bylaws developed and members selected in 2017. The main goal of the Assessment Campus Committees is to support the implementation of academic assessment processes in the campuses.

To provide the needed support to the faculty in this process, an assessment consultant was hired in December 2015. Her role was to offer coaching to Deans, Program Directors and faculty at the campuses to assure the understanding and the implementation of the whole assessment cycle.

**Dissemination of Assessment Results**

SLO assessment results and recommendations for improvement are communicated to the university community in various ways. At the program level, results are posted on the institution’s Web Page, bulletin boards, electronic communication, and discussed in staff and faculty meetings. Results are gathered from the *Course Assessment Summary and Program Assessment Summary*, are analyzed by Department Directors and Program Coordinators and then discussed with faculty to identify areas that need improvement to make the necessary changes. For example, the
electronic classroom assessment forms, final activity assessment form, and end of course assessment form, were integrated in the electronic gradebook and have been revised in many instances during the last several years as a result of recommendations derived from the assessment process from all academic leaders and faculty. More importantly faculty are responsible for developing, designing and implementing the tools for assessment and analyzing the results.

**Other Examples of the Use of Student Learning Assessment Information**

Through the assessment plan, periodical and cyclical assessment is carried out by the faculty to determine the effectiveness of the learning strategies and the acquisition of the competencies by the students. The results are used to design other assessment measurements conducive to guarantee the improvement of the learning outcomes and program effectiveness. Assessment analysis meetings are carried out to discuss the program assessment results, and curricular changes are adopted if necessary as established in the *Institutional Integrity Policy* (Appendix 5).

The learning process assessment shows the institution’s commitment with the optimal preparation of each of the students and the results match the goals and objectives of the academic programs. To achieve the program effectiveness, the assessment results are used to improve the teaching process and the academic offering.

Moreover, periodic evaluation of curricular experiences is carried out through program evaluation and revision, Examination Board exams results, internship/practicum evaluations by employers, and the administration of the SSQ and ESQ are such examples. These periodic and formal evaluations provide evidence of the effectiveness of the curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular experiences. The results are used to improve the academic offering, academic programs and student population services.

Although protocols have been in place throughout the years to assess SLO in the classroom, program, and institutional levels, faculty implement their own assessments to validate that students have developed the competencies that comprise the student competencies. One of the positive by-products of the self-study was to better structure this process with specific assessments and to ensure that a minimum of agreed assessment techniques would be used across the disciplines.
The general education competencies are obviously addressed in the general education courses; however, discipline-specific courses also integrate aspects of the general education component. Student activities also have purposes that consider the general education component and the “integral development” of the student, highlighted in NUC’s mission. All syllabi are required to incorporate general education competencies; some courses more than others.

NUC’s seven (7) ILG (previous Student Profile) were aligned with the general education competencies to ensure that both documents comprise the same profile, but stated in clearer and concise terms. Faculty from the general education and the disciplines courses evaluated together the results of specific assessments directed towards general education competencies.

The Directors of the General Education Program and their working committees reported that a variety of assessment activities were used and reported as a measure to assess the mastery of the seven ILG during the years 2013 through 2015. Recognizing the importance of maintaining consistency in the assessments carried out in the General Education Key Courses, a continuous revision process was conducted to identify activities that promoted the development of the institutional goals. By the end of 2015-2016, most Key Courses had identified two Assessment Activities which have been designed by experts in the field and reviewed by curriculum design experts. The faculty was oriented by course as to their responsibility to use the design assessment activities to validate the mastery of the institutional goals. Information on the achievement of the learning objectives, the effectiveness of the activities and actions to improve were collected and analyzed to continue the assessment cycle.

The following are examples of some General Education courses assessment results and analysis: In the BIOL 1010 course, the two specific assessment strategies were directed to demonstrate master of essential concepts for the course: demonstrate through a Venn diagram of plant cell and animal cell differences and designing a cell with three pairs of chromosomes in meiosis process, using the technology tools for drawing, then identify and explain the processes through which passes the cell during meiosis. The analysis of the results indicates that 70% of students have mastered the SLO for the course in 2014-15 and 70.6% in 2015-2016, and this year results reflect that
76% of students completed the course satisfactorily. The increase in the percentage of students completing the courses evidences the effectiveness of the assessment strategies selected and continuous improvement in the course.

Another example is SOSC 1010, which assessment activities promote: the contrast of the particular features of different cultures and their influence on cultural development in today’s society, and the analysis of the social events that allow understanding and characterization of current social problems. The results indicate that in SOSC 1010, 69.6% of students have mastered the SLO for the course in 2014-15 and 72.7% in 2015-2016. In this course there is another very important assessment activity: a Service Learning project, which promotes the development of social commitment, respect for diversity and strengthens oral and written communication skills, by requiring the students to develop a project where they can provide community help and then conduct an essay and an oral presentation to share their learning experiences and recommendations. As part of the assessment process, this course is being considered to be one of the General Education Key Courses for the variety of assessment activities integrated in the course.

Other assessments strategies used to validate the mastery of GE ILO are:

1. Student practicum portfolio
   a. The health sciences faculty uses this portfolio in a more systematic and effective way, especially the nursing faculty. When assessing student outcomes through the portfolios, faculty can make corrections to students’ deficiencies in the use of the written communication skills.
   b. Critical thinking is analyzed through students’ reflections. They have to analyze different situations observed in the practicum scenario, apply their knowledge and provide possible solutions through the decision making process, and critical thinking skills should be observed.

**Institutional Commitment**

The Institutional Effectiveness Office manages an inventory of all the studies being carried out such as needs analyses, satisfaction surveys, as well as monitoring through a series of surveys and focus groups to evaluate processes and institutional services. The implementation of each study is carried out by the related department at each campus such as: Registrar, Bursar, Guidance and Counseling, Placement, Recreational and Sports Projects, and the academic area. The inventory of instruments is available and accessible at the NUC Intranet, as well as the results and findings of the most recent studies. Appendix 45 shows for each study the instrument used, the time line
in which it is carried out, meaningful findings, actions taken, results of the actions taken, and next administration.

NUC has a culture of collaboration and support from both areas, academic and administrative, which is reflected in the active participation of faculty and staff in every improvement initiative. The Effectiveness Office publishes the results of each study and distributes them to all departments in order to discuss the results and provide evidence for the decision-making leading to improve processes and services in each area. Since 2011, the information is available in the Intranet.

The results of the surveys from the Effectiveness Office have a great impact in the decision making process of the EC led by the President, the Academic Board and department directors of each campus under the Chancellor’s supervision. Through this process, they generate various work plans leading to the continuous improvement of services and processes subsequent to review the work plans and the Institutional Strategic Planning. Work agendas, minutes, and record of numerous meetings of the EC, Academic Board, and Chancellors’ meetings of each campus evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation, and renewal and to improve and gain efficiencies in programs, services and processes, including activities specific to the institution’s mission.

**Professional Development**

NUC provides professional development opportunities for faculty and staff in the areas of institutional effectiveness and SLO through workshops, symposia, small group discussions, summits, and conferences, among others. Workshops have been presented by faculty and staff on such assessment topics. Chapter III. Table III.6, presents the faculty professional development expenses for the period 2013-2017 in Faculty Activities, Employees Education, Training & Convention and Association & Memberships. The data presented shows that increased investment ($7,990.00) was directed to instructors during the year 2017 to provide ample training to comply with specific requirements for programmatic accreditations.

**Periodic Assessment Plan Review**

The President requires all Vice Presidents, Chancellors, Deans, and Directors to report on and document any changes in strategies for accomplishing the objectives of
their area. The use of institutional effectiveness outcomes serves as a means of demonstrating transparent accountability and concrete verification that fiscal and human resources are being used effectively. The Academic Program Development and Evaluation Model (Chapter III. Table III.2) guarantees the use of multiple qualitative and quantitative measures to evidence student learning. An alignment is agreed upon by faculty between the ILG (previous Student Profile), program competencies and all the courses outcomes. Faculty members are responsible for classroom and course assessment and participate actively in the complete process.

**Communication Process and Assessment Outcomes**

The process of communication as the result of data gathering is present at all administrative levels, utilizing the Institutional Strategic Plan and the CEP. The institutional community is kept informed about changes and issues affecting them through general communications usually issued through the President’s office. Figure V.32 represents the process and hierarchy used to communicate the data throughout the Institution.

*Figure V.32 Communication Process and Assessment Outcomes*
Assessment Results for the Improvement of Educational Effectiveness

At the institutional level, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for coordinating and guiding the institution’s efforts in accordance with the CEP. However, since the CEP model has a strong emphasis on educational quality, the SVPAA is responsible for the assessment of the student learning component of the CEP. In 2015, the institution hired an Institutional Assessment Consultant, to help the campuses in this area of opportunity. In 2016, with the purpose of standardizing the process of academic assessment, the institution hired an Institutional Assessment and Retention Director. Therefore, all academic assessment efforts are carried out through the Academic Departments.

Each functional area/department has developed a function-specific mission statement that is aligned with the institutional mission statement; developed functional goals; and developed assessment instruments to gauge effectiveness. This process reveals that all areas of the NUC community are engaged in the collection of meaningful data about the students they serve. Furthermore, the data is synthesized and utilized to affect positive change with their respective departments. The Institutional Effectiveness Office deploys a variety of instruments:

a) Student Satisfaction Questionnaire,
b) New Student Needs Analysis and Transfer Student Profile Questionnaire,
c) Admissions deploy a Careers Questionnaire,
d) The Registrar deploys a Re-admissions Questionnaire and a Graduate Satisfaction Survey,
e) The Counseling Office administer activities evaluations and Primary Prevention Questionnaires,
f) Career Services deploys the ESQ and the Graduate Follow-up Employment Survey,
g) Student Activities and Sports deploys the Students Activities Questionnaire surveys, and
h) the Library administer the Education Resources Center Service Satisfaction Questionnaire. These are but a few activities being utilized by functional areas at NUC to gather information about students, programs, and services.

A full list of assessment instruments is located in Appendix 45.

Graduates Satisfaction Questionnaire. This instrument is administered every semester. The questionnaire consists of 11 questions. Among the questions there are areas related with: academic quality, date of completion, faculty qualifications and student’s services. Other questions are: Will you recommend NUC to others? Did NUC fulfill your expectation as student? The results are distributed to all departments through the chancellors and the registrar’s offices. Most of the graduates answer this questionnaire, since they are required to have an exit interview with the placement officers before
requesting their diploma in the registrar’s office. The most significant results in August – November 2017 administration were the following:

Students indicated that their main objective in enrolling at NUC was to receive preparation for a career. This data coincides with the response of new students when asked why they enrolled at NUC, discussed in Chapter 1 Mission and Goals.

- Students rated the attention and services as excellent or good.
- In general terms, students evaluated the following as excellent or good: availability of courses, updated content of courses, training on the ethical aspects of the profession, integration of technology in the courses, academic preparation and competency of the faculty, interest and enthusiasm of the faculty, teaching methods used, and evaluation methods used.
- Students indicated that faculty was always accessible during office hours and outside of the classroom.
- Students indicated that they always had the opportunity to evaluate faculty.
- In general terms, 98% of the graduates surveyed indicated that NUC met their expectations and 99% would recommend NUC to a friend or family member.

Based on SSQ results administered on 2017, 96% of students feel proud for NUC and 98% evaluated NUC's reputation in the community as excellent. These results coincide with the results obtained from the survey administered to previously thus validating that students are satisfied with NUC. Although most of the students graduate from the health programs, the graduates that answered the satisfaction questionnaire do not necessarily reflect this proportion. Efforts should be directed towards obtaining a higher number of responses from these graduates. The proportion obtained, though, may be used as a baseline to take some improvement actions, the lack of proportion that represents the active population and even the graduates’ proportion, places a risk in the validity of the results.

**University Environment Seminar Satisfaction (SEMI 1001).** This is a one credit course required for all new students’ providing an overview of NUC and the services available, attitudes towards life and university life, study habits, as well as information literacy, emotion control, resiliency, among others. In 2016 as in 2017 students were satisfied with the course. Students described the course faculty as leaders, dynamic, empathetic, responsible and possessing mastery of different concepts discussed in the course as well as for the basic skills courses. The course consists of fourteen weeks and is offered at all campuses of NUC, including the NUC-Online Division.

In the most recent focus groups in 2017, students expressed satisfaction with the instructor’s methodology, and also described them as attentive and accessible, always in the best interest of the student’s needs. The concepts discussed in the course are clear; the
course meets its purpose, and the quality and depth of the themes are appropriate. The majority of students were satisfied with the technology, materials used, length and hours that classes were delivered. Some students said: “new year students are privileged because by taking this course at the beginning can take advantage of all the resources the institution has to help them reach their goals”.

Students considered that all new students should enroll in the SEMI 1001 course, and emphasized that measures should be taken to guarantee all new students enroll in the course when they start at NUC, not in later trimesters. Students recommended that the basic mathematics, communication skills, preparation of an essay and, teamwork needs to be reinforced in the course, as well as dynamics in the classes. Students agreed that professors master the content, encourage study habits, and help them to know more about the University and its services. The majority of students were satisfied with the technology, materials and time, but expressed that the class schedule is very early or late at night which makes it hard for students with transportation problems. They indicated that the course is essential to have success in the University life, to complete the academic goal and graduate from NUC.

Based on their recommendations, a new syllabus was developed in November of 2017 by the General Education Program Directors. A new unit on Management of Emotions was integrated in the course and in June 2018 was discussed with the directors of the General Education Program for final assessment and edition. As a group, they decided to dedicate a separate unit to the development of academic skills for University life and another unit to strengthen written and oral communication. The recommendations were integrated and submitted for approval to the SVPAA. The final version of the syllabus was completed.

In general terms students were satisfied with the course. Most of the students participating in the SEMI 1001 focus groups viewed the course as necessary, although the faculty is an important factor in that opinion. Therefore, the selection of faculty as well as their training, are the aspects that need to be reinforced continuously. Students continuously present concerns about: the need for a cafeteria or extended hours, a childcare for those mothers who have nowhere to leave their children, more, the integration of more collaborative work, and the integration of computers in the course.
Transfer Students. These students are surveyed every August. Among other socio-demographic characteristics, they are identified by program, academic term, institution of origin, reasons to transfer to NUC, and importance of specific aspects when transferring. The most significant findings from the 2016-2017 questionnaires include:

1. The majority (56.6%) of the transfer students surveyed are between the ages of 18-25, belong to the female gender (76%) and are enrolled in a nursing program (76%).
2. The three most important reasons for students to have selected NUC are: Time to complete a degree, academic programs and referred by a friend.
3. Analyzing more profoundly the transfer students who choose to enroll at NUC, this population was seeking another institution to complete their degrees when they decided to enroll at NUC. Therefore, the institution has to ensure that they will receive at NUC what they expect.
4. The three most important reasons for students to have selected NUC are: location near their home, flexible class scheduling, and referred by a friend. Although there is a consensus on these three reasons, NUC has not taken advantage of them in the advertising and promotion areas. This aspect has still not been addressed as expected.
5. Students indicated that the faculty is dynamic and well prepared.
6. They also indicated that the teaching and learning activities as well as the course manuals (prepared at NUC) laboratories and equipment are excellent. Students express their concern with activities at the Learning Resources Center because limits their time to use the facilities.

Between 2015 and 2016 surveyed students expressed their discomfort at having to take SEMI 1001 course (University Environment Seminar), since they could have previously taken it. As a result, the SVPAA in conjunction with the Academic Board reviewed the Transfer Student Policy and determined to allow students that would have more than 6 credits at another institution approved to transfer the course of SEMI 1001 to NUC. This change was effective in February of 2016-2017. As a result, the retention rate for the online course SEMI 1001 on June of 2017-2018 was 92%, an increase of 3% in retention compared to 89% on the online course SEMI 1001 on June 2016-2017.

Employer Satisfaction Questionnaire (ESQ). This questionnaire consists of 14 questions, most of them related to: integration of professional knowledge in the work environment, ethical and moral compromise, compliance with the general work responsibilities, leadership, initiative, team work and a section for comments and recommendations. For nursing programs, a Nursing Employer Follow-Up Survey was developed and is administered to employers that recruit NUC graduates 6 to 12 months after graduation. The employers assess the graduate performance based on the seven (7) professional role-specific competencies or SLO’s required for each level (ADN, BSN) of licensure. The survey, therefore, can correlate the graduate’s perception of the acquired level of competencies with the employer’s perception of the level of achievement.
demonstrated by the graduates. This is an area that will continue to be explored to enhance employer questionnaires in other disciplines. Even though the results of the questionnaire administered reflect that the employers consider the graduates’ performance as excellent or good, the questionnaire was revised to better address the issues regarding employment and to recollect the data in an easier manner.

Gathering data from employers is one of the challenges for the institution and placement officers at NUC. The Survey Monkey online platform is used to collect the data and survey links are sent to the graduate, and, follow-up is provided by the placement personnel through phone calls and emails. One of the findings when gathering information from previous year’s surveys, was that the response rate was not as high as expected. Although in general, in higher education institutions, employer’s response rates are low, this is an area of opportunity for improvement at NUC. Thus, in order to improve the employer’s response rates, an SOP on Procedures for Administration of Surveys by the Placement Office is being developed to help the placement personnel improve the data collection.

**Student Satisfaction Questionnaire** (SSQ). This questionnaire is administered every two years. It has a total of 79 questions that include: Academic aspects (curriculum, classroom environment, out class assignments and tutoring) and other areas like Students services (Admissions office, Registrar office, Financial Aid, Bursar, IT and facilities). The last two administrations were in November 2015-16 and August 2017-18. In the different Chapters, the items related with each standard are provided. In general terms:

- In all campuses, there was an improvement in the accessibility of the tutoring services. The results show that 95% of students in the daytime hours are very satisfied in 2017-18 compared to 92% in 2015-16. At night time it was 94% compared to 92% in 2015-16. This responds to the different actions taken in the Tutoring Center and with faculty meeting student’s needs.
- When they were asked about the institution’s commitment to academic excellence, 95% indicated that they were very satisfied compared to 2015-16 (92%).
- Regarding the Library, students are satisfied in general. There was neither an increase nor decrease, 94% indicated that they were very satisfied compared to 94% in 2015-16.
- Regarding the organization of the major courses, 93% reported being satisfied. However, there was an increase in satisfaction compared to 2015-16 (88%). The areas of nursing, pharmacy, dentistry and criminal justice were reviewed. These programs have a great impact on the student population.
- In general, satisfaction with the faculty, their monitoring and tutoring service was 95%.
- As an example, in the survey carried out by 2015, 86% of students reported being satisfied with the facilities of the computer laboratories and 82% with the quality of the computers in the computer labs. These results were below the NUC (90%) metric for the student’s satisfaction. As a result, funds were allocated to improve the technological and physical infrastructure in all NUC campuses. Following these enhancements, in the 2017 student satisfaction questionnaire, 95% of
students reported being satisfied with the facilities of the computer laboratories which represents a 9% increase in satisfaction. Also, 94% indicated to be satisfied with the equipment of the laboratories, which represents a 12% increase. The actions taken as a result of the assessment contributed to the increase in the satisfaction of students and to the achievement of the established NUC effectiveness indicator.

- Wi-Fi connection is still an improvement opportunity for NUC since students are not completely satisfied with the service. Action plans are in place to improve this area.

Students express high satisfaction with the service provided by the Admissions Offices, Financial Aid, Bursar, Registrar and Counseling in general. Regarding the Student’s Services Office, there was an increase in the encouragement for the participation of student associations in both populations day and night 93% compared to 2015-16, reflected a satisfaction of 91%. In general, students are proud of NUC and value its high reputation. The students when evaluating the sports activities offered, 90% are so very satisfied or satisfied. When evaluating the activities offered, 80% are very satisfied or satisfied. In general, the students evaluated the education received at NUC and their services as excellent. Please refer to Appendix 46 (Satisfaction Questionnaires Results) for details of their responses.

One of the areas of improvement that needed to be addressed was the administration of the FSQ and the StSQ. Although the SSQ has been administered since 2003 and has been an excellent tool to improve the academic programs and services, the institution lacked the needed systematic feedback of faculty and staff on issues that may affect not only them but also the students. Questionnaires were administered electronically. The FSQ was administered again in 2016 and the StSQ was revised, and administered in November 2016. In this questionnaire, the faculty satisfaction on the awareness of the Mission, Vision and Core Values reflected that 99.8% were satisfied with the revised mission and agree with it.

Appendix 47 Significant Results of Institutional Studies includes a comparative table of the most significant results of all these studies. Appendix 46 Satisfaction Questionnaires Results presents all the results of the student, faculty and staff satisfaction surveys.

**Key Metrics**

**Retention and Placement.** The parameters used for the analysis of the institution’s retention and placement rates are: (a) retention and placement rates shall not be lower than the average for the last three years rates at the institutional level.
Specifically, NUC has established a minimum of 60% parameter for retention rate and a 60% measure for placement.

**Retention Rates.** Student retention rates (total and by program) are evaluated weekly by the Chancellors, Academic Deans, Department Directors, Student Affairs Personnel and actions are taken as a result of these regular evaluations. An SOP to conduct weekly retention meetings was developed to monitor daily and weekly potential drops and results are discussed with department directors, programs coordinators, retention personnel and faculty. Strategies are implemented or revised in order to increase retention. For example, retention action plans have been developed for Pharmacy Technician and Criminal Justice Programs to address program, faculty and course retention, resulting in retention improvement from 2014-15 to 2015-16. For example, the Criminal Justice Programs had a retention rate of 63.3% for 2014-15 and improved to 64.2% in 2015-16. In addition, the Associate Degrees in the Allied Health cluster increased their retention rate from 65.7% in 2014-15 to 65.8% in 2015-16.

Drop analysis, by course and by faculty is conducted on a weekly basis and regular meetings are conducted with faculty, Department Directors and Program Coordinators to discuss situations affecting their retention. Specific action plans have also been developed per campus to address retention at unit’s level. NUC’s Director of Business Reports provides statistical reports on a regular basis for the purpose of monitoring institutional retention rates.

Table V.5 shows the retention rates for all campuses over a three-year period and the goals for the 2016-17 academic years:

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>63.40%</td>
<td>60.50%</td>
<td>62.00%</td>
<td>61.97%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón*</td>
<td>59.20%</td>
<td>63.90%</td>
<td>64.00%</td>
<td>62.38%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>59.30%</td>
<td>62.20%</td>
<td>60.10%</td>
<td>60.53%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>62.30%</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>62.23%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>60.60%</td>
<td>90.60%</td>
<td>90.60%</td>
<td>90.60%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande</td>
<td>60.40%</td>
<td>61.50%</td>
<td>59.70%</td>
<td>60.53%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.30%</td>
<td>62.70%</td>
<td>66.48%</td>
<td>63.14%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. This rate includes NUC–Online Division part of the Bayamón Campus.*

NUC continues to monitor the effectiveness of its retention strategies by utilizing the results of the assessments and expects to make further improvements with respect to
retention. The analysis of retention rates led to the implementation, through the last three years, of initiatives to broaden the scope of department and unit offices at each of the campuses in order to work more collaboratively to further improve retention rates. Representative members of academic, student, and administrative affairs departments are in charge of monitoring at-risk students. In response to this initiative, “liaison groups” were established following the REMA retention model, to systematically address issues pertaining to at-risk students. These liaison groups ensure services and activities to better serve students who might fall within the following categories: academic mentoring, unsatisfactory academic progress, total withdrawals and administrative withdrawals, “no show” (cancel), “partial show” (enrolled in one or more courses, but still attending to at least one course and never attended to any other) students, absentees, students less than 18 years old, admissions committee students, re-entry students, non-enrolled students, and vocational rehabilitation students. For each group, effectiveness indicators are established and goals identified. To guarantee effectiveness, these groups are monitored by the VPSAE, the SVPAA and the Institutional Assessment and Retention Director.

Placement Rates. NUC establishes a placement range of 60% to 70% as an internal guide to measuring effectiveness. The minimum rate will be 60% in academic programs with placement difficulty and more than 70% in other academic programs. The Campus Placement Office supports active and graduated students of NUC’s academic programs of all modalities in the preparation and placement in the work setting. Each academic year, professional development activities are coordinated to develop skills such as curriculum, simulated interviews and how to perform job search. Similarly, job fairs are coordinated with employers who have available job offers or visits to a particular employer to conduct the interview process on campus. Throughout the year, the newsletter is kept up to date with available job openings. Student employees are identified in the Student Management System (Campus Nexus) where the necessary information is documented to monitor the placement percentage, month by month until the achievement of the annual goal. To observe the quality of performance of the graduate student, an ESQ is administered to the active annual employers. The results of the 2015-16 administration reflect 95% of employers' satisfaction with the performance of our graduates.
Table V.6 shows the placement rates by campus over a three-year period.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>79.88%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>71.78%</td>
<td>72.78%</td>
<td>72.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón*</td>
<td>68.06%</td>
<td>62.14%</td>
<td>69.32%</td>
<td>66.51%</td>
<td>66.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>71.25%</td>
<td>68.37%</td>
<td>46.74%</td>
<td>62.12%</td>
<td>62.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>69.16%</td>
<td>70.27%</td>
<td>65.38%</td>
<td>68.27%</td>
<td>68.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>91.00%</td>
<td>74.02%</td>
<td>54.37%</td>
<td>73.13%</td>
<td>73.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72.45%</td>
<td>65.19%</td>
<td>64.00%</td>
<td>67.21%</td>
<td>67.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *This rate includes NUC–Online Division part of the Bayamón Campus

Enrollment Report. Every academic semester, the enrollment statistics are analyzed in order to study the trends, agree on the alerts and actions to be taken in order to make the next enrollment a more successful one. This report provides the base data for the next enrollment goals or revision of goals through the baseline data changes. Some of the campus and institutional statistics included are: comparison of enrollment with previous similar terms and the established goal; day and evening students; full and part time students; new, continuing, re-entries, and transfer students; retention and placement rates; faculty/student ratio; enrollment trends by program; and no shows, withdrawals, and administrative withdrawals as compared to the goals.

New Students Profile. NUC’s typical student is traditionally a high school graduate, whose age is between 18 and 21, from a low socioeconomic income level, a first generation student in the family, and predominantly female. In August 2017, the newly admitted students accounted for 32% of all enrolled students. Females represent the majority of the newly admitted students, comprising 69% of the enrollees at all campuses, 71% for online students, and 6% of students enrolled in blended learning in master degrees. An estimated 68% of the newly admitted students are enrolled in the day session. The distribution of the newly admitted students by program at the institutional level is the following: 67.8% health sciences, 18.8% business administration and technology, and 13.4% criminal justice and education. The newly admitted on ground students reside in municipalities surrounding their corresponding campus while students enrolled online are from towns throughout Puerto Rico.
1. Students under the age of 18 years.
2. Having an enrollment of two females out of every three students requires offering special services to this population as well as searching for strategies to attract more male students, especially through programs directed to that population. This is an area of opportunity not too well addressed at NUC.
3. Although most of the new students have a full time program of study, a proportion of these students also have full time jobs that place a burden on their retention. These students neither have the time to attend activities or orientations addressed to their needs since their available time is limited by their job demands.
4. NUC students come from a low or medium low socioeconomic level, thus placing another burden on their success.

**Withdrawal Report.** This report is prepared at the end of every semester for each campus. The withdrawals are analyzed by academic department and program, by reasons for withdrawing, gender, type of student (new, regular or re-entry), and municipality. Table V.7 presents the most common reasons for withdrawing were the following for the fiscal year 2016-17.

### Table V.7 Causes for Withdrawal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>*Bayamon</th>
<th>Caguas</th>
<th>Ponce</th>
<th>Rio Grande</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismiss - SAP Not Met</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Another School</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Consecutive Absences</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Family Reasons</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Financial Reasons</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Job Related</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Medical</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - No Registration</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Not return from LOA/WCFA</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal - Personal Issues</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Reasons</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Include Online Students
Data from Nov 2016 to Feb 2017

The non-response rate was 29% in the Arecibo campus, 51% in the Caguas campus and 41% in the Ponce and Rio Grande campuses. The other characteristics analyzed present proportions similar to those observed in the total enrollment. This report is distributed to each campus and then analyzed by the different departments or programs. Strategies are then reinforced or initiated depending on the results. After evaluating results from reports, some strategies implemented include: contracting the services of a licensed psychologist to reinforce the service to students that require and request support to manage their personal issues, a more aggressive display of the counseling and guidance services, more structure to the retention project REMA, as a measure to address
their academic problems, and strengthening tutoring and mentoring services, among others.

**Other Surveys and Questionnaires**

NUC conducts a new students’ needs assessment, satisfaction surveys, administers and monitors a series of surveys and focus groups to seek opinions, comments or questions by the students and achieve qualitative and quantitative information relevant for decision making.

In terms of levels of student satisfaction, it is expected that students shall evaluate the services as not less than 4 (satisfactory) on a Likert 5-point scale. With regard to withdrawals, the percentage should not be over the one observed for the previous year in the same academic term. Concerning faculty evaluation, the effectiveness goal is also to achieve not less than 4 on a 5-point scale for all faculty evaluations, including student evaluations, faculty self-evaluations and evaluations by the academic program coordinator or academic department director. The following are additional surveys and questionnaires carried out, latest administration, most significant results, and some examples of actions taken.

**Re-entry Students.** A student is considered a re-entry if he/she was an active student at NUC at any given time and left with a drop status, and has not exceeded 180 days since withdrawal. The latest administrations were in August 2015 and 2016. 100% of the re-entry students were surveyed. This survey is part of the documentation that students complete to be readmitted. The questions address different areas such as: program enrolled the first time, reason for withdrawal, program enrolled the second time, reason for selecting the program, reasons for returning to NUC, and an open question asking how the institution can help the student to finish his or her program the second time around. In general terms, the most significant findings were the following (no significant differences were observed between campuses):

- Most of the re-entry students were first enrolled in the previous four years and in nursing, the program with the highest enrollment at NUC. They were seeking readmission in the same degree in which they were previously enrolled.
- The main reasons for the previous withdrawal were personal and economic problems, among others. Students decided to return to study once they had solved their issues. This finding reflects the desire and willingness of these students to finish their degree at NUC.
- During the period of time they were outside NUC, these students were either working or unemployed.
When asked about how NUC can contribute to their success, they indicated: more support and motivation, better orientation to students, more financial aid, flexible scheduling, and work study opportunities, among others.

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for providing the results of the survey and share them with the CEPEM group (initials in Spanish for Committee for the evaluation of the enrollment processes and strategies) in order to continue searching for better alternatives to help these students overcome their issues, such as more support from the placement officers in helping them find part time jobs. The academic departments also analyze the data and establish strategies to better serve these students. The mentoring and tutoring services have evolved as a result of the assessment process.

**Focus Groups.** Between August and November 2014 and between March and June 2015, the VPSAE conducted various focus groups at all campuses in order to obtain students opinions on specific issues in areas such as: sense of belonging, knowledge of NUC’s mission, what satisfies the most, reasons for selecting NUC, what is needed to improve the institution, support services that meet the university, among others. The following are some of the most significant results of these conversations. Two groups were selected: enrollees in the University Environment Seminar and transfer students.

- **Bayamón campus-transfer students.** Students expressed that they feel they are in a professional environment that is very calm and comfortable, at National. They are very satisfied with the faculty, the balance between the theory and practice, and the flexibility of the scheduling. They identified the student services available. When asked about the mission, they read the mission in classrooms and in strategic places around the University.

- **Arecibo campus-transfer students.** Although not in absolute numbers, this campus has the largest proportion of transfer students. They are transfers mainly from the University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo campus, Inter American University in Arecibo, and the Ana G. Méndez System. All students expressed their satisfaction with NUC, the way they are treated by faculty and staff, its location, the good references by friends, the transferability of credits, the scheduling, and the possibility of advancing in obtaining their degree. Students expressed the need to have a better cafeteria, more financial aid, and expanding the academic offerings, as well as more parking spaces.

- **Río Grande campus-transfer students.** Students expressed feeling comfortable with the facilities, schedules, and satisfied with the faculty. The support services offered, among them tutoring, mentoring, counseling services of the psychologist, help the student to approve their classes. Students request a printer in the library, more spacious lounges, recreation facilities. Some asked for a master in Anesthesiology.

- **Ponce campus-transfer students.** The students felt comfortable, they believed that the institution complied with their expectations, and they would recommend NUC. The students agree that the reason they transferred to NUC is the time to complete the degree. The students also indicated those aspects that must be addressed in the Ponce campus: improvements of elevators and library facilities.

- **Caguas campus-transfer students.** The majority of respondents felt a sense of belonging, an atmosphere of camaraderie with everyone, students, faculty, administration, and security guards. There are several reasons why they selected NUC: support available, including the student loans,
to continue a Bachelor; referral from other students; advertisement (*I believe in you*); facilities; laboratories; the location; flexible schedules; and, the length of the programs. The students also indicated aspects that need to be addressed on the Caguas campus including a more spacious library, faster Internet, a program of tutorials that does not interfere with classes, and a cafeteria. 86% of those surveyed indicated having knowledge of the Mission of NUC.

In general terms, student’s opinions were similar across campuses. Like the satisfaction surveys, students felt secure at, and well served by NUC. The faculty is one of the most positive assets, and the service culture is evident. Students also could identify the student services available.

**Assessment After Hurricane María**

Hurricane María brought to NUC challenges of all kinds. Maintaining operations after Hurricane María was the greatest challenge, but the integration of the support staff with the students and the faculty allowed maximizing the resources for handling the situations that needed to be handled "post María". The strengthening of relations between NUC and collaborators from all communities, both internal as well as external, allowed NUC to unify all the institution’s efforts. At the academic level, the varied offer of modalities allowed for alternatives to be offered to the student to maintain his/her academic objective and support staff were activated in phases according to the needs of each Campus. NUC’s goal was to resume operations in the shortest possible time and to be able to continue ensuring its curricular and instructional delivery with rigor and excellence.

A recovery plan was implemented prioritizing campuses and NUC has re-established its educational operations at all of six of its locations. For this reason, some modifications were required to adapt the institution to its conditions. NUC decreed an academic recess from September 19 to October 14, 2017. Classes resumed on Monday, October 16, 2017. The daytime courses were offered from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM and the evening courses from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. In some campuses there were different start dates, these were on October 16, 2017 and October 23, 2017. In the case of the campuses that resumed their classes on October 16, their academic term ended on November 30, 2017 whereas the campuses that resumed their classes on October 23, 2017 their academic term ended on December 2, 2017. However, in the edition of the academic calendar, the Thanksgiving week was just at the end of the edited academic calendar and
students were scheduled to return to new academic term on December 6, 2017. 
(Appendix 48 Revised Academic Calendar Post-Hurricane María).

Other measures implemented were:

1. Course work replacement plans – course work replacement plans were developed by faculty in a reasonable and flexible way, and according to the reality that Puerto Ricans were confronting where there was no electricity, no water, no access to Internet or Wi-Fi, or these services were very limited, and no transportation, among other conditions. Course work plans consisted of completing study guides, modules, and special assignments so that students could meet the instructional time and courses competences given the academic calendar adjustments. The students were provided with reference material and printed assignments. The replacement activities were duly documented and the necessary evidences are kept in each campus.

2. NUC eased certain penalties such as not removing points for late delivery of assignments, offering additional time for the removal of provisional (incomplete) grades, from 15 days as stated in the policy to a 45 days’ extension. A total of 620 incomplete applications were filed at the end of the academic term from which 551 or 89% were removed after the 45 days’ extension. The Bayamon Campus Online Division had the most incomplete applications with 390 and an excellent removal number of 362 for a 93% of effectiveness with the strategy. Figure V.33 shows the incomplete removal percentage per campus after Hurricane María.

Figure V.33 NUC Incomplete Removal Percentage per Campus Post Hurricane María

3. Clinical experiences, practicums and other learning experiences were redesigned or reprogrammed according to best meet student needs. In the case of Nursing and Pharmacy Technician programs, arrangements were made which have allowed students to continue in previously identified places.

4. Tutoring - The Center for Academic Development (CDA) offered tutoring services for those students who needed assistance in a course or assignment. Tutors were serving students most of the time and faculty played a very important role in helping personnel at the DCA to assist any student in need of tutoring. For example, at the Bayamon Campus there was an increase of tutoring sessions in November from 37 individual tutoring session in 2016-2017 to 73 individual tutoring session in 2017-2018. Group tutoring sessions increased from 2 in 2016-2017 to 18 in 2017-2018.
Figure V.34 shows the increase in tutoring sessions offered in the CDA during November 2018 as a result of the different initiatives established to help students complete their courses satisfactorily.

**Figure V.34 CDA Individual Tutoring Sessions November 2017 vs 2018**

![CDA Individual Tutoring Sessions November 2017 vs 2018]

Faculty also played an important role with tutoring by providing individual and group tutoring sessions to assist the students. For example, at the Arecibo Campus, faculty offered 202 tutoring sessions in November of 2017 and 261 in 2018 showing an increase of 59 individualized tutoring sessions. At the Caguas Campus faculty offered 42 tutoring sessions in November of 2017 and 75 in 2018 showing an increase of 35 individualized tutoring sessions. Satisfaction surveys at the CDA’s reported great satisfaction of students with tutoring services at all campuses during the months following Hurricane María.

Also, attendance reports were issued daily to monitor the results of all initiatives. Meetings were also conducted frequently to ensure the effectiveness of the many initiatives in place to reach out to students in all affected areas in Puerto Rico. All these strategies and activities plan for the students, staff and the community had a very important role in the retention of students during the months of October, November and December 2017, so that students could complete their courses; and were also vital in helping the students with many other needs that were extremely important so they could continue their studies and stay in Puerto Rico. A 91.06% of students were recovered with...
respect to the population NUC had before hurricane María and 96.98% of students were recovered with respect to the active student population as of the end of November. This percentage was a result of the excellent work reaching out to students by all means and through all fronts.

As shown in Table V.8, NUC retained 93.4% of its faculty in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and María and thereafter. Currently NUC has a total of 637 faculty including full and part-time faculty. The Mayagüez campus shows an increase of 18 (13%) of faculty members as it is a new campus and in growth. Each academic dean certified that the faculty distribution continues to be appropriate to meet the program of study and students’ academic progress, assessment of student learning outcomes, and the student experience and learning opportunities.

Table V.8 Aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and María Faculty Retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>August 2017</th>
<th>December 2017</th>
<th>March 2018</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón-Division Online</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>162.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Student learning outcomes

NUC evaluates its operations and assesses the process for improvement of educational effectiveness using the various departmental action plans and the outcomes of the effectiveness indicators established for each department. Some of the direct and indirect measures reviewed to validate the educational effectiveness for student learning at NUC include licensing passing rates, student retention, placement in the related field of study, level of satisfaction of enrolled students, graduates and employers, the employee performance evaluations, and the program and course assessment results, among others.

Conscious of the importance of learning assessment, the institution has undertaken several actions to guarantee the continuity of a comprehensive and systematic process of learning assessment at all academic levels (classroom, course, program levels). The Institution has uninterruptedly continued its learning outcomes assessment process.
The academic deanships continue gathering the assessment data and submitting their corresponding reports. As shown in Table V.9, the institutional assessment results of examination pass rates for the Pharmacy Examination Board demonstrate students are fulfilling the program competencies. Students performed at a higher level in January 2018 than in August 2017 with an increase of 15% at the NUC Institutional level and 16% over the PR Statewide results. Also, as shown in Table V.10 the institutional assessment results of examination pass rates for the Dental Examination Board demonstrate that students are fulfilling their program competencies.

**Table V.9. Comparison of Pharmacy Examining Board results August 2017-January 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>NUC Institutional</th>
<th>PR Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>38 de 115 = 33%</td>
<td>141/653 = 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>19 de 40 = 48%</td>
<td>121/320 = 38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table V.10 Comparison of Dental Examining Board Results Summer 2017 and Winter 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>NUC Institutional</th>
<th>PR Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>43 de 58 = 74%</td>
<td>Not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2017</td>
<td>27 de 31 = 87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V.11 shows a summary of the grade analysis of students enrolled in practicum courses during August to November 2017, nearly 80% (3,014) completed them with a passing grade (A, B, C,), 4% failed (grades: D, F), and 16% withdrew (grade: W) from the courses. Meanwhile, Table V.12 shows a summary of the grade analysis of students enrolled in practicum courses during November 2017 to March 2018, nearly 85.2% (2,963) completed them with a passing grade (grades A, B, C,), 2.8% (84) failed (grades: D, F), 0.1% received Incompletes and 11.9% withdrew (grade: W) from the courses, demonstrating that the student experience and learning opportunities were appropriate.

**Table V.11 August to November 2017 Student Approval Rate in Practicum Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Courses</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Failed</th>
<th>Incompletes</th>
<th>Withdrew</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>N 2411</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>3014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 80.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table V.12 November 2017 to March 2018 Student Approval Rate in Practicum Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Courses</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Failed</th>
<th>Incompletes</th>
<th>Withdrew</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>N 2523</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>2963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 85.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC’s continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from the work group have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the department group to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.

Strengths

1. NUC has strengthened the assessment and accountability culture considering direct and indirect measures to assess effectiveness and deepen the knowledge and accountability in SLO assessment, as well as the effectiveness of its academic, administrative and services areas.
2. Assessment results are used in all planning and resource allocation processes.
3. NUC has strengthened its academic offering and assessment processes through programmatic accreditations to enhance the quality of education and promote the NUC brand within the community.
4. The accountability culture as well as the direct mandate through the years from the BOD and BOT has led NUC to reinforce the assessment of its effectiveness.
5. NUC has a structured and sustainable assessment process, including assessment and action plans for all levels at the institution.
6. NUC has implemented a standardized electronic gradebook template for the course assessment report that provides uniform data collection and analysis making the institutional assessment summaries easier to prepare.
7. Students feel that they belong to NUC, that they are well served, and that their program leads them to a needed job, thus complying with the career oriented mission.
8. Although students withdraw due mostly to economic reasons, many return later to finish their degree.
9. NUC continues to attract transfer students, who come in good academic standing either from the largest universities as well as the smallest institutions, which makes NUC an option for higher education.
10. Students feel satisfied with NUC, its academic programs and services and faculty is well recognized by students for their access and caring.

Challenges

1. Although the institution has a standardized electronic gradebook template for the course assessment report that provides uniform course data collection and analysis, further improvement is needed to allow for electronic data collection, management and analysis.
2. Continue analyzing the reasons why students decide not to continue in their programs and leave without reaching for support. This will allow to take assertive actions to increase the percent of program retention and completion rates.
Recommendations

No recommendations have been identified for this standard.

Summary

NUC complies with Standard V and demonstrates fulfillment of Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, and 10. NUC has an assessment tradition that has been reinforced throughout the years. Nevertheless, the assessment of institutional effectiveness has become a significant issue in higher education institutions. Internal, external and government forces make it necessary to emphasize the need to continuously stress the assessment efforts. NUC has validated its commitment with the institutional effectiveness and its assessment. The model and processes in place have contributed to the reinforcement of a well-grounded assessment culture. The results of the assessment and the evidence-based analysis have allowed NUC to improve its programs and services, thus complying with the Mission and Goals. The challenges identified are assumable and already are given the needed analysis to reinforce the institutional assessment efforts. The growing number of changes and improvements at NUC illustrate that results of assessment activities are shared and utilized to improve. Furthermore, NUC’s continuous improvement processes do in fact lead to continuous institutional renewal at NUC.
Chapter Six: Standard VI - Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

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

Introduction

At NUC, strategic planning has a long tradition. The overall strategic planning process is disciplined, coordinated, collaborative, systematic, and sustained. Furthermore, this process is grounded by its institutional mission statement and guided by its institutional values and priorities.

The mission and strategic goals of NUC provide the foundation upon which all strategic planning, resource allocation, and other significant activities that lead to institutional improvement take place. The institution’s clear focus and proud tradition of career education characterizes the outcomes-based process for planning and resource allocation and by the resulting strength and quality of its institutional resources.

The discussion of Standard VI in this chapter provides analysis of the institution's ongoing process for planning, resource allocation, and how evaluation is conducted in pursuit of institutional quality and renewal. In the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, the use of the Academic Program Matrix (Appendix 19) as an organizational model ensures that a time line is followed as a result of internal and external requirements discussed. The planning-budgeting-assessment process is illustrated including improvements already made as a result of the self-study process. Also, the use of the assessment results will be analyzed and evaluated through the academic, financial, human, learning, technological and student services and physical resources allocation. At the end of the chapter, strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations will be discussed.

Strategic Planning Model

NUC’s current strategic plan spans a five-year period, 2016-2020. In preparation for its development, a SWOT analysis was conducted, pinpointing the institution’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. As a result of the SWOT analysis, the NUC vision, mission statement, and values were revised while preserving their essence. Moreover, these discussions were inclusive of faculty, staff, students, and Trustees. Following these revisions, a series of five institutional priorities were developed. They include academic quality; service development and the student experience; organizational
development; strengthening and positioning the NUC brand; and financial strength. Within the strategic plan, each priority is accompanied by a series of measurable strategic goals and objectives, associated activities, and expected outcomes. Last, each campus also has a distinct campus strategic annual action plan that cascades from the NUC long-range strategic plan. At NUC, planning is supported by a Physical Facilities Plan that directs renovations and new construction at the campus level.

As mentioned earlier, the NUC strategic planning process is a coordinated effort that involves representation of all stakeholders, from its development through its implementation. The strategic planning efforts at NUC are supported by an Institutional Strategic Planning Committee consisting of the President, SVPAA, VPSAE, Director of Research and Development, Financial Analyst, Institutional Director for Human Resources, and the Institutional Director of Assessment. This committee meets on an as needed basis to discuss issues, concerns, and progress to date.

NUC has a roadmap in place that links budgeting to planning as shown in Figure VI. I. The roadmap begins with the Finance Department providing the functional units with annual instructions and initial financial parameters based on agreed enrollment goals and expected profit margins. Functional units then review existing action plan results and future plans to develop the allocation of resources based on resources and planning. During the year, dashboards and other performance indicators are reviewed regularly to monitor achievement of goals and adherence to the budget. Figure VI.1 shows the planning-budgeting-assessment process that takes place at NUC.

**Figure VI.1: Roadmap for the Planning and Budgeting Process for NUC**

Institutional renewal is a key component of strategic planning. NUC has leveraged planning to continuously improve its educational infrastructure, programs, and services. Examples include the revision of mission and goals; programmatic accreditation
candidacy in several degree programs; revision of existing degree programs; introduction of new degree programs; introduction of hybrid courses across all campuses; and the strengthening of the continuing education division, to name a few.

As evidenced by the results of its initial MSCHE accreditation process in 2013, NUC provides its stakeholders with optimal facilities and the necessary human, financial, technical, and other resources necessary to achieve its mission and goals, and a learning environment conducive to teaching and learning, and to promoting student success. Furthermore, NUC conducts annual assessments that measure how the institution adheres to its strategic plan and complies with the annual plans and its budget. These activities include regular discussions at the EC and campus levels and annual assessments to name a few.

**Planning-Budgeting-Assessment Process**

NUC’s planning-budgeting-assessment process is aligned with the Institution’s Vision, Mission, and the Strategic Goals. As part of this process, the financial and human resources needs are identified annually to accomplish the five priority areas at the institutional and campus levels. The capital investment is distributed by campus accordingly to the institution's unit strategic plan and campus needs. As an example, as a result of the needs assessment in the Arecibo’s Nursing Department, the physical facilities were relocated and new offices and laboratories were built and equipped to improve the students’ learning process. At the Caguas Campus, an expansion was made in which additional classrooms were built and properly equipped, a new computer lab was habilitated, and faculty offices were also built and remodeled.

**Budgeting Process Timeline**

The budgeting process starts each year during the month of May when the Finance Department forwards the guidelines for the budget preparation for the following fiscal year (November to October). Action plans are then reviewed at the campus and department level by the chancellors, deans, and departments directors and new plans are prepared considering the Institutional Strategic Planning, mission, and strategic goals. Budget and action plans are analyzed and reviewed by the President, Chancellors, Financial Analyst, Senior Vice President of Finance (SVP of Finance). The process
continues with meetings until September, when a final budget and work plan are agreed upon. When finalized, the BOT and BOD approve the budget for the new fiscal year.

Although planning has a long tradition at NUC, since 2011 the vice presidents, chancellors, academic deans and department directors have been more directly involved in the planning and budgeting process. A new budget model was implemented and some of its most relevant changes include:

1. The chancellors participate in the budget design based on enrollment and retention goals.
2. The budget monitoring process has been shortened to a monthly basis.
3. Budget accounts are more integrated and the chancellors, deans, and the department directors decide on the expenses based on the immediate priorities.
4. There is a more in depth knowledge of the controllable and non-controllable expenses.
5. The chancellors, deans, and department directors are more aware of the impact of enrollment in the different accounts. The dashboard is more deeply analyzed by the chancellors, deans, and department directors.
6. The campus chancellors have been assigned more responsibility in budget management and are held more accountable for the financial operations.
7. More meaningful discussions are held between the chancellors and the President in order to follow up on the various accounting and financial indicators, thus improving the management participation in the decision making process.

Table VI.1 illustrates the changes in the budgeting process and campus management participation in the decision making process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>What is expected</th>
<th>Measure cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Chancellors, Institutional Vice Presidents and Directors participate in the budget design based on enrollment goals, retention and reentries metrics, as well as historical tendencies on existing programs and new programs implementation, as it may apply.</td>
<td>Each Chancellor, Institutional Vice Presidents and Directors prepare a yearly budget draft to be discussed with the President and the Financial Officer.</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly analysis of budget summary track report</td>
<td>Operational expenses control</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNL Report</td>
<td>Chancellors review the budget taking in consideration expenses control in the decision making process.</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model was designed to give the administrators the ability to create their own annual budget for their respective campus considering all accounts. It includes tools to forecast revenue, and current expense items and also provides ways to include non-recurring expenses and detailed expense items.

Chancellors now receive updated reports regularly on enrollment attrition, daily tuition analysis, and the income statement summary. On a periodic basis, meetings are held with the Financial Analyst, to analyze this report as well as variations in revenues.
and expenses with respect to the budget and versus the previous year. This activity manages the operational expense controls while maintaining the needed cash flow. The access to the financial information allows for more informed decision making, the reinforcement of a culture of accountability, establishment of uniform procedures for disseminating the information, and provides for a more continuous monitoring.

Also, a periodical report is submitted by Chancellors in which the enrollment movement is documented, thus providing for a better tracking of retention and implementation of the agreed upon strategies for student success. This is an ongoing learning process that needs to be monitored closely to detect possible pitfalls and to make the necessary adjustments.

The annual budgeting process also incorporates the capital expenditures budget and master plan in which capital resources are allocated to accomplish the strategic goals of the year in accordance with the Institutional Strategic Plan and agreed upon priorities. In terms of physical facilities and other capital resources, the campus provides to students and all constituents the appropriate facilities and infrastructure needed to support the programs and services, and to provide a learning environment conducive to teaching, learning and student success based on the requirements and objectives of the academics programs. Evidence of use of rational and consistent policies and procedures used to determine allocation of assets is available through the annual budget memoranda, as well as meeting minutes. These changes have improved the planning and budgeting process, as well as the participation of the deans and department directors in the decision making process.

Resource Allocation Process

*Academic Program Matrix* (Appendix 19) - is a guide for academic budget allocation based on assessment and planning. NUC’s planning and budgeting culture includes the continuous evaluation of the achievement of priorities, as well as the establishment of new priorities and realignment of others. The Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Process provides a good example of the outcomes-based planning and resource allocation process. Based on a five-year timetable, the plan is aligned with NUC’s Strategic Plan and supports the Institution’s Mission, Strategic Goals and priorities established through the *Vision* to be recognized as a university community.
where students receive an education of excellence which promotes their continuous, integral development through innovative and diverse learning modalities. The plan is focused predominantly on facilitating access to a wider array of students, fostering success, creating curriculum relevance, innovation in delivery by diverse modalities and technology integration, supporting faculty development, and strengthening the entrepreneurial approach in the majority of the programs. As part of the Institutional Strategic Planning, resources are identified and approved to properly support and accomplish the strategic goals of Academic Affairs.

The Academic Program Matrix provides for the assurance of the control of the new educational offerings, on ground and online. This matrix includes new programs development and its related processes including programs in the process of approval, proposed programs, and programs in any phase-out stage, as well as institutional changes. The Academic Program Matrix has proven to be an excellent continuous quality control tool that keeps track of new program development, and licensing and accreditation actions. Programs being phased out or under consideration are also included. As part of the Self-Study Report (SSR) process, this quality control tool was redefined and expanded to incorporate additional components, in order to have a master Academic Program Matrix that includes not only the new programs in development, the process of approval, proposed programs, and programs in any phase out stage, but also, an inventory of all current offered academic programs and important information such as: credential level, campus offering the program, credit, hours, CIP Code, first offered date, and last revision date, among others.

**Institutional Resources Allocation**

During the 2013-2016 four year period, a significant investment was made in order to ensure that the technological, human and physical resources are aligned with the mission and strategic plan and goals. All this has been achieved through active participation of the department directors and staff to ensure the delivery of adequate service for both on ground and online modalities. The assessment results are utilized for the resource allocation process.

The 2016-2020 Institutional Strategic Plan includes anticipated enrollment growth mostly from new campuses such as Mayagüez as well as new programs and online
initiatives. This projection is part of the Strategic Goals 1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.6, 4.2, and 4.2.2. The Institution did not achieve the new student enrollment projections during 2014 and 2015 due to the phase out of the Physical Therapy Program. To increase enrollment in 2016, new strategies were developed based on an analysis of NUC enrollments trends and the introduction of a new digital marketing agency. The institution offers continued training to the admissions officers on new strategies for enrollment and on the management of the CampusNexus system. The July and August 2016 new enrollment budget was achieved, partly due to these changes. NUC should continue the in-depth analysis of enrollment trends throughout the years and academic terms for new and continuing students, transfers and re-entries. New programs such as those indicated in Table VI.2 are being considered; as well, other programs with low enrollments will be under analysis to determine if they should be phased out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Programs</th>
<th>Possible Date to be Submitted</th>
<th>Approximate Date of Approval by the PRCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration under the Competency Based Education approach</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing with Major in Medical Surgical and Role in Administration</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Master's Degree in Science in Nursing with Major in Clinical Simulation with Role in Education</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Note: This Master's Degree needs to be recognized first by the Puerto Rico Board of Nurse Examiners in order to issue licenses under this specialty, which is why the process will take longer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Academic Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration under the Competency Based Education approach</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing with Major in Medical Surgical and Role in Administration</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Master’s Degree in Science in Nursing with Major in Clinical Simulation with Role in Education</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Note: This Master's Degree needs to be recognized first by the Puerto Rico Board of Nurse Examiners in order to issue licenses under this specialty, which is why the process will take longer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fiscal Resources**

NUC is approved by the US Veterans Administration, the PR Vocational Rehabilitation Department, and participates in Student Financial Assistance (Title IV programs) from the US Department of Education. The institution derives a substantial portion of its revenues from Federal Student Aid (FSA) received under the Title IV...
programs administered by the US Department of Education (ED) pursuant to the Higher Education Act 1965, as amended. Under this law, NUC, as a proprietary institution, is required to comply with the 90/10 policy of not exceeding the 90% of its revenue from Title IV Programs. NUC has always complied with the ratio requirement. During the last several years the percentage of revenue from Title IV funds has fluctuated slightly between 88.6% and 89.4% which is a stable proportion evidencing compliance with the 90/10 requirement of the US Department of Education. At the end of the fiscal year 2017, NUC closed with a ratio of 91.5%. However, as a result of the two hurricanes (Irma and María) that impacted Puerto Rico during the second half of 2017, we experienced a material reduction in collections from students that particularly affected us because our fiscal year ended on October 31st. In addition, once the classes restarted, we provided our students flexibility in their payments plans given the situation in which they were after the hurricane. We informed ED immediately in October of the situation and within 45 days after the end of fiscal years once we have finally calculated 90-10 ratio. As part of the NUC reorganization in February 2018, the Finance Department restructured the Students Accounts Office and established orientations to students to help them prioritize their payments among other actions. This and other actions will allow NUC to be better prepared for the future when emergencies as catastrophic as the two recent hurricanes that impacted the island in 2017 occur. Table VI.3 illustrates how NUC has complied with this policy in the last several years.

Table VI.3 NUC Source of Revenue and 90/10 proportion: Years 2014 to 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title IV funds less</td>
<td>51,785,860</td>
<td>55,028,681</td>
<td>49,295,731</td>
<td>59,088,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matching portion of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEOG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total eligible cash</td>
<td>59,638,032</td>
<td>61,535,486</td>
<td>55,641,593</td>
<td>64,608,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of revenue</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure VI.2 illustrates the historic revenue during the four previous fiscal years, demonstrating an increase and stability of revenue in this area. Also, the slight increase in payroll and operational expenses is observed. The tuition revenues increased by 2.6% while the payroll expenses increased by 6.8% and the operating expenses by 4.8%. Therefore, the payroll grew proportionally to the increment of revenue for each period and the operational expenses slightly higher reflecting an increase due mainly to laboratories and building remodeling and technology and physical resources. However,
by September 2017 the passage of two powerful hurricanes in the country (Irma and María) caused an impact on the income of the Island as well as the institution. Despite efforts by the government, private enterprise and social assistance corporations, the country's recovery has been slow. The infrastructure of electric power was one of the most adverse and complicated situations to restore. To continue the educational operations on the Campuses, the purchase of electric generators was required, since those in place were damaged during the storms. The decline of students after the hurricanes also undermined the finances of the institution. However, adjustments have been made to the strategic plan, and marketing campaigns and enrollment projections have been redefined to counteract the economic impact.

Figure VI.2: Relation between Tuition and Expenses: Years 2014 to 2017

The revenue increase in 2013 was due to the increase in enrollment in the Physical Therapy Program. After an evaluation process, in 2014, the program was scheduled to begin the process of programmatic accreditation so that students have greater employment opportunities. In order to comply with the requirements for the Candidacy submission to CAPTE, the program was revised including among others, change of name to Associate’s Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant, 77 total credits and 1,725 contact hours. These changes were submitted to CAPTE for the Bayamón Campus Only. Effective November 11, 2015, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program of NUC’s Bayamón Campus was granted Candidate for Accreditation status by CAPTE. Candidate for Accreditation is a pre-accreditation status of affiliation with CAPTE that indicates that the program is progressing toward accreditation and may matriculate students in technical/professional courses. Candidate for Accreditation is not an accreditation status nor does it assure eventual accreditation. The new Associate Degree Program in Physical Therapist Assistant opened its offering for the Bayamón Campus in
the August to November 2016-2017 term with a cohort of 20 students. In August 2017, a second cohort of 20 students will be admitted since the students are admitted annually. The curriculum amounts to 77 credits divided in five (5) academic terms. Currently, the first class will graduate in July 2018, and the visit of the evaluation team of CAPTE is scheduled from October 22 to 25, 2017. Due the circumstances of Hurricane María the site visit was scheduled for January 30-February 1, 2018. However, the institution has increased its enrollment in Health and Criminal Justice programs, as well as new programs in the campuses of Caguas and Ponce; and in the NUC-Online Division. Table VI.4 shows the operational expenses by major category.

The changes in the operational expenses may vary directly due to the enrollment resources changes, new developments or program revisions, change of level or complexity of academic offerings, and still others may respond to the priorities of the period. The total costs and expenses for the four year period increased by 6% mainly due to ACEN accreditation and the October student population increased by 12.8% in Nursing Program. Table VI.5 shows the student population by year in Nursing Program.

The percentage increase in Instructional Costs is mainly due to Faculty Payroll with an increase of 9.8%, Library Resources with a growth of 72.7% due to the acquisition of data bases to replace more traditional books, and faculty professional development. Marketing and Advertising decreased due to less new enrollments with a maximized investment and the use of strategies such as the recruitment of additional staff in Admissions, which has yielded an increase in new enrollments. Occupancy expenses increased 1.8% due to additional space and the subcontracting of the maintenance
company during 2015. The administrative payroll fluctuated steadily from 2014-2017. For the years 2014-2017, the Table illustrates that the main increase is in Faculty Payroll with a 9.8% increase in comparison with the Administrative Payroll that increases 2.8%. Administrative expenses increased mainly in sales tax, students’ services expenses, training and conventions, memberships in professional associations and professional development. The bad debt percentage fluctuated between 3% and 4% during the four years.

Even though a healthy proportion to keep a balance between expenses and revenue is observed, these expenses have to be analyzed on a regular basis in order to maintain the needed stability. The immersion of the Chancellors in the financial analysis is helping to keep track of these expenses and their appropriate allocation. The incursion of a Financial Analyst in the budget preparation process has become a significant element in the appropriate analysis and tracking the institutional budget. The involvement of all constituents internal as well as external ensures that institutional improvement responds to attend the needs of the institutional community.

**Physical Facilities Resources**

Each year, campus physical facilities are assessed for updating, renovating and remodeling based on NUC’s plans and strategic priorities. These actions are part of a road map in concert with the capital budget. The Chancellors, academic deans and directors monitor these plans regularly. The EC discusses actions to be taken in those matters that require attention and develop the proper plan and justification for each campus as evidenced in the meeting agendas and minutes.

As of 2017, NUC accounted for a total of 341,755 square foot of building space distributed within its different locations and municipalities. Table VI.6 includes a breakdown of square footage by campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus/Additional Location</th>
<th>Square Footage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>80,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>70,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>60,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>38,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>38,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC-Online Division</td>
<td>14,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüéz</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>341,755</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each location provides classrooms, student space, faculty and administrative offices, laboratories, an ERC, one stop service, parking lot, as well as other student services offices. As a whole, the campuses have the required classrooms, computer labs (with access to the Internet, online databases, supporting software and WIFI), and specialized laboratories for the various educational programs. It is important to highlight that as part of the strategic planning process, Mayagüez Campus was added in the western region of Puerto Rico. The physical facilities are in excellent condition and the accreditation processes for dual authorizations are being executed.

Dedicated facilities are provided for the following administrative offices at each campus: Registrar, Placement, Counseling and Guidance, Student Center, Admissions, Financial Aid, Bursar, Faculty, Information Technology, among others. In addition, areas are assigned for passive recreation as well as group and individual study areas. The following are the most significant capital investments in the 2013 - 2017 fifth year period for each campus.

- The NUC-Online Division’s academic operations have been relocated to the Bayamón campus and occupy 643 sq.ft. with seven cubicles, the director’s office and reception. The NUC-Online Division administrative offices are located in the COD in a separate 14,152 sq.ft. building. Admissions, Registrar, Academic Advisors, Bursar, Financial Aid, and Program Development services are offered in this area. Also, 3,012 sq.ft. are dedicated to the staff that serves the academic program, the Center for Teaching Learning (CTL), editors and the Virtual library.
- The Bayamón Campus has completed its health programs department renovation for ACEN accreditation during 2016. A 24,000 square feet annex property has been added to the existing campus which NUC is using 100% of its capacity to date and includes nursing school laboratories for all academic curriculum levels and student services. Also, it includes 400 parking spaces on an adjacent multi-level parking lot directly connected to building that supports current operations. An additional budget of $250,000 was added to 2014-2015 investment of over $1,300,000. The property has been equipped with modern state of the art infrastructure, laboratory equipment and office equipment to serve the student population.
- At the Arecibo campus, the Chancellor’s office, student services, health department and common areas were updated in order to better support student population. The Arecibo Campus library was remodeled in 2015 and moved to a new facility on the first floor. This library has more common area (for study) and incorporates two rooms for individual studies. Eighteen new computers were added to the technology resources that the library had for the use of the college community. The Nursing Department of Arecibo campus was relocated to new facilities in the second floor of the building. This new facility includes the addition of more specialized and modern laboratories in the areas of posology, nursing fundamentals, maternity, pediatric and medical surgical specialization. A high definition simulation laboratory was built and the process to acquire and install all necessary equipment has begun. The full preparation of this lab is designed in a three-year plan to be concluded in 2018. New Nursing facilities include more offices for associated professors, clinic liaison, director, administrative assistant, academic advisors, and mentor. The dental laboratories were relocated. Electrical engineering laboratories were remodeled. The Coordinator of Distance Education’s office was relocated and expanded. The office was located in front of the Registrar’s Office and was equipped with two additional computers to give tutoring and assistance to students and faculty that needed it. Faculty area for professors of Technology, Business Administration and General Education programs were relocated and reorganized. Also administrative offices of these
programs were relocated in one administrative area. The Students Recreation Center and the Academic Skills Development Center were remodeled to bring more space and equipment for the use of the students.

- During 2014-2015, the Río Grande campus facilities were expanded to a 60,140 square foot property, adding a new building and reconfiguring space usage for the whole campus. The nursing laboratories and classrooms were relocated to the new department space in regulation to ACEN accreditation that required a full expansion and renovation plan. The campus was updated with state of the art technology, which allows NUC to maximize resources and reduce operating costs. Also, as part of the expansion, the library, additional classrooms, Academic Affairs Office including all faculty area, dental and pharmacy program and nursing laboratories were renovated. Plans also included the electronic and electrical engineering program laboratories and assistive technology new equipment was updated.

- The Ponce Campus inaugurated its new facility in 2015. With a state of the art 38,049 square foot property, the whole campus has been consolidated into a five (5) story building to address current students and future growth. The new facilities are located within the San Cristóbal Hospital premises, which contribute to the nursing program students’ experience.

- The Mayagüez Campus started their operations in the month of March 2017 with a Capital Investment of $1,915,113. The Campus counts with 40,000 square feet and with extensive facilities, parking, library with independent study rooms, equipped laboratories, an interior garden and student’s open spaces. They count with the academics offers that includes programs at the levels of associates, baccalaureates and master’s degrees in the areas of Health programs, Business Administration and Criminal Justice.

Table VI.7 presents the capital expenditures for the last four year period by campus.

### Table VI.7 Capital Expenditures by Campus: Years 2014-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Total Capital Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>$856,028</td>
<td>$553,086</td>
<td>$626,640</td>
<td>$366,942</td>
<td>$2,402,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>$283,248</td>
<td>$290,824</td>
<td>$1,209,312</td>
<td>$258,913</td>
<td>$2,042,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Grande</td>
<td>$2,059,124</td>
<td>$319,491</td>
<td>$365,876</td>
<td>$120,807</td>
<td>$2,865,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>$1,872,155</td>
<td>$625,191</td>
<td>$526,065</td>
<td>$169,922</td>
<td>$3,193,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>$197,991</td>
<td>$236,449</td>
<td>$511,404</td>
<td>$295,091</td>
<td>$1,240,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUC-Online Division</td>
<td>$817,527</td>
<td>$837,273</td>
<td>$1,028,273</td>
<td>$1,104,423</td>
<td>$3,787,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayagüez</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$362,507</td>
<td>$1,552,606</td>
<td>$1,915,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>$2,778</td>
<td>$493,682</td>
<td>$19,375</td>
<td>$140,435</td>
<td>$656,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,088,851</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,355,997</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,649,451</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,009,138</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,103,437</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI.8 presents the capital expenditures for the last four year period by category.

### Table VI.8 Capital Expenditures by Category: Years 2014-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Site Move</th>
<th>New Programs</th>
<th>General Expansion</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Total Capital Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$1,770,521</td>
<td>$726,788</td>
<td>$2,326,866</td>
<td>$1,264,676</td>
<td>$6,088,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$747,391</td>
<td>$560,719</td>
<td>$2,047,887</td>
<td>$3,355,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$1,461,792</td>
<td>$1,144,706</td>
<td>$22,0882</td>
<td>$1,181,758</td>
<td>$4,009,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,594,820</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,501,538</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,908,668</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,098,411</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,103,437</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capital Expenditures % 20% 19% 22% 39% 100%
During the 2014-2017 period, NUC invested over $18.1 million in capital expenditures. Although new programs were delayed due to regulatory hurdles, there was a significant investment made in preparation for the launching of new programs. During 2016, the Institution had an increase year-over-year in General Expansion and Maintenance due to the ACEN Accreditation. As with the annual operational budget, each campus participates directly in the capital expenditure budget preparation. The proposed budget is evaluated by the NUC President, the SVP of Finance, and the CEO and approved by the BOT and the BOD, according to the strategic goals for the year. This process ensures that the learning resources are available at each campus, including a library with paper bound and virtual resources and modern laboratory equipment. NUC has invested significant financial resources to ensure that students have access to the needed facilities, equipment, and services to enhance their learning experiences and to comply with the mission.

NUC has an annual financial audit as well as a compliance audit performed by an external independent Certified Public Accounting firm, Kevane Grant Thornton LLP. In the 2014-2015 audit, there were four findings, which were addressed by a corrective action plan. These findings were: under awarded Federal direct subsidized loan, untimely paid credit balances, late refunds and inaccurate enrollment status reporting. The implementation of the action plan resulted in no findings in the 2015-16 compliance audit.

**Human Resources**

As of March 2018, NUC had 627 faculty members (163 Full-time and 464 Part-time) and 394 staff (368 Full-time and 26 Part-time) for a total of 1,057. Please refer to Appendix 49 *Staffing Profile Table*. During the 2014-2017 years, 84 new positions were created to support NUC and its students, and as part of institutional renewal (Appendix 50). The Human Resources Office maintains records of all staff and faculty needs and requests, and vacancies. Staff under leaves and other classifications are easily obtained in order to provide data for future projections.

NUC’s allocation approach ensures adequate faculty, staff, and administration to support the institution’s mission and outcomes expectations. As an example, the annual budgeting process provides the assessment of the headcount needed at the faculty level as
well as for staff. Although not established in a specific document, depending on the service area or department, an employee will serve between 150 and 200 students weekly. The department’s headcount is based on the number of students as well as the type of service and particular demand. In addition, the faculty is allocated during the enrollment process as part of the course offering.

An example of the results of this allocation approach is the student-faculty ratio which varies annually between 13:1 and 15:1. Under the new budgeting model, the faculty ratio is monitored periodically. Constant monitoring of faculty is carried out to ensure the adequate support of academic offerings. The processes of monitoring the faculty ratio assist in the decision making, to take proactive action in reference to the resource allocation. Variability is due mostly to new faculty or staff as a response to the enrollment increase as well as for new and specialized programs, departments and new locations as well as the NUC-Online Division. The regular and annual under contract faculty classification was changed to a rank classification in August 2011.

**Personnel Recruitment Process:** The NUC’s recruiting process begins with the personnel requisition that establishes the specifications as well as the description of duties and responsibilities for the position to be filled. Once the requisition is approved, the position is announced/posted as requested. The resumes of candidates who applied for the vacant position are then evaluated according to the minimum requirements established for the position. Immediately thereafter, the coordination process for the interviews of qualifying candidates begins. Strategies to identify the profile of the candidate to align it with NUC’s institutional values and the profile of institutional staff will take place during the interview process. Once the candidate has been selected, an offer of employment will be made to the candidate and the contracting/hiring process officially begins.

**Training and Development:** NUC has established as part of its Strategic Priority Service, Development, and Student, to provide its employees with opportunities to enrich and improve their knowledge and skills through various methods. These allow the employees to develop professionally and effectively achieve the objectives of their duties and responsibilities.
The Human Resources Department actively collaborates with the Chancellors of each Campus and the Institutional staff to identify those areas that require more training. In addition, it identifies the issues of greatest need that employees require to be more efficient in their day-to-day operations.

For professional development workshops, training and activities inside and outside the Institution, NUC has established that employees comply with trainings and professional growth annually, as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Personnel</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Professional Growth</td>
<td>2 Professional Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 In Service Training</td>
<td>3 In Service Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information is registered by means of the Administrative & Faculty Staff Record Checklist with the purpose of corroborating the required compliance. The Human Resources Department collaborates in the coordination of trainings that are required for the administrative as well as faculty. However, each campus has an annual budget assigned to provide training to the employees, which is utilized according to each group particular needs.

**Educational Resources Centers (ERC)**

NUC’s ERC provide a variety of learning support services to promote student achievement and success to all on ground and online students. All of the campus libraries are led by a qualified professional staff person with a Master’s Degree in Library Services and several professionally trained individuals who possess at least a bachelor’s degree. (Please refer to *Chapter III. Table III.11 Library Collection*, specifies the inventory of the collections and *Table III.9* includes the *staff of the ERC per campus*).

To comply with the mission, the centers are equipped with a *Collection Development Policy* which gives direction to the librarians in charge of the centers and the educational collections that support the academic programs in such a way that the students develop their professional competencies and are updated in the labor area. The librarians reviewed and updated the *Collection Development Policy* in October 2015; the *Discard Policy* in November 2015.
Technological Resources, Laboratories and Equipment

All NUC academic offerings include in their curriculum at least one information technology course which involves the use of a computer laboratory. In addition, NUC has laboratories to serve the following areas of study: dental, chemistry, pharmacy, electronics/electricity, physical therapist assistant, business administration, technology, and nursing.

The System Administrator is in charge of the learning resources in the computer laboratories. In the other areas of study, the Department Director is in charge in coordination with the Academic Dean. This person conducts needs assessment based on existing materials and those projected for use in the courses offered during the year. Equipment and materials recommended by faculty and students are reviewed by each program’s director or coordinator in order to identify the need and importance in the teaching-learning process.

The Information Technology Office at each campus is responsible for maintaining the computer software license inventory and for supervising compliance with the Copyright Laws and licensing requirements. The inventory includes every computer at the campus, the user it is assigned to and the software installed. The maintenance or updated services of existing computer labs that directly support instruction are reviewed twice a year; this equipment has a configuration in which a student who does not log-in for a period of sixty days is automatically erased from the system. This allows the equipment to stay in optimal condition. Another project was implemented in all campuses to increase the internet’s bandwidth allowing a faster connection that benefits the students and faculty with a better service. The 50Mb bandwidth standard was implemented to all campuses.

Table VI.9 illustrates the increase of equipment for student use and Table VI.10 the Mayagüez Campus inventory of computers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecibo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayamón</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caguas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The institution is planning to continue increasing its use of information technologies to enhance services to students, to improve the student information system, and address the needs of new initiatives. Each of these initiatives will enable NUC to better serve its students and further enhance the quality and effectiveness of its educational programs.

Since all programs have a technology component, there is a need to ensure that information technology is continuously updated. Although the technological resources are available and updated, still there is a need to better determine the necessities of hardware and software technology resources, both in the academic and administrative areas. As part of the continuing improvement process, the Technology Development Plan (Appendix 51) is aligned to new programs development and curriculum revisions, as well as to provide staff with continuously updated technology. This plan is aligned with NUC constituents’ professional development plan. In alignment with the Institutional Strategic Planning, mainly Strategic Priority 1.2: Facilitate an integral and satisfactory learning experience for the students.

The Information Technology Development Plan contemplates the following initiatives to be implemented in the next three years:

1. With the purpose of keeping the CampusNexus services updated, the following programmatic updates will be implemented: Campus Nexus 1098T 2017 Q1; Core Update 18.3.3; FAA 6.1.1 and Regulatory 10.1- Q2; Regulatory 11 Q3 and FAA 7.0 Q4.
2. Migrate Citrix licenses components to the Citrix cloud providing business to the latest platform and technology
3. In order to support the academic quality, the electronic equipment such as laptops and desktops will be updated to Windows 10.
4. In order to develop and diversify the Distance Education and Continuing Education offering, a project of IT Academy is being implemented to certify the administrative personnel in the Microsoft licenses. An integration of Canvas and Office 365 is being worked out that will allow to reduce costs.
5. Veeam Backup & Replication 9.5 is being adopted in order to keep campus data safe at all times.
6. ENCASE Software is a tool that allows to obtain products licenses for the institutions based on needs, and it is being implemented in the Criminal Justice Program for the Major in Cyber Crime.
7. Security Program Implementation has been adopted to keep the services in the NUC campuses safe and protected against viruses.
8. Active Directory Federation Service allows controlling the electronic equipment from a Main Server. In addition, the domain controllers will be updated in order to work the policies in the technological areas in response to the campus needs.
9. Legacy System Databases for major’s institutions Migration allows us to move in order to be able to store the database of the last ten years.
10. Microsoft System Center 2016 is a tool that facilitates the process of Images for the electronic equipment to be able to keep the equipment as updated as possible. The implementation of this technology in the classroom is fundamental since it allows that the faculty as well as the students to have access to the appropriate.
11. Adopt lease replacement strategy for network equipment providing latest leading edge technologies to the campuses with an integrated management platform.
12. Adopt lease replacements strategies for server legacy equipment providing leading edge technology to back office users and central repository for documents, departmental files and print services providing robust backend equipment.
13. Evaluate and review actual carrier provider contract, request new proposals to carriers that provide monthly savings and allow us to provide a reliable internet platform to our students.

Each campus has an IT Department with appropriate staff who are in charge of the computer laboratories, their hardware and software management and control. These departments work closely with the academic and other departments, and are supported by NUC Corporate’s Vice President of IT. Table VI.11 presents the Staff of the IT Department by campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Bayamón</th>
<th>Arecibo</th>
<th>Rio Grande</th>
<th>Ponce</th>
<th>Caguas</th>
<th>Mayagüez</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT Director</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Technician Full Time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Technician Part Time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional Renewal

The continuous institutional assessment process provides valuable data which is analyzed and taken in consideration in the planning and implementation phases of institutional initiatives. Every two years, a SSQ is administered in which students’ perception regarding human, technological, and physical resources is assessed as well as open comments. In addition, the FSQ also addresses these areas. In faculty meetings, the faculty members express their opinions about varying issues including the physical facilities and other needs. This information supports the decision making utilizing assessment results for resource allocations, which are incorporated back into the strategic planning process of NUC completing the loop of planning, assessment, analysis of results, and implementation of renewal. As a particular example, it was observed that the Nursing Department facilities needed ampler space and laboratories with simulators. As a result, the facilities in all campuses have been renovated to attend students' needs as well as faculty assessment to take action and promote improvement. In addition, the Strategic
Goal 3.2 of the Institutional Strategic Plan established to explore the ACEN accreditation, already achieved. At the Ponce Campus, administrative offices of Students Affairs were relocated and additional classrooms were habilitated. The Faculty area and the ERC was expanded. At the Río Grande Campus, the parking facilities were restored in order to provide better service. Improvements to the security area were made installing additional internal and external cameras. On the other hand, two classrooms were added.

Another strategy used to ensure an effective utilization of resources is through discussions at the EC’s meetings where the campuses’ operations are discussed and any project not contemplated during the annual planning process is evaluated and approved where appropriate, considering the priorities for the year and any change in the assumptions made for the budget and action plans. The open doors policy in place throughout all administrative levels, including that of the President, facilitates the informed decision making as well. On a monthly basis, the campuses Chancellors analyze the updated financial statements and dashboards in order to monitor compliance with the budget and the appropriate use of resources and to make the adjustments if needed. The support of the central office, NUC Corporate, made possible the development of the priority project in each campus facilities through the data obtained by the Help Desk tool.

- Since the implementation of this tool in 2015, it has been used to prioritize the troubleshooting of physical facilities in all the campuses of NUC. The required services are centralized and there is a permanent record of the breakdown of all the services provided at the physical facilities to improve the student experience in them. The data of this tool provides report services that have been referred and served by categories and subcategories such as problems related to air conditioning, electricity, plumbing, elevators, parking, maintenance, and fire prevention, among others. Effective results for example, that we have from the introduction of the tool in 2015 and subsequent years, are as follows: From 2015 onwards it took 120 days on work requests for physical facilities. Currently, from the year 2018, the response time has improved considerably, taking approximately 30 days in to fix problems of physical facilities at the Campuses. On the other hand, the tool provides the guidance and the opportunity that the Chancellors receive monthly reports including ticket tracking among others: who assisted, status, date of repair, and other incidents. This tool has enabled NUC at all its branches to maximize the economic resources, control costs and to be more efficient in addressing claims of physical facilities. (see a sample report of 2018).

Evidence of the use of rational and consistent policies and procedures to determine allocation of assets is available through the strategic plan, policies, annual budget, action plans, budget templates and budget memoranda, as well as meeting minutes. Correspondingly, the establishment of a consistent budgeting and planning process, the use of a technology-based budget preparation and control, the steps in the
budget and resources allocation, the regular and continuous meetings (where issues are brought up and alternative solutions discussed), the open, clear and known decision making process, and the institutionalized policies ensure the adequate institutional control in order to appropriately allocate resources.

**Trends Analysis**

For the last three (3) years, the Institution has had a consistent growth in enrollment in Health and Criminal Justice programs, new programs in the campuses of Caguas and Ponce; and in the NUC-Online Division. The student’s tuition and fees increased between 1% and 3% which speaks to an index of the Institution’s financial stability. For the next three (3) years, the main projected increase is in the Mayagüez campus and in the Nursing Programs due to the programmatic accreditation. The student’s tuition fees projection increase with student growth and the revenues assuming tuition prices are kept in line with academic year 2016 – 2017. Table VI.12 illustrates the Student Enrollment Projections and Revenues for the next three years.

**Table VI.12 Student Enrollment Projections and Revenues for the next three years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beg Balance</td>
<td>9,779</td>
<td>9,848</td>
<td>10,289</td>
<td>10,669</td>
<td>10,552</td>
<td>10,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Entries</td>
<td>2,702</td>
<td>2,498</td>
<td>2,316</td>
<td>2,510</td>
<td>2,474</td>
<td>2,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>7,132</td>
<td>7,423</td>
<td>7,855</td>
<td>8,026</td>
<td>8,455</td>
<td>8,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attrition</td>
<td>7,132</td>
<td>6,706</td>
<td>7,066</td>
<td>7,041</td>
<td>7,534</td>
<td>7,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>2,547</td>
<td>2,779</td>
<td>2,799</td>
<td>3,251</td>
<td>3,197</td>
<td>3,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-74</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending Balance</strong></td>
<td>9,848</td>
<td>10,289</td>
<td>10,669</td>
<td>10,552</td>
<td>10,750</td>
<td>11,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Revenue Students</td>
<td>9,627</td>
<td>9,672</td>
<td>10,363</td>
<td>10,132</td>
<td>10,431</td>
<td>10,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention %</td>
<td>63.6 %</td>
<td>66.1 %</td>
<td>65.5 %</td>
<td>66.8 %</td>
<td>64.9 %</td>
<td>64.9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Tuition Fees</td>
<td>$62,826,052</td>
<td>$62,231,508</td>
<td>$63,922,494</td>
<td>$65,681,268</td>
<td>$67,455,772</td>
<td>$69,362,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>702,475</td>
<td>677,357</td>
<td>-3,026</td>
<td>598,591</td>
<td>590,536</td>
<td>594,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>$63,528,527</td>
<td>$62,908,865</td>
<td>$63,919,468</td>
<td>$66,279,859</td>
<td>$68,046,308</td>
<td>$69,956,860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The historical annual costs and expenses increased mainly in Instructional, Administrative Payroll and Administrative Expenses due to the student growth increase, the costs associated to the Nursing programmatic accreditation and the new government taxes. Otherwise, the Institution has a costs efficiency in Marketing and Advertising and Recruiting. Another indicator of the financial stability is the proportion of bad debts, that
has been a constant healthy rate between 3% and 4%, also projected for the next three years. This rate compares favorably when considering the decline in the economic indicators of Puerto Rico. For the next three years, the main increase expected is due to the new Mayagüez campus. All of these costs and expenses categories are related to the expected increase in student population. The EBITDA margin percentage is around 17% and is expected to grow to 19.2% at the end of 2020. Table VI.13 presents the Total Cost and EBITA Projections for the next three years.

Table VI.13 Total Cost and EBITA Projections for the next three years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs and Expenses</th>
<th>Last Three Years</th>
<th>Next Three Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>$14,786,718</td>
<td>$15,474,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Advertising</td>
<td>4,487,352</td>
<td>4,461,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>1,964,798</td>
<td>2,216,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>7,892,340</td>
<td>8,440,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Payroll</td>
<td>12,712,136</td>
<td>13,049,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Expenses</td>
<td>5,567,366</td>
<td>5,956,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Debt</td>
<td>1,412,275</td>
<td>1,934,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Costs and Expenses</td>
<td>$48,822,984</td>
<td>$51,532,513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Assessment Results for Institutional Renewal

NUC conducts annual meetings that measure how the institution adheres to its strategic plan and complies with the annual plans. These plans are a result of the priorities established for the next period and the analysis of the results of assessment previously administered. Following are some of these studies, their purpose, and the Chapter/Appendix in which the results of these studies are analyzed as well as their impact on program development and evaluation, as well as student services improvement in order to reach institutional renewal. Furthermore, some of the assessment results and their use for institutional renewal are discussed.

1. **Bring support to new student - New students’ profile.** Obtain information about newly admitted students’ needs that shows how NUC uses results from this assessment to affect positive change is how NUC addressed new students’ needs of transportation, childcare and tutoring. To address this concern, four campuses contracted transportation services from the most important locations of the towns bordering the campus. The Ponce campus promotes the use of the transportation service of the municipality that has a stop at the entrance of the campus. The NUC Bayamón Campus has a
Children's Library, where children are served while the evening students are in classes from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. All CDA have increased tutoring services to students by teacher referral or by direct student visits.

- The information obtained from the instrument, that was developed to meet the needs of the new students of NUC has been highly effective since it allows NUC to meet the needs of the students, and channel them into their first term of classes, thus reducing anxiety or distractions that can result in the student dropping out. Therefore, to minimize any situation that may affect the environment or academic performance of the student in this new stage of the University. As it can be seen from the results of the questionnaire, the students are requesting that NUC provides them with the following:
  - NUC should provide better preparation for labor market
  - NUC should help me to be a better person as a student.
  - NUC should help me complete my goal, which is to graduate.
  - NUC should help me reach my goals
  - NUC should give me the tools to finish my studies.

- Also, the knowledge of these needs has allowed the campuses to improve the following: setting priorities, referring them to the correct departments, develop educational management and coordinate strategies at the level of municipality, government and private offices for the new student to feel safe and comfortable in this new phase of study. The paragraph below describes some of those needs that have to be met from the beginning of the student’s studies.

2. **Make the university a caring institution. Focus Group SEMI Students.** Obtain information about students enrolled in the SEMI 1010: University Environment Seminar course to determine if it meets the needs of new enrolled students. [Appendix 52](#).

   New students identified that the content of the course needed more depth, workshops should increase and more technology is needed. As a result, the course content was reviewed (syllabus change, technology integration and the inclusion of pertinent topics such as finance literacy, entrepreneurship initiative (National Bazar) and violence prevention).

3. **Transfer students’ profile.** Through this study, transfer students’ needs are identified in order to optimize services to the specific population addressed. [Appendix 53](#).

   Students indicated that they selected NUC by recommendation, academic programs and the time to complete their studies. As a result, the following actions were taken: the transfer student population is identified since the admission process and is treated as one of the high-risk groups in the student retention project. Periodically, a focus group is held with transfer students to continue identifying their needs.

   As directly related to instruction, in Chapters III and V, course and program assessment, including the general education component, are analyzed and the use of the results for program development and evaluation and institutional renewal is discussed.

4. **Satisfaction Questionnaire.** The purpose is to obtain information about satisfaction level of faculty, staff, and students in order to strengthen and improve the academic, student and administrative processes of the Institution. Faculty, students and staff participate directly in the process of the institutional renewal through the assessment of the effectiveness of the institutional resources.

**Faculty**

A comparison of the results of the FSQ administered in 2014 and 2017 was made to determine the efficiency of the resources. A significant sample of faculty participated in the 2017 survey (529 of 627, 84.37%). In 2014, 83.67% of faculty evaluated satisfactorily the opportunities provided by the institution for professional growth; in 2017 the proportion increased to 89.84%. This increase in satisfaction responds to the allocation of more resources in this area, in response to the faculty needs.
In 2017, the faculty was asked if they consider that they comply with the updated annual professional development plan. 97.16% agreed. When asked if the facilities were kept clean and in good conditions, there was an increase from 80.89% in 2014 to 90.39% in 2017. Although the satisfaction level with the opportunities provided by the institution for professional growth were high, in the open comments the members expressed the need for more professional development and continuing education. In the last several years the training and convention for faculty was steady to continue strengthening this area. Table VI.14 presents the Faculty Training and Conventions Expenses for the 2014-2017 years. For a more detailed discussion on the results of the FSQ, refer to Chapter III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Convention for Faculty</td>
<td>$32,649</td>
<td>$40,823</td>
<td>$41,118</td>
<td>$28,962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the year 2017-2018, the faculty development plan increased in each campus according to the resources available in each of them. However, the faculty development activities were interrupted for several months after the impact of Hurricane Maria in 2017. However, by the beginning of 2018, the development plans were resumed and the schedules have been adjusted to continue with the activities as scheduled. One of the aspects that has contributed to increasing the development of faculty since 2017 has been the creation of the continuing education unit. This office has a service component that has been working directly with the SVPAA, Chancellors, and Deans to support the development of faculty in each campus.

In reference to facilities providing a safe environment, in 2014, 80.09% agreed and it increased to 91.82% in 2017. 73.23% of the faculty considered that the needed materials and equipment were available in order to develop their educational functions adequately in 2014 in comparison to 84.19% in 2017, which validates the positive impact of the increase in materials and equipment. Even though a satisfaction increase in this area was observed, faculty still considered that they needed more materials and equipment in the laboratories and classrooms.

In 2014, 83.94% of the faculty surveyed considered that the educational data bases were accessible and efficient in comparison to 90.78% in 2017, which shows the impact of the training to the faculty related to the databases and the acquisition of
textbooks and assistive technology equipment. In reference to the adaptation of the facilities for students with special needs, in 2014, 72.14% of the faculty was satisfied with an increase to 91.94% in 2017, which responds to the physical facilities remodeling and maintenance efforts.

**Staff**

In the 2016-2017 survey the staff evaluated satisfactorily the opportunities provided by the institution for professional growth with a 69.42%. The organizational development priority area in NUC’S Institutional Strategic Plan 2016-2020, contemplates increasing professional growth training for all employees as primary focus for NUC.

79.59% of the staff expressed satisfaction in reference to the physical facilities being kept clean and in good conditions. When asked if the facilities provide a safe environment, 83.68% expressed satisfaction. In terms of the needed materials and equipment, 77.85% expressed they were available in order to perform their functions adequately.

**Students**

The results of the NUC General Satisfaction Student Survey in 2017, indicated an overall 93% satisfaction level of services provided at all NUC locations. Included in these results with the Services category is an internet connection in the classrooms, labs, and campuses in Puerto Rico. Students responded in the survey with a satisfaction level of 69%. The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey before and after Hurricane Maria. It should be noted that this event of Hurricane Maria on September, 2017, interrupted the continuity of the work plan of the technological infrastructure at our campuses. Regardless of this impact of the effects from Hurricane María to Puerto Rico, the campuses resumed with electricity and/or electrical generators the activities that were covered in the plan with the purpose of improving the access to the internet service.

The library staff work plan has continued, increasing the availability of educational resources, including additional books on the shelves for the collection at the libraries at each campus. The hours of tutoring services increased 92% of student satisfaction. Therefore, each campus continues combining efforts to ensure access to this vital service for students in times of availability of students. Below, are the results with this resource:
1. Tutoring. 95% of students surveyed were satisfied with the tutoring physical facilities and 91.94% of faculty was satisfied. This is congruent with the changes implemented in each campus including a center exclusively for tutoring, a coordinator assigned of these services, and technological resources to assist students during the tutoring sessions.

2. ERC. Students feel that the resources are adequate to fulfill their needs, both on ground (92%) as well as virtual (85.73%). Students could have access to specialized resources when needed both on ground as well as virtual (93% and 85.4%, respectively). In terms of the center’s hours of service, students were satisfied, (95%). As observed, students are satisfied with the ERC.

3. Physical facilities. Students were asked about their satisfaction with the physical facilities. 89% were satisfied with the classrooms, 89% with the maintenance of the bathrooms, and 83% were satisfied with the technology in the classrooms. On an overall basis, 95% of students were very satisfied with the physical facilities in general.

In the discussion of Chapter 1 Mission and Goals, Chapter I, other aspects of students’ satisfaction are discussed as well as Chapter V Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC’s continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from the work group have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the department or groups to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.

Strengths

1. NUC continues to strengthen the strategic planning process and its alignment with the annual budget allocation. This contemplates the enrollment growth and establishment of priorities to ensure academic quality and student services. (Priority Areas: Academic Quality, Student Development, Financial Strength)

2. The ISP’s five-year planning period is used for prioritizing resource allocation, and institutional renewal. The Institutional Strategic Plan and the Academic Program Matrix are revisited each year in agreement with the departmental action plan. (Priority Areas: Academic Quality, Financial Strength)

3. The decision-making process and institutional development and renewal are aligned to NUC Mission and Goals and operationalized by the departmental action plans. All processes are conducted in a high quality service environment. (Priority Areas: Organizational Development, Financial Strength)

4. Academic offerings are properly supported by the financial resources and controls that ensure the institutional financial stability. (Priority Areas: Academic Quality, Financial Strength)

5. Students are satisfied with the physical facilities and technological resources. (Priority Area: Student service, Development, and Experience)

6. Appropriate allocation of funds to update instructional resources, laboratories, and library holdings is contemplated to serve all academic programs. (Priority Areas: Academic Quality, Student Service, Development and Experience)
7. Continuous investment for facilities renewal and expansion is carried out in accordance with the agreed priorities between campuses, programmatic accreditations, and population growth. (Priority Areas: Academic Quality, Student Service, Development and Experience)

8. Each campus has been empowered through a more intense participation in the budgeting process making each department responsible of managing their own budget and automation of expense control processes (E-Requester, Facilities Project Approval and Human Resources Requests in DocuSign, Facilities Help Desk). (Priority Area: Financial Strength)

9. Educational programs, student learning and services are adequately supported by financial, technological, facilities, and educational resources. (Priority Areas: Academic Quality, Student Service, Development and Experience)

Challenges

In the current economic situation and Puerto Rico’s negative demographic growth, NUC encounters a challenge in achieving its population growth goals.

Suggestions

1. Continue the search of opportunities or economical means to generate financial resources to supplement students’ financial aid.
2. Continue optimizing the human, technological, instructional, and other resources between campuses.

Recommendations

1. Continue reinforcing the managerial staff knowledge of the budget planning and process in order to better monitor the priorities and resource allocation of financial resources in each campus and administrative units.

Summary

NUC is in compliance with Standard VI and demonstrates fulfillment of Requirements of Affiliation # 8, 10, and 11. NUC has a long and rich planning tradition enhanced through the years with a very active and effective participation of its stakeholders at all departments and levels in the comprehensive planning-budgeting-resource allocation and assessment process. This process is followed from its development through its implementation. NUC followed a thorough strategic plan revision process and as a result five priorities were established with the corresponding Strategic Goals and Objectives for the 2016-2020 five-year period.

Professional training (inside and outside), regular and systematic meetings, continuous and effective communication as well as a knowledge and experience based enhancement has led the institution to encounter its challenges successfully. NUC has developed through the years the needed Standing Operating Procedures in order to ensure
that all of its campuses and departments are aligned. The Academic Program Matrix ensures that a timeline is followed in the academic program development and revision, as well as following the external governmental and accrediting agencies requirements. A roadmap for the Planning and Budgeting Process establishes the specific yearly timeline. Each department develops its own action plan aligned to the Institutional Strategic Plan as part of this strategic well organized process, NUC has developed and revises yearly a capital expenditures budget and master plan in order to ensure that all facilities are in optimum conditions, that new facilities respond to a well-designed development plan, and that it responds to the academic programs development and revisions, and the needed student services. During the 2013-2017 period, NUC capital expenditures totaled $18,205,352, impacting all campuses and programs, as agreed priorities. A Technology Development Plan is also revised regularly in order to be aligned to new programs development and curriculum revisions, as well as to provide staff with continuously updated technology. Satisfaction surveys are systematically administered to students, faculty, staff, employers; the results are used for continuous assessment and institutional renewal. All of these efforts are aligned with each other, thus ensuring the fulfillment of the mission and strategic goals.

As part of NUC’s responsibility, NUC has a check and balance process through which regular internal monitoring is carried out in order to reassure that all campuses and departments follow the established procedures in aspects such as faculty and staff records, student records, and other systematic procedures. Besides, NUC undergoes annual external compliance audits with regard to its administration of student financial aid funds. When these audits have been conducted, no major findings have been cited. For the most recently completed compliance audit 2014-15 NUC obtained a clean audit with no findings. This shows that NUC is in compliance with the integrity processes of the Institution.

As part of NUC’s planning and operation, the institution has enhanced the review process aligned to assess the activities established in the Institutional Strategic Planning. Annually, a meeting is held to discuss the achievements and pending goals in order to plan for the next year. This serves as part of the periodic assessment of results in order to determine the resource allocation and reevaluate the priorities that will be addressed the next year.
Chapter Seven: Standard VII - Governance, Leadership and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Introduction

The NUC MSCHE Steering Committee charged the Governance, Leadership and Administration Work Group with analyzing the NUC governance, leadership, and administrative structure, identifying any major issues, and proposing recommendations and suggestions for ongoing institutional improvement. In addition, the work group was charged with providing evidence that the institution meets the Standard VII criteria as well as the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation.

It is also important to mention that on September 20, 2017 Hurricane María, a powerful Category 4 hurricane struck Puerto Rico wreaking catastrophic damage throughout the entire island including to its electrical power grid, infrastructure and telecommunications systems. On October 27, 2017 the Middle States Commission on Higher Education directed NUC and all Puerto Rico institutions to submit a Supplemental Information Report due December 1, 2017 regarding the operating status of the institution as well as the damage and impacts to all campuses and locations caused by the hurricane. Please refer to Appendix 54. This chapter will also include where applicable any adjustments made by NUC to address the impact of the hurricane as they relate to Standard VII.

At NUC, a clearly articulated, multi-level, substantive and transparent governance structure is in place that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision makers by its stakeholders. The NUC governance structure consists of a corporate BOD, NUC’s BOT, NUC’s EC, Academic Board, Student Advisory Committee, and Campus and Department level structures as well. Decision making processes are analyzed considering the role of each of the governing bodies. Changes in the governance and administrative structure since the last self-study process in 2012-13 are presented as well as their impact on learning and scholarship and in fostering professional development and continuous improvement. The qualifications and responsibilities of the President and CEO are also presented. The administrative leaders
and staff as well as their lines of authority and their decision making processes are highlighted.

Also analyzed are the ways in which NUC promotes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy between faculty, staff, students, and the BOT, in policy making, and academic program development; the effectiveness of the processes used to assess the BOT and to evaluate the higher level administration such as the President, senior management (mostly the Vice Presidents and other institutional level directors), Institutional Directors, and Chancellors; how the governance system addresses changes in services, academic programs and administrative processes, and how effectively are they conveyed to NUC’s constituents. The assessment of the effectiveness of the governance and administration is analyzed. The professional development effectiveness is also assessed.

The chapter concludes with the strengths, challenges, recommendations and suggestions related to the standard, as well as a summary.

**Governance System**

As a private, for-profit institution, NUC’s governance system consists of a BOD, a BOT, an EC, an Academic Board, and a Student Advisory Council. These bodies have the responsibility of assuring that the mission and goals of the institution are satisfactorily accomplished. The governance system’s end result is to guarantee that teaching and learning flourish at NUC in which the student will derive the highest satisfaction both from the academic offerings and the faculty instructional process, as well as from the quality of student, academic and administrative services received. NUC also has in place a Student Advisory Council which is described later in this standard. *Appendix 55 Organizational Chart* includes this chart for NUC, clearly showing the structure of NUC’s governance system.

**Board of Directors (BOD)**

NUC, IBC, POPAC, FTC, and the Digital Animation and Visual Effects (DAVE) School are part of a system called the EduK Group (*now NUC Corporate*), which is a corporate structure headquartered in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. NUC is a wholly owned subsidiary of IBC, Inc., whose majority owner is Leeds Equity Partners IV, LP, a partnership with 72% ownership in IBC, Inc. The BOD is a corporate body appointed by shareholders and was established to ensure financial stability and appropriate investment
in NUC and the other educational entities within the EduK Group (now NUC Corporate). The BOD is guided by its legally approved set of bylaws (Appendix 56 Amended and Restated Bylaws of Leeds IV Advisors, Inc.). The BOD is currently composed of three members. They include:

- Kevin Malone – Leeds Equity Partners
- Scott VanHoy – Leeds Equity Partners
- Michael Bannett – The EduK Group (now NUC Corporate)

Scott VanHoy has participated on the BOD of NUC since 2011. Mr. Kevin Malone joined the BOD in June 2014. Mr. Michael Bannett, who is also CEO of the EduK Group (now NUC Corporate), joined the Board in 2015. Scheduled board meetings are held on a quarterly basis inclusive of the annual meeting but additional meetings may be held during the year as needed. The EduK corporate (now NUC Corporate) mission, supported by the BOD, is as follows:

*The EduK Group (now NUC Corporate) supports all of its schools to achieve their respective missions through proper resourcing, administrative support, integration, expertise, and SERVICE.*

Guided by the above mission and a legally approved set of bylaws, the BOD reviews budgets, strategy, and institutional performance while searching for potential synergies between EduK (now NUC Corporate) institutions. Examples include student information systems, technology, payroll and benefits administration, procurement and other areas in which the scale and resources of the EduK (now NUC Corporate) system have benefited individual institutions. While NUC controls its own annual budget and all academic and daily operational decisions, the BOD occasionally provides access to incremental resources (fiscal, technological, legal, etc.) for innovative learning resources, technology, equipment and physical facilities that are periodically updated to stimulate a teaching and learning process of the highest quality (NUC Strategic Goal I). The Board is also committed to continuous institutional development and improvement through support of initiatives such as regional and programmatic accreditation, strategic planning, online learning, and other initiatives.

The BOD appointed Michael Bannett, as the CEO of EduK Group (now NUC Corporate) in September 2014. Mr. Bannett has over 30 years of experience in the financial services, consulting and education areas. He has worked in a number of Fortune 500 companies in the US, Latin America and Spain and was CEO at *Grupo Planeta de*
*Agostini* before being appointed at EduK Group (*now NUC Corporate*). *Grupo Planeta de Agostini* provides post-secondary education both on ground and online. Mr. Bannett has an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor’s degree from Trinity College. As the Chief Executive, Mr. Bannett leads corporate operations in support of EduK’s (*now NUC Corporate*) educational institutions. The CEO supervises the Senior Leadership Team, comprised of both corporate and school leaders, to work as business partners in pursuit of the highest possible operational outcomes. The Senior Leadership Team of the EduK Group (*now NUC Corporate*) includes the Presidents of all the institutions within the EduK Group (*now NUC Corporate*), and other top executives of the EduK Group (*now NUC Corporate*) including the SVP of Finance, VP of Human Resources, and the VPCRA, among others.

**NUC Board of Trustees (BOT)**

Since 2009, a BOT further governs NUC. The BOT is the policy making body that reflects the interests of its constituents and the community in its decisions and activities, safeguarding the mission, educational quality and academic integrity. This Board is fully committed to fulfill its responsibilities to ensure the quality and integrity of NUC in the administrative, academic, and student services.

The BOT consists of internal and external (independent) members. A majority of the trustees are independent members. As per the NUC BOT Bylaws, the authorized number of voting members of the BOT are not less than five nor more than 9 members not including the NUC President. The BOT includes 4 male and 4 female members from diverse professional backgrounds including academic, legal, medical, financial, and insurance fields. *Table VII.1* illustrates the BOT members, their occupations, and years on the Board. Dr. Gloria Baquero, the NUC President, is an ex-officio non-voting member of the BOT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Years on the BOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mr. Antonio Ginorio</td>
<td>Retired Certified Public Accountant</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dr. Gloria Baquero-Lleras</td>
<td>NUC President</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dr. Carmen Z. Claudio</td>
<td>NUC Past President, Consultant</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sylvette Rivera, M.D.</td>
<td>President, CEO UTICORP</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mr. Marcos A. Vidal Gámbaro</td>
<td>President of GBC(Insurance Company)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mr. Alberto Estrella, Esq.</td>
<td>Attorney, Managing Partner, Estrella Law Firm</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ms. Minerva Rivera, Esq.</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mr. Josue Medina</td>
<td>NUC Corporate - SVP of Finance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The BOT is guided by its Bylaws (Appendix 57) and by a Conflict of Interest Policy that addresses actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. The bylaws state that “It is the affirmative obligation of each member of the BOT to avoid both actual conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest. A Trustee who is found to have acted in violation of this provision shall be subject to removal for cause as provided in these Bylaws”. (Appendix 58 BOT Conflict of Interest Policy). Upon receipt of the latter, each Trustee is asked to review it carefully and sign a statement (annually) that he/she has read it, understands its content and agrees to abide by it.

BOT meetings are held at NUC’s campuses on a quarterly basis or as often as necessary to conduct business. No Board member is paid for his/her service as a trustee, but independent members receive a five hundred dollars ($500.00) per diem allowance for attendance at regular BOT meetings as is permitted in the BOT Bylaws (Article III. Item 9). No member of the BOT is a creditor of the institution, guarantor of institutional debt, or active member of a business of which the institution is a customer.

The BOT has in place three (3) standing committees and one (1) ad hoc/special committee. They include:

**Executive Committee (EC)**
The members (3) of the EC carry out the general governance responsibilities of the Board, during such periods and under such conditions as the Board by resolution specify, except that the EC does not have the authority to take any action that requires the ratification of the Corporate Board. The EC is responsible for evaluating the performance of Trustees respecting reelection and identifying new candidates to serve as Independent Trustees and proposing a slate of candidates for ratification by the Corporate Board.

**Academic Affairs Committee**
The purpose of the Academic Affairs Committee is to ensure a general oversight of the academic programs, student affairs and operations of the university. The Academic Affairs Committee is responsible for ensuring the adequacy and integrity of all academic and student services, including but not limited to counseling and information resources.

**Budget and Finance Committee**
The Budget and Finance Committee reviews and recommends the operating and capital budgets and generally oversees the financial affairs of the University for the purpose of ensuring the maintenance of its academic integrity, programs and services. The senior financial officer of the corporate parent entity serves as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee.
Health Committee
The Health Committee is an ad hoc committee that reviews and makes recommendations to the Board and the NUC President regarding possible new health related programs. It also may perform such other duties or responsibilities expressly delegated to the Committee by the Board from time to time related to the Committee’s purpose.

The BOT has developed the necessary mechanism to periodically assess its performance through a Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 59 BOT Self-Assessment Questionnaire). An annual self-assessment is carried out by the Board for the evaluation of its effectiveness. The questionnaire is composed of thirty-three questions designed to obtain members’ input regarding the performance of the Board as a group and of each of its committees.

As a result of one of the annual self-assessments of the BOT, the Board was expanded and now includes the maximum number of trustees as authorized in the Bylaws. Two additional female professionals were also added to the BOT for a total of four female BOT members. The newest members of the Board also bring with them a wider range of talent, expertise and occupational and personal backgrounds. Also as a result of one of the annual self-assessments, BOT members indicated that a more frequent communication was needed with the Corporate Board (BOD). Subsequently, the EduK Group (now NUC Corporate) CEO, representing the BOD, now attends and participates in BOT quarterly meetings.

New Trustees are oriented regarding their duties and responsibilities and how the BOT operates. They are also provided with a copy of the 2010 MSCHE publication Governing Boards: Understanding the Expectations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Current members are also updated on the institution’s achievement of its mission and goals during the regularly scheduled Board meetings as reflected in meeting minutes. NUC Trustees are also members of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). The AGB is the premier organization centered on governance in higher education. It provides leadership, counsel, and professional development to member boards, chief executives, organizational staff, policy makers, and other key industry leaders to help them navigate the changing education landscape. This organization also offers conferences, workshops and publications to its members regarding trends and best practices in governance. NUC assigned funds in its
2016-17 and 2017-18 budgets to enable some BOT members to participate in *AGB* webinars, workshops and its annual conference on Trusteeship.

The BOT is responsible for periodically reviewing and approving the mission, vision, values, goals, and organizational priorities. It is also responsible for assuring that NUC achieves its mission and maintains standards of excellence as an institution of higher education. This body safeguards the consistency of good practices within the operational management, suggests, reviews and approves policies. It also evaluates and recommends the adequacy of the financial resources and the annual operating budget for NUC that should be consistent with the criteria established by the Corporate Board and recommends strategic plans for the institution. In November 2015, the NUC President held a meeting with several BOT members at the Quality for Business Success (QBS) offices to discuss their recommendations relative to NUC’s Strategic Plan 2016-2020. Also, in January 2016, NUC held an offsite strategic planning meeting with representation from the faculty, administrative staff, and BOT.

In accordance with the resolution approved by the Corporate Board, specific responsibilities have been delegated to the BOT. *(Appendix 57: Board of Trustees Bylaws)* The scope of the Board’s role and responsibilities has been set forth in the BOT’s Bylaws. Trustees make certain that the development of the academic offerings is diversified and of recognized distinction. The offerings must respond to the needs of the student population and easily adapt to the continuous changes of the employment market and society on a local, regional, national and global scope. *(NUC Strategic Goal I).* As an example of this, the BOT at its March 2016 quarterly meeting approved the creation of an ad hoc/special committee to discuss other possible new health related academic offerings for NUC to consider. The committee has met on several occasions with health industry leaders such as the President of the Hospitals Association and current and former senior level State health department officials to discuss the current environment and needs of the health industry in Puerto Rico. The BOT also discussed at a special meeting held in December 2015, the 2015 Puerto Rico Health Department report covering the health situation on the island for the period from 2004-2013. A member of the BOT presented the report.
In this way, the BOT plays an important role in the approval of the planning of the new and existing academic offerings for NUC. The Board is acquainted with the new academic offerings through the President’s report to the Board in each of the meetings held by this governing body. Appendix 17 Process of Academic Offerings Approval shows a flowchart and a narrative illustrating the process that is carried out for the academic offerings approval and the functions carried out by the BOT.

The Board also has the authority to appoint, dismiss and evaluate the NUC President/CEO. Article II of the Bylaws of the BOT provides that one of the purposes of the BOT is to “[s]elect, oversee and evaluate the performance of the President of the University and act upon his or her reappointment or dismissal.” Pursuant to Article IV of the Bylaws, the BOT has delegated the performance evaluation process to its EC.

Over the past three years (2014-2016), the BOT Executive Committee has met to consider and evaluate the performance of the President of the University. The Committee reviewed the evaluations prepared by the corporate officers. In 2014, the information was provided by the CEO, Puerto Rico Operations, EduK Group (now NUC Corporate), and in 2015, the information was provided by the latter and by the CEO of the EduK Group (now NUC Corporate).

The objective and subjective data provided in 2014 was more detailed than the data provided in 2015. Consequently, during the evaluation process in 2015, the BOT’s Executive Committee conducted more in depth interviews with both the CEO, Puerto Rico Operations, EduK Group (now NUC Corporate), and the CEO of the EduK Group (now NUC Corporate). Furthermore, the Committee requested that for 2016, management provide the same level of detailed information as was provided for the 2014 evaluation. Based on the information received both years, the BOT’s Executive Committee adopted the evaluations and communicated this to the full Board during the following quarterly meeting. It is clear that the BOT takes this role seriously.

In addition to the formal performance evaluation process, the President is required to submit and present a formal report to the full Board during every quarterly meeting. Consequently, the Board is constantly able to evaluate the performance of the President of the University.
Since its creation, the BOT has been actively involved in executing its responsibilities in concert with all NUC stakeholders. The BOT has developed an agenda template that includes all tasks that will be addressed during the year divided in areas that are discussed at its quarterly meetings. These areas are mainly related to NUC’s governance and finances.

Over the BOT’s nine years of existence, its members have discussed and reviewed policies regarding appointment, promotions and dismissal of faculty members, and have attentively followed the accreditation processes that NUC is undergoing with MSCHE, ACEN, CAPTE and TEAC. They are also actively engaged in program and institutional growth and site renovation and expansion. The BOT is an integral part of NUC.

As part of the agenda at the BOT meetings, the NUC President updates the Board with regard to the university’s enrollment, accreditation, academic programs, compliance related matters, significant events and services and serves as an adviser to the BOT. BOT meetings are rotated by campus providing for members to get acquainted with the different physical facilities, staff and faculty members and the student services provided.

The BOT’s autonomy and participation as an active body in the decision making process is well documented. The BOT is actively involved in the financial statements analysis, as evidenced in BOT Finance Committee meeting minutes.

In short, the BOT’s major responsibility is ensuring that NUC maintains its integrity as an educational institution with academic programs of recognized excellence and financial stability in order to effectively achieve its stated mission, goals and objectives.

Academic Board

The Academic Board, the de facto Faculty Senate, consists mainly of faculty members, academic affairs deans and other members of the academic community. Its main purpose is to advise and make final recommendations, through the SVPAA, to the President with regard to learning outcomes assessment, curricular matters, and academic policies. The Academic Board is also responsible for overseeing the development of all academic activities of the institution, formulating and reviewing policies, guidelines and
procedures in relation to academic matters and playing an active role in assuring the quality of teaching in the University.

Although the Academic Board has been in place since 1999, it lacked the needed faculty and campuses representation as well as the internal systematic and formal structure. The Academic Board was reorganized in September 2011. It has its own set of bylaws (see Appendix 60) that delineate its membership, committees, meetings and procedures. The two Vice Presidents (SVPAA and VPSAE) serve as ex-officio members and the body consists of two faculty members from each campus, Deans of Academic Affairs from each campus including Distance Learning, and representatives from the Office of the Registrar, student affairs, and Educational Resources. The Academic Board meets at least once per trimester in ordinary session (three times per year). A detailed description of the Academic Board is presented in Chapter III Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience.

**Student Advisory Committee**

Its purpose is to provide a space for dialogue with students in order to receive their input regarding their NUC college experience. This committee is comprised of active students (new & continuing) as well as members of the different academic program student associations, with the objective of identifying student needs, situations, or observations regarding the services they receive from the different administrative and academic offices. At each meeting, information is provided concerning the actions taken with regard to the needs expressed in prior meetings. This committee was created in 2013 for implementation at all campuses and counts with a SOP to guide its operation. It does not have a set of bylaws. The Student Advisory Committee meets twice per academic term. Following each meeting, the minutes and attendance of the meeting are sent to the NUC Campus Chancellor, Academic Affairs Dean, and several institutional offices such as the VPSAE, and the Financial Aid and Bursar’s offices among others, in order to carry out the corresponding actions to attend the student needs presented.

**Administrative Structure**

NUC is characterized by its open door administration with minimal bureaucracy, ample channels of communication and efficient and effective decision making processes. Please refer to Appendix 61 for the comprehensive organizational chart reflecting the
administrative structure. Also, Figures VII.1 and VII.2 below illustrate the organizational structure of the President and her direct reports, and the Corporate Organizational structure respectively.

**Figure VII.1 Organizational Chart of President and her Direct Reports**

**Figure VII.2 Corporate Organizational Chart**
The President/CEO

The current NUC President was appointed in January 2011. President and CEO, Dr. Gloria E. Baquero assures that the institution continually strives to achieve its institutional mission and goals as one of her primary responsibilities. To accomplish this task, her responsibilities include the administration of NUC. President and CEO Baquero is well prepared for this leadership role. She has the authority and the autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position of President.

Dr. Baquero has extensive experience, including over 35 years in education and educational administration. Her academic background is in the science, administration and educational supervision fields. See Appendix 62, for her curriculum vitae. President Baquero’s academic preparation includes an Ed.D., M.Ed. and a Bachelor’s in Education, all from the University of Puerto Rico. She is responsible for leading and administering all the institution’s affairs in accordance with the guidelines of the BOT, State and federal laws and accrediting agency standards. She coordinates and implements the policy decisions of the BOT, as evidenced in her job description. Since her appointment, Dr. Baquero has guided the development and expansion of NUC, enhancing the already established culture of integrity that is asserted on the principles of educational quality, academic excellence, and service to the internal and external communities.

With regard to the issue of continuity of leadership there are no immediate plans to make any changes in leadership at NUC. The strength and stability of the senior leadership team assures the stability of the institution and the fulfillment of its mission. In addition, the policies and procedures implemented to guide institutional operations, coupled with the Board’s oversight, is additional evidence that the institution has mechanisms in place to secure its future. The BOT Bylaws, specifically, Article II.1 delineates the responsibilities of the BOT in the appointment of the President, and that authority extends to the appointment of an interim or acting CEO should that become necessary. Collectively, the Board’s role and responsibilities for the quality, integrity, and continuity of the institution will guide the needed process to ensure a smooth, appropriate and timely transition.

For the planned succession or selection of a new President, the BOT will constitute a Search Committee composed of Board members. It will also identify and
select a search firm with national experience in the recruitment of higher education leadership. The BOT will define a timeline for the search not to exceed 3-4 months. The BOT Presidential Search Committee will review and interview the prospective candidates referred by the search firm and once the candidate is selected will appoint the new President.

Executive Committee (EC)

As part of the NUC governance structure, the institution also has an EC comprised of the top ranking executives of NUC, led by the NUC President, and including the Chancellors and Vice Presidents, the Research & Development Director as well as several representatives from the corporate office including the SVP of Finance, the Facilities and Management Director, and the Senior Marketing Manager. President Baquero, as chair of the EC, establishes the agenda considering permanent agenda items as well as current priorities.

The EC meets regularly, usually on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis, to address current institutional matters, monitor institutional operations, follow up on the Institutional Strategic Plan and administer policies. This Committee has been in existence for over 20 years, thus constituting a very strong decision making organism.

NUC’s President/CEO is responsible for the implementation and the successful achievement of the institutional goals by suitable administration and supervision processes. Not only is the President in charge of overseeing the development and execution of the strategic plan, but she also acts as a liaison of communication between the BOT and the university staff, faculty and students. On the other hand, NUC’s President/CEO is the representative of the BOT in all matters relating to the university, which involve any external organization or professional group, and has the power to make organizational structure changes for the efficiency and effectiveness of the university’s daily operations. The President’s primary responsibility with the institution is established in the job duties and responsibilities of the President /CEO. (Appendix 63)

Senior-level Administration

The institution’s administrative team is also comprised of the Chancellors (due to the evolution of NUC into a university level institution) and the institutional department directors with functional expertise that facilitates the different common institutional areas
such as Compliance, Financial Aid, Bursar, Human Resources, Research and Development, Strategic Planning, NUC-Online Division and Admissions & Marketing.

These departments provide direction, advice and support to all NUC’s campuses. This structure, well understood by the varying stakeholders, has brought unity of purpose to the different departments, the necessary uniformity of policies, norms, and procedures, the sharing of effective strategies and practices while each campus is in charge of the campus and its operations. Most of all, the EC, with its well defined structure and functions, allows for a decision making process with ample participation of NUC’s directors and officers.

Furthermore, the institution’s senior leadership team has the appropriate skill set, degrees and training to carry out their responsibilities and functions. (Table VII.2)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Degree/Credential</th>
<th>Major/Discipline</th>
<th>Years of Service at NUC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avilés-Castañón, Ángel</td>
<td>Research &amp; Development Director</td>
<td>MS, MA Ed.Dc</td>
<td>Industrial/Organizational Psychology</td>
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<td>Bannett, Michael</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baquero, Gloria E.</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Ed D</td>
<td>Educational Administration/Supervision</td>
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<td>Estrada, Maria E.</td>
<td>SVP Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Ed.D</td>
<td>Education; Administration</td>
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<td>Flores, Aixa M.</td>
<td>VP Nursing Program</td>
<td>Ed D</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<td>García, Juanaita</td>
<td>Institutional Distance Education Director</td>
<td>Ed.D</td>
<td>Inst Tech and Distance Educ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutierrez, Yelitza</td>
<td>Senior Marketing Manager</td>
<td>BBA</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>López, Desi</td>
<td>VP Compliance</td>
<td>MSPS</td>
<td>Student Personnel Services</td>
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<td>Lucumi, Ana</td>
<td>VP Student Affairs &amp; Effectiveness</td>
<td>Ed D</td>
<td>Inf. Syst &amp; Educ Technology</td>
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<td>Martínez, Gaisy</td>
<td>Chancellor – NUC Arecibo</td>
<td>MAE</td>
<td>Administration &amp; Supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medina, Josué</td>
<td>SVP of Finance</td>
<td>BBA, CPA</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torres, José</td>
<td>Chancellor – NUC Rio Grande</td>
<td>DBA</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagán, Marisel</td>
<td>Chancellor – NUC Caguas</td>
<td>MA, Ed.Dc</td>
<td>Personnel Administration</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivera, Daliana</td>
<td>Chancellor – NUC Bayamón</td>
<td>DBA</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruiz, Daisy</td>
<td>Chancellor – NUC Mayagüez</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vázquez, Frances M.</td>
<td>Chancellor – NUC Ponce</td>
<td>MSN, Ed.Dc</td>
<td>Family Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wittenberg, Konrad</td>
<td>Facilities Management Supervisor</td>
<td>BBA</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

NUC has always believed in the decentralized model of organization and therefore has continued to move forward with this organizational structure, empowering and spreading responsibility for the decision making process across the campuses and departments to respond quickly to the emerging situations and to facilitate NUC’s expansion. The President, Vice-Presidents and Institutional Directors and Chancellors...
concentrate on the Institutional Strategic Plan and major decisions, whereas the other
decisions are undertaken by the deans, department directors, program leads, and other
people further down the organizational structure.

NUC is further supported by an impressive administrative structure that
collectively participates in guiding the institution to achieve its goals. Prior to Hurricane
María (February 2017), NUC had 394 administrative staff of which 368 were full-time
and 26 part-time. Post Hurricane María, NUC now has 387 administrative staff of which
371 are full-time and 16 part-time The employees’ files evidence that administrative staff
have the appropriate skills, competencies, degrees, and the required on-the-job training
in order to effectively carry out the NUC mission. 78% are female and 22% are male.
100% are Hispanic. 10% have an associate degree; 48% have a bachelor’s degree; 30%
have a master’s degree; 5% have a doctoral degree and 7% have no degree. The NUC
administrative structure including all staff members appears to be appropriately prepared,
with strong educational backgrounds to support their work.

New employees are carefully oriented about NUC’s culture, policies, and
regulations. The orientation process is carried out by NUC’s Institutional Human
Resources Office and covers NUC’s mission, vision, institutional values, history,
organizational structure, and employee benefits including vacation leave, sick leave, life
insurance, medical plan retirement plan and paid holidays. Policies regarding attendance,
sexual harassment, drug and alcohol prevention, campus security, and use of institutional
email among others are also covered.

The Institutional Policies and the Faculty Handbook provide clear documentation
regarding the organization’s lines of authority and the necessary information to support a
sound decision process that enhances the administrative leaders’ work and
responsibilities. The Vice-President of Academic Affairs works closely with the
Academic Deans to ensure that the academic programs are achieving their goals that are
aligned to standards of quality and to the institutional mission. To ensure that the criteria
and accreditation standards are met is also part of the SVPAA’s responsibilities. The
Academic Affairs Department oversees the curricula at the institutional level as well as
new curricular offerings so as to ensure that they are appropriate to NUC’s mission. This
department also promotes effective communication and collaboration on academic
matters among the campuses, guides the assessment process for the improvement of programs and services, defines and shapes strategic academic priorities, advises on the academic policies and supports academic initiatives to ensure the achievement of the institutional mission and objectives.

The VPSAE is responsible for providing support, guidance, services and other activities to maximize and develop students’ learning. This office assists students to foster personal values, interpersonal relationships and to create a deep sense of responsibility. Student’s active participation in community activities such as Zika prevention campaigns, helping their neighbors in cases of crisis as well as the Service Learning project are evidence of these types of activities. Under the supervision of the VPSAE are the Admissions and Marketing, Registrar, Special Services, Placement, Counseling, Business Reports (enrollment, retention, statistical) and Student Activities offices.

NUC’s Policy Approval Process begins when the need for a new policy is established based on federal and state regulations or internal procedures. The policy is originated by the interested office that may include faculty or staff. It is then circulated to the applicable offices for review. Once reviewed it is sent to the President for review, approval and implementation. Appendix 64 includes a flowchart demonstrating NUC’s policy approval process, which shows that the institution enables the participation of the faculty and administrative staff in the policy development. In section Assessment of faculty and staff satisfaction of this chapter, the level of satisfaction of staff and faculty with this process is analyzed.

Professional Development

As mentioned earlier, the organizational culture at NUC is focused on promoting and fostering the professional development and continuous improvement of its human capital. NUC defines professional development as the process by which an employee acquires knowledge and skills, through a variety of strategically planned activities, to strengthen and enrich his/her expertise. Professional development can be achieved through a variety of activities aligned with the employee’s professional needs and with the institution’s mission and goals. Some of these are financed by the institution and others are financed by the employee. Examples of these professional development
activities include membership and participation in educational associations, professional organizations, continuance of education, advanced degrees and attendance at seminars, webinars, conventions, and vendor shows among others. An employee’s professional development is a commitment of both the employee and the institution.

NUC’s Professional Development Plan seeks to:

1. Increase and strengthen employees’ technical knowledge and professional competencies in their work areas to promote and solidify a culture of service in all areas such as academic, student related and administrative.
2. Strengthen, modify and expand the values of NUC employees to encourage them to be better human beings and excellent institutional collaborators.
3. Have each employee understand that continuous quality of service depends, in great measure, on his/her professional development. This should be an institutional as well as an individual commitment.
4. Continue promoting employees’ capacity and attitude to become effective leaders at different administrative levels of the institution.

NUC’s growth and development has always been predicated on valuable human resources and strategic planning principles and processes. As part of these efforts, the institutional community participates in activities geared to strategically re-evaluate its academic and administrative priorities. Some of these activities include:

1. Meetings with directors and program leads (academic and administrative) to strengthen work groups, share experiences and concerns and discuss areas, which need attention and improvement.
2. Direct participation in the budget development process and the annual action plan.
3. Bi-monthly meetings of the EC.

During the period of 2013-2016, $741,654.00 was allocated for professional development. (For additional details of the Professional Growth Budget by Year, please refer to Chapter III. Table III.6)

Periodic Assessment of the Leadership, Governance, and Administration

NUC believes in continuously evaluating its processes and performance to measure its results and to make certain that the strategic plan is being implemented, evidenced by the student and staff satisfaction surveys, the strategic meetings, and the faculty and staff satisfaction surveys. NUC carries out an annual evaluation process for leadership position employees in order to measure compliance with their duties and responsibilities as well as the established goals.

NUC has instituted a Performance Management Program (PMP) that emphasizes a continuous process of planning, communication, evaluation and development rather than a one dimension and more traditional performance appraisal process (See Appendix...
The PMP consists of a mid-year and end of year review. Also, the results of this assessment serve to identify areas in need of professional development. The PMP instrument measures four components: (1) business objectives, (2) functional objectives, (3) values/behavior, and (4) professional development and growth. It was formulated to enhance two-way communication, to clarify job expectations and performance standards, goals and metrics and to plan, discuss and implement professional development.

In terms of faculty participation in the decision making process, NUC has strengthened and increased the participation of faculty in its satisfaction survey. During the last phase of satisfaction questionnaires administered in 2017, nearly 85% of faculty completed the survey as compared to a participation of 75.23% in 2014. About 80.0% of the faculty feels that they have participated in the planning processes either at the institutional or program level. These results show an increase of 13% of satisfaction since 2014. In order to broaden faculty participation in the decision making process, faculty have been selected to participate on different committees such as: Retention and Assessment Committees at the campus level as well as several committees of the Nursing Program which were created to increase the participation of the faculty in the decision making of the program. As part of the Self-Study Report (SSR) process and the current academic structure in place, the NUC Academic Board (NAB) continues to be reinforced. Faculty participation at all campuses has increased on the NAB. In addition, representation of the Registrar, ERC’s Directors and the VPNP was added. Faculty members actively participate in the election of their representatives at the beginning of each academic year. In addition, permanent committees were structured with a majority of faculty as members. In Chapter III Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, this change is analyzed in detail.

The faculty academic freedom policy is included in the Faculty Handbook. It allows faculty to implement instructional strategies to enable student learning. A great majority of the faculty feels that NUC supports academic freedom (87.19%). The administrative staff seems to be also empowered and allowed to implement their knowledge and experience into the organizational development. Among the administrative staff, 95.85% expressed satisfaction with the Degree of involvement with my Work Team.
Staff was asked about their participation in the decision making process through the following questions: (1) *My participation is valued in achieving the goals of my department*, and (2) *Different alternatives are offered to express my ideas and opinions*. Their responses as totally agree or agree were 84.48%, and 72.85%, respectively. This denotes that over 80% of the staff perceives that they are valued in achieving the goals but there’s a lower satisfaction with alternatives to express ideas and opinions. NUC should strive to improve their staff’s awareness of their participation in the decision making process. Priority should be given to expand the participation of staff in committees and workgroups in special projects. They should be made aware that they are being invited to offer their points of view on current issues and their recommendations and opinions should be considered through diverse participation strategies.

One of the strengths of NUC is its organizational culture. The high stability of faculty and staff, the open door environment, faculty and staff understanding of the most significant tasks of their supervisors and their relationship as well as the traditional familiarity between its members and their interpersonal relations propitiate a minimum bureaucracy and a feasible participation in the decision making process. Regarding interpersonal relations, faculty perceives that relations are cordial and open between members of their team or department. Faculty was asked if *My supervisor provides timely feedback on my work*. Their response was 89.65% affirmative. Also, Faculty was asked regarding their perception about *My participation in the achievement of the objectives of my program is valued*. Their response was 85.28% affirmative.

NUC is a strong believer in the need to offer quality of service as a distinctive niche of the organization. This process is strongly attached to a well-defined communication process. The faculty and staff perceptions of the communication process were analyzed when asked if “the current level of communication supports the achievement of the institutional goals”.

The FSQ and StSQ included items directed toward their assessment of NUC’s administration, specifically those related to staff duties and responsibilities and professional development. Table VII.3 presents the results of the survey administered from December 2016 through February 2017.
Table VII.3 Faculty (2017) and Staff Opinions on Issues Related to Administration Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The institution provides me opportunities for my professional development</td>
<td>89.84%</td>
<td>69.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation is valued in achieving the goals of my department</td>
<td>85.28%</td>
<td>84.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor provides timely feedback on my work</td>
<td>89.65%</td>
<td>85.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I comply with the annual training plan required to keep me updated in my professional field</td>
<td>97.16%</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In terms of professional development, 69.42% of staff felt that the administration is interested in their professional future by helping them identify the development areas of need. Although these results are not consistent with NUC goals for staff satisfaction it’s important to address that an increase of 12.22% of satisfaction was achieved since the last StSQ questionnaire. This perception presents a challenge to the Human Resources Department and supervisors, since there is ample evidence of the professional development of the staff in their files, but they do not feel that what is received is enough. A possible explanation to this perception is the lack of a more systematic staff professional development as it exists for faculty. Also, there is a possible lack of effective communication in order to make staff aware of the professional development activities held and the staff professional development plan that the Human Resources Department follows.

In contrast with this opinion, faculty feels that NUC provides enough support to reinforce their professional development (89.84%). NUC administers a specific needs assessment instrument that faculty complete every August and that serves as the baseline for the professional development activities of the year. These results are used to determine professional development activities in order that particular needs of the faculty are met.

**Strengths, challenges, suggestions, and recommendations**

As part of the self-study process as well as NUC’s continuous improvement culture, strengths and challenges have been identified, recommendations from the work group have been analyzed, and some strategies are already in place or form part of the action plan of the department or group to whom it concerns, in order to address the issues.
**Strengths**

- The BOT has a high level of commitment and enthusiasm, and the depth and breadth of experience and expertise to contribute to NUC’s improvement and fulfillment of its mission and goals.
- NUC has processes in place to assess the BOT and to evaluate the President, VP’s, Institutional Directors and Chancellors.
- The governance responsibilities are clear and available through the BOT bylaws, staff and faculty manuals.
- Very well defined reporting lines are understood by the faculty and staff that facilitate ongoing communication and necessary discussion related to daily operations and progress made toward strategic objectives.
- The NUC’s EC, which has been in existence for over twenty years and meets periodically to review institutional priorities, monitor operations, and address matters of concern, provides the appropriate leadership and oversight of NUC.

**Challenge**

No challenges have been identified for this standard.

**Suggestions**

1. Continue developing and strengthening staff in executive functions as part of succession planning.
2. Expand professional level opportunities for staff

**Recommendations**

No recommendations have been identified for this standard.

**Summary**

The institution complies with Standard VII – *Governance, Leadership and Administration* and demonstrates fulfillment of Requirements of Affiliation 12, 13, and 14. The institution’s governance structure and corresponding process of decision-making is clear, transparent, and supportive to all the various stakeholders and allows NUC to carry out its stated mission and goals.
Part II: Summary of NUC Self-Study Recommendations by Standard

Standard I: Mission and Goals

Create policy to review NUC Mission.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

1. Consider additional ethics and integrity related topics in the institution’s portfolio of professional development activities.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

1. In order to meet the challenge mentioned above, it is suggested to review faculty evaluation criteria, according to the expectations of the 21st century professor profile and Outcomes Based Education.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

No recommendations have been identified for this standard.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

No recommendations have been identified for this standard.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

1. Continue reinforcing the managerial staff knowledge of the budget planning and process in order to better monitor the priorities and resource allocation of financial resources in each campus and administrative units.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration

No recommendations have been identified for this standard.
APPENDICES