



UAGM Gurabo Self-Study

2024



UNIVERSIDAD
ANA G. MÉNDEZ
UAGM
Recinto de Gurabo

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Common Acronyms at UAGM Gurabo Campus

Common Acronyms	Official Common Acronyms Titles
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AACRAO	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
ACEN	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
ACUC	Animal Care and Use Committee
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
Bb	Blackboard
CAA	Center for Academic Advising and Counseling
CAAC	Academic Advisory and Counseling Center
CAEP	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
CASA	Center for Academic Learning and Services
CBT's	Virtual Trainings Human Resources
CREE	Center of Resources for Educational Excellence
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education
EARS	Early Academic Referral System
EI	Evidence Inventory
ENGS 152 & 153	Fundamentals of Speaking, Reading and Writing in English I y II
EO/G	Educational Outcomes/Goals
EO	Expected Outcomes
FAFSA	Free Application of Federal Student Aid
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
GEC	General Education Component
HIGS 201	History and Culture of Puerto Rico
HR	Human Resources
HUGS 101 y 102	World Cultures I y II
IBC	Institutional Biosafety Committee
IO/G	Institutional Outcomes/Goals
INGS 201	Introduction to Information Literacy, Research, and Writing
IRB	Institutional Review Board
JIP	Puerto Rico Board of Post-Secondary Institutions (JIP by its acronym in Spanish)
MAGS 120I	Introductory Algebra
MSCHE	Middle States Commission on Higher Education
MSN	Master of Science in Nursing
OCIT	Office of Information Technology and Communications and Academic Technology (OCIT by its Spanish Acronym)
OSEI	Office of Services for Students with Disabilities
PCMAS	Puerto Rico Teacher Certification Exam (PCMAS by its Spanish acronym)
PP	Predominant Priorities
PSEC	Student Support Services Program
ROA	Requirements of Affiliation

RQ	Research Question
SAP/ NPAS	Satisfactory Academic Progress
SC	Standard Criteria
SCC	Standard Compliance Criteria
SLO's	Student Learning Outcomes
SPGS 152	Fundamentals of Reading and Writing
SPGS 250	Writing Techniques
SUAGM	Sistema Universitario Ana G. Méndez (SUAGM, by its acronym in Spanish)
UAGM	Universidad Ana G. Méndez
UAGM-GC	Universidad Ana G. Méndez - Gurabo Campus
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
WG	Working Group

Glossary of Common Terms Used at UAGM Gurabo Campus:

Cross- Check with MSCHE Common Term

Common Terms	UAGM Gurabo Campus Definition of Common Terms: Cross-Check with MSCHE Common Terms
Student Learning Goals	Educational Learning Outcomes or Institutional Educational Goals
Strategic Priorities of UAGM President	Guidelines and priorities that will serve to guide UAGM operations for (3) academic years (2021-22 to 2023-24): new academic programs; strengthening of enrollment and student retention; strengthening academic and student areas; research initiatives that attract sponsor funds; internationalization. initiatives; emphasis on hybrid courses, "online" courses, and "virtual classroom" technology; strategies for the fiscal strengthening.
UAGM Gurabo Campus General Education Goals	UAGM GE Goals correspond to MSCHE definition of Educational Outcomes.
UAGM Gurabo Campus Institutional Goals	UAGM Gurabo Campus Institutional Goals are twofold: 1. UAGM Mission Goals (8) which correspond to MSCHE definition of Institutional Outcomes. UAGM Gurabo Campus Strategic Goals that underline the Gurabo Campus Strategic Development Guidelines 2021-2024, which correspond to what MSCHE name as Strategic Plan.
UAGM Gurabo Campus Strategic Development Guidelines 2021-2024	UAGM Gurabo Campus Strategic Development Guidelines corresponds to what MSCHE refer to as Strategic Plan.

Strategic Vectors	Areas of strategic priorities upon which the strategic planning is developed and serve to prioritize its objectives, goals, and initiatives.
Core Strategic Vectors	Academia, Research, Student Development and Services, and Public Function.
Support Vectors	Human Resources and Organizational Development, Physical and Technology Infrastructure, and Fiscal Strength
Assessment and Improvement Vector	Institutional Quality and Effectiveness
Banner	Banner is an administrative software application developed specifically for higher education institutions by ELLUCIAN. Banner maintains student, faculty, course, alumni, financial, financial aid, and personnel data. Supports functions that need to be carried out for an institution to run efficiently.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Executive Summary

The Sistema Universitario Ana G. Méndez Inc. (SUAGM) is a non-profit corporation that develops and manages educational entities for the benefit of the communities where its institutions are established in and outside of Puerto Rico. SUAGM is the main corporate and legal entity, which manages two units: Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM), with its three campuses and nine university centers in Puerto Rico, and Ana G. Méndez University (AGMU), which has the Online Campus and three centers in the United States. The president of SUAGM is also the president of the two units; he is the main academic and administrative leader of the corporation and the university. The president also chairs the University Board of the UAGM. The University Board is in charge of promulgating the rules, policies, and regulations, that pertain to the university and its campuses. This is done in harmony with the Bylaws, the Corporate Bylaws of the SUAGM, the executive orders of the President, and the resolutions and regulations approved by the Board of Directors of the SUAGM. The SUAGM responds to a Board of Directors, which is the highest governing body of the corporation that ensures compliance with the strategic plans of the administrative, academic and student areas.

The Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM) is a private, non-profit higher education institution founded in 1949. The institution is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and licensed by the Board of Postsecondary Institutions of Puerto Rico (JIP). It has three main campuses and nine university centers located in Puerto Rico, and three branch campuses in Florida. In addition, it owns the only television channel in Puerto Rico affiliated with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). UAGM has an enrollment of approximately 21,000 students and offers about 246 academic programs that include technical certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureates, masters, post-graduate certificates, and doctorates.

University entities under UAGM are directed by a systemic chancellor who is appointed by the president. However, all university campuses have their individual licenses, are academically

autonomous, and have their own mission and strategic plans according to the challenges and opportunities of the respective markets where they operate. Similarly, each campus has an Academic Senate that is chaired by the vice chancellor (CEO).

The Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) is a private, non-profit, non-sectarian, higher education institution licensed under the laws of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Federal Government. As previously mentioned, UAGM-GC is one (1) of the three (3) campuses in Puerto Rico that is integrated into Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM). The Gurabo Campus has academic offerings that include certificates, associate, bachelor's, master's, post-graduate certificates, and doctoral degrees.

UAGM-GC evolved from a two-year college called Puerto Rico Junior College (PRJC) that was established in 1949. PRJC received its first accreditation from Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (now MSCHE) in 1959. In 1968, a campus in Gurabo was formed and that campus later became known as Colegio Universitario del Turabo in 1972 and began to offer bachelor's degrees. The name was changed to Universidad del Turabo in 1981, and the institution began to offer graduate degrees. After careful planning, an institutional integration process took place in 2019, and all three SUAMG institutions in Puerto Rico (Universidad del Turabo (UT), Universidad del Este (UNE), Universidad Metropolitana (UMET) changed their names to Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM), along with the city corresponding to campus. What used to be UT became Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC). Today, UAGM-GC has four (4) additional locations in Puerto Rico: UAGM Barceloneta, UAGM Cayey, UAGM Ponce, and UAGM Yabucoa; and three (3) branch campuses in the state of Florida (Metro Orlando, Tampa Bay, and South Florida).

The Universidad Ana G. Méndez mission states that UAGM is a private non-profit educational institution, committed to the quality of teaching, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and internationalization. It serves a diverse student population through a multi-campus structure. The UAGM aims to contribute to the formation of citizens committed to the welfare of the local and global community. In addition, the university offers post-secondary, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education academic programs, through the various face-to-face and distance modalities, framed in the highest quality standards. The Universidad Ana G. Méndez vision is that it will be recognized as an institution focused on academic excellence, research, and service, with social responsibility with local and global projection.

The Universidad de Ana G. Mendez, Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) also has its own mission which is pronounced in all of its academic programs and services and are promulgated through the university community. UAGM-GC's mission states that the *Gurabo Campus and its localities are accredited units of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez committed to academic excellence, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization, and socio-humanistic development of a diverse population. Through the development of academic and professional skills, citizens capable of contributing to the local and global community are formed. As such, its resources support postsecondary, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education academic offerings, through various modalities, framed in the highest quality standards.*

Eligibility Certification Statement

Universidad Ana G. Mendez Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) certified its compliance with relevant federal regulations recognized by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and developed by the United States Department of Education (USDE). The compliance with the given regulations were

submitted to the MSCHE through its portal and includes evidence of accessibility for constituents regarding the documentation of institutional policies and procedures, and relevant information reflecting current practice to consumers.

Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

As part of this self-study process, the institution conducted an in-depth study of its processes, policies, and services addressing the following broad outcomes:

1. Demonstrate how Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo Campus meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation to achieve reaffirmation of accreditation.
2. Demonstrate how UAGM Gurabo assesses continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution's mission and its institutional priorities.
3. How the campus engaged the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.
4. Demonstrate how it has Assessed UAGM-GC's processes of academic and student integration to attain its institutional mission.

Major Findings and Opportunities for Improvement

Standard I: Mission and Goals

UAGM -GC mission and goals guide all aspects on institutional effectiveness, improvement, and sustainability. The Gurabo Campus goals are realistic, achievable, and consistent with its mission and in compliance with higher education requirements and expectations. UAGM-GC's mission and goals guide decision making related to planning, resource allocation, programs and curriculum development, definition of institutional and educational outcomes, and scholarly and creative activities. Mission and goals are widely known by the UAGM-GC internal and external stakeholders and are periodically assessed. The last revision of the institutional mission was conducted in 2019 as part of the UAGM Integration Project.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

UAGM-GC evidences the integration of ethics and integrity in its internal and external activities in support of its mission and goals through comprehensive and up-dated policies and procedures. The UAGM-GC fosters an organizational climate centered on respect among internal and external constituents, inclusion, diversity, and discrimination free in compliance with its mission and goals, and with federal, state, and Commission regulations and requirements. It is conscious of local and global changes and responds proactively to maintain its pertinence in higher education by supporting its mission and goals through policies and procedures. UAGM-GC's ethical standards and integrity underline all of its contracts and commitments with students, faculty, administrative staff, and the public. Ethics and integrity are central throughout all units, structures, activities, and processes.

Opportunities for Improvement in Context of Findings

1. Use different media for training and constant communications with employees, faculty, and students on ethical principles, values, copyright, plagiarism, policies, procedures, controls, and prohibitions.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

UAGM-GC provides diverse licensed academic offerings based on the institutional mission and vision. Framed in the UAGM-GC planning, institutional goals, educational goals, institutional assessment, and general education, competencies are developed and measured across the curriculum. Student learning experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed by highly credentialed faculty who comply with teaching, student learning assessment, scholarly inquiry, and community service. UAGM Gurabo provides its students with sufficient, services, and resources to support academic programs and students' learning through enriched cocurricular and extracurricular activities, specialized laboratories and equipment, field experiences, capstone courses, services for students with disabilities, as well as opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking in graduate level curricula. Student learning assessment is a formal and consistent process that strengthens student learning at UAGM. A new integrated assessment model and processes have been instituted, and the results are used for the improvement of academic programs and learning experiences, regardless of the instructional modality, program pace/schedule, and level.

Opportunities for Improvement in Context of Findings

1. Faculty participation in research projects and the submission of proposals for external funding is not widespread throughout the institution.
2. Financial constraints limit the opportunities for faculty promotions in rank.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

UAGM-GC policies and procedures regarding student's experience are clearly defined, implemented, and updated considering the needs of 21st century students. Recruitment and admission policies are aligned with the UAGM-GC mission, strategic guidelines, and institutional values to facilitate student retention and success across all levels and instructional modalities. Student information is regulated by the FERPA Act and the institutional Policy for the Conservation and Disposal of Student Documents under the Registrar's Office. Policies, procedures, and services regarding athletics, student life, and extracurricular activities are clearly developed and implemented. Support services provided to students such as health, counseling, psychological services, tutoring, recreational and athletic activities, strengthen the educational experiences of students. Technology supports the access of students and the entire university community to information regarding admissions, enrollment, course selection, academic support services, student life, and extracurricular activities. The UAGM-GC physical facilities promote a safe and healthy environment for all students, including those specialized services for students with disabilities and veteran students. UAGM Gurabo Campus' assessment process provides data to improve students' academic experiences, services, and resources. UAGM Gurabo Campus regularly evaluates its academic and student support services using institutional tools in collaboration with the institutional assessment unit. During the integration process, the curriculum, organizational structure and services, and job descriptions were reviewed to improve students' experience.

Opportunities for Improvement in Context of Findings

1. Enhance strategies for keeping students informed of all policies, procedures, and services.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

The student learning assessment process focuses on the attainment of learning goals across programs. The assessment model supports continuous improvement at the course, program, and institutional level. The General Education Component is integrated in academic programs and is aligned with the

Institutions' mission. Academic programs assess students learning according to the curricular map in accordance with institutional and professional competencies. Support to faculty is provided periodically regarding the assessment model. Recommendations for enhancing education effectiveness and improving learning emerge from assessment results. The Integrated Assessment Model is continuously evaluated to ensure accurate student learning results. The assessment process is used to improve student learning by identifying actions to achieve learning goals.

Opportunities for Improvement in Context of Findings

1. Establish an assessment committee integrating leaders from campus and additional locations to foster current and emerging assessment practices in UAGM Gurabo Campus.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

UAGM Gurabo Campus' planning is an on-going institutionalized, three-level process that is aligned with the institution's mission and assessment results. It encompasses the academic and administrative constituencies, and serves as a guide to the institution's development, resource allocation, and improvement. The financial planning and budgeting process provides for constituents' participation with individual and unit work plans directly tied to the university's strategic plan. Financial planning and budget strengthen adequate allocation of resources to support UAGM Gurabo Campus operations, institutional effectiveness, and sustainability. It serves to improve student learning, student support services, academic offerings, highly qualified faculty, student retention, physical infrastructure, and updated technological equipment and services. UAGM has implemented effective and efficient measures to improve its financial liquidity and overall financial condition to maintain its financial sustainability. External funds are procured to implement special projects that are aligned with the strategic goals, needs, and priorities that support its mission and goals.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

UAGM has a clear and solid governing structure which supports the attainment of its mission and goals. UAGM board of directors is legally constituted to oversee institutional quality at the policy-making level with sufficient independence. In compliance with the conflict-of-interest policy, the Board appoints and evaluates the UAGM President (CEO) and assures that the CEO is assisted by qualified and sufficient administrators. It is responsible for the assessment the institution's governance, leadership, and administration, the attainment of the institution's mission and goals, and accountable for decision making of all university constituencies, including a self-governing body. The UAGM board of directors supports UAGM Gurabo Campus' attainment of its mission and goals through specific assignment of roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making at the campus level. UAGM Gurabo Campus has a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including the self-governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students in compliance with ROA 12, 14, and 15 and Standard VII accreditation criteria. The Vice Chancellor/CEO is the Chief Officer for the UAGM-GC and complies effectively with all the requirements to lead UAGM-GC by the granted authority for decision making. The Gurabo Campus Academic Senate's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in the UAGM Bylaws (2020) and in its own rules and procedures (2021). Each year during the annual Faculty Assembly, the Vice Chancellor shares the achievements of institutional goals and priorities with the faculty and administrative staff.

Opportunities for Improvement in Context of Findings

1. Continue promoting Employee Opinion and Satisfaction Survey participation to gather systematic evidence for continuous improvement, institutional quality, and effectiveness,

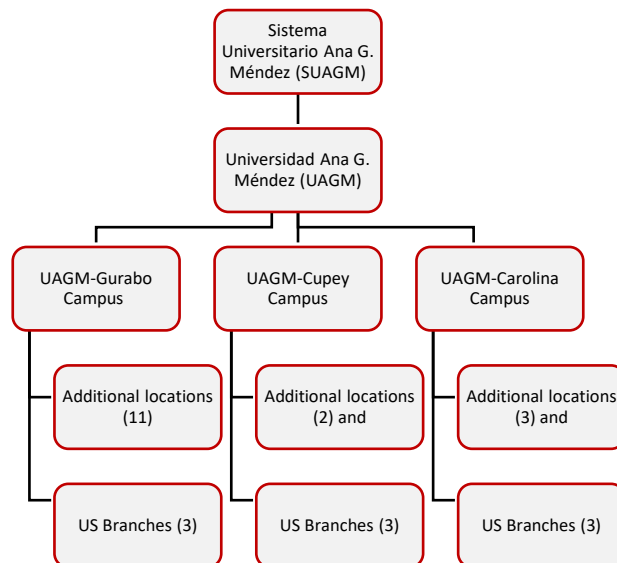
INTRODUCTION

UAGM Gurabo Campus Context

Universidad Ana G. Méndez-Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC), formerly Universidad del Turabo, is a nonprofit institution of higher education located 15 miles southeast of San Juan, Puerto Rico, within easy reach of the entire East-Central part of Puerto Rico. Its 140-acre suburban campus, and its fifteen buildings, provide an ideal atmosphere for the learning experience. The university currently operates ten (10) additional locations and three (3) US Branch Campuses. The additional locations are Universidad Ana G. Méndez - Barceloneta, Universidad Ana G. Méndez - Cayey, Universidad Ana G. Méndez - Yabucoa, and Universidad Ana G. Méndez - Ponce, Lebanon School District, Penn State Abington, Penn State Berks, Penn State University Lehigh Valley, St. Croix School District - Curriculum Center, and St. Thomas/St. John School District - Curriculum Center. I. The Branch campuses are Universidad Ana G. Mendez - Metro Orlando Branch Campus, Universidad Ana G. Mendez - South Florida Branch Campus, and Universidad Ana G. Mendez - Tampa Branch Campus.

During the 1940's, three distinguished educators, Dr. Ana G. Méndez, Dr. Florencio Pagán Cruz, and Mr. Alfredo Muñiz Souffront, recognized the need for new developments in the field of education that would keep pace with the social and economic advances that were taking place in Puerto Rico. In 1947, they began to lay the groundwork for establishing a modern institution of higher learning. In 1949, the Puerto Rico Junior College (PRJC) was founded and incorporated according to the laws of Puerto Rico on June 30, 1950. The Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education licensed the Institution on June 27, 1957, and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools accredited the institution on May 1, 1959. The PRJC set the foundation for the growth of UAGM. As part of this educational endeavor, in 1972, Colegio Universitario del Turabo (currently the UAGM Gurabo Campus) was established. In 1974, it was accredited by MSCHE and changed its name to Universidad del Turabo (currently UAGM Gurabo Campus). Since then, the institution has always received MSCHE accreditation, with its last reaffirmation in 2015.

Figure 1. SUAGM Integrated Organizational Chart



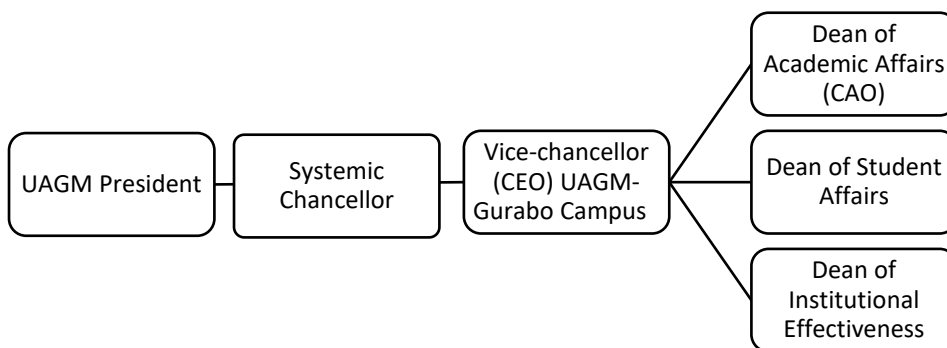
The nature and structure of SUAGM has been the result of 70 years of constant development and growth. SUAGM’s growth has been tied to the external conditions of the higher education market in Puerto Rico, as well as to its internal development, thus creating new institutions, different units, and new offerings in response to these external conditions. However, SUAGM’s development has resulted in a complex academic and administrative organization. In addition to this complexity, and the external factors that have impacted student enrollment, SUAGM began the academic integration of its institutions in 2017. In December 2018, SUAGM operated four institutions: Universidad del Turabo, Universidad Metropolitana, Universidad del Este, and Universidad Ana G. Méndez. In January 2019, SUAGM integrated its four institutions under a single name, Universidad Ana G. Mendez (UAGM): Universidad Ana G. Méndez-Gurabo Campus, Universidad Ana G. Méndez-Cupey Campus, and Universidad Ana G. Méndez-Carolina Campus (see Figure 1).

This strategic and comprehensive project began in 2017, and followed the model of an academic and student services integration that was geared to achieving a more effective institution that would meet the needs and aspirations of our diverse student body. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of hundreds of faculty members, deans, associates, and students, UAGM achieved its integration of the former universities as three coherent campuses in Puerto Rico under one name, one simplified and integrated catalog, one general education component, and one set of academic, student, and administrative policies. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of each campus holds the title of Vice-Chancellor with the corresponding faculties, responsibilities, and a representative governance body for decision-making at the campus level.

On February 26, 2021, the Puerto Rico Board of Postsecondary Institutions (*Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias – JIP*), which is the entity that authorizes the operation of post-secondary institutions and their academic programs in Puerto Rico, officially approved the institutional integration of Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM), and all its campuses, additional locations, programs, and students under a single license. As stated in the JIP Certification #2021-091, the license has been effective since May 25, 2021, and will expire on November 29, 2025. A renewal request will follow thereafter.

The administrative organization is outlined in the institutional Bylaws. The President is the chief executive officer of the organization and reports to the SUAGM's Board of Directors. All SUAGM members benefit from the Central Administration support services and resources in academic, administrative, and financial management. This includes support in the areas of academic affairs, financial affairs, planning and institutional effectiveness, student affairs, and administrative affairs. As a result of the corporate change, the academic administrative structure was revised and a new organizational chart for the Gurabo campus was implemented (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. UAGM Gurabo Campus Organizational Chart – Upper Leadership



The new structure includes a UAGM Systemic Chancellor who oversees the three institutions. Each institution will have a vice-chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor of UAGM-GC is the chief executive officer (CEO) and receives direct support from the campus' academic and administrative staff. Together, they are responsible for on and off-campus operations. The UAGM-GC Vice-chancellor (CEO) responds to the UAGM Chancellor, who responds to the President regarding all UAGM campuses' operations. Each campus has a Dean of Academic Affairs, a Dean of Student Affairs, and a Dean of Institutional Effectiveness.

Even though student and academic integration has been taking place, each of UAGM's campuses has distinctive characteristics and programmatic developments. The Gurabo Campus not only has singular geographical conditions that contrast with its urban sister campuses, but it also provides educational services in a different higher education landscape. Its location is less densely populated than the metropolitan area where the two other sister campuses reside. With less postsecondary developments in the region, the Gurabo Campus was able to increase its offerings, becoming the main higher education institution within the Central-East region of the island, and consequently the largest private institution in Puerto Rico. Academic programs in Engineering and Architecture are unique in the region and within the university system, and growing doctoral offerings are some of the programmatic differences that UAGM-GC exhibits.

UAGM Gurabo Campus Students

<p>Currently, UAGM-GC has seven (7) academic divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering, Design and Architecture • Sciences and Technology • Health Sciences • Liberal Arts • Business, Tourism and Entrepreneurship • School of Technical Programs • School of Professional Studies 	<p>UAGM-GC also has three (3) specialized schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Dental Medicine • School of Naturopathic Medicine • School of Veterinary Medicine
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The following tables show the distributions of UAGM-GC's degree levels and programs with highest enrollment respectively. As may be observed, academic programs offered at the bachelor and master's levels constitute the major degree levels. Throughout the years, the Gurabo Campus has been investing efforts in expanding its offerings at the doctoral level.

Students receive educational services from an academic staff of 181 full-time faculty members. Most full-time faculty members hold doctorates and master's degrees in their fields of expertise. At least 65% of full-time faculty hold a doctoral degree. The gender distribution of faculty is 53.9% female and 46.1% male. The US Branches count with full-time faculty members and 43% hold doctoral degrees. The gender distribution of faculty at the US branches is 57% female and 43% male. The institution serves a diverse student body, many from surrounding communities with varied socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The student population, with an enrollment of over 10,000, is mainly composed of young adults and professionals as illustrated in the following tables.

Table 1. Distribution of Academic Programs per Level

Academic Levels	Amount
<i>Technical certificates</i>	13
<i>Associate degrees</i>	29
<i>Baccalaureate</i>	49
<i>Master's</i>	43
<i>Doctorates (1 professional practice)</i>	10
<i>Professional, postbaccalaureate, graduate, and postgraduate certificates</i>	16
Total:	160

Table 2. Academic Programs with Highest Enrollments 2021-2022¹

Level	Main Campus and PR Additional Locations	US Branches
<i>Undergraduate</i>	BS Veterinary Technology –760 (9%)	BBA Management– 112 (18%)
	BS Biology – 573 (7%)	BSW Social Work– 97 (16%)
	BBA Management – 394 (5%)	BBA Accounting – 89 (14%)
<i>Graduate</i>	MPsy Counseling Psy. – 206 (11%)	MSN Family Nurse Practitioner – 305 (77%)
	MSAC Accounting (MAcy) –114 (6%)	MED School Counseling – 13 (3%)

Table 3. UAGM – Gurabo Campus 2021-2022 Total Enrollment Data

Locations	Levels		
	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
<i>Main Campus and PR Additional Locations</i>	8,150	1,931	10,081
<i>US Branch Campuses</i>	622	397	1,019
Total:	8,772	2,328	11,100

Table 4. UAGM Gurabo Campus 2021-2022 Student Profile

Criteria	Main Campus and Additional Locations (PR)		US Branch Campuses	
<i>Enrollment</i>	10,081		1,019	
<i>Ethnicity</i>	99% Hispanic		99% Hispanic	
<i>Sex</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
	60%	40%	77%	23%
<i>Average Age</i>	25-years-old		36-years-old	

¹ Percentage is calculated in relation to the total 2021-2022 enrollment data.

Criteria	Main Campus and Additional Locations (PR)		US Branch Campuses	
<i>Average Household Annual Income</i>	Undergraduate \$30,581		Undergraduate \$33,204	
	Graduate \$28,942		Graduate \$52,470	
<i>Enrollment Status</i>	<i>Full-Time</i>	<i>Part-Time</i>	<i>Full-Time</i>	<i>Part-Time</i>
	71%	29%	64%	36%
<i>Pell Grant Recipients</i>	83%		60%	
<i>Student Loans Recipients</i>	Undergraduate 20%		Undergraduate 68%	
	Graduate 73%		Graduate 89%	
<i>Academic Index</i>	3.29		3.83	
<i>Dependency level Undergraduate</i>	72% Dependent		15% Dependent	
<i>First Generation</i>	26%		47%	

There are noticeable contrasts in the Puerto Rico and US branches student profiles, as may be observed in Table 4. Data shows that some significant differences are age and dependency level. The student profile at the main campus and its locations in Puerto Rico are younger and more family dependent than its US branch campuses peers. It is important to highlight that Hispanic cultural groups are very diverse. While PR and US students served by UAGM-GC are generally Hispanic, there are cultural differences that create distinct environments at the branches and the main campus. The US branches reflect the diverse nationalities present at the states they are located at, different from the more nationally homogenous Hispanic group at the main campus and its locations in Puerto Rico.

Between 2013 and 2017, UAGM campuses experienced a period of enrollment reduction. Puerto Rico’s demographic tendencies have been characterized by factors such as the decrease in high school graduates, migration, and the ongoing economic recession, that challenge the Higher Education sector. Hurricane María in September 2017, the December 2019 – January 2020 earthquakes, and the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified sociodemographic factors that continue to impact student enrollment in all educational levels in Puerto Rico. By 2017, UAGM had already reflected an annual decrease in enrollment of 4%.

During the years 2017 and 2018, UAGM lost an additional 3,700 students (-10%) as a direct result of Hurricane María. In August 2019, returning students represented a loss reduction of -5%. It should be noted that, between 2015 and 2019, UAGM enrollment reflected the same changes in percentage of the population in the 15-19 age group in Puerto Rico. The following figure represents the correlation between UAGM’s enrollment loss and Puerto Rico’s population changes:

Table 5. UAGM 2015-2020 Enrollment Data

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
40,972	39,553 (1,439) -4%	38,094 (1,439) -4%	34,357 (3,737) -10%	32,515 (1,842) -5%
Population 15-19 (censo.estadisticas.pr):				
242,946 -4%	234,369 -4%	222,094 -5%	205,293 -8%	201,616 -2%

Self-Study Priorities

UAGM-GC has identified the following priorities (P):

- **Educational Excellence (P1)**
 - Provide an education of excellence that develops in students the skills that allow them to make positive contributions to their environment locally and globally; and maintain a teaching staff that responds to levels of excellence in all modalities.
- **Quality Student Support Services (P2)**
 - Provide academic, occupational, professional, and quality of life support services aimed at the integral formation of the student and the achievement of their academic goals.
- **Technological Infrastructure and Resources (P3)**
 - Allocate the necessary resources to promote innovation through the incorporation of technology in the learning and teaching processes considering the needs of the modern learner.

As part of the Self-Study Design process, the Steering Committee used the goals of the 2021-2023 Strategic Guidelines to survey the academic, administrative, and student community on institutional priorities. In 2020, UAGM Gurabo Campus had undergone a consultative, representative, and participatory process to establish the 2021-2023 Strategic Guidelines. As part of the planning process, the campus' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were considered to define strategic goals around eight vectors: Academia, Research, Student Services and Development, Public Function, Human Resources and Organizational Development, Physical and Technological Infrastructure, Fiscal Strengthening, and Quality and Effectiveness. This vector system is the planning framework used in UAGM strategic planning activities.

The survey process consisted of two questionnaires: one for faculty and administration using the Gurabo Campus' strategic goals, and the other for students, which included fourteen (14) statements related to the strategic goals. A Likert scale questionnaire was utilized to survey the level of importance of all institutional goals. The scale ranged from one to five; five being the level of highest importance, and

one, the lowest level of importance. Prior to administration, these surveys were submitted to a group of experts with experience on academic, student, and administrative affairs for the content validation.

The survey was announced by the Vice-Chancellor in the Faculty Assembly and via a campus-wide communication. The Chair of the steering Committee later sent a communication opening the survey with the support of the offices of Public Relations, Student Affairs and Marketing. Tables 6 and 7 show alignments between the selected priorities and UAGM’s mission and strategic vectors, and MSCHE’s Standards of Accreditation.

Table 6. *Alignment of Selected Institutional Priorities with the Institution’s Mission and Goals*

Concepts associated with the mission statement	UAGM Strategic Vectors	Priorities		
		P1	P2	P3
Academic Excellence	Academia, Physical and Technological Infrastructure, Fiscal Strengthening	P	P	P
Research	Research, Physical and Technological Infrastructure, Fiscal Strengthening	P		P
Innovation	Academia, Physical and Technological Infrastructure, Fiscal Strengthening	P	P	P
Entrepreneurship	Academia, Fiscal Strengthening	P		P
Internationalization	Academia, Student Service and Development	P	P	P
Socio-Humanistic Development	Academia, Student Service and Development, Public Function	P	P	
Diversity	Academia, Student Service and Development, Human Resources and Organizational Development	P	P	
Community Service	Academia, Student Service and Development, Fiscal Strengthening Public Function	P	P	

Table 7. *Alignment of Selected Institutional Priorities to MSCHE’s Standards for Accreditation.*

Priorities	Related MSCHE Standards						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Educational Excellence (P1)	P	P	P		P		P
Quality Student Support Services (P2)	P	P	P	P	P		P
Technological Infrastructure and Resources (P3)	P		P	P		P	P

Major Changes Since Last Accreditation

The milestones of our mission are to offer quality academic services, and to adapt to the continuous external changes. Since its last MSCHE visit, UAGM-GC has reviewed its processes, revised its academic offerings, received new accreditations and reaccreditations, and implemented administrative changes for the continuous evolution of the institution. The figure below shows a brief timeline of some of the campus’ milestones.

Figure 1. Gurabo Campus' Milestones 2015 - Present

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSCHE accreditation reaffirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACS recognition • APA initial accreditation of the Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program • CAA-ASHA reaffirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of student support services and community aid due to the impact of hurricanes Irma and María 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVTEA Gurabo initial accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name change Turabo-UAGM • State authorization of PhD in Cultural Studies • NAAB initial accreditation • LAAB-ASLA initial accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote academic and student services due to pandemic • State preliminary authorization of Doctorate in Dental Medicine • CAEP reaffirmation Teacher preparation programs • APA initial accreditation Psychology Internship Program • ACEND reaffirmation • CVTEA Ponce and Barceloneta initial accreditation • CCNE reaffirmation FNP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State preliminary authorization of first Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in PR • UAGM Student and academic integration • Title IV recertification • AACSB reaffirmation • CNME initial accreditation • NAACLS initial accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women Business Center inauguration • AVMA Consultative visit DVM • CCNE re-accreditation

For the past 5 years, UAGM has embarked on an administrative, academic, and student services integration process that began with the name change of its four institutions and the review of its missions. Henceforth, some academic programs were integrated taking into consideration the particularities of each of the campuses that are part of UAGM, and in order to attend to the needs and opportunities for the population it serves. This provided the opportunity for each campus not only to have the same programs, but also to have unique programs that can meet the characteristics and demands of prospective students.

Also, as part of the integration process, SUAGM decided to establish Ana G. Mendez University (AGMU) in the state of Florida. Since 2021, AGMU began to maintain the administration services for the UAGM institutions in each of the US Branch campuses in a shared space.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, major adjustments were made to give continuity to administrative tasks, services, and academic offerings to minimize the impact on students. Day-to-day work quickly moved to remote format and technological equipment was assigned to staff, faculty, and students. After the Island-wide lockdown put in place by the PR government, the university's administration and services continued remotely, and the academic offerings were able to resume in less than two weeks. Despite adjusting to a remote reality, many processes and issues that were being decided, renewed, or developed regarding the integration process were slow down to adequately meet the needs of the new reality that the pandemic imposed. As the institution began to take steps towards normality, it also began taking up pending issues for the continued improvement and the success of the population it serves.

Structure and Organization of the Self-Study Report

Universidad Ana G. Méndez – Gurabo Campus will follow a **Standards-Based Approach** to the Self-Study. UAGM considers that the Standards-Based Approach is consistent with the institution's strategic

planning and assessment framework. UAGM-GC also holds several programmatic accreditations and is well acquainted with the use of standards as a basis for practice, assessment, and compliance. Considering these, the selected approach will allow for a more structured and cohesive inquiry process for the self-study.

The Self-Study report is structured in eight (8) chapters and a conclusion. Seven of them are aligned with MSCHE's Accreditation Standards. The eighth chapter includes information of the US branch campuses. The final section of the document presents the Evidence Inventory Index. Each standard chapter includes the following section:

1. An introduction that states the Requirements of Affiliation, Institutional Priorities, and Research Questions addressed in the chapter.
2. A statement of each standard, criterion, and sub-criterion.
3. A narrative section which assesses how UAGM Gurabo Campus meets the criteria, the requirements of affiliation, and the applicable Institutional Priorities.
 - o Evidence that addresses the criteria included in the inventory is also incorporated with an indexing (reference) note **(Standard Number, Evidence Number)**.
4. A list of strengths, opportunities, and recommendations.

This entails a conclusion that states how UAGM Gurabo Campus meets the Standard, the Requirements of Affiliation, and next steps to be taken for continuous improvement.

Evidence Inventory

The documents included in the Evidence Inventory demonstrate how UAGM-GC meets each one of the seven (7) MSCHE Accreditation Standards and the Requirements of Affiliation. The Evidence Inventory (EI) is referenced in the chapter, a reference note is provided to indicate the code number of the document to facilitate its access. Each EI document is identified according to its first occurrence in the document or the relevance of the evidence in the standard. The document will be referenced with the same code number in later citations to prevent unnecessary duplication. Additional evidence will be provided upon request.

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.

The UAGM Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) Mission Statement is: *The Gurabo Campus and its locations are accredited units of Universidad Ana G. Méndez that are committed to academic excellence, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization, and the socio-humanistic development of a diverse population. By developing academic and professional competencies we form citizens capable of contributing to the local and global communities. Its resources support its post-secondary, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education academic offer, using diverse learning modes and following the highest standards of quality (S1-100).*

Chapter 1 provides evidence as to how UAGM Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) complies with the Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 15, Standard I Criteria, and Self-Study Institutional Priorities 1 and 3 in context of the five Research Questions of the inquiry conducted by Working Group 1 (WG-1). Working Group 1 identified and analyzed key findings and submitted recommendations that are achievable and consistent with the strategic direction set forth in the Gurabo Campus Strategic Development Plan 2021-2022, 2023-2024, and its Mission and Goals (S1-101).

RQ1	To what extent are UAGM- Gurabo Campus' goals realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with its mission?
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Appropriate and Realistic Goals

The UAGM- GC mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals and objectives are consistent with the SUAGM Strategic Development Guidelines and specify how UAGM-GC fulfills its mission. The mission, goals, objectives, and values are recognized by the institution's academic and administrative leadership, governing bodies, faculty, staff, and students. They are used to develop and implement institutional programs and practices, and to evaluate their effectiveness. The mission, goals, objectives, and values guide the ongoing planning, resource allocations, assessment outcomes and evaluation results for institutional improvement. UAGM-GC complements its mission by enhancing knowledge through excellence in teaching, fostering research, innovation, and the internationalization of its programs. The university is committed to graduating well-educated, professionally competent, and technologically literate students who think critically and apply ethical principles and values (S1-102). Through their knowledge of social systems and role as responsible citizens, students gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to the well-being of the community.

As an institution of higher education UAGM-GC is committed to:

- freedom of thought and expression
- excellence in teaching and the pursuit, generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge
- respect for the dignity of the individual
- respect for nature and the environment
- promote ethical, social, and cultural values
- recognize and respect diversity

- promote institutional excellence in planning, operations, and service
- promote human and esthetic sensibility

RQ 2	To what extent are the mission, goals and objectives reviewed and reflected in the strategic plans of the institution?
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Review of Mission, Goals, and Objectives in Strategic Planning

In August 2018, on the recommendation of the president of the Sistema Universitario Ana G. Méndez, the process of reviewing the Mission, goals, objectives, and values of the then well-known University of Turabo began. This process was led by the then Chancellor of the University of Turabo. This review considered a significant change, the unification of the Ana G. Méndez University System (SUAGM) into a single university, Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM), with three campuses and their respective locations. In June 2019, the Board of Directors approved the change and as of August 2019, Ana G. Méndez University, Gurabo campus, adopted a new mission, goals, objectives, and values (**S1-103**).

Table 1.1 contains the current mission as approved by the governing bodies. Through its strategic plan, UAGM-GC effectively reflects on its mission through seven (7) themes that are illustrated below. Table 1.2 (**S1-104**) shows the mission themes, goals and objectives, assessment methods, and their impact on institutional Assessment methods, reports, and analyses are continuously conducted to monitor changes as they relate to the seven mission themes (**S1-103**)

Table 1.1: UAGM-GC Mission

UAGM-GC Mission
(2019-Present)

The Gurabo Campus and its locations are accredited units of Universidad Ana G. Méndez that are committed to academic excellence, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization, and the socio-humanistic development of a diverse population. By developing academic and professional competencies we form citizens capable of contributing to the local and global communities. Its resources support its post-secondary, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education academic offer, using diverse learning modes and following the highest standards of quality.

RQ 3	How do the mission, goals, and objectives guide decisions that are related to planning, resource allocation, program development, and definition of program outcomes?
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Mission, Goals, and Objectives in Planning

The goals and objectives supporting the UAGM-GC mission are reflected in the departments/specialized schools’ missions, program offerings, professional goals and objectives, and academic integrity policies. They address student learning, professional training, research, and provision of services in accordance with ethical norms and services of the institution, the professions, and the broader community that, includes patients, community organizations, and governments at various levels. The goals and objectives comply with the SUAGM and UAGM-GC mission statements. The mission statement is published in the Institution’s catalog (**S1-105**), UAGM-GC web page, <https://uagm.edu/es/recinto-de-gurabo>, annual reports, official documents, promotional flyers, booklets, media, discussed in the induction and

leadership seminar and posted in UAGM-GC buildings. The following achievements demonstrate how the institution is committed to the mission statement:

- building accommodations for the new Veterinary School, Dental School, and Naturopathic Medicine Clinic (**S1-106**)
- expanded the Center for Integrated Students Services
- fostered and received academic and professional accreditations from multiple accreditation agencies such as: ABET for the Engineering programs; CCNE for the nursing program; ACEND for nutrition and dietetics; AACSB for the School of Business and Entrepreneurship; and CAEP for the School of Education undergraduate teacher preparation programs and graduate leadership program. Accreditations may be found on the website, <https://uagm.edu/es/sobre-uagm/acreditaciones-y-certificaciones>, and mentioned in Chapter 3 (**S1-107**).
- developed self-studies for undergraduate and graduate level programs' accreditation processes for the American Chemical Society (ACS); Council of Social Work Education (CSWE); American Psychological Association (APA), and Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME); Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA); American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).
- developed accelerated academic programs for the adult population (*AHORA*).
- expanded the Virtual Library database.
- implemented ESL professional studies in partnership with Penn State University, St. Thomas, St. Kitts, and St Croix (**S1-108**).
- implemented new paradigms of distance education such as online, hybrid, televised, and remote courses and the use of the learning management platform, Blackboard, for web-enhanced courses (**S1-109**).
- created the Office of Faculty Development and Evaluation to improve pedagogical competencies and instructional technology skills.
- implemented online services for students through the UAGM Web site and Blackboard platform (**S1-110**).
- promote faculty participation in symposiums, conferences, and professional organizations (**S1-111**).
- offers clinical services in speech therapy, psychology, naturopathic medicine, and veterinary services to the community (**S1-112**).
- Promote faculty and student participation in research projects and proposal writing.
- Promote faculty publications in local and international journals.

RQ 4	At what level are appropriate constituents involved in planning?
RQ 5	What evidence is there that faculty, students, and staff incorporate or reflect these values in their own activities?
RQ 6	How is the mission communicated to all constituencies and how are they involved in the planning process?

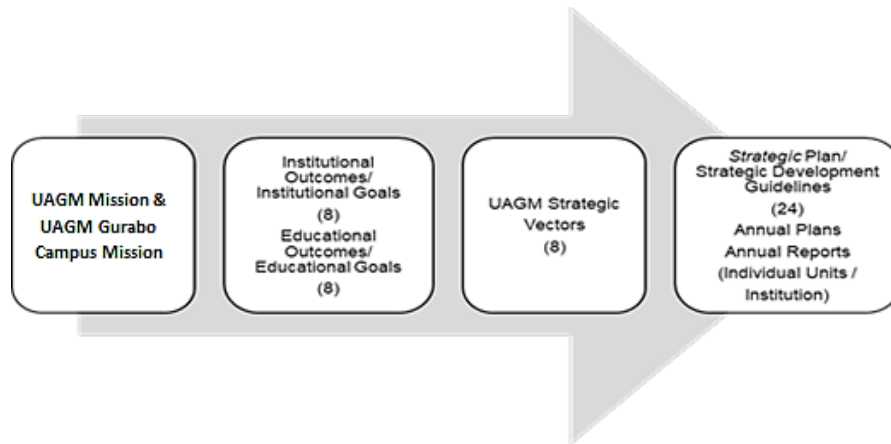
Constituent Involvement in Decision Making and Planning

UAGM Gurabo Campus' Mission and Goals guide its planning and decision-making processes at all institutional levels (**S1-100**). All departments and units of the institution have policies and procedures aligned with the mission and goals. The planning process is focused on developing achievable goals that

ensure the fulfillment of its mission. The planning process is structured and executed according to guiding elements included in the: UAGM-GC Mission Statement, UAGM’s Vision 2025, and Strategic Development Guidelines (SDG) 2021-2024. These processes are aligned with MSCHE Accreditation Standards Criteria and MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation (2015). The mission elements and goals are integrated in the Strategic Development Guidelines (SDG) 2021-2024 (**S1-101**).

Figure 1.1 presents how the UAGM-GC Mission guides the design, execution, and evaluation of its Institutional Outcomes/Goals (IO/G) and Educational Outcomes/Goals (EO/G) in compliance with Strategic Vectors, Strategic Goals, Annual Plans, and Annual Reports of individual units and of the institution. These processes are explained in more detail in Chapters 3, 5, and 6, respectively. UAGM Institutional Goals are what MSCHE calls Institutional Outcomes; UAGM Educational Goals are referred to as Educational Outcomes, and UAGM SDG is what MSCHE calls Strategic Development Plan.

Figure 1.1. Decision Making Processes Guided by Institutional Mission



UAGM Strategic Development Vectors: 1. Academia, 2. Research, 3. Student Service and Development, 4. Public Function, 5. Human Resources and Organizational Development, 6. Physical and Technological Structure, 7. Fiscal Strengthening, and 8. Quality and Effectiveness; are the foundation on which the strategic planning is developed and serve to prioritize goals and objectives. These are classified into four categories: Core, Support, Assessment, and Improvement. The institution also identifies critical issues, strategic priorities, goals, and achievement indicators within each planning period. Planning and resource allocation is aligned with the institutional Vision 2025, which presents the expected five-year results envisioned. Furthermore, the SDG (2021-2022 to 2023-2024) establishes fundamental priorities to lead the development of the Gurabo Campus three-year programmatic plans. Three-year programmatic plans are prepared to address critical issues such as retention, internationalization, and distance education, among others. Finally, planning processes are carried out at the tactical level through academic, student services, and administrative annual plans, fiscal priorities, and budget allocations. These processes are explained in Chapter 6.

Executive Order No: 16- 2021, Policy to Establish Guidelines and Guide the Creation and Development of Academic Programs in the UAGM states that: *Universidad Ana G. Méndez is committed, as part of its mission, to develop academic programs of the highest relevance and academic excellence in accordance with the needs and interests of the various sectors of the communities it serves. The creation of these programs, regardless of the level, must respond to the mission and vision of the UAGM and, in addition,*

*be aligned with the strategic plans of each of the venues (S1-113). This alignment process will facilitate compliance with the principles of **excellence, responsibility, and innovation** established in the statement of our vision.* The UAGM-GC mission and goals guide the development of innovative and non-traditional competency-focused academic programs centered on sustaining the institution's educational excellence (ROA 10). It also offers continuing education, workshops, and certifications to faculty on different teaching modalities for supporting academic excellence. Institutional leadership is demonstrated in initiatives and projects linked to academia, research, student, and community service, in a suitable environment and are aligned with the campus mission. More details about decision making regarding program and curricular development are presented in Chapters 3 and 6, respectively.

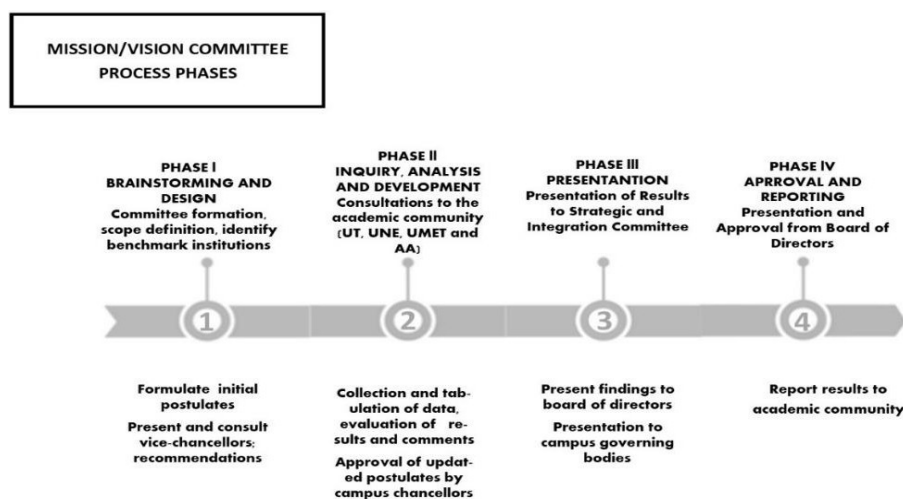
UAGM-GC decision-making process regarding the definition of educational outcomes, is based on the distinctive elements of the Vision, Mission, Institutional Values, and Strategic Goals of UAGM (ROA 1) and the relationship of these key fundamental decision-making and planning tools. The UAGM-GC Mission establishes the development of academic and professional competencies through education, research, innovation, technology, entrepreneurship, and internationalization, which serve as guidelines for the assessment of institutional and educational/student learning outcomes. The student is the center of the educational process and academic support is offered by qualified academic, administrative, and student support services personnel. The support provided is centered in facilitating students' success aimed at improving retention and graduation rates. Likewise, retention and graduation rates are indicators of optimal learning outcomes achievement, and in turn, are measures of institutional effectiveness and of the attainment of the UAGM-GC Mission and Goals. Consistent with this decision-making approach geared at defining educational outcomes, the UAGM-GC conducted the Self-Study Institutional Priorities Campus Survey in May 2021 to assess stakeholders' opinions and recommendations regarding key priorities for continuous improvement of curricular development and institutional and educational outcomes in support of its students' learning experience and its mission. Decision -making and planning considered three (3) top priorities that were validated by campus stakeholders as part of this Self-Study: 1. Academic excellence and student achievement in an engaging, student-focused learning environment, and continuous assessment of learning in compliance with our mission and goals. 2. Financial sustainability through new academic programs, planning, allocation of resources, institutional assessment, innovation, improved university processes, and expansion of revenue sources. 3. Excellence in all campus units in an inclusive and ethical culture in support of students experience by immersing students, faculty, and staff in the multicultural dimensions of higher education at the local and international level (S1-100).

The SUAGM Faculty Handbook (2015) establishes research and creative work as part of the faculty's duties (ROA 15) (S1-114). The Faculty Handbook is currently under review by the faculty affairs committee. To ensure compliance with these duties, the SUAGM Faculty Evaluation System has eight (8) evaluation criteria related to the creative work and research role (See criteria 11 to 18 of the SUAGM Faculty Evaluation System, 2015) (S1-115). Additionally, the faculty evaluation process includes three central roles: Teaching and learning, research, and institutional and community service. Please refer to Chapter 3 for details about the faculty work and diverse roles. The UAGM-GC library provides support to students and faculty for research and scholarly activities. The institutional web page has a section of services provided by librarians in support of research activities, citation resources, and training videos, among others (<https://biblioteca.uagm.edu/>). Scholarly and creative activity are also included in the

UAGM-GC assessment plan and processes. Further information about these topics is expanded in Chapter 3.

The UAGM-GC Mission is disseminated to all internal and external constituents through diverse communication methods, such as: UAGM website, internal and external presentations, posters, new employees and students’ orientations, annual reports, and brochures among others (S1-116). In accordance with its Mission, the UAGM-GC institutional website provides information on services, academic offerings, admission policy, enrollment, financial aid, and student life in compliance with (ROA 8). UAGM-GC Mission is assessed every five or six years, or earlier if necessary. Nevertheless, its institutional Goals are assessed every year to ensure that they are relevant and achievable (ROA 8). The latest revision of the UAGM Gurabo Campus Mission was approved in 2019 as part of the initial stages of the UAGM Integration Project. Figure 1.2 presents the Mission Statement Development Process (2018-2019).

Figure 1.2. UAGM Mission Statement Development Process (2018-2019)



Phase I included the constitution of the UAGM mission review process committee, definition of the scope of work, and the benchmark process with other universities in Puerto Rico and outside the Island.

Phase II consisted of a broad consultation of the revised mission postulates with members of the UAGM-GC community including faculty, staff, and students, among others.

Phase III called for presenting the revised mission statement to the UAGM Integration Strategic Committee, followed by a presentation and feedback from the Governing Board. This phase concluded with the official presentation, discussion, and approval by the Gurabo Campus Governing Bodies on May 28, 2019.

Phase IV included an official presentation of the campus’ revised mission to the UAGM Governing Board for final approval in September of 2019. This approval was followed by the dissemination of the revised mission to the UAGM-GC internal and external community.

RQ 7	To what extent are the goals and objectives focused on student learning and institutional improvement?
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Student Learning and Institutional Improvement

UAGM-GC goals and objectives focus on student learning and are consistent with the institutional mission and supported through administrative, educational, student support programs and services. Among these include academic tutoring, quality of life support and retention programs, international programs, and co-curricular activities, among others, which are all rooted in elements and goals of the Gurabo Campus Mission (*ROA 8, 10, 15*). UAGM-GC has sufficient professionals to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs. As part of the institution critical processes, the UAGM institutional assessment policy ensures the fulfillment of the institutional mission through the systematic assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness (**S1-117**). UAGM-GC institutional student learning goals, related outcomes goals, and institutional improvement goals are aligned with Gurabo Campus Institutional Outcomes/Goals rooted in its mission and with its SDG 2020-2021 to 2023-2024. More details of UAGM-GC learning, related outcomes, and institutional improvement goals are presented in Chapters 3, 5, and 6, respectively.

RQ 8	How are the mission and goals reflected in the strategic plans of the Institution?
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Strategic Planning for the Mission and Goals

The UAGM-GC Strategic Development Guide (SDG) (2021-2022 to 2023-2024) is anchored within its Mission, is realistic, and is appropriate to higher education expectations (*ROA 10*) (**S1-101**). The strategic goals direct the work of the academic, student services, and each administrative support unit towards the achievement of the institutional mission. Table 1.5 (**S1-118**) presents the mission elements and its congruence with UAGM Gurabo Campus SDG.

Compliance with realistic institutional goals is presented in each campus division and specialized schools' annual achievement report at the end of each academic year. The institution's annual reports present specific evidence that supports that the goals are realistic, achievable, and appropriate to higher education (**S1-111**). The institutional initiatives and assessment of each strategic development goal contribute to the institutional effectiveness of UAGM-GC mission in society as a high-quality institution of higher education. The UAGM-GC's Strategic Goals are established, disseminated, and discussed with the academic department directors and specialized schools' deans of the different academic units and key performance indicators are developed and aligned using a waterfall model. Each director or dean is required to develop work plans for their units and establish annual activities that are aligned with objectives and contribute to the fulfillment of the Mission as shown in annual reports and performance evaluations. These work plans are also aligned with the vectors and priorities for each fiscal year. The supervisors oversee the work plan progress and evaluate the fulfillment of the institutional Mission. The institutional goals are implemented throughout the institutional planning, decision making, resources allocation, evaluation, and assessment processes. The results of a content analysis of official institutional documents conducted by the UAGM-GC Vice-presidency of International Affairs, evidence compliance with (*ROA 7 & 10*) and Standard I – Mission and Goals accreditation criteria 1.a-d, 2,3,4 as related to the internationalization strategic direction approved by the UAGM Governing Board since 2002 and its implementation through realistic and achievable strategic goals up to 2022.

RQ 9	How does the institution ensure a periodic assessment to demonstrate an effective dissemination of its mission among the university community?
RQ 10	How are the institutional mission and goals relevant and achievable in student learning?

Relevant and Achievable Mission, Goals, and Student Learning

The UAGM-GC has been immersed in continual assessment that validates significant changes in the past years (ROA 8). These modifications range from changes in the environment in context of higher education, to changes in its organizational structure, governance, and in the composition of its workforce. In 2019, SUAGM integrated the three (UT, UMET, UNE) of their four institutions into one integrated university (S1-119). This integration required to review and adapt the mission of former Universidad del Turabo (UT), into the current UAGM-GC Mission. Consistency has been maintained, and to a great extent, the essence, and values of the original mission (Table 1.1) remain prominent. It is important to note that the scope of the *new mission transcends economic and social development, and adds political, social, cultural, and environmental elements as part of its value proposition*. As part of the UAGM integration process, the institution has made significant investments in classrooms and laboratory technologies with the purpose of transcending knowledge transfer by opening new virtual channels to enhance academic offerings and accessibility (S1-120). The integration of the curriculum and the assessment processes are carried out uniformly in all units and respond to the same learning and institutional outcomes across the organization. Please refer to Chapter 5 for detailed information and analysis. An Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) was created with the responsibility of identifying and prioritizing the needs resulting from institutional assessment processes. IEC also recommends the allocation of resources, ensures compliance with the institutional action plan, and establishes processes that promote institutional improvement and sustainability. Please refer to Chapter 6 for detailed information and analysis. Although, the transitions from the former UT critical assessment processes evolved into the UAGM's integrated processes, it continues to support its higher education purpose, the students it serves, the accomplishment of its stated goals, and fulfilling its stated Mission (ROA 1 & 7).

Faculty member roles reflect the institutional mission and goals through several activities such as: (a) local, national, and international presentations (b) peer mentoring, (c) publishing in professional and/or academic peer-reviewed journals, (d) literary and creative productions, (e) participating in externally or institutionally funded research projects, and (f) mentoring students in undergraduate/graduate research, among others. Based on *Boyer's Model of Scholarship*, the institution classifies all faculty scholarly activities as academic or professional using the criteria of teaching, discovery, integration, and application.

RQ 11	How are the institutional mission and goals addressed during remote education?
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Remote Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, major adjustments were made to give continuity to administrative tasks, services, and academic offerings to minimize the impact on students. Day-to-day work quickly moved to remote format and technological equipment (computers, laptops, and Wi-Fi hotspots) was assigned to staff, faculty, and students. After the Island-wide lockdown put in place by the PR government, the university administrative and services continued its operation remotely, and the academic offerings were able to resume in less than two weeks. Despite adjusting to a remote reality, many processes and issues that were being decided, renewed, or developed due to the integration process, were slowed down to adequately meet the needs of the new reality that the pandemic imposed. Eventually, two-way virtual technology was installed in all classrooms of UAGM-GC and its additional locations which allowed for diverse modalities (traditional, remote, hybrid, and online) to

take place as the emergent situations occurred. As the institution began to take steps towards in-person modality, it has taken up pending issues for the continual improvement and the success of the population it serves. The university community was constantly updated via email, social media, text messages, and press releases (radio, TV, and newspapers) regarding the campus operational status, available services, and the resumption and modality of classes. To make up for the lecture time lost, faculty was instructed to design and implement make-up classes using synchronous and asynchronous teaching strategies, materials, and assignments.

During the pandemic period, classes were offered remotely or in hybrid format utilizing a synchronous class in the LMS Blackboard. Laboratories were offered in a hybrid format and utilized simulators, virtual practice, and practicums. Student services and classes were also offered remotely or in hybrid modes. Noteworthy to mention, class modifications and repositions were documented by each professor and submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs. Additionally, make-up classes, materials, videos, and assignments were recorded and stored in Blackboard to ensure that students could have access to the material. Furthermore, when courses were offered remotely, administrative, student support, and academic staff were on campus to continue offering student support services, such as biopsychosocial, tutoring, and academic support on campus when permitted by the government, or virtually when mandated by the government.

AREAS OF STRENGTH AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

1. The strategic goals that direct the work carried out in the institution are based on the UAGM Gurabo Campus Mission Statement to ensure the achievement of its Mission.
2. Development and implementation of the Associate Vice Presidency of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness helped to manage and maintain uniformity and stability in administrative processes among all the campuses.
3. Redefinition of the General Education Component (GEC) focuses on competencies throughout the curriculum to emphasize the integral formation of the students, their development as educated persons and social beings, are in harmony with the graduate profile and the institutional mission.

Conclusions

UAGM Gurabo Campus' mission and goals guides the processes that are carried out in the institution in compliance with the criteria established by MSCHE Standard I. The mission has been revised due to the challenges posed by organizational changes and the external environmental challenges that have impacted higher education institutions in Puerto Rico. Among these were: Hurricane María of 2017, Earthquakes of 2019, COVID-19 Pandemic of 2019-2023; demographic changes, and enrollment reduction at higher education institutions. Policies, rules, and procedures have been reviewed to adapt them to current realities. Significant efforts have also been made to highlight the new image of the UAGM once the integration had taken place. These efforts have been a part of a revised institutional identity and a promulgation of the values by which the institution is governed.

Standard: II - Ethics and Integrity

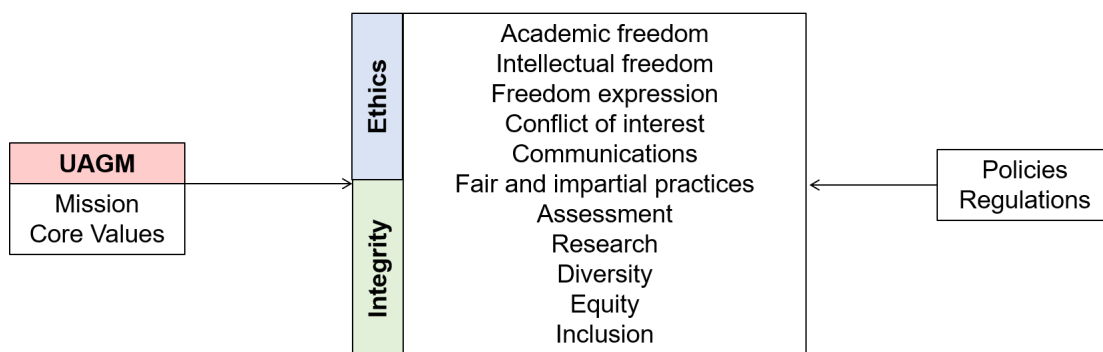
Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

The ethics and integrity of Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce are clearly demonstrated in its policies, procedures, communication, and transparency. Through the aforementioned, UAGM-GC delineates and exhibits that it is faithful to its mission, honors its contracts and commitments, adheres to its policies, and represents itself truthfully. Additionally, ethics and integrity are rooted in the institution’s mission, and reflect its core values of excellence, liberty, respect, integrity, equity, innovation, and social responsibility. Furthermore, the importance and definitions of ethics and integrity are included in Executive Order #19-2020 and states that ethics “is a set of customs and norms that direct or value human behavior in a community. Ethics contributes to establish the referent for the acts that the human being exercises consciously and freely.” (S2-200) Integrity “is the quality of an individual to act fairly even when not being supervised, and to ensure that his performance is aligned with the norms and in compliance with human values” Without exception, ethics, integrity, and their relationship with the general climate of the campus are concerns in all academic activities, and administrative processes led by Vice Chancellor (CEO), the Office of the Vice Chancellor, Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs, Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, and Office of the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness. The alignment of these principles to the mission and core values are illustrated in Figure 2.1.

This chapter will further explain how ethics and integrity are at the foundation of all the institutional practices and procedures.

- UAGM-GC policies and regulations clearly stipulate that faculty enjoy academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression.
- To avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict, the institution has adopted a Conflict-of-Interest Policy # VPAF-13-003-005, safeguarding ethical, honest, and integral behavior, as well as the use of good judgment in its execution (S2-201).
- The institution guarantees that the information on communications such as: announcements, advertising, catalog, recruitment, admissions material, theses, and scientific publications is honest and truthful, and is shared with internal and external audiences through the centralized supervision of the corresponding departments and offices.

Figure 2.1 - Alignment Principles to the Mission



- UAGM performs fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees, as evidenced in the Human Resources Handbook (2021) (S2-202).
- The Vice-President for Assessment performs detailed evaluations ensuring compliance with regional, state, federal, and state system guidelines. This includes institution-wide assessments of academic, support, and administrative departments.
- The compliance officer from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies is in charge of ensuring compliance with institutional, federal, and state rules and guidelines for ethical research that includes humans, animals, biological matter, and chemical hazardous materials, as well as maintaining a safe environment. This office continuously reviews all regulations, procedures, and forms related to this matter, and advises and approves faculty and students research endeavors before they conduct their research.
- The institution focuses on faculty and staff excellence and emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusion in the campus culture. UAGM-GC and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce promotes a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, and staff from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. Further details on our policy on equity, diversity, and inclusion can be found at Executive Order #02-2022 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy. (S2-203)

UAGM has transparent, well documented, and disseminated policies and procedures to ensure integrity and ethics are adhered to throughout its operation and practices. Evidence (S2-204) shows the list of policies and procedures that have been enacted to ensure the highest standards of integrity and ethics at the UAGM-GC and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce.

RQ 1	How are institutional priorities P1 and P2 achieved considering the standard criteria?
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Ethics and Integrity in P1 and P2

The UAGM-GC has established Academia as P1, and Student Service and Development as P2. To achieve P1 and P2, the UAGM-GC has established a climate that fosters respect, diversity, inclusion and equity among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. The principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are reflected in the academic offerings and services provided. Evidence of compliance with these principles are stated in:

- Fair and equitable institution that provides high-quality education that is vital to the growth of the different communities in Puerto Rico (Admission Policy # 14-2021) (S2-205). The institution provides educational access and services to a diverse community without discrimination based on age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, handicap, political affiliation, political or religious ideas.
- Access to higher education for students from different geographic areas in Puerto Rico and Hispanic students in the USA and low-income students.
- Academic program that addresses the needs of diverse student populations with offering different degrees and certificates. The rate of distribution of full-time students in academic level is distributed as following Table 2.1.

Access to demographically diverse freshman age groups is important for UAGM-GC. Table 2.2 presents the percentage of freshmen age admission during the academic years 2016-17 to 2021-22.

Table 2.1. Distribution of full-time students in academic level

Academic year	Gender	% Academic Level			
		Technical Studies	Undergraduates	Masters	Doctorates
2018-19	Female	66	59	67	68
	Male	34	41	33	32
2021-22	Female	14	61	70	69
	Male	86	39	30	31

Table 2.2. Freshmen age admission

Academic year	% < 20 years	% 20-24 years	% 25 years +
2016-2017	80.6	11.8	7.6
2017-2018	86.3	9.2	4.5
2018-2019	87.1	8.1	4.8
2019-2020	87.1	7.2	5.7
2020-2021	89.9	6.2	3.9
2021-2022	86.8	7.9	5.3

Access to female freshman students. Table 2.3 presents the female freshman students during the academic years 2016-17 to 2021-22.

Table 2.3. Female freshman students

Academic year	% Female
2016-2017	53.7
2017-2018	53.9
2018-2019	55.6
2019-2020	54.8
2020-2021	55.9
2021-2022	60.7

Academic calendars and instructional formats that address the specific needs of diverse student populations.

UAGM-GC offers students a variety of services that include individual orientation; pre-admission counseling and assistance with registration; assistance for students that require reasonable accommodations or modifications for diverse functionalities; financial aid, tutoring services, research opportunities, and other vital services for students, such as:

- Access to Learning and academic service centers in “Asesoría Académica y Consejería” (CAAP), Centro de Recursos para la Excelencia Educativa (CREE), and Centro para el Aprendizaje y Servicios Académicos (CASA).
- Access to gender neutral restrooms available.
- Use of birth name and preferred name, according to the provisions contained in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act “FERPA”, establishes that students may request a change of name or gender on their university record or an amendment when they understand that it is

inaccurate, incorrect or violates your privacy rights. Students can make this request through the Title IX Coordinator.

- Outreach activities to promote economic welfare and entrepreneurship in the community. Examples of these outreach activities are the Mercado Estudiantil and the workshop support by Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) in Financial Literacy-Educación Financiera by Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

Equity and diversity principles are as well observed in recruitment procedures for faculty and administrative personnel. As an example, evidence **S3-325** (Faculty Profile) presents demographic data for faculty during the academic years 2017-2022.

RQ 2	What evidence exists to demonstrate commitment and compliance with the respect for academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, intellectual property rights, and avoidance of conflict of interest? Which institutional public policies support/validate/guide, and/or address the issues of plagiarism, copyright, freedom of expression and academic freedom?
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Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Academic Integrity

Freedom of expression is granted to the faculty inside and outside the institution, as long as the exercise of that freedom does not undermine the institutional order, statutes, and current regulations. UAGM recognizes academic freedom, freedom of expression, integrity in research, and copyright and intellectual property as a fundamental right. Evidence of this includes Fundamental Rights of the Faculty as stated in the 2015 SUAGM Faculty Handbook, section 8; Executive Order # 13-2017- Copyright Policy; Executive Order # 07-2023 - Distance Education Policy and Courses Supported by Technology; and Executive Order # 14-2017 – Use and Reproduction of Material Protected by Copyright Policy (**S1-114, S2-206, S1-109, S2-207**). UAGM also adheres to policies to ensure integrity and ethical behavior with students through policies stated in the Student Regulations Handbook and UAGM Catalog (**S2-208, S1-105**).

UAGM, through the Research Integrity and Compliance Office, establishes three regulatory committees to ensure that all research projects comply with federal and state regulations, as well as established institutional policies and procedures. The Research Regulatory Committee are governed by:

1. Executive Order # 08-2022 - Policy for Human Subjects Research Protection Manual (**S2-209**)
2. Executive Order # 46-2023 - UAGM Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Policy and Procedure for the use of Hazard Material (**S2-210**)
3. Executive Order # 23-2023 – Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) (**S2-211**)

Information related to research is reviewed by the compliance specialist at the Office of Research and Graduate Studies in the Deanship of Academic Affairs to ensure that the dissemination of research is honest and truthful with both internal and external audiences and communities. All dissertations, thesis, and doctoral projects are revised for compliance with the academic integrity policy. In the last 8 years, more than 300 doctoral theses have been presented and many of them have been published in “ProQuest Central” database. The theses committee in collaboration with the Center for Graduate Student Support Services (Título V - CGSSS) has been responsible for rigorously guiding and examining the theses, which are presented in a session open to the public. In the last two years, at least 86

dissertations have been reviewed with *PlagScan* Program. Noteworthy, not a single sign of plagiarism or intellectual dishonesty has been found.

RQ 3	What evidence exists to demonstrate commitment to inclusion in a climate of respect among all members of the community? How does the University recruitment and retention policies evidence the institution’s commitment to meet the needs of a diverse student body and prohibits discrimination as the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation?
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To avoid conflict of interest, UAGM has specific policies, rules, and procedures to establish guides, prevention, and management of conflict of interest related with the administration of federal grants, contracts, acceptance of gratuities, students’ services, and all duties. UAGM-GC promotes that all constituents show the highest standards of ethics and professional behavior, honesty, and integrity in their judgment and performance. The Executive Order # 19-2020 - Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Integrity Commitment are policies implemented by UAGM for such purposes. **(S2-200)**

The institution and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce promotes a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. The most relevant policies are: Executive Order # 19-2020 Code of Ethics **(S2-200)**; Conflict of Interest and Commitment to Integrity **(S2-201)**; Executive Order # 02-2022 The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy **(S2-203)**; Executive Order # 03-2022 Policy for a Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Free Community and Work Environment **(S2-212)**; Executive Order # 40-2023 Policy and Protocol for The Prevention and Management of Sexual Harassment **(S2-213)**; Executive Order # 20-2023 Policy for Managing Violence and Domestic Violence in the Workplace and Establishing Institutional Protocol for Case Management **(S2-214)**; and Institutional Policy on Harassment and Intimidation or "Bullying" and Harassment Cyber Bullying **(S2-215)**.

In accordance with pertinent provisions of the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, that states: “no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color, sex, birth, social origin, or condition, or political or religious ideas”. Both the laws and the system of public education shall embody these principles of essential human equality.” P.R. CONST. art. II, § 1; and the provisions required by the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that contains a broad array of statutory provisions that are applicable to most federal education programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), as well as provisions related to the powers and responsibilities of USDE. General Education Provisions Act, as amendment; 20 U.S.C. § 1221 et seq. (1967); and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, Pub. L. No 101 101- 336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990), UAGM-GC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation or handicap for admission or access to their programs (Admission Policy # 14-2021 **(S2-205)** and Transfer Credits Policy # 17-2020) **(S2-216)** or activities related to populations regarding students, teachers and/or program beneficiaries with special needs. The Department of Veterans Affairs at UAGM-GC offers all soldiers, their spouses, and dependents the alternative of starting or completing an academic career. All students are also protected by Title IX Law **(S2-217)**.

The UAGM 2022-2023 Catalog and the course syllabi feature fundamental contractual commitments of UAGM-GC and its students and following higher education expectations. The institution guarantees a climate of respect, inclusion, and diversity to students from admission to graduation, and afterwards, as

alumni. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSEI), of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo Campus, provides services for students with disabilities through the rehabilitation counselor, professional counselor, or staff designated by the institution; (Manual of Service Procedures for Students with Disabilities/Functional Diversity) **(S2-218)**. Universidad Ana G. Méndez provides reasonable accommodation to students with functional diversity, in compliance with state and federal laws that protect and guarantee their rights; (Student Manual) **(S2-208)**.

The athletic program offers services to student athletes in sports competitions for different disciplines and academic services for student athletes to be successful during their university studies (Manual of Students Athletes) **(S2-219)**. Through these policies, UAGM's commitment is to provide students with the experiences necessary for success in their college, athletic, and professional life.

RQ4	How do institutional policies guarantee equal employment opportunity as stated by federal and state laws?
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Equal Opportunity Employer

Equity and diversity principles are as well observed in recruitment procedures for faculty and administrative personnel. UAGM-GC and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce is compelled to ensure equal opportunity in employment and to not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, actual or perceived sexual orientation, national origin, military status, status as a protected veteran, physical or mental disability, social status, age, marital status, political views, status as a victim of domestic violence and stalking, and any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. (See, Recruitment Policy RH-41-2023) **(S2-220)**.

The Executive Order # 02-2022 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy was established with the purpose of maintaining a work and learning environment focused on diversity of people, perspectives, and ideas **(S2-203)**. UAGM-GC promotes breaking down barriers and mediates equal rights and opportunities, ensuring fair treatment and respect and dignity for all the university community. The focus on the global perspective of the human being is a priority in the education and training processes of educational institutions, both for students, and administrative staff, and the faculty.

UAGM-GC bases its good management practices regarding recruitment, evaluation, compensation, retention, promotion in rank, and termination of employment, as evidenced in the following policies: Executive Order # 19-2020 Code of Ethics **(S2-200)**; Conflict of Interest and Integrity Commitment **(S2-201)**; Executive Order #41-2023 Human Resources Recruitment Policy of UAGM **(S2-220)**; the RH-09-2023 Policy for the Hiring Foreigners **(S2-221)**; the Equal Opportunity Policy and Availability of the Affirmative Action Program to be Inspected **(S2-222)**; Performance Evaluation Policy **(S2-223)**; the SUAGM Faculty Evaluation System **(S1-115)**; and the Human Resource Handbook **(S2-202)**.

RQ5	How does the university implement protection and prohibition policies and procedures against sexual harassments, mobbing and other type of quid pro quo activities that are prohibited by federal and state law?
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Protection and Prohibition Policies

Ethics and integrity are essential elements for a higher education organization and its employees, for this reason, UAGM-GC and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce has implemented the following policies and prohibitions:

1. **Executive Order 02-2003 – Code of Conduct for Employees:** Employees, officers and agents shall not solicit or accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors or subcontractors of SUAGM and its operating entities, except in the limited circumstance that such unsolicited gratuity or favor is of nominal value (less than \$100) **(S2-224)**.
2. **Executive Order #19-2020 - Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, and Integrity Commitment:** It prohibits the payment of commissions, bonuses or incentive payments based directly or indirectly on obtaining enrollment or federal financial aid to any person or entity involved in student recruitment, admissions activities or decisions related to the granting financial aid for students. **(S2-200)**
3. **Executive Order #05-2021 – Procedures Against Mobbing:** establishes regulations and policies that serve as a guide for compliance with state and federal laws that promote a suitable work environment. Law No. 90 of August 7, 2020, Law to Prohibit and Prevent Labor Harassment in Puerto Rico recognizes the right of every employee to be protected against workplace harassment **(S2-225)**.
4. **Executive Order #01-2022- Sexual Harassment Policy:** policy to provide students, faculty, and all staff with a fair, humane, and responsible learning and work environment that supports, nurtures, and rewards professional and educational improvement based on ability and performance. Considerations based on sex or sexual conduct limit and undermine the character and purpose of the University and its community. Therefore, does not encourage, tolerate, or allow sexual harassment in any way **(S2-213)**.
5. **Executive Order # 20-2023 - Policy for Managing Violence and Domestic Violence in the Workplace and Establishing Institutional Protocol for Case Management:** establishes that the institution must develop procedures to deal with cases of violence or domestic violence and establish the institutional protocol for handling cases. Law No. 217 of September 29, 2006, Law of Domestic Violence that impacts the workplace or employment recognizes that all employers implement a protocol to develop policies and procedures to handle situations **(S2-214)**.
6. **Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy.** This policy is established in compliance with Law No. 85 of 2017, also known as the Alexander Santiago Martínez Law. It prohibits harassment and intimidation or "bullying" and cyber bullying among members of the student community **(S2-215)**.
7. **VAWA Law.** UAGM is committed to the prevention, safety, and well-being of the university community in situations of sexual violence, dating violence, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination based on sex **(S2-217)**. The UAGM prohibits all conduct of this nature in all its manifestations, so the necessary measures and actions are taken to prevent it, in compliance with the provisions of Title IX, Federal Civil Rights Law and
8. the **Clery Law through the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act** (VAWA Pub. Law 11-4, 2013).

The UAGM requires all employees to receive training on the policies through the Office of Human Resources. The UAGM offers development activities that include new employee orientation; publication on the UAGM-CG website; institutional emails; online tutorial; face-to-face activities; and CBTs on Human Resources Policies.

RQ6	What are the protocols/policies for managing complaints and grievances between and raised by the institution’s constituencies (faculty, students, and staff)?
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Managing Complaints and Grievances

Managing complaints and grievances between and raised by the institution’s constituencies (faculty, students, and staff) are handled according to the protocol for the constituents below:

Students

The Dean of Student Affairs has an “open door” practice where students can go through the process of submitting formal complaints and grievances. The Procedure for the Investigation of Student Complaints is established to address the claim or complaint raised by students who consider that an offense or violation of their rights was made by any associate of the Institution related to services and processes provided (S2-226). All grievance information and required forms are available to students through the UAGM website. This is established to address the claim or complaint when a student considers that a fault or violation of his/her rights related to the services, processes, or by an associate of the Institution has been committed against the student.

Faculty and Staff

The SUAGM recognizes the importance of providing a fast and efficient procedure for the resolution of complaints or conflicts that affect the work environment. The Executive Order #18-2021, Policy of Resolution of Complaints, is established so that every employee or faculty member can present any matter that, in his/her opinion, is affecting his/her employment conditions, work environment, or the rights that affect him/her (S2-227). A complaint will constitute any verbal or written expression in which an employee or professor asserts that he or she is being harmed and that, in his or her understanding, his or her conditions and rights within employment or the work environment are being affected. Various stages have been established to facilitate the resolution process and recommended actions.

RQ7	How is the university an equal access/equal opportunity employer corporation?
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Equal Access and Equal Opportunity Employer

The university, as an equal access/equal opportunity employer corporation, has established the Executive Order # 02-2022 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy (S2-203) with the purpose of maintaining a work and learning environment focused on diversity of people, perspectives, and ideas. UAGM-GC promotes breaking down barriers and mediates equal rights and opportunities, ensuring fair treatment, respect, and dignity for all the university community.

The institution has various categories of appointments that are divided into two areas: Faculty appointment and Administrative Employee appointment by type of contract. The recruitment process begins when an open position is advertised soliciting applications from qualified candidates, usually through the university’s human resource webpage. Candidates submit applications through the university’s Human Resources webpage. Then, applications are collected by Human Resources. Top candidates are identified and invited for an interview. Candidates are interviewed by a hiring committee. The hiring committee makes its decision, recommends the candidate, and communicates it to Human Resources for consideration. Finally, Human Resources extends an offer of employment to the candidate. Then, candidates then submit all required employment eligibility documents before being employed.

To attract and retain highly qualified employees, UAGM offers a comprehensive fringe benefit package that includes employer matched 401K retirement plans, health insurance plan, life insurance, promotion in academic rank for faculty, and ample opportunities for professional development.

RQ8	How does the university ensure compliance with state, federal, and all applicable regulations and demonstrate an enforcement duty and responsibility for certifying the truthfulness and correctness of all university external and internal communications (e.g., accrediting, licensing, and regulatory entities, as well as to any department, agency or instrumentality of the federal government and the Government of Puerto Rico, active and prospective students)?
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Certifying the Truthfulness and Correctness of External and Internal Communications

The internal and external communications of UAGM related to accreditation, licensing, and regulatory entities are reviewed to provide certainty of their veracity by the staff of the Office of Regulatory Compliance, Office of External Resources, and Office of Licensing and Accrediting and the Office of Marketing. On occasions, inspections, and audits are carried out, or external personnel are hired to audit and certify that the procedures, laws, and regulations are fully complied with. To ensure compliance of applicable laws and regulations, UAGM-GC and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce has implemented the following policies:

- Trademark Policy # 03-2014; social media Policy # 08-2020; Executive Order #01-2021 - Contract Policy; and Executive Order # 13-2022 - Policy for the Use of Digital and Electronic Signatures Support Compliance with Honesty and Reliability in External and Internal Communication.
- Trademark Policy # 03-2014, establishes the use of the trademark for the purposes of internal and external communications, publications, marketing, digital marketing, advertising, public relations, production of promotional material, or recruitment. The use of the trademarks for these purposes must comply with the provisions of this Policy **(S2-228)**.
- Social Media Policy #08-2020, establishes that social networks are a tool for immediate communication and interaction with its diverse audiences (active students, prospects, graduates, administrative employees, faculty, news media, and the public). Information that is confidential or UAGM proprietary will not be disclosed, as defined in its policies **(S2-229)**.
- Executive Order #01-2021 - Contract Policy, was established to ensure that there is responsibility and accountability when signing, certifying, and submitting a report. This policy establishes the rules and procedures that regulate the approval and signing of contracts for collaboration agreements, expenses for services, leases, construction, agreements to carry out supervised clinical practices and internships with external entities and for the administration of funds of external resources (grants) on behalf of the institution **(S2-230)**.
- Executive Order # 13-2022 - Policy for the Use of Digital and Electronic Signatures, was established the regulations for the use of the digital and electronic signature of employees of the administrative, academic and student areas at SUAGM to guarantee the authenticity and veracity in document communications **(S2-231)**.

RQ9	How does periodic assessment of university policies and practices adhere to the standard and how such assessments strengthen the university faithfulness to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and truthfully represent itself?
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Assessment and Adherence to Policies and Practices

UAGM policies, processes, and practices are assessed thereby safeguarding ethics and integrity throughout official structures, supervision, and accountability of activities and compliance with federal, state and Commission regulations and requirements. UAGM-GC has worked to restructure its organization in order to provide a refreshed, transparent image focused on accountability and academic excellence. As a direct consequence, policies have been developed to ensure contemporary principles and values such as, conflicts of interest, ethics, integrity, purchasing hierarchies, and contract and representation authority, student accessibility, and employee support especially in atmospheric events and natural disasters (i.e., Hurricane Irma and Maria, earthquakes and COVID 19). This practice is carried out in a cyclical period of 3 to 5 years, depending on the circumstances, and reflects an exercise with clear objectives and goals. (See, Strategic Development Guides 2016 to 2020 and 2021 to 2024).

Table 2.6: Assessment Methods and Relationship to Mission Theme

Mission Theme	Goals and Objectives	Assessment Methods	Impact/Changes
Ethical Principles and Values	<p>Promotes ethical values that will allow students to exert their professional judgment and performance responsibly.</p> <p>Fosters the preservation and dissemination of those values inherent to Puerto Rican culture in a global context.</p>	<p>During the development of the General Education courses (social sciences, Puerto Rican history, and humanities) several learning assessment methods were used, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written works • Critical analysis of readings • Conceptual maps • Discussion forums • Pre and post-tests • Reflective diaries • Self-studies • One minute paper • Concept graphic organizers • Course reflections <p>Institutionally and compulsorily, written work is used to evaluate ethics and diversity competence through an institutional rubric.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised the General Education component social sciences and humanities courses. • Created the Research Integrity and Compliance Office (S2-209, S2-210, S-211) • Created an ethics and value module for the Freshmen Workshops • Created norms for copyright and plagiarism.

AREAS OF STRENGTH AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

1. There’s an institutional interest and effort to promote inclusion and respect among all members of the community that prohibit any kind of discrimination based on ethical principles, sexual harassments, mobbing, violence, and domestic violence in the workplace, and other type of quid pro quo activities that are prohibited by federal and state law, and institutional policies.

Challenges

1. Use different media for training and constant communications with employees, faculty, and students on ethical principles, values, copyright, plagiarism, policies, procedures, controls, and prohibitions.

Conclusion

UAGM-GC and its four locations in Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce has a stated commitment and plan to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout its mission and practices. UAGM-GC is committed to deliver excellence in teaching, research, innovation, and social-humanistic values for a diverse academic population, forming global citizens with critical thinking skills that contribute to the development and well-being their communities. UAGM-GC is committed to freedom of thought and expression; excellence in teaching and the pursuit, generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge; promoting respect, protecting individuals' dignity; encouraging respect towards nature and the environment; promoting ethical, social, and cultural values; and recognizing and fortifying respect diversity (See UAGM-GC mission and vision).

Through the Office of Human Resources, there's a vast list of established policies that promote inclusion and equality, such as the Employment Equality and Affirmative Action Programs (AAP's). Our institution has policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of institutional and federal funds. There's a plan in place to prevent and detect any non-compliance, such as prohibited and criminal activities. This also includes disseminating and training associates in the procedures and policies established by UAGM, such as: the Policy for Filing and Resolution of Complaints; the Policy of Equal Employment Opportunity; Availability of Affirmative Action Plan for Inspection; Sexual Harassment Policy; Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Commitment to Integrity; and Human Resources Recruitment Policy.

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 programs, 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.

The mission of UAGM-GC and its additional locations is to serve a diverse population of students through academic excellence research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and internationalization, through socio-humanistic development (**S1-100**). To achieve its mission, UAGM-GC offers a variety of educational programs at all levels (certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's, professional certificate, and doctoral), in different modalities (traditional, online, remote, hybrid, accelerated, and televised) to an inclusive student population (**S1-105**). It is through the delivery of a high-quality curriculum, and highly qualified faculty and support staff that UAGM-GC can achieve its mission. All learning experiences are student centered and aligned to institutional values, and compliant with local, regional, and specialized accreditation standards. A horizontal alignment of the institutional mission and values across all the academic and student services offered, allows UAGM-GC to fulfil its priority of academic excellence.

This chapter will explain how UAGM-GC assures compliance with Standard III, the Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) and P1, educational excellence, by delineating the policies, procedures, and processes of the curriculum, learning experiences, general education component, and communication strategies since 2015. It will also describe how the results of the systematic assessment process drive the decision making for academic and institutional improvement.

RQ 1	How is institutional priority P1 achieved considering the standard criteria?
RQ 2	What are the policies and procedures for the design of certificate, undergraduate, graduate and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential at UAGM Gurabo? How does UAGM Gurabo ensure compliance with such policies and procedures?
RQ 3	How do the certificate, undergraduate, graduate and/or professional programs that lead to a degree or other recognized higher education credential foster a coherent student learning experience and promote synthesis of learning?

Curricula and Institutional Goals

Educational programs at UAGM-GC effectively reflect the mission and goals of the institution (**S1-105**). UAGM-GC adheres to its institutional goals by: 1) maintaining a fair and equitable admissions policy (**S2-205**) in which each academic department establishes requirements for its programs; 2) providing academic and personal support services to the student body to support their attainment of academic and personal goals; 3) offering academic skills and career-oriented activities to precollege students through special projects (e.g. precollege programs), federally sponsored activities, and summer institutes; 4) implementing faculty development to improve the faculty credentials; 5) offering conferences and workshops to improve pedagogical instructional technology skills; 6) promoting the internationalization of its programs (**S3-335; S3-336**); and 7) establishing collaborative partnerships with universities, government agencies, industry, and community organizations to improve curricula, retention, and graduation rates (**S3-337, S3-338**). As February 2023, there are Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and partnerships with local and international universities and corporations in Europe, the United States, and Latin America to keep abreast of all significant issues that will enhance learning opportunities. The school have formal cooperative agreements with mainland and international institutions, e.g., George Mason, University of Notre Dame, Southern Connecticut State University, San Pablo-CEU de Madrid, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Instituto de Historia, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Palazzi Florence Association for International Education (PFAIE), Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales and many other associations. Additionally, through international efforts the following has been made possible: 89 students from 23 countries have enrolled in UAGM-GC programs; 32 full-time professors and 7 lecturers from 16 countries are part of the GC faculty; 13 UAGM-GC students have participated in study abroad programs and 32 in academic/cultural trips to Spain, Guatemala, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Mexico.

A wider range of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities also promote the achievement of institutional goals and objectives. Among them are student engagement in academic research, community service activities, laboratory, clinical and practicum experiences, field research and experimentation, case studies, experiential learning, simulations, learning technologies, community projects, clinical services, and participation in student organizations and internships.

Educational offerings support the development of students' social responsibilities, and ethical and cultural values through diverse community, cultural, sports, and social activities developed by the academic divisions and Student Affairs. Each program mission demonstrates its uniqueness and responds to UAGM's mission statement by offering academic services that develop the competencies and skills that enable students to become competent in their disciplines, and future leaders in their community. During the academic year 2021-2022, 164 undergraduate and graduate degree programs were offered at Gurabo Campus, the additional locations and US branch campuses. Specific data on the number of programs is shown in Evidence **S3-300** and may also be found on the university 2021-2022 amended catalog (**S1-105**) and website.

Additional evidence of our mission towards achieving academic excellence in the design and delivery of the student experience is that UAGM-GC professional programs have been accredited by specialized accreditation bodies, as independently required by corresponding disciplines. These academic programs are thus responsible for guaranteeing the quality and rigor of the curriculum, assessment, fiscal responsibility, and faculty for the specific discipline or profession. Evidence (**S3-301**) shows the status of the professional accreditation processes among academic programs.

The development of courses and academic programs follows a process of curricular alignment with the institutional mission, program objectives, program outcomes, and when applicable, specialized accreditation standards. Course development begins with a template (**S3-302; S3-303, S3-304, S3-305**) that ensures uniformity of all the course syllabi. This helps guide faculty to ensure the following components are not overlooked: course description, objectives, program outcomes, content, assessment, and evaluation instruments. The Curriculum Committee of each academic division is responsible for the creation of new course syllabi, or the revision of existing ones. The Curriculum Committee usually consists of the department director and faculty members. Created or revised syllabi are sent to the Academic Programs Committee of the Academic Senate for its evaluation, prior to being sent to the Academic Senate for its final validation.

In compliance with the policy to develop new academic programs (**S1-113**), the Curriculum Committee develops the proposal for new programs or significant changes, the Academic Programs Committee discuss and revise the proposal, and the Academic Senate validates it (**S3-306**). Then, the proposal is presented at the UAGM University Board. After its final approval by the University Board, the proposal is submitted to the state licensing agency, the Puerto Rico Board of Postsecondary Institutions (JIP, Spanish acronym). The JIP evaluates the appropriateness and rigor of the program and decides to approve, request additional information, or reject the program.

Each program has an assessment plan (**S3-307**) that specifies learning and program outcomes. Additionally, programs accredited by professional bodies must conform to their respective agencies' standards and requirements. As previously mentioned, UAGM-GC currently has 14 specialized accreditations. The assessment plan requires that courses and programs are systematically revised (**S5-500**). When program revisions require substantive changes, these must also be submitted to JIP after being approved by the governing bodies of the institution. Furthermore, academic programs are evaluated following the *UAGM Evaluation of Academic Programs Policy* (**S3-308**). This policy specifies the criteria and itinerary of the program evaluation cycle. The Academic Program Evaluation Committee will participate in the different stages of the evaluation process for the implementation of this Policy.

The Curriculum Committees begin to spearhead program development or changes. This committee usually consists of the department director, director of assessment, and faculty members. After the JIP approves a new program, the existing assessment plan, policies, and procedures begin to monitor and assess student learning and program outcomes, as well as accreditation standards when applicable. The assessment process is further explained in Chapter 5. To ensure that the academic offerings are relevant, rigorous, have required resources, and are of the highest quality, UAGM GC engages in a process of periodically reviewing its academic offerings. Both the academic department and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee play important roles in ensuring degree appropriateness, alignment with program and institutional goals, and the use of assessment data and results to guide planning and budgeting. The role of the Committee for Institutional Effectiveness is described in detail in Chapter 6.

RQ 4	How does the institution comply with the policies and procedures related to faculty recruitment, qualifications, induction, evaluation, and retention?
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Faculty Recruitment

UAGM-GC has policies and procedures in place that govern the processes of recruiting, developing, evaluating, and retaining qualified faculty, and providing opportunities for faculty to excel in their three stated roles of teaching, service, and research. All of these processes are guided by the SUAGM Faculty Handbook (2015), and institutional norms and procedures to guarantee equitable and consistent treatment in faculty recruitment, retention, development, and evaluation (**S1-114; S2-220**). When situations of termination of contract occur, due process is afforded, according to established policies and procedures stated in the SUAGM Faculty Handbook.

Figure 3.1 Faculty Candidates Selection Process



The main objective of UAGM-GC faculty recruitment process is to strengthen new and existing academic programs and to support institutional growth. UAGM-GC faculty recruitment process is aligned with the regulations and bylaws established in the *SUAGM Faculty Handbook*. This handbook establishes the following criteria for faculty recruitment: (a) academic preparation with specialization in the discipline, (b) teaching or professional experience, (c) evidence of professional and personal development, and (d) scholarly production and research experience. The process complies with all the established precepts under the UAGM recruitment policy, which aspires to identify and attract the best qualified candidates to occupy faculty positions (**S2-220**). The process to ensure that the faculty recruitment plan is aligned with the institutional mission is summarized in Figure 3.1.

Faculty Qualifications

The current recruitment process includes: (1) reviewing the candidate’s credentials, (2) an interview with the candidate, (3) evaluation of the candidate’s written essay, and (4) the candidate’s presentation of a short demonstrative class. The same process is followed for the recruitment of full-time and part-time faculty on the main campus, as well as at university centers. Additional requirements, such as

licenses or certification, may be required for specialized and accelerated programs. Part-time candidates who successfully complete the recruitment process are included in a database of *Certified Part-Time Candidates* indicating which courses they are eligible to teach. If appointed as part-time professors, all candidates go through an orientation and induction process.

Faculty Recognition and Support

UAGM-GC strategic guidelines establish Goal 1.6 in Vector 1 (Academia) as: *Maintain the existence of a faculty that responds to levels of excellence in all modalities. (S1-101)*. UAGM-GC promotes, supports, and recognizes the academic and professional endeavors of its faculty members. Faculty retention and recognition is articulated through the granting of, and promotion in academic rank.

Academic Rank

As stipulated in *SUAGM Faculty Handbook*, academic rank is a recognition conferred by the institutions to distinguish extraordinary merits accomplished by faculty in academic, intellectual, and professional areas, and in service that exceeds strictly contractual duties. Academic rank promotion is a competitive, voluntary process, and is rewarded with a salary increase according to the rank conferred. The criteria for each rank are the same, but the attainment scores for each are different. The Assistant Professor rank is the only rank that may be automatically conferred to any Instructor who completes a doctoral degree. Also, the institution honors academic ranks conferred by other accredited higher education institutions to newly hired full-time faculty. Because of hurricanes (2017), earthquakes (2020), and the pandemic (2020-2022), there was one rank promotion process in the academic 2021-2022. Seven rank promotions were conferred: two for full professors, three for associate professors and two for assistant professors (**S3-309**). During the process of this self-study, it became evident that the institution needs to create new opportunities for academic rank promotions.

Faculty Development and Induction

To continually increase the breadth, depth, and updating of faculty's professional, pedagogical, and technological competencies, UAGM-GC has established an institutional faculty development plan that includes induction, pedagogical, technological, and discipline-related training (**S3-310, S3-311, S3-312**). To comply with the *SUAGM Faculty Handbook*, it considers institutional, academic, and personal goals to promote faculty member's short-term and long-term development. Aligned with the institutional plan, full-time faculty members design their working plan for each academic semester (**S3-313, S3-314**) and prepare an annual achievement report based on the proposed activities included in the working plans (**S3-315, S3-316**). As part of the process, each faculty member and the respective academic program director review the working plans and achievement reports (**S3-317**).

Faculty Evaluation

As establish by the *SUAGM Faculty Handbook*, full-time professors are evaluated in the last year of their contract on four (4) major roles: (a) Teaching and Learning, (b) Research and Creative Work, (c) Service to the Institution, and (d) Community Service (**S1-114, S1-115, S3-334**). The results of instruments used for each role are based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, and a final total composite score is calculated. Table 3.1 shows aggregated average values of faculty evaluation results during academic years 2017-2018 through 2021-2022. Data of RT faculty members (Regular faculty appointed for a 10-month term) on

Role 2: Research and Creative Work reflects their evaluation results for academic years 2017-2018 through 2019-2020. Full data of faculty evaluation results is available in Evidence **S3-318** and **S3-319**.

Table 3.1. Aggregated Average Values for Faculty Evaluation Results of Evaluation Roles by Contract Type Academic Years 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

Contract Type	Number and Percent of Faculty Members Evaluated		Role 1: Teaching and Learning	Role 2: Research and Creative Work	Role 3: Institutional Service	Role 4: Community Service	Composite Value
	Number	Percent					
RT	98	29.3	4.52726	2.86740	4.26712	4.07190	4.28483
M1	85	25.4	4.68625	3.25726	4.47082	4.04806	4.44325
M3	62	18.5	4.73117	4.07759	4.70156	4.55536	4.62791
M5	32	9.6	4.66414	3.97861	4.74653	4.69710	4.60196
Research	58	17.3	4.69142	4.44699	4.56844	4.46075	4.56313
Total	335	100.00					

Legend for contact types: RT-Regular faculty appointed for a 10-month term; M1, M3 and M5-Regular faculty with multiannual contracts of 1, 3 and 5 years respectively; Research-Regular faculty with multiannual contracts as researchers.

Source: Faculty Development and Evaluation Office 2023

RQ 5	How does UAGM Gurabo ensure that rigorous and qualified faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals design, deliver, and assess student learning experiences, and are sufficient to address the educational needs of students?
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Faculty Development and Support to Ensure Academic Rigor and Qualified Faculty

The Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs is responsible for the development of UAGM-GC faculty members. During the annual budget planning, departments request funds for faculty development activities that may include memberships in local, national, and international professional organizations, participation in professional conferences and seminars, and continuing education. At the beginning of each semester, meetings and assemblies are organized to inform full-time faculty of relevant information related to assessment results, new institutional initiatives, and annual work plan issues. Professional development activities are usually included in these meetings.

A faculty development plan is developed annually to facilitate workshops regarding the use of the advanced technological classrooms and Blackboard tools, and the faculty induction and faculty evaluation processes. Additional workshops about the virtual library, databases and e-books are coordinated with the library personnel. Furthermore, the Human Resources Office has adopted a training model for all UAGM employees based on three categories: Essential Skills, Professional Skills, and Technological Skills (**S3-310**). Full-time and part-time faculty are able to complete interactive and computer-based training through an electronic platform during the academic year. Evidence **S3-320** presents the number of institutionally sponsored professional development activities on the main campus and at additional locations and for faculty offering traditional and accelerated modality courses, from 2017 to 2022.

In addition, UAGM-GC encourages faculty participation in local and national conferences, and training. The institution has also sponsored graduate studies for faculty members in areas of difficult recruitment as part of the institution’s commitment to guaranteeing a faculty body of excellence. Faculty members actively participate in external academic and professional activities to increase their knowledge in specific disciplines, as well as to improve their teaching skills. Some of these activities include: (a) participating in local, national, and international presentations (b) peer mentoring, (c) publishing in professional and/or academic peer-reviewed journals (**S3-321**), (d) literary production, (e) participating in externally or institutionally funded research projects, and (f) mentoring students in undergraduate/graduate research, among others.

RQ 6	How are the institution's mission, goals, and policies aligned to the design, delivery and assessment processes of the student learning experiences?
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The Strategic Development Guides (SDG) of the Gurabo Campus represent a critical tool that reflects the development priorities, at the level of the Campus and the AGMU. Furthermore, these SDGs respond directly to our Mission, which establishes that the Gurabo Campus and its additional locations are committed to "academic excellence, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization, and the socio-humanistic development of a diverse population." Similarly, the SDG responds to the diversity of programs and academic levels, through which we develop academic and professional skills to educate responsible citizens who will impact local and global communities. In other words, the SDG that appear below constitute the reference framework for the objectives and strategies that will direct the development and continuous improvement of the offices and programs attached to the Academic, Student, and Institutional Effectiveness, including the Specialized Schools of Dental, Veterinary, and Naturopathic Medicine (**S1-101**).

Admissions

UAGM-GC has a fair and equitable admission policy that requires a high school diploma or equivalent (**S2-205**). Due to the nature of a program, or specialized accreditations mandates, some programs have additional admission requirements such as exams scores (e.g., University Admission Test, PAA, by its Spanish acronym), and a specific high school or undergraduate GPA (**S1-105**). These measures are used to assess the academic potential of the applicants to be successful in their selected program. General requirements for graduate students include a bachelor’s degree, a specific GPA, and recommendation letters. Some graduate programs also require an essay and an interview. The accelerated adult learner program (*AHORA*, by its Spanish acronym) has specific admission requirements and procedures designed for the adult non-traditional learner. At the doctoral level, students are required to hold a completed master’s degree, a specific GPA, letters of recommendation, an essay, and an interview. The doctoral program in Cultural Studies allows students to enter with a bachelor's degree or higher, with a specific GPA, letters of recommendation, and an interview. For specialized doctoral programs (e.g., Naturopathic Medicine) additional requirements apply. Note that the Office of Admission provides advisement on the admissions requirements when individuals are identified as prospective students or those seeking admission.

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning occurs throughout the curriculum. It begins with the General Education Component (GEC) course competencies and continues with program competencies (**S1-102**). As it

mentioned before, the SDG constitute the reference framework for the objectives and strategies that will direct the development, continuous improvement and assessment of the offices and programs attached to the Academic, Student, and Institutional Effectiveness, including the Specialized Schools of Dental, Veterinary, and Naturopathic Medicine. These competencies are reflected in the mission commitment.

Table 3.2. Description of Competencies

Competency	Description of Competency
Critical Thinking	Question, analyze, categorize, evaluate, argue about issues, problems and situations, assume points of view and propose solutions or ideas in various contexts.
Communication	Understand, interpret and express with correctness and coherence oral and written language, in Spanish and English, in different contexts and discourses for a variety of audiences.
Technological Literacy	Effectively manage state-of-the-art technological equipment, programs and applications.
Information Skills	Inquire systematically, ethically and legally using various reliable sources of information. Identifies how to effectively locate, evaluate, and use information.
Ethics and Diversity	Use ethical principles in a variety of social, political, economic, ecological and multicultural contexts within a situation.
Scientific Reasoning	Apply the scientific method in a variety of research contexts by analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to reach conclusions, communicate results, and make decisions.
Mathematical Reasoning	Use logical-mathematical reasoning in contextualized situations to represent, interpret, analyze data, reach conclusions, communicate results and make decisions.
Innovation	Evaluate local and global trends and opportunities to generate new thinking and create new ways of thinking and practice.

In the GEC, the assessment instruments included in the plan are rubrics that evaluate the eight competencies described in the table above. Some of the instruments include, final evaluations used in the areas of English and Spanish (departmental exams and essays or monographs), in humanities and social studies (portfolios, critical or reflective essays, and case analysis) and in science and mathematics (research projects and departmental exams). These evaluations, supported by rubrics and departmental exams, are a part of the institutional assessment that allows UAGM-GC to measure student learning outcomes and competencies (**S5-500, S5-504**). It is important to point out that the CEG competencies continue to be assessed in courses of the professional and concentration components of the academic programs. The latter assessment is contemplated in the academic program plans (see table of the GEC courses aligned to the competencies (**S3-307**)).

Assessment of student learning is ongoing and in General Education and all academic programs. As explained in Chapter 5, assessment results help the institution validate if learning goals are met, and guide decision making and planning, particularly when the benchmarks are not obtained. Faculty are required to participate in the assessment process at the course level, and are required to report assessment results, and recommendations for improvement annually. The details of this process are further explained in Chapter 5.

RQ 11	What policies, procedures, and evaluations are in place to assure that students achieve the general education, professional and concentration learning goals, and objectives, cultural and global awareness regardless of level, location?
RQ 15	How does UAGM's general education curricular sequence support the acquisition and demonstration of essential skills such as oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis, technological competency, and information literacy, and address the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives?

Evolution of the General Education Component

Since 2010, the General Education component has undergone a series of changes with the aim of improving academic offerings and services to students and the university community in general. In 2010, the Associate Deanship of General Education was created, attached to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, headed by an associate dean, and included a director of the Department of Languages and administrative staff. In 2012, the Associate Deanship of General Education became an autonomous component of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities expanding its academic and administrative staff. In 2017, it became the School of Liberal Arts and General Education (EALEG by its acronym in Spanish), which in addition to offering academic offerings to freshmen and sophomores, offered a new associate degree in interdisciplinary studies, and later a master's and doctoral degree in Cultural Studies. In 2017, the School of Liberal Arts and General Education aimed to develop the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes as its learning outcomes in General Education for all students:

1. Identify and understand global issues from the social, economic, and political perspectives.
2. Comprehend the biological, behavioral, and social aspects of human beings.
3. Analyze the importance of historical and current world events.
4. Understand and explain the multidisciplinary nature of learning and problem solving.
5. Explain the relationship and contribution of the arts and the humanities in society's development.
6. Apply ethical values and principles as a responsible citizen.
7. Recognize the importance of the conservation of nature and the environment.
8. Respect human rights, tolerance, diversity, and individual and cultural differences
9. Develop and apply critical thinking skills to solve problems.
10. Communicate effectively in oral and written Spanish and functionally as English Language Learners.
11. Develop and apply mathematical, reasoning skills, and scientific inquiry methods.
12. Achieve basic literacy in technology.

Students acquired this knowledge, skills, and attitudes through EALEG's academic offerings. Depending on the undergraduate program, they had to take between 33 and 48 credits divided into courses in Spanish, English, humanities, social sciences, freshman seminar, integrated science, and mathematics. The courses were English 152 or 152 E (Enhanced), 153, 231 or 331; Spanish 152 or 152 I (Intensive), 250, 255 or 331; Humanities 111 and 112; Social Sciences 111 and 112; Freshman Seminar; and one of the following freshman mathematics courses: Math 120, 120 E (Enhanced), 126 or 199. The acquisition of these learning outcomes was assessed through various instruments that provided direct and indirect evidence, such as: portfolios, departmental final exams, research papers, checkpoint exams, pre-tests, and post-tests (**S3-322**).

As of August 2020, the General Education Component of the Ana G. Méndez University, Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) moved to a competency-based curriculum. This new curriculum applies to all programs and specialties of the institution. UAGM adopted the following definition of competency (González & Wagenaar, 2003). Competencies are understood as knowing and understanding (theoretical knowledge of an academic field, the ability to know and understand), knowing how to act (the practical and operative application of knowledge to certain situations) and knowing how to be (values as an integral part of the way of perceiving others and living in a social context). Competencies represent a combination of attributes (with respect to knowledge and its applications, aptitudes, skills, and responsibilities) that describe the level or degree of sufficiency with which a person is able to perform them.

Table 3.3. *Distribution of General Education Courses by Degree*

Component	Bachelor Courses	Crs	Associate Degree Courses	Crs
English	ENGS 152/ENGS 153	6	ENGS 152	3
Spanish	SPGS 152/ SPGS 250	6	SPGS 152	3
Humanities	HUGS 101/HUGS 102	6	HUGS 101 or SOGS 201	3
History	HIGS 201	3	-	-
Social sciences	SOGS 201/SOGS 202	6	HUGS 101 or SOGS 201	3
Mathematics	MAGS 120	3	MAGS 120	3
Natural sciences	SCGS 200	3	-	-
Information skills	INGS 201	3	INGS 201	3
		36		15

Current General Education Component

UAGM-GC has established educational goals to be attained by undergraduates in all programs and all majors and they are published in the undergraduate catalog. Educational goals are driven by overarching principles, institutional values, and based on assessment data. In 2019, the three former institutions (Universidad de Turabo, Universidad del Este, and Universidad Metropolitana) had become what we now know as three individual campuses of Universidad Ana G. Mendez: (1) Gurabo Campus, (2) Carolina Campus, and (3) Cupey Campus. As Chapter 7 explains, each campus is autonomous, and its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the Vice Chancellor. While each campus is unique, the GEC was unified to create a more efficient and effective institution, policies, procedures, and processes. This unification was completed in 2019; however, it began with the unification and approval of its General Education Component. At that time, General Education moved from a content-focused to competency-focused and required that all students graduate mastering eight (8) university competencies with at least five (5) courses/15 credits for associate degrees, and 12 courses/36 credits for bachelor’s degrees (**S3-323**).

Additionally, each program’s curriculum is divided into four major areas: general education, core courses, major or professional required courses, and electives (**S3-324**). Core courses include either

foundation courses or second level courses directed towards a discipline. Core courses range from 6 to 51 credits. The majors in professional courses range from 27 to 63 credits, while elective courses range from three to nine credits. The course distribution creates a balance between general and professional education. Undergraduate degrees credit requirements range from 120 to 132 credits, which are completed in four or five years.

General Education Component (GEC) Impact

The courses of the GEC are aligned to the competencies of Critical Thinking, Communication, Technological Competence, Information Literacy, Ethics and Diversity, Scientific Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Innovation. In addition, these competencies are developed across the curriculum considering the existing curricular components (S3-323). All undergraduate students must take the required general education courses at the associate degree (15 credits) and bachelor's degree levels (36 credits). Table 3.3 illustrates the distribution of General Education courses that are universal for all students.

The integration of academic offerings in 2019 resulted in a common General Education component and a homogeneous curriculum for all academic programs offered at all UAGM campuses. Faculty representatives from all UAGM campuses participated in this process, and this integration has brought a change in how courses are taught, changing from a content-based GEC towards a GEC focused on competencies. All courses of the GEC are required for all academic programs of the institution, thus ensuring that all students can acquire breadth and depth that encompasses the GEC and the eight (8) competencies embedded in it. Also, the competencies of the GEC are universal for the institution. These are developed at the basic and developing performance levels in General Education and are developed at the competent and proficient performance levels in the core and concentration courses.

RQ 7	To what extent does the institution facilitate and promote professional development opportunities and resources to ensure that faculty is actively involved in the design, delivery, and assessment of student learning experiences?
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Faculty Involvement

The evidence included in this chapter depicts a faculty who is academically prepared, participates in professional development in teaching and their discipline, engages in research and creative work, procures external funds, and provides service to the institution and the community. UAGM-GC recognizes the importance of a well-prepared faculty body in the teaching-learning process, as expressed in UAGM-GC strategic guidelines (S1-101):

Vector 1: Academia

Goal 1.6: *Maintain the existence of a faculty that responds to levels of excellence in all modalities.*

Objectives:

1.6.1. Attract and recruit faculty trained by specialty and expertise, with skills in research, entrepreneurship, assessment knowledge, and a global perspective in curriculum development.

1.6.2. Develop and implement a training plan according to your needs on topics such as competencies, critical thinking, service, assessment, retention, research, entrepreneurship, teaching modalities, and technology in the classroom.

Table 3.4 presents UAGM-GC full-time faculty profile that includes highest academic degree, gender, and rank for the last five years, including additional locations and branch campuses. Evidence **S3-325** presents UAGM’s full-time faculty profile, segregated by academic school.

Table 3.4 Profile of UAGM-GC Full-Time Faculty (Academic Years 2017-18 through 2023-24)

Year	Academic Preparation Distribution								Gender				Academic Rank Distribution								Total
	AD Cert		Bacc		Master		Doct		F		M		Full P		Assoc P		Assist P		Inst		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
17-18	0	0.0	4	1.7	71	30.3	159	67.9	121	51.7	113	48.3	53	22.6	67	28.6	73	31.2	41	17.5	234
18-19	0	0.0	6	2.4	81	31.9	167	65.7	137	53.9	117	46.1	52	20.5	56	22.0	87	34.3	55	21.7	254
19-20	0	0.0	5	2.3	67	31.0	144	66.7	118	54.6	98	45.4	43	19.9	50	23.1	77	35.6	46	21.3	216
20-21	0	0.0	4	1.9	58	27.9	146	70.2	110	52.9	98	47.1	42	20.2	43	20.7	81	38.9	42	20.2	208
21-22	1	0.5	8	3.9	55	27.0	140	68.6	108	52.9	96	47.1	38	18.6	37	18.1	86	42.2	43	21.1	204
22-23	1	0.5	7	3.8	49	26.6	127	69.0	100	54.3	84	45.7	30	16.3	32	17.4	86	46.7	36	19.6	184
23-24	1	0.6	8	4.4	48	26.5	124	68.5	104	57.5	77	42.5	29	16.0	29	16.0	88	48.6	35	19.3	181

Source: Faculty Development and Evaluation Office 2023

It is important to note that as a direct correlation to natural disasters (hurricanes and earthquakes), and the pandemic, there has been a reduction of the Island’s population, school closings, and a pool of fewer students entering higher education. As a result, SUAGM took the necessary measures to reduce the number full-time faculty through retirement incentives and hiring based on program faculty-to-student ratios. This allowed the institution to maintain the quality of education, appropriate student to faculty ratios, while ensuring fiscal responsibility based on enrollment.

Faculty Engagement Faculty members’ workload is clearly established at the beginning of each semester, in agreement with the academic program director. In general terms, the weekly faculty workload consists of fifteen teaching hours, six office hours, fifteen hours for creative/scholarship/research activities, and 4 hours dedicated to service to the institution. The *SUAGM Faculty Handbook (S1-114)* establishes that for faculty members teaching on graduate programs, the

teaching load per semester is 12 credits and office hours to complete their workload. In a combined (undergraduate and graduate) course load schedule, teaching hours may not exceed fifteen.

UAGM-GC is a primarily teaching institution with a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Faculty members scholarship, credentials, and experience provide support to the teaching and learning process, and curricular needs. To ensure a smooth transition into the UAGM-GC academic structure, new faculty at the main campus and additional location receive induction training, including orientation on: (a) the institutional administrative structure, (b) norms and procedures in teaching, (c) the teaching-learning process, (d) UAGM students' profile, and (e) student learning assessment process and evaluation (**S3-311, S3-312**). The *SUAGM Faculty Handbook* provides information on faculty duties and responsibilities in their educational work and a detailed description of the evaluation processes. During the academic semester and after finalizing the training, workshops on diverse topics are offered: quality teaching strategies, learning styles, assessment and evaluation techniques, conceptual development, and integrating and applying technology in teaching, among others. Individualized mentoring services are also provided to develop and improve faculty's teaching skills. The institution closely supervises faculty's teaching performance through the evaluation processes previously described.

Course syllabi are developed following the official institutional competency-focused format (**S3-302, S3-303, S3-304, S3-305**). Using the syllabus as a guide, student learning goals are met through diverse teaching-learning strategies, assessed using varied measuring instruments, and rigorously evaluated. Faculty members are required to prepare course assessment reports that include student learning results and recommendations for improvements (**S5-518**).

Faculty members are encouraged to actively participate in service and professional activities that enhance the depth and knowledge of their disciplines and, thus, the effectiveness of their teaching. End of course faculty assessment results for 2020-2023 are shown in Table 3.4. These results show a tendency of increase in the use of technology, information literacy skills development, and assessment in the teaching process.

Details of the assessment structure at the academic school level, and faculty's role and responsibilities in this process are described in standard 5.

The *SUAGM Faculty Handbook* recognizes academic freedom as a fundamental right of full-time and part-time faculty. Under UAGM's definition, the professor has the right to participate in the design, content, objectives, teaching methods, and strategies of the courses they are qualified to teach within the limitations of the student's rights and the institution's policies. A grievance procedure describes how to proceed when a faculty member perceives that their academic freedom rights have been violated (**S2-227**).

Research and Creative Works

UAGM-GC is in constant capacity-building to develop the necessary culture and infrastructure for institutional development in the research area. As stated in the *SUAGM Faculty Handbook*, research or creative works compose from 20-65% of a professor's evaluation. The Director's Office for Research is committed to promote, coordinate, and disseminate research activities and projects, as well as creative production, through a trans-disciplinary approach. With this purpose in mind, UAGM-GC has developed various strategies to promote qualitative and quantitative research at the graduate and undergraduate

level. Faculty members participate as researchers and as mentors to graduate and undergraduate students. During 2017-2023, faculty involve in research or creative work initiatives produced 103 publications, mostly in peer reviewed journals (S3-321).

Table 3.5. Summary of Approved Research and Creative Work

Academic Year	Number of Research Proposals Submitted and Approved					
	Academic Division of Science and Technology		Academic Division of Liberal Arts		Academic Division of Business, Tourism and Entrepreneurship	
	Submitted	Approved	Submitted	Approved	Submitted	Approved
2019-2020	22	6	21	11	1	0
2020-2021	27	15	18	12	1	0
2021-2022		13	19	12	0	0

Source: Office for Research, 2023

Faculty involved in any type of research, including projects that are part of a coursework, must comply with the various certifications required by the SUAGM Compliance Office, which is part of the Vice President’s Office of Academic Affairs - Associate Vice President’s Office of Research and Compliance. According to the nature of the project, faculty members must complete the following applicable certification procedures: research with human subjects (IRB), research with animal subjects (ACUC), and research using hazardous chemical or biological materials (IBC). In addition, faculty must comply with SUAGM’s copyright policies before publishing any material in any journal, educational platform, social network, or any other media.

Faculty Participation in Governance Faculty members assume an active role when participating in the most important institutional governing bodies: the *University Board* and the *Academic Senate*. The *University Board* has faculty representation from each campus. This governing body is responsible for approving policies, curricular revisions, institutional budgets, annual work plans, and the granting of degrees, among other duties. The *Academic Senate* is responsible for originating and recommending academic policies to the University Board. At the beginning of each academic year, each academic division and school selects the faculty members that will represent them. The necessary number of faculty representatives are selected in a faculty assembly to ensure an absolute faculty majority in the *Senate* (S3-326).

There are other opportunities for faculty participation and involvement in decision-making processes, such as policymaking, development and implementation, include their participation in SUAGM inter-institutional, institutional, and academic divisions committees. Some of these committees are ad hoc, but most of them are permanent ones. Examples of such committees are:

SUAGM Faculty Handbook Revision Committee (ad hoc: 2021- 2022) - UAGM representatives in the committee were responsible for compiling all UAGM-GC faculty recommendations in a final report and representing UAGM-GC faculty in the committee meetings.

UAGM Mission Revision Committee

UAGM General Education Revision Committee (ad hoc: 2018-2019) – This committee developed the definitions of the competencies and the course syllabus for the new general education component which was implemented in August 2021. It was mostly composed of faculty members and all academic schools were represented.

Curriculum Committees (permanent) - Each academic school appoints its own committee, which oversees leading the process of program developments and revisions, among other duties, as stipulated in the document *Procedures for the Establishment of Permanent Committees*. A faculty member leads the committee.

RQ 8	How and where does the institution officially disclose their academic programs of study to students in such a way that they understand and follow degree and program requirements, as well as the expected time to completion?
RQ 13	How are tools and strategies used to communicate effectively with students, so they understand degree and program requirements, available learning opportunities, and expected time to completion?

Communication Strategies

The UAGM-GC academic catalog provides information to students, faculty, and the general public regarding degree and program requirements, learning opportunities, normal academic progress, and the expected time for degree completion, policies, regulations, and norms. The catalog is available at the institutional webpage (**S1-105**). Additionally, the website includes all academic programs, Student Consumer link, regulations for distance, hybrid, and remote learnings, academic calendar, student services, accreditations, Student Handbook, institutional norms, regulations, and additional institutional information.

To ensure that students are kept abreast of academic and institutional information, UAGM-GC utilizes various communication methods in addition to the institutional website (**S3-327**). Among them are telephone calls, emails, text messages, social media, and announcements in the Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard. Note that emails and text messages may be informative or require responses from the students. An example of a required email response was utilized when the institution integrated its curriculum and wanted to confirm that all students were apprised of the new curriculum changes, and to meet with their department directors for any clarifications.

Communication strategies and tools include official communication sent directly to students (electronically and in print), and the institutional Assessment Dashboard. Additional official communications include application and enrollment status, financial aid, student services, emergency situations, policies, and procedures. The Assessment Dashboard allows students, as well as faculty, to see the assessment and achievement of program learning outcomes. A tool also utilized in the continuous assessment process of data analysis, decision-making, planning and reporting.

RQ 9	How does UAGM Gurabo provide sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support student success and academic progress?
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Information Resources and Library

The library is the primary information center for the UAGM-GC and additional locations. It provides students, professors, staff, and external community services and resources that are aligned with institutional priorities, goals, and strategic plan. The Library/Information Resources is organized into two main structures: the Library and the Informatics and Telecommunications units. Library services, collections, and technology resources play a crucial role in the support of the institution's mission for teaching, learning, research, and information literacy through guided independent instruction on the web and direct group instruction. During the past ten years, the UAGM Library has provided a place for both physical and digital resources through Virtual Library.

The library staff includes four (4) professional librarians and five (5) library assistants. The library administers collection development activities (acquires and catalogs materials) for its main campus and additional location libraries. The library policies and procedures that oversee the use of library services and resources are documented and accessible in print and through the Virtual Library. The library policies and procedures that manage the organization of resources are clearly defined and documented in the Voyager System.

A considerable investment has been made for the collection of electronic resources and databases, audiovisual materials, and print that allows a vigorous information literacy and information resources available to the university community. Library instruction has always been an important service provided at the library. Notwithstanding, the level of commitment and resources for a well-designed program of user instruction has varied over time. Thus, the Information Literacy (IL) program is in constant revision. The goal of the IL program at UAGM-GC is to develop in its users advanced searching skills and a critical analysis of information.

Collections

The library develops its collections according to the priorities of the programs to fulfill the information needs of its users. It actively seeks recommendations from faculty and administrators for the acquisition and development of library resources and services. The librarians serve as a liaison between the school and the library. Faculty, administrators, and library staff actively participate in the recommendation, evaluation, and selection of UAGM-GC library resources. The library collections include print, audiovisual materials, and electronic resources. There are books, electronic books, newspapers, maps, indexes, journals, periodicals, databases, and audiovisual materials.

Information Literacy

Library personnel offers workshops on the use and integration of the virtual library, databases, and e-books into the instructional process for full and part-time faculty (**S3-339, S3-340**). In 2022-2023, 208 full-time and part-time faculty members among UAGM campuses participate in six workshops. Faculty integrates the use of those resources in course planning and instructional activities and bibliographic literacy sessions through the course INSC 201 (**S3-341, S3-342**).

Archives

The Governor Pedro Rosello Library Museum, or Biblioteca Museo Gobernador Pedro Rosselló (BMGPR, by its Spanish acronym) was created as a result of Law 290 signed in 2000 by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which allows all former governors of the island to designate a non-profit or educational institution as a depository of historical materials (documents, photographs, media files, and

memorabilia) of their years in office, to safeguard and make them accessible to the public for reference and study. The exhibits and historical documents at the BMGPR provide a summary of the work carried out by former Governor Pedro Rosselló and former First Lady Maga Rosselló during their years at La Fortaleza (as Puerto Rico's Executive Mansion is commonly known). The BMGPR presents an enlightening compendium of events, initiatives, and key projects that allow visitors to become acquainted with the public service efforts of the Rosselló administration in a more intimate manner. BMPGPR holdings include the papers of Pedro Rosselló, approximately 16,000 videos; 25,000 audio tapes; 503 books; 1,378 museum artifacts (including memorabilia, PR artisan objects, and works of art, among others); and two private collections (family photos and political party materials).

Informatics and Telecommunications

The Informatics and Telecommunications (IT) unit, which is a part of the Vice Presidency of Telecommunication and Academic Technology, provides telecommunications and computer resources support (computer labs and network) to the academic community (students, professors, staff, and the community). The technology professionals provide an ongoing inventory, assessment, evaluation, and modernization of the necessary technologies needed for the institution's physical plant, virtual library, student, and faculty needs. Informatics and telecommunications are further explained in chapter 6.

RQ 10	What processes are in place at UAGM Gurabo to identify and monitor at-risk students and their academic progress?
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Academic Support

At-risk students are identified by their college entrance exam or institutional placement exam scores. Students who enter the institution underprepared are provided with additional support that aids in their success. In addition to receiving designated academic counselors who provide advisement, counseling, and resources for new freshmen, students whose cut-off scores indicate they need additional academic support are given mandatory tutoring in English, Spanish and Mathematics in laboratories that are co-assigned with their courses. This enables students to make academic progress without taking remedial classes that do not count towards degree completion and graduation. Additionally, professors monitor students' attendance and academic progress through the institutions' Early Alert Retention System (EARS) and make referrals to counselors and other student support services when interventions are needed (**S3-328**). EARS, tutoring, and other support services are explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

UAGM-GC provides sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support student success and academic progress. Students can look for a program by field of study, modalities, level degree or institutional locations. In addition, all students can request a copy of their program curriculum in the academic unit or the Center of Academic Advising and Counseling (CAAC), ascribed to the Office of Student Retention located in the Center of Integrated Student Services (CISE, by its Spanish acronym). The Office of Student Retention is an academic service unit designed to provide academic opportunities that support the success of students. They offer specialized and direct services to students aimed at contributing and strengthening their academic achievement and their integration into the institution's social system.

The other UAGM-GC unit that provides learning opportunities and supports students' academic progress is the Center of Resources for Educational Excellence (CREE). CREE provides academic support for

students to achieve their adaptation process to university life and achieve their academic goals. CREE provides evaluations of career pathways and placement services, Educational Induction and Leadership Seminar (SIGS 100) and workshops on technological tools for academic success are offered regularly to the UAGM-GC community. All these learning opportunities and resources are available through a student facing web page and enable them to make appointments as desired.

The Academic Advising Standard Operating Process (SOP, 1-2019) (**S3-329**) is defined for the student withdrawal process as determined by the Executive Order 27-2019 (**S3-330**). The objective of the SOP is to establish that all students need to complete an academic orientation and know their academic progress before completing the partial or total withdrawal. The document also provides the scope and reach of students and associates responsibilities in the process. Online and onsite procedures and definitions of terms are included in the SOP document. Finally, the Early Alert Retention System (EARS) enforced by SOP 1-2022, obligates the use of EARS as an academic preventive process that allows the Office of Student Retention to monitor the academic development of students. The application identifies all students with irregular attendance, and with a performance of 69% or less during the midterm grades reports. Those alerts are sent to the academic advising unit so that they may contact students to offer those academics and support services, such as tutoring services and peer mentoring, among others.

Communication Tools and Strategies

UAGM-GC has countless options to communicate effectively with students so they can understand and know the requirements of their degree. Among the currently used options are emails, text messages, and communication by regular physical mail (**S3-327**). Academic divisions and program departments contribute to communications with students. Academic divisions and departments contact students and disseminate information that pertains to their academic program. Additionally, professors communicate valuable information in the Blackboard announcement section or directly inside the classroom. UAGM-GC also has a group of academic advisors assigned to different academic divisions. They track and monitor students' compliance with their academic program and their academic progress towards their goals. More information related to students and their academic progress is discussed in Chapter 4.

RQ 12	How are the programs and related learning experiences effectively evaluated to ensure rigor, coherence, and effective delivery, irrespective of modality?
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Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are established by courses and programs in each department and serve as the foundation for the development of uniformed syllabi for each course. These serve as the foundation for the course guides which are disseminated to students by the professor at the beginning of each semester. Both the syllabi and course guide clearly delineate the assessment instruments that will be utilized for assessment reported by the professor and institution in the Course Assessment Report: AR1 (previous assessment model) (**S5-504**); IAC for Spanish acronym (current assessment model) (**S5-518**).

Programs that develop SLOs are consistent with the institution and program mission. The Office of the Associate Vice Presidency of Institutional Assessment, assessment officials, and faculty participate in diverse assessment processes that address learning outcomes. The Office of Institutional Assessment

and the directors of each academic program are central in guiding faculty through the assessment process and procedures, as well as providing training and feedback as they work on course and program assessment. Course and program assessment provide the basis for academic institutional data analysis and inform the appropriateness and alignment of SLOs with courses, programs, and the UAGM-GC mission, goals, and objectives.

As indicated on the uniformed syllabus. A variety of teaching methodologies are used to facilitate learning. Note that professors are evaluated on the use of a variety of teaching techniques in their student evaluation, and as a part of their evaluation portfolio. Among the teaching strategies are lectures, presentations, demonstrations, large and small group discussions, problem solving, case studies, projects, student presentations, collaborative inquiry, simulations, original document analysis, laboratory, and field study, service learning, community engagement, capstone projects, practicum, among others. In addition to the traditional modes of instruction, UAGM-GC, has been expanding its teaching delivery modes of with blended, web-supported, distance education, on-line courses/degrees, simulators, and interactive video conferences. Additionally, the Learning Management Systems, Blackboard, supports teaching and learning, provides communication and interaction, and disseminates course materials while conducting class synchronously or asynchronously.

RQ 14	To what extent are faculty evaluated through clear, meaningful, and equitable processes with the goal of creating and maintaining an academic environment that promotes student learning and facilitates academic rigor and ongoing assessment?
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Faculty Evaluation

As stated before, full-time professors are evaluated in the last year of their contract on their four (4) major roles: (a) Teaching and Learning, (b) Research and Creative Work, (c) Service to the Institution, and (d) Community Service. The Teaching and Learning role comprise five components: (1) Content expertise, (2) Teaching strategies, (3) Learning assessment and evaluation, (4) Instructional design and Delivery, and (5) Course administration (**S3-334**). As shown previously in Table 3.1, aggregated values on role 1, independently of faculty contract type, exceeded an average of 4.50 on a 1-5 Likert scale (**S3-318**).

Curriculum Revision

When revising or creating new programs, UAGM-GC utilizes a range of informative sources such as feasibility studies, changes in market trends, new technology demands, the emerging job market, input from advisory boards, student surveys, and student profiles, and assessment results. These inform changes in the existing curricula, the development of new courses, and suggest the use of innovative pedagogy techniques. Moreover, UAGM-GC responds to professional organization standards and accreditation agency requirements to maintain the quality of its programs. It complies with state and federal laws that regulate some of the professions, which require the institution to periodically revise its academic programs to guarantee long-term compliance.

UAGM-GC academic departments and programs have faculty and personnel involved in professional associations, and in governmental organizations and agencies that bring the most innovative ideas and projects to the institution, which in turn enhances current offerings (**S3-337, S3-338**).

RQ 16	How does UAGM Gurabo guarantee that faculty and/or other professionals have the appropriate credentials to graduate-level curricula, and to provide opportunities for research, scholarship, and independent thinking?
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Faculty Credentialing Process

Candidates for full-time or part-time faculty positions must submit official academic credentials and evidence of professional experiences that will be included in their file and required for the recruitment process as stated in the 2015 SUAGM Faculty Manual. The assessment of the credentialing criteria of each faculty member will be the role of the department and academic program personnel committees at the time of recruitment. These criteria will include academic degrees, specialty boards, research and scholarly activities, and capacity for creative work, among others. All credentials must be submitted in original forms and certified digital copies.

The Program Faculty Recruitment Committee, with the referral and recommendation from Academic Program Director, will receive and review documents from interested applicants, conduct interviews, and render a report with recommendations to the Academic Program Director. The Committee will verify that the candidate is qualified for the available position and that the selection process has been fair and unbiased, and subsequently submit a final recommendation. The director will review the Committee’s report and submit recommendations to the department director.

The department director or specialized school's dean will recommend candidates for appointment to the Academic Dean and to the Academic Senate who will have the final authority over all faculty appointments and rank assignments. The Faculty Affairs Commission of the Academic Senate and the Human Resources Office can request additional documents from the new faculty member according to local and federal labor laws and regulations.

The Dental Health, Health, Naturopathic Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, and Psychology schools may have additional requirements. At the beginning of the academic year, administrative staff prepares a list of all faculty with expired or forthcoming expired credentials. This list is disclosed to the departments who will oversee and notify the faculty member of the required documents and collect all documents for each professor’s record. Each department, with the help of the Personnel Committee, carefully reviews the credentials of appointed faculty, including license renovations, CPR Certificates, and specialty boards recertifications to maintain updated records of all its faculty members following the school’s Re-Credentialing Policy. The records are kept electronically in the UAGM Database. Common expectations for the faculty credentials will be that the faculty should have completed a program of study in the discipline or subfield (if applicable) in which they teach, and/or for which they develop curricula, with coursework at least one level above the courses that are being taught or will be developed.

Graduate Fields and Professional Programs

Graduate fields, professional programs’ descriptions, and the corresponding requirements are available at UAGM-GC catalog, academic departments, and academic programs.

The Director of the Center for Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) holds meetings with all doctoral program coordinators to discuss issues relevant to admission criteria, doctoral policies, and relevant matters that affect the needs and success of doctoral students. The CGSR also coordinates with each

department/school, the doctoral students' participation and attendance to seminars, workshops, and professional conferences. Additionally, CGSR provides students with a resource and study room. Additionally, coordinators of each doctoral program provide support in course selection, academic guidance, and progress until degree completion. The CGSR contributes to the promotion and participation of students in local and external scientific research activities.

The CGSR collaborates with Central Administration and the other two main campuses to hold its Annual Research Forum, which provides doctoral students, faculty, and external researchers an opportunity to present their research **(S3-331, S3-332, S3-333)**.

Graduate fields and professional programs have clear requirements appropriate to each degree offered. The masters' curriculum has four components: core courses, specialized courses, electives, and research or a project. All master's degree programs require research, a project, or internships and most programs require a thesis or a project prior to graduation. Others require internships, practicum, or the completion of a specific amount of supervised clinical practice hours. Faculty mentors supervise and guide students through their thesis/project in business and entrepreneurship, environmental sciences, architecture, nursing, education, engineering, and information and network systems administration programs. The graduate programs in speech-language pathology, nutrition, nursing, naturopathic medicine, veterinary technology, counseling psychology, and guidance and counseling require clinical experiences. The graduate program in architecture requires a design-built studio practicum. All graduate programs require a thorough literary review and analyses of statistical research; some require case studies, and theoretical models **(S1-105)**.

To maintain the relevance of current offerings in the academic and corporate environments, students in graduate and undergraduate programs are supported to develop and foster relationships, representation, and participation in professional organizations, associations, and local businesses.

RQ 17	To what extent does UAGM Gurabo assessment policy, plans and procedures impact the improvement of student learning experiences?
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Assessment and Student Learning Experiences

The culture of assessment drives the planning and decision-making of the institution, particularly around the area of student learning and student learning experiences. Learning outcomes, programs, and student services go through on-going assessment and includes the benchmarks, instruments utilized, results obtained, recommendations for improvement, and the measurements and results for benchmarks that were not met during the previous assessment cycle **(S5-504, S5-518)**.

Since Universidad Ana G Mendez integration process, a new *Assessment Model for Institutional Effectiveness (AMIE)* was implemented and has become the guidance for the UAGM-GC schools, student learning outcomes, and administrative offices assessment implementation. The model proposes the integration of two complementary components in the institution: the academic, and the student services component. The assessment of the academic component helps in monitoring student learning process and the development of the competencies that are included in each academic programs' profiles. It also allows generating assessment plans for academic programs and action plans that promote changes for continuous improvement and closing the loops actions. This type of assessment is

carried out at three levels: course level, academic program, and institutional. The details of the Assessment Model for Institutional Effectiveness are described in detail in Chapter 5.

AREAS OF STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

1. Faculty recruitment, development, and evaluation processes are uniform for all faculty members, regardless of location and teaching modality, ensuring the same quality of credentials, excellence, and rigor in the teaching-learning process.
2. The increase in faculty with doctorate degrees, and the level of faculty retention evidence that the policies and procedures implemented by the institution are effective and contribute to the achievement of UAGM's mission.
3. Faculty representation in governing bodies strengthens the academic commitment with UAGM's stakeholders.
4. Scholarly activities both at academic and professional activities show a strong faculty commitment towards self-improvement and strengthens the service to UAGM's stakeholders.

Challenges

1. Faculty participation in research projects and the submission of proposals for external funding is not widespread throughout the institution.
2. Financial constraints limit the opportunities for faculty promotions in rank.

Conclusions

UAGM-GC has demonstrated that the processes of design and delivery of student learning experiences rely on rigorous and standardized procedures regarding program development, implementation and assessment in compliance with its policies, the state licensing agency and professional accrediting agencies. Those processes are anchored in UAGM-GC mission, vision and core values to ensure that the curricular content, sequence and depth fosters success in the student learning experience and their prospective insertion as well-prepared and skillful citizens in today's society. Available student support, information resources and an academic performance monitoring process allows UAGM-GC to provide additional tools to promote an engaging, inspiring and scholarly learning environment to all students. Faculty recruitment, qualification, induction, development and evaluation processes allow the selection and retention of highly qualified professionals committed to creating, facilitating and assessing student learning. Therefore, UAGM-GC strongly complies with standard 3.

Standard IV - Student 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.

Chapter 4 provides evidence as to how UAGM Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) complies with the Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15 and the Standard 4 Criteria, as well as the Self-Study Institutional Priority 2 in context of the nine Research Questions of the inquiry conducted by Working Group 4 (WG-4). Working Group 4 identified and analyzed key findings and submitted recommendations that are achievable and consistent with the strategic direction set forth in the Gurabo Campus Strategic Development Plan 2021-2022, 2023-2024 (S1-101), and its Mission and Goals (S1-100). Students' integral formation and achievement of their academic goals are UAGM-GC and additional locations Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce y Yabucoa priorities in terms of high-quality student support services.

RQ1	How is institutional priority P2 achieved considering the standard criteria?
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UAGM-GC and Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa Centers, has a variety of academic and student support service programs to assist students in attaining their academic competencies, retention, and graduation goals. Once students are identified as perspective students, a series of monitoring of progress begins to take place until they are admitted. Once admitted, student orientation and academic progress becomes more formalized, and a concerted effort between academia y student services begins and continues until graduation and alumni services. To begin with, students who are underprepared are identified through the College Board entrance scores, or the university placement exams in English, Spanish and mathematics (S4-400). These students are provided with extra academic support by being placed in courses that require co-curricular laboratories that strengthen skills. While focused attention is given to freshmen students, and students who enter underprepared, all students receive academic advisement from the Deanship of Student Affairs, and their corresponding academic programs. This chapter will describe the spectrum of support services that attend the educational needs, support, and well-being that are offered to students to attain their academic and career goals.

RQ2	How do the institution's policies, procedures and programs build student success through admission, retention, graduation, and transfer, including placement in the appropriate courses?
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Policies that Build Student Success

UAGM is committed to providing undergraduate and graduate students accurate and comprehensive information regarding all admissions requirements, academic programs, student services, and relevant services that contribute to their success at the institution. Prospective students learn about academic programs, admissions requirements, and required placement or diagnostic testing through the UAGM web site, UAGM Catalog, Student Handbook, flyers, brochures, on-site and phone calls, and open house fairs (S1-105, S2-208, S4-401). Information about Academic Divisions, specialized schools and academic programs are accessible from the UAGM home page and brochures.

At the onset of each semester, UAGM offers orientation to new and transfer students to provide information and printed material about the institution's resources, procedures, policies, student services, financial aid, student loans, and academic support services, among others (S4-402). UAGM also holds informational events that include fairs and Financial Aid Awareness Days. The student advisors use the Ellucian applications, that includes Banner and CAPP, an online academic progress reporting system to audit progress toward a degree, and institutional technology tools such as the Early Administration

Retention System (EARS). Throughout their academic careers, students can review this easy-to-read, comprehensive snapshot of their academic progress.

Although UAGM has an open admissions policy, some academic programs require specific College Entrance Examination Board test scores and a high school GPA to assure that the prospective student has the academic potential to be successful in the selected program. Graduate and doctoral programs also provide their admission requirements and academic information through the UAGM webpage and brochures. Graduate students are required to have a bachelor's degree, a minimum specific GPA score established by the academic program, recommendation letters, an essay, and an interview. Additionally, the admissions office must advise students on the interviews and minimum program requirements established by the academic division or specialized schools (**S2-205**).

UAGM Gurabo Admissions policies and processes support the UAGM mission statement, offer quality services through post-secondary and graduate program that also include an accelerated modality for adults (**S2-205**). The student admission process for the accelerated adult learner program (Spanish acronym, *AHORA*) has specific admission requirements and procedures designed for the adult learner. The Recruitment and Admissions Office recruits, admits, and encourages the enrollment of students. Prospective students are encouraged to attend information sessions offered throughout the year at their high schools, UAGM main campus, and its additional locations (**S4-403**). These sessions are offered by staff from the Recruitment and Admissions Office and the Academic Divisions or Specialized Schools. Admissions Officers assist students in the application process to UAGM-GC programs, examine academic and career objectives, and review program requirements. Admissions and transfer policies are available to assist prospective students make informed decisions about the admissions process (**S2-216**). Information is also available in UAGM brochures and institutional pamphlets.

Most of UAGM admitted students entered with need of basic skills support, as well as financial assistance (**S4-404**). UAGM offers academic and non-academic student support services provided by the Office of Student Retention. All services are designed, implemented, and evaluated in collaboration with the department and schools, complying with the US Department of Education rules and regulations. The institution's assessment process has provided valuable data to improve and expand services for its diverse population (**S4-405**). Academic and non-academic support service hours have been extended to provide day and evening students tutoring and mentoring, medical, and counseling services, access to the bursar's and registrar's offices, and on-line services to enhance academic excellence. These services are annually or bi-annually assessed in response to the needs of the student population. Up until the pandemic, the results of these combined efforts have contributed to improving retention efforts. However, UAGM Gurabo, like other higher education institutions in Puerto Rico, has experienced a decline in admission, enrollment, and fiscal resources during the last 10 years. This was further exacerbated by the COVID 19 global pandemic which has impacted enrollment in institutions around the world. However, post-pandemic strategies have begun to stabilize enrollment and retention.

Retention

Student retention is one of the highest priorities for Universidad Ana G. Méndez. To this end, strategies have been established to support the development and academic success of students. This effort is framed in an Institutional Retention Model (MRI, by its Spanish acronym) based on the early identification of needs, timely intervention, and continuous monitoring of students from the classroom to graduation (**S4-406**) This MRI presents three components: (1) academic dimension, (2) student

dimension, (3) the administrative and technological dimension. The policies, standards and procedures have been created with the purpose of strengthening the effectiveness of the student retention model. Through the academic dimension, strategies have been developed to address early aspects of academic services support. For example, the Center for Learning and Academic Services (CASA) was developed to provide a peer tutoring program that supports students' achievement and academic success. In CASA, services are offered in face-to-face and remote modalities, and provide tutorials, and mentoring or peer advice. These services are available to all students and are offered individually and/or in small groups. Other academic and support services offered through CASA are: (a) Structured Learning Assistance (SLA), (b) Supplemental Instruction Program (PIS by its Spanish acronym), where tutors render academic support during the actual class, as well as private tutoring; (c) Online Academic Support and through tutoring in Blackboard or MS Teams, and (d) Challenge (**S4-407**). Additionally, the Center for Resources and Educational Excellence (CREE) offers academic support and social support to help students acclimate to university life and achieve their academic goals (**S4-408**). CREE offers student orientation, diagnostic and placement services for English, Spanish and mathematics, a course called Induction and Educational Leadership Seminar (SIGS 100), and workshops on technological tools for academic success (**S4-400, S4-402**).

The Office of Retention is responsible for preparing the annual retention plan for the institution and additional locations(**S4-409**). Retention committees work to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and suggest improvements based on assessment results. Student profiles, social and financial needs, and academic performances are considered to establish strategies that promote student retention. UAGM Gurabo uses retention and attrition data analysis as part of its retention program and implementation planning processes (**S4-410**). Retention and attrition data have been used continuously to: (1) develop academic services for at risk freshmen students e.g., Supplemental Instruction Program, Complementary Educational Services, (2) formulate a follow-up plan to address the need of second, third- and fourth-year students; and, (3) establish a plan to contact and reach out to students who withdraw and are unlikely to reenroll the following term through a joint effort with the enrollment management office. As part of the institutional retention model, at the end of each academic year, the retention office meets with the different units and present the results of the previous year. This leaves retention plans ready for the new academic year.

UAGM-GC understands that student retention is more important than ever, and the priority is reverberated in the Executive Order 27-2019. As a result, the Center for Academic Advising and Counseling (CAAC) provides orientation and guidance concerning their academic goals and progress, career choices, and personal life through regular communication with their academic advisor (**S4-411**). Additionally, academic advisors utilize CAPP, degree completing monitoring software, for the continuous monitoring and documentation of student progress. Executive Order 27-2019 also requires that faculty and advisors utilize the Early Administrative Retention System (EARS) to monitor and document student progress and support (**S4-412**).

The **Early Administrative Retention System (EARS)** - A student tracking system platform that facilitates agile entry, collection, and access to student interventions. This platform consists of three (3) components: EARS Interventions, Daily Census, Web Referrals and Early Alert which are explained below.

Daily Census - Web application for early intervention of excessive or unexcused absences or lateness. It sends an automated referral to the student services administration who follow-up with the student. It also simultaneously generates an email to the student after the second absence, or when a pattern is detected.

Referred Web – A web application for the referral, documentation, and follow-up of students who present any need or situation that affects their academic performance and persistence in the institution. This tool allows professors and advisors to refer students to the appropriate office for academic and/or biopsychosocial support.

Early Alert - A system that notifies the appropriate personnel and students regarding their academic progress, tutoring, and other support provided. The support and services provided help to identify students not making satisfactory process while allowing student services to mitigate the number of students not obtaining satisfactory academic progress.

Table 4.1. Assessment Results and Actions Taken for Student Retention

Close the loops activities	Source information (years)	Outcomes of actions	Action Taken	Assessment Results
Student Support Services Enhancement	Office of Retention and Quality Life Office	Provide services for childcare for students to increase student retention rates (more than 50% of our students are female)	Grants identification to expand students' services for childcare.	CAMPIS Proposal: Provides free care to the children of 48 students. 9 of these 48 students completed grade. All 48 enrolled in the following semesters in the Gurabo Campus and Center, Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa. (Total: 57 participants).
Student Support Services Enhancement Assessment Tool Improvement	Student Survey 2021	Strengthen innovation competencies at the undergraduate level. Reinforce technological skills at the graduate level	Training and workshops development to complement formal education in areas of need.	93 student training activities were offered during 2021 -2023 on topics of financial, legal, technological aspects, personal and professional development, services, employment opportunities. impacting 1,504 students.
	Graduated students survey 2021	Need of tutoring to facilitate student retention at all levels	The faculty was guided on the referral processes to the tutoring and mentoring services available at the institution.	Centro Aprendizaje y Servicios Académicos (CASA) offers face-to-face and remote academic support services through peer tutoring and mentoring to students. A total of 1,323 services were offered during 2021-2023. 85% of participants were retained. (S4-414)
	UAGM Integration Process	The UAGM integration process requires rethinking a new assessment model	Systemic committee was established including Assistant Vice-president of Assessment, Assessment Directors of the three institution and faculty	A new Policy to Systematize the Assessment Model for the Institutional Effectiveness of the UAGM was approved #22-2023 (S5-500)

Executive Order 27-2019 also established that other CAAC strategies and services include guidance and advisement services for academic progress (**S4-412**). The objective of this SOP is to ensure that students receive academic guidance regarding their academic progress and the impact withdrawing from courses has on their graduation date and financial aid. It also provides professional counseling services that recommend academic and other support services to help students make continual academic progress towards degree completion. While all students receive this support, freshmen students receive additional focused support to aid them with their transition into university life. This service is coordinated by the Deanship of Student Affairs and its Office of Quality of Life (Calidad de Vida, by its name in Spanish). These offices implement and monitor strategies and projects that identify, modify, or establish strategies that promote student success and degree completion.

UAGM-GC develops and assesses short-term and long-term retention and student achievement goals in response to information obtained through the analysis of various institutional reports (**S4-413**). Persistence rates, academic performance, graduation rates, transfer rates, and student satisfaction with services are tracked and evaluated in a systematic manner. Specific reports track how many students persist from semester to semester, year to year, up until graduation. The continuous retention assessment data is utilized for planning and implementing strategies to improve student success, retention, and graduation. Table 4.1 illustrates programs and results for student retention that were created because of assessment data.

The following three tables summarize student retention rates from 2018 to 2022.

Table 4.2. Retention Rate Full Time and Part Time

	Aug 2017 -Aug 2018			Aug 2018 -Aug 2019			Aug 2019 - Aug 2020*			Aug 2020 - Aug 2021*			Aug 2020 - Aug 2021*		
	Base	Retained	Rate (%)	Base	Retained	Rate (%)	Base	Retained	Rate (%)	Base	Retained	Rate (%)	Base	Retained	Rate (%)
Total	2379	1599	67.2	2115	1590	75.2	1930	1367	70.8	1540	1012	65.7	1298	861	66.3

*Note: Covid 19 Pandemic caused a decline in enrollments and retentions affecting global higher education institutions.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) uses graduation rates as indicators for success. It defines graduation rates as equivalent to what percentage of an incoming full-time students graduate by 3 years for associate degrees and six years for bachelor's degrees. This sole definition of success has been considered by many institutions of higher education an inappropriate measure because all institutions are unique and the cohort groups at each institution are different in their academic preparation and compounding social factors. For example, the socio-economic characteristics of UAGM-GC and Center Barceloneta students constrain their ability to enroll in more than 12 credits per semester (**S4-404**). Consequently, most UAGM undergraduate students are unable to complete graduation requirements by the timeframe mandated by the USDE. Noteworthy to mention, a significant number of students of UAGM-GC graduate in six or more years. Before the COVID 19 pandemic, UAGM-GC had made significant progress in improving graduation rates determined the USDE, going from 26% in 2015 to 33% in 2020 (**S4-415**). Graduation rate was 26% again during COVID 19 in 2021. However, graduation rates

returned to its pre-COVID 33% in 2022. The table below illustrates the latest cohort graduation rates from the last five years, 2019 to 2023. Note, data for 2022-2023 will be available by December 2023.

Table 4.3. UAGM-GC Data on Graduation

2017-2018 (2012)	2018-2019 (2013)	2019-2020 (2014)	2020-2021 (2015)	2021-2022 (2016)	2022-2023 (2017)
31%	32.7%	33%	26%	33%	31%

RQ 3	How does the available academic and student support services such as counseling, advising, tutoring, and co-curricular opportunities, among others, enhance retention, guide students throughout their educational experience, and facilitate successful achievement of students' educational goals in all degree levels and modalities?
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Studies and surveys by AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admission) revealed that providing all student services in one central location would be more effective and efficient (**S4-416**). As a result of this assessment, UAGM-GC remodeled a building and created the Center for Integrated Student Services (Spanish Acronym, *CISE*) as a one-stop service center. *CISE* has the primary responsibility for the following services: admissions, counseling, registration, financial aid, bursar, academic advising, profession-specific student organizations, academic tutoring and mentoring, career counseling, health and wellness, mental and physical health services, non-academic counseling, services to students with disabilities, recreation, and social and cultural programming.

All offices and personnel in UAGM-GC are aware of the challenges they face in meeting student needs in a diverse and academically challenging community. To this end, *CISE* and school-based offices ensure that all students are provided with the services that are necessary for their academic and professional success. Student academic progress reports provide valuable information relevant to grades, withdrawals, academic and counseling support services, and other support services that serve to assess and improve the admission processes across the schools (**S4-416**). Since the schools have specific needs for their diverse population, several student support services such as academic advising for upper-level gatekeeper courses, course selection, and academic planning are provided exclusively by the academic divisions and programs. Additionally, division directors continually communicate with the Director of Admissions to establish the admissions criteria and requirements to ensure the academic success of its students. Students learn about these requirements and services through institutional visits, departmental websites, and the UAGM Student Handbook.

In 2013, a new student services web platform, Mi UAGM, was launched to provide students access to available electronic student services. Students can access their courses through Blackboard, select tuition alternatives, find financial aid information, check their debt balance, be informed about academic warnings, and use e-mails, notes, class program, and other resourceful information to become adequately informed of their academic and financial status.

Student Council

The Student Council provides student representation in various institutional forums and the governing bodies of UAGM Gurabo, the Academic Senate and the University Board. At the beginning of each

semester, the Dean of Student Affairs convenes an assembly in October to select student delegates for the main campus and University Centers. The Student Council is composed of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and a representative from each academic division on the main campus and one from each University Center to ensure that all sectors have representation (**S2-208**).

Childcare Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) Program

CCAMPIS is a program that supports the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based childcare services. It is subsidized 100% by grant number USDE P335A190263 and funded to serve 162 students each year (**S4-417**).

Quality of Life and Health Services

This unit provides primary and secondary intervention that contributes to the welfare and maintenance of health, healthy lifestyles, and strengthens student's physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The unit has two (1) social workers and three (3) counselors on the main campus and one (1) counselor at each of the three (3) additional Center. They provide services and advisement to help students achieve their academic goals at each stage of their academic career. It also has a contracted licensed psychologist who provides additional services with UAGM doctoral counseling psychology interns.

Examples of counseling support services include individual, vocational, and psychological counseling services. The Office of Quality of Life also address the needs of student with disabilities, diversity, access, and inclusion, as well as prevention activities related to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, and harassment. This office also assists students with personal and academic situations that can interfere with the achievement of their academic and personal goals. For example, students with low academic performance are identified by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Standard (**S4-419**) (NPAS, by its Spanish acronym) and counselors guide them through the appeal process and help design improvement plans that support their academic outcomes.

The Quality-of-Life unit also has the Oasis Taino store, which was established in 2017 after Hurricane Maria as an emergency response to aid the entire university community with the catastrophic disaster caused. Oasis Taino has continued to help students in during Hurricane Fiona and the COVI 19 pandemic. The Oasis Taino store remains open and is a space where the student can get meals and other essential products.

The purpose of this unit is to promote health, prevent diseases, intervene in medical emergencies on campus, and help students develop healthy lifestyles. The unit provides some of the following services on campus: first aid assistance for accidents, management of medical emergencies for illness or injury, primary intervention and medical consultation, and evaluation and treatment by a medical practitioner. The unit coordinates prevention activities with the Office of Quality of Life and Academic Division. During the past five years, students have received 7,258 medical services (**S4-419**). These numbers represent an increase in services offered by the unit although during the COVID-19 period services decreased when changing services to a remote modality. A seen in evidence **S4-419**, psychological services has increase during the same period as the result of having a psychologist and two doctoral interns on the UAGM Psychology Internship Program (an internship program accredited by the American Psychological Association) offering free psychological services to the students.

Program for Student with Disabilities or Functional Diversity

UAGM Gurabo and Center serves students with disabilities and ensures compliance with the rules and regulations that apply to this population by federal, state, and local laws. The office serves as an expediter of support services for students with disabilities and functional diversity, as well as their integration into university life. UAGM-GC also encourages disabled students to learn about their personal, educational, and social-communitarian rights and responsibilities. The aim of this office is to create a conducive and stimulating environment that will maximize students' personal development and intellectual abilities to achieve their academic goals. Student Disability Services provide programmatic, academic accommodations, and services for students with disabilities across the university and play a critical role in helping disabled students successfully achieve their goals. The program provides an opportunity for students to assess their level of preparedness in core academic competencies and is also a mechanism for identifying and planning future and ongoing academic support needs (**S2-218**).

Student Integral Development

The Office of Student Integral Development (SID) was created to manage the student associations. The Honors Program, Career Placement Office and Internship Office are housed under the umbrella of the SID. The Career Placement Office serves our students, alumni, and the community in assistance with seeking and transitioning to employment by providing services such as training, workshops, and jobs fair. This office also collaborates with the socio-economic development of Puerto Rico through the creation of partnerships with public and private sectors that promote new jobs and new business developments. The Placement Office has registered employers from various industries who have offered employment opportunities to UAGM-GC students and alumni (**S4-420**).

Honor Program, Scholarships, and Internship

The Office of SID is also charged with the selection of students with outstanding academic achievements. The office selects students for the honor program and provides students opportunities to engage in internships and university activities that build their leadership skills and enhance the major course of study. These academic-occupational opportunities develop student preparation, skills, and abilities through new roles, projects, and specific tasks that are overseen by a specialized supervisor. The office also offers scholarships to freshmen honor students and athletes to develop their capabilities, leadership qualities, and complement their educational experiences (**S4-421**).

Student Associations

Student associations impact the comprehensive development of students by promoting their leadership and providing students with effective learning environments that help to prepare in their field-of-study, as well as help them to live in a responsible in a global community. In addition to building lasting friendships, student organizations provide many benefits including serving as spokesperson for the university community, meeting mentors, and networking with professionals in their fields. Student associations participate in and collaborate with different industries, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. Student Associations have participated in such noble causes as, American Cancer Society campaign, collected and donated essential needs for the *Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal*, a home for abandoned children, collaborated with *SER* Puerto Rico, and provided community lectures and workshops on social and environmental issues. These associations must follow the procedures

established in the Manual of Procedures for the Accreditation and Development for Student Association (S4-422).

Athletic Program

The Sports and Recreation Programs of the UAGM Gurabo promotes the comprehensive development of the student. Since 1975, Universidad Ana G. Mendez has been part of Intercollegiate Athletic League of Puerto Rico (LAI, by its Spanish acronym). This entity brings together higher education institutions from Puerto Rico, to promote sports competitions among its members. In 2022, nearly 252 (141 men and 111 women) student-athletes participated in one the intercollegiate sports. Additionally, student athletes are apprised and adhere to their requirements, roles, and responsibilities set forth by the Student Athlete Manual referenced (S2-219).

International Programs

UAGM Gurabo provides programs and services to facilitate international experiences for students consistent with their academic goals. Services are provided by the Campus Officer of International Affairs and are aimed at fostering global learning experience in the curriculum and abroad. General Education and other programs have incorporated themes of internationalization, global citizenship, ethics, diversity, and inclusion in its curriculum competencies. Services are also provided by the Study Abroad and Student Exchange program, International Internships, and Study-Travel Program with credit.

RQ4	To what extent are students able to access accurate and comprehensive information about costs, financial aid, scholarships, repayment, and refunds?
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The Bursar

The Bursar is responsible for applying fee policies and administering payment plans that guarantee institutional income. The Office of the Bursar also monitors and reports compliance with the fiscal policy established by the Vice-Presidency of Financial Affairs, establishes the registration validation process, administers the application of refund policies for federal funds, and registers private and public agency contracts. It is also responsible for the refund processes, student check emissions, registering payments, and maintaining the student account collection system.

To ensure that students are aware of all financial aspects, UAGM-GC has structured an effective and efficient procedure for identifying the financial needs of its students. UAGM-GC aggressively disseminates information in a timely manner, guiding students through the process of submitting their application for federal financial aid, and subsequently determining their financial needs. In addition, the UAGM webpage includes information about all available federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs, eligibility requirements, institution's fiscal enrollment and refund policies, information on tuition costs and other program-specific fees, and a *Net Price Calculator*. In addition to this information being housed on the website, they may also be found in the following documents: (1) Refund Policy, (2) Payment and Refund Policy (S2-248), (3) Bulletin of Costs (S2-249).

Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office administers all Financial Aid. It is responsible for identifying student financial needs through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and using the results of the

Expected Family Contribution Eligibility Index (EFC). The institution registers student records processed by the US Department of Education into its Banner Financial Aid electronic system, takes into consideration the financial aid institutional policy, and determines the students' needs to pay for their studies. Once a student is deemed eligible, financial aid is granted for the upcoming academic year. When student loans are needed, the financial aid office has a unit responsible for informing students about their responsibilities, implications, and repayment of student loans. One of the main objectives of this unit is to maintain the institution's compliance with federal regulations default rate. In addition to FAFSA grants and loans, students may receive other financial aids such as the:

- Work-Study Program, which is awarded to students who qualify.
- The Permanent Scholarship Fund. Funds that are generated by the institution through donations and events. These funds are available to students for a variety of academic and other necessities.
- Institutional Administrative Scholarship designated for UAGM associates and their children.
- Sports Program Scholarships for students who meet athletic recruitment requirements as regulated in the Sports Program Handbook of Administrative Policies.

RQ5	How does the institution provide assurance of the safety, security, and accuracy of student information and records? What policies and procedures does the institution have to ensure the confidentiality of records and how does it disclose such information to stakeholders?
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Student Records

The Registrar's Office is responsible for safekeeping student information and academic records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)(S2-247). It trains staff and establishes security controls prior to granting staff access to physical and electronic education records. The Registrar Office disseminates The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act through the university website. Additionally, as required by FERPA, dissemination and disclosure of FERPA information is sent by letter to students every six months. In addition, FERPA information is in the institutional catalog and the website. The directory of information and FERPA is kept in digital format in Registrar's Office archives. The Registrar's Office notifies its active students regarding FERPA rights by regular mail, emails, and through the UAGM webpage. To guarantee institutional protection of academic records, UAGM has clear policies in the *Handbook of Academic and Administrative Norms and Procedures for Undergraduate Programs, the Registrar's Office Handbook and UAGM Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs*.

The Registrar's Office is also responsible for the Student Record Policy. The policy for the Conservation and Disposal of documents of UAGM Gurabo is the guide for creation and management of digital files for student active and inactive (S2-233). The file includes documents for the following services: admission, financial aid, and Disciplinary Council decision Policy. The Register officer also oversees and safeguards student records, academic status, and only divulges this information in compliance with law.

RQ6	What are the policies and procedures for evaluating and accepting transfer credits and credits awarded through experiential learning and other approaches?
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Student Transfer Policy

The Transfer Policy establishes the process to consider admission of a student if they have followed a course of study in another post-secondary institution or university that is accredited. When seeking transfer credits, the course content is compared to that offered at UAGM Campuses or appropriate for the degree program as evidenced in Policy Number: 16-2022 **(S2-216)**.

Procedure for Transfer

Complete transfer procedures may be found on the institutional catalog and website. However, general procedures include:

- Submitting an application for transfer students.
- Submitting an official transcription from all accredited institutions the student attended.
- When seeking transfer credit, the applicant may be required to submit a copy of the catalog of the institution where the student attended if the applicant studied outside of Puerto Rico.

Special Students

Students with an academic degree who wish to take courses to fulfill a personal or professional requirement or complete another major may apply as a special student.

Transitory Students

Students who are enrolled in another university or college and wish to take courses not leading to a degree can apply as transitory students. They need an official authorization letter from their university or college.

Requirements for Special and Transitory/Visiting Students

Special and Transitory/Visiting Students must complete the following:

- Complete a Special Student application form.
- Applicants with a college degree must submit a copy of the degree or an official authorization letter allowing them to enroll in UAGM.
- The applicant may be required to attend an interview with representatives of the school.

International Student Requirements

Requirements

- The international student applying for admission, readmission or transfer must meet with the requirements of the program.
- The international student must complete Form I-20 and meet with the Designated School Official (DOS) of the Institution.
- Present a sworn statement certifying financial capability to disburse for his studies.
- The admission of international students is subject to immigration laws and the student must obtain the appropriate visa for studying.

Procedure

International students applying for admission must meet the requirements set forth by the institution in its general admissions, as well as the criteria set forth by the academic program of study.

RQ7	How are academic and student support services communicated and disseminated to students and how is their availability determined for students with diverse needs and schedules?
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Student Support Services

UAGM-GC and Center integrates academic and student services through student and academic services are disseminated: having presence in social networks: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter in addition to traditional methods such as text messages, email, phone calls, and the website of Universidad Ana G Méndez. Prior to the beginning of the semester, students are engaged in a non-credit course SIGS 100, previously mentioned in this chapter (**S4-402**). This course is administered by the retention unit and has activities aimed at new students with the purpose of guiding them on the different academic and support services, procedures, policies, and supporting resources.

Additionally, there is a Student Guide that is used as a tool for the dissemination of academic and support services and location of these units (**S1-110**). In addition, it includes services such as: the Student Portal (MiUAGM), uagm.edu website, Blackboard (uagm.edu/blackboard, university email <https://ocitapps.uagm.edu/sica>). UAGM-GC also provides a directory of services and hours of operation.

RQ8	How are students with varied educational and social backgrounds identified and supported in attaining their educational goals?
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Undergraduate Student Profile

UAGM freshmen student profile reveals that they are: on average under 20 years old, public and private high school graduates; mostly first generation; English Language Learners; from low-income families; are 60% female and are 40 %male; are mostly PELL Grant recipients; and, predominantly come from the East-Central part of Puerto Rico(**S4-404**).

The background characteristics of the non-traditional students reveal that they are: on average 24 years or older; enrolled part-time; a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) holder; a single parent; English Language Learners (ELLs); employed; in need of basic skills development; independent of parents' financial and/or emotional support; disabled or have special learning needs; and military veterans. These characteristics pose challenges for non-traditional students in meeting their goals, persisting, and graduating. Nevertheless, the institution regularly collects data that produces analytical reports that support strategic initiatives that address the needs of non-traditional students in an effort to facilitate their success. (**S4-423**)

Graduate Student Profile

UAGM graduate student profile shows that they: are between 25 to 29 years old; study 83% full-time and 17% part-time. 69.4% female and 30.6% male and, predominantly come from the East-Central part of Puerto Rico. The student profile of doctoral students reveals that they are: between 25 to 39 years; 31.7 study part-time and full-time are 60.8. 68.3% female and are 31.7% male; work full-time, and predominantly come from the East-Central part of the island. (**S4-424**)

RQ9	How does the university assess the effectiveness of the administrative and educational support units and how are results used for continuous improvement?
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Assessment of Student Support Services

UAGM-GC regularly engages in the assessment of student support services. Survey results from multivariate analyses of student satisfaction are reported annually by the Office of Institutional Assessment. Student responses to institutional surveys are used to assess year-to-year improvements in overall satisfaction and satisfaction with their experiences and services. Assessment results drive decision-making and improvement actions. For example, the one-stop service center in CISE was created because of assessment data from an AACRAO visit that determined it would be more effective and efficient to have all student services in one place instead of in various buildings (**S4-416**).

ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

1. There is a wide array of student support for student biopsychosocial and academic needs.
2. Students are made aware of the availability of service through various multimedia means, as well as being contacted directly by counselors.
3. The student referral system EARS help with early detection of student facing difficulties in attendance and academic needs. This system is also used by professors to refer students for other social and psychological needs that impact their learning.

Challenges

1. Enhance strategies for keeping students informed of all policies, procedures, and services.

Conclusion

The UAGM-GC and university centers has a wide array of students support services. These services are geared towards the main purpose of being able to lead the student to achieve their academic goals. The UAGM-GC has located most of these services within the same place, the Integrated Center for Student Services (CISE). Biopsychosocial support services have been increasing in recent years, due to which the Quality-of-Life units and the Student Retention unit have been strengthened with different support services ranging from counseling to tutoring. The UAGM-GC has proven to be strong in these areas of services to the student community.

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.

The UAGM assessment model has been standardized throughout the institution and the results have provided the academic departments and schools valuable information for revision, improvement, and innovation of its academic and non-academic processes (**S5-500**). As an example of some improvement resulting from this assessment process, the questionnaire of student satisfaction and graduate student provides insights about student's opinion regarding both academic and support services. Findings of the questionnaire are shared with the Dean of Student Services and other institutional offices as well, in order to give special attention to those areas that need improvement for the next cycle of assessment.

Some results of these improvement have led to the extension in services hours of Student Services Offices as well as library. Acquisition of educational software's, equipment for new virtual classroom among others has also been part of the action taken as part of the continuous improvement actions pursuing the close the loop (**S5-501**).

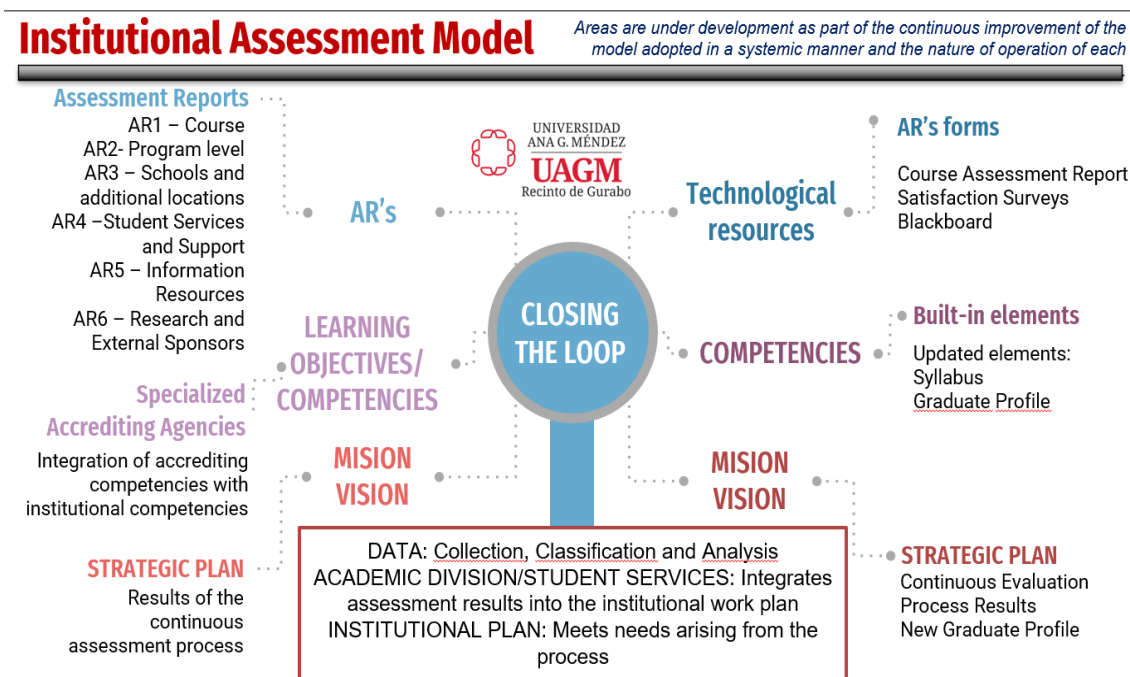
The assessment process not only measures the desired benchmarks and outcomes, but it also goes beyond examining the results and "the closing the loop" in each assessment cycle. Closing the loop refers to the process of reflection on how to improve undesired results, taking the necessary corrective actions, and then measuring the actions taken to determine if they were effective. The actual Assessment Course Report (**S5-502**) is the tool in which the institution gathers information from direct and indirect measures and recommendations provided from the faculty in each academic term, regarding course assessment results as well as recommended action at course, program, academic division, and institution. Since our last self-study in 2015, this model of closing the loop in all programs and services has stimulated an institutional culture of assessment. Hence, this well-structured and systematic ongoing process has aided the institution in its continual improvement. As a result, this practice has positively impacted all academic and nonacademic services of the institution, strengthened specialized accredited and non-accredited programs, and improved the learning outcome competencies of general education, as well as other emerging programs.

The assessment process further evolved during these past years due to the events of Hurricane Irma and María (2017), the UAGM integration process (2018), and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). Such evolution includes the use of the Learning Management System (LMS) Blackboard, to store evidence, and to collect data and continuously measure program and institutional goals, competencies, and experiences. As can be seen in evidence **S5-503**, the institution former assessment model, considers the use of tools called AR's. For each assessment level and areas, the model used to provide a numeric Assessment Report that facilitates the data collection. The Assessment Report (AR) AR-1 was the Course Level Assessment Report, AR-2 - Program Level Assessment, AR-3 -Assessment Report of School and Additional Locations, AR-4 -Assessment Report of Student Services and Support, AR-5 - Assessment Report of Information Resources and AR-6 - Assessment Report of Research and External Sponsors (examples of the reports can be seen in **S5-504**). The actual Assessment Model (**S5-500**), presents a new methodology for data gathering, considering and new Course Assessment Report: IAC, Spanish acronym, which is technology embedded. It is also complemented with such institutional questionnaire that has been designed considering effectiveness indicators (**S5-505**). The process of data collection relies on the use of technology facilitating it. Once analyzed the findings are shared with each academic and support unit in order to give special attention to those areas in which benchmarks were not reached. Then each area will include the findings as part of its Work Plan for the next cycle in order to attend it and pursue the close the loop. Institutional Work Plan Platform provides information to each unit of the areas that need improvement. This alignment of the Work Plan with assessment results can be seen in more details in evidence **S5-505**. Figure 5.1 illustrates graphically the transformation of the Institutional Assessment Model.

This chapter discusses the accreditation standard of assessment of student learning and the processes UAGM-GC have implemented and assessed to accomplish the expected learning outcomes in each academic program. It also delineates how the assessment and achievement of student learning are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and corresponding programs (**S1-100**). To achieve this, the institution has developed a culture of assessment among its stakeholders, associates,

students, and additional locations, Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa, as well as systematic assessment practices to ensure student learning outcomes are obtained. Diverse assessment tools, both direct and indirect, are embedded in the assessment model. Additionally, the systematic assessment practice is used throughout the institution to ensure that learning and institutional goals are measured, and the results utilized as the foundation for planning and decision-making examples in evidence **S5-506**. More information regarding UAGM-GC's assessment model and procedures can be found in evidence **S5-500**. Noteworthy to mention, these practices are also used to provide evidence to the 14 specialized professional accreditation agencies that UAGM-GC has.

Figure 5.1. Institutional Assessment Model Transformation (S5-507)



The Planning Office collaborates with the Assessment Office to advance institutional and academic assessment initiatives by collecting and promoting assessment findings, as well as data relevant to institutional performance from students, faculty, alumni, administrators, employers, and other stakeholders. These findings are shared and play a crucial role in supporting institutional planning and budgeting processes (**S5-508**). Regular assessment is conducted for program integration, student profile review, revision of programs, general education, courses, satisfaction surveys, and other institutional studies. Since the last MSCHE visit, there was the creation of a “dashboard”, which illustrates assessment results has been made available to the university community. Faculty development and the inclusion of external partners and stakeholders as part of the assessment activities have enhanced the culture of assessment within the academic departments and support services areas. This has led not only to more transparency to the process and results, but also to the inclusion of the entire UAGM community in strengthening the process for achieving the assessment goals at all levels.

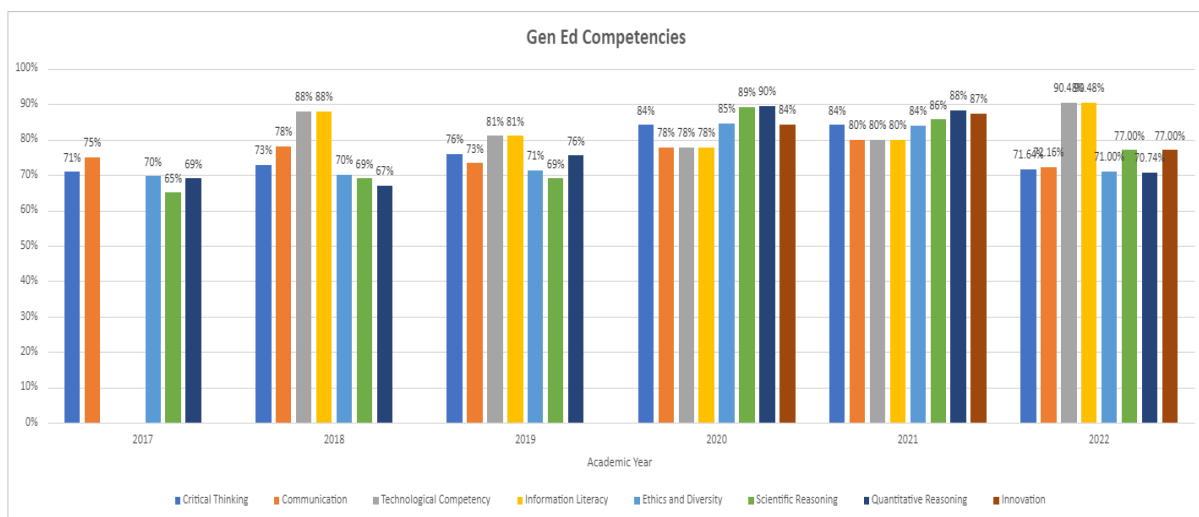
RQ 1	How is institutional priority P1 achieved considering the standard criteria?
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Academic Effectiveness

As established by P1, "Provide an education of excellence that develops in students the skills that allow them to make positive contributions to their environment locally and globally; and maintain a teaching staff that responds to levels of excellence in all modalities," the UAGM-GC has created a culture of assessment that drives continuous improvement using evaluation and data analyses to make decisions. All academic programs, student and support services are systematically assessed for standards of excellence and effectiveness on regularly scheduled cycles. Established learning competencies are written and assessed within every academic program. Curriculum maps clearly identify each learning competencies institutional as well as professional, specialized accreditation standards that are aligned to institutional goals. Additionally, the general education competencies have become universal and continue to be developed throughout all academic programs. The programmatic student learning outcomes are reflective of each program learning goal (S5-509). Academic units perform assessment practices to allow academic governing structures to approve revisions.

UAGM-GC is in compliance with the criteria of educational effectiveness related to the assessment of students' learning and achievements. This is achieved through the analysis of direct and indirect measures of learning outcomes. The scrutinized data from the direct and indirect instruments evidence that students are achieving competencies consistent with general education, the programs of study, degree level, and the institutional mission. Note that the mission and goals are align with all programs.

Graphic 5.1. General Education Competencies Assessment Results



Since the last MSCHE visit, UAGM has revised its General Education program and assessment Plan. The Institution has established mechanisms for all assessment of student learning outcomes related to the processes in the General Education Component. The use of Blackboard to administer student learning outcome evaluations and surveys, collect and store assessment results, has strengthened the agility and compliance to evidence institutional effectiveness. As a result of assessment, data that indicated the inter-transfer policy and credit acceptance among other UAGM institutions, warranted that UAGM integrate its curriculum (S2-216). This curriculum unification process began with the General Education component in 2019(S5-510). Curriculum committees were formed and a consensus to revise the GEC into eight (8) universal competencies that consists of 36 credits at the bachelor's level, and 15 credits at the associate degree level. The General Education Component (GEC) evolution and competencies are discussed more in Chapter 3. Note that the GEC competencies are regularly assessed, Table 5.1 presents

the assessment results of the eight competencies that indicate the results of learning outcomes. These results are derived from institutional assessment rubrics assigned to measure each competency in the general education area (S5-511).

Table 5.1. General Education Competencies Assessment Results¹

Institutional Competencies	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Critical Thinking	71%	73%	76%	84%	84%	71.64%
Communication	75%	78%	73%	78%	80%	72.16%
Technological Competency		88%	81%	78%	80%	90.48%
Information Literacy		88%	81%	78%	80%	90.48%
Ethics and Diversity	70%	70%	71%	85%	84%	71.00%
Scientific Reasoning	65%	69%	69%	89%	86%	77.00%
Quantitative Reasoning	69%	67%	76%	90%	88%	70.74%
Innovation				84%	87%	77.00%

Notes:

1. Results presented are based in a sample.
2. Source – Course Assessment Report and Program Assessment Report
3. 2020 to 2022 - UAGM Integration process
4. 2020 -Pandemic year
5. Innovation Competency was incorporated as part of the UAGM Competency based model 2021
6. Benchmark is 70% for each competency
7. 2017 – Hurricane Maria

When the expected benchmark of 70% is not achieved, the strategy for student compliance and retention is based on the student's referral to academic advising, retention, and tutoring program services, among others. As an example of the strategy Table 5.2 shows, for the 2022 academic year, a total of 71,967 interventions with students and its impact on retention rates.

Table 5.2. Impact of the Support services provided by Retention Office

EARS/Academic Advisory	2018- 2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
	201901	201902	202001	202002	202101	202102	202201	202202	202301	202302
Interventions	4,274	14,183	23,622	30,367	15,581	16,742	35,472	36,495	30,476	28,087
Population impacted	2,178	6,611	8,415	9,243	4,952	5,482	9,544	7,884	7,982	7,728
Retention rate for next term	1,629 - 74.8%	4,258 - 64.4%	6,188 - 73.5%	4,070 - 44%	3,064 - 61.9%	3,402 - 62%	4,405 - 46.2%	4,463- 56.6%	5,045 - 63.2%	4,434 - 57.4%

EARS/Tutoring	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
	201901	201902	202001	202002	202101	202102	202201	202202	202301	202302
Interventions	3,939	4,622	5,304	3,860	2,411	1,506	1,916	1,694	2,521	1,755
Population impacted	1,133	1,185	1,219	1,092	726	398	391	315	446	398
Retention rate for next term	1,006 - 88.7%	992 - 83.6%	1,079 - 88.5%	893 - 81.9%	572 - 78.8%	323 - 81.1%	313 - 79.8%	234 - 74.3%	380 - 85.2%	339 - 85.2%

The General Education Assessment Plan (AP) serves as a guide for the identification of innovative measures for data collection, that helps validate institutional effectiveness and monitor weaknesses that should require immediate attention. The component of the AP includes program learning outcomes, name of the course where competency will be measured, assessment tool (direct/indirect), benchmark, time frame, accountable person. The assessment plan is performed annually, and each academic unit and faculty provide input and feedback on the plans. This has been instrumental in developing departmental commitment and establishing and planning long-term assessment objectives for each academic program as well as in pursuing the closing the loop in each area. Example of the Program Assessment Plan can be seen in **S5-512**. At the end of the assessment cycle, findings are analyzed to give special attention to opportunities areas in the programs. The mentioned strategies have led to establishing a robust assessment structure that includes faculty assessment committees, annual assessment reports, data analysis, and providing faculty and administrators the tools and information to implement changes to advance each academic program goal. A systemic committee has also been established, which includes participation from the three main campuses and their additional locations, Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa, which has facilitated the process of empowering the faculty and the directors of the programs in the integration process (**S5-513**).

Student learning outcomes, a comprehensive curriculum map and benchmark are part of the assessment process. Within the process, different tools have been designed to collect relevant data such as, but not limited to, surveys, departmental tests, mock tests, practicum and clinical experiences, and rubrics. This allows UAGM-GC to measure student and institutional performance as well as its effectiveness. Results can be reached through the institution's webpage under the section of the Assessment Office Dashboard, <https://www.uagm.edu/es/avaluo-evaluacion-programas-gurabo>.

The assessment cycle ensures that decisions are data driven. It begins with benchmarking expected results of 70% and which help identifies needed for improvements in those areas where benchmark is not achieved. This process evaluates the overall effectiveness in achieving the mission and goals of the institution, as well as the assessment of student learning that demonstrate the attainment of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that are consistent with program and institutional goals and objectives.

Assessment results are discussed at the Committee of Institutional Effectiveness (CIE) and shared annually to academic departments and programs to develop action plans, that are eventually incorporated into the annual work plans of each unit. Thus, each Annual Plan must be based on the analysis of the data collected in the previous assessment cycle. The recommended actions are implemented to begin the improvement plans and set the first step for institutional, school, and unit planning and budgeting (**S5-514**). Recommended improvement and action plan are implemented and include reassessing benchmarks/expectations (“closing the loop”) that were not met during the previous cycle.

Educational excellence is achieved through faculty expertise among other activities promoting educational excellence at all levels. The UAGM-GC has a faculty development program that promotes training and professional development in teaching strategies, teaching, and learning styles, online education, and the use of technology in the classroom, among others (**S3-310, S3-320**). The Office of Assessment regularly offer faculty workshops and individual coaching regarding assessment process and

compliance during the academic year **(S5-515)**. Also, some tutorials are available in Blackboard Platform and Jammer to facilitate an effective participation of the faculty in the assessment process. Faculty members keep their knowledge up to date in their disciplines through participation in conferences, conventions, research, and continuing education related to their area of specialty. Also, the UAGM-GC promotes the participation in institutional governance committees including the Academic Senate, University Board, and additional systemic and institutional committees, among others **(S3-326)**. Additionally, academic departments such as Health Sciences, Science and Technology, Engineering, and Liberal Arts, have promoted faculty participation in the development, submission, and awarding of external funding from such agencies as Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS), the US Department of Education (USDE), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD), Advanced Nursing Education Workforce(ANEW). These initiatives have helped academic programs to obtain additional resources to develop activities and learning experiences for faculty and students **(S5-516)**.

Students and faculty are also motivated to provide social and communities services by participating in activities such as professional organizations, student associations, health fairs, social services outreach, and other community service projects. Additionally, academic units have maintained a professional/academic partnership with local and international professional associations and governmental agencies. As an example, two nursing faculty members have been working on the design of a master's degree in Family Nurse Practitioner in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Board of Nurse Examiners. Collaborations such as this help to keep faculty and students abreast of current research, trends, and competencies which in turn, can be incorporated into the curriculum and programs. These reflect a strong desire to meet our goal of educational excellence, as well as help students and faculty develop strong professional competencies.

RQ2	How are the assessment methods designed and carried out to improve educational effectiveness and what strategies are used to involve constituents in meaningful appraisal processes?
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Assessment and Continuous Improvement

The focus of institutional assessment is aimed at providing evidence of the implementation of actions and the attainment of results for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of instruction, programs, and services in the institution. Since the last MSCHE visit in 2015 until 2021, UAGM-G assessment activities were designed, monitored and implemented using the guidelines of the former *Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning Assessment Plan (IESLAP) (S5-503)*. *Evidence of findings and closing of the loop for this period, this can be observed through the AR's report each year (S5-504)*. The focus point of the model was to delineate the process of assessment for overall institutional effectiveness and promote the integration of planning and assessment at the institutional level and each activity, service, or academic area. The plan outlined efforts at the institutional level and provides guidelines for operational units of the institution to develop assessment plans as part of their respective work plans. The Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning Assessment Plan is also used to drive a continuous improvement process that focuses on the critical areas of the university performance.

As part of this model, the data collection utilized assessment reports for all academic and service areas. They are: (1) Assessment Report (AR) AR-1 -Course Level Assessment Report, (2) AR-2 - Program Level

Assessment, (3) AR-3 -Assessment Report of School and Additional Locations, (4) AR-4 -Assessment Report of Student Services and Support, (5) AR-5 - Assessment Report of Information Resources and (6) AR-6 - Assessment Report of Research and External Sponsors. Each form includes the benchmarks, instruments utilized, results obtained, recommendations for improvement, and the measurements and results for benchmarks that were not met during the previous assessment cycle **(S5-504)**.

Since the Universidad Ana G Mendez integration process, a new *Assessment Model for Institutional Effectiveness (AMIE)* was implemented and has become the guidance for the UAGM-GC schools, programs, and additional locations (Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa) and administrative offices assessment implementation. The model proposes the integration of two complementary components in the institution: the academic component and the student services component. The assessment of the academic component helps in monitoring student learning process and the development of the competencies that are included in each academic programs' profiles. It also allows generating assessment plans for academic programs and action plans that promote changes for continuous improvement and closing the loops actions **(S5-517)**. This type of assessment is carried out at three levels: course level, academic program, and institutional. Examples of these reports can be observed in **S5-518**.

The Assessment of Student Services and Support Component is evaluated through a structured process that measures the effectiveness and student satisfaction regarding its processes and services **(S5-519)**. This component demonstrates its effectiveness through the collection of valid and reliable information by various means, such as surveys and record keeping. This allows the identification of strengths and areas for improvement in achieving the goals. The academic component coordinates institutional efforts with the student services and support component to improve processes. This actions, allows the institution to guarantee that the processes and services support learning and the development of student competencies comply with the goals established in the Strategic Development Guides and the institutional mission.

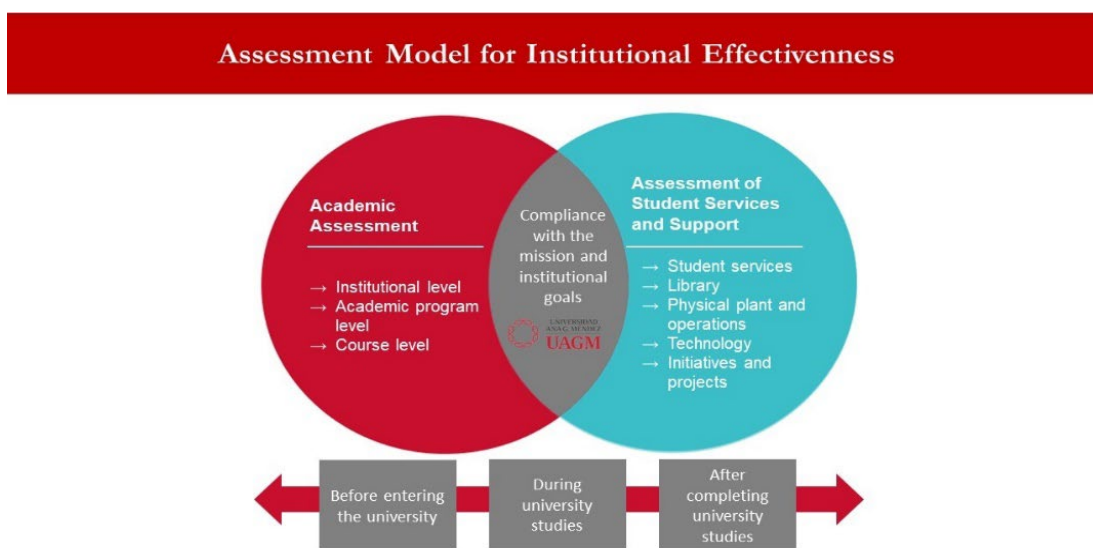
The AMIE document indicates how to conduct assessment in a practical, cost efficient and effective way. It also recognizes that assessment, planning, and fiscal matters are interrelated. Thus, assessment results yield recommendations, and the implementation of improvement efforts are the starting point for institutional, school and unit planning and budgeting.

In accordance with the excellence standards of MSCHE (2015), UAGM reviewed its assessment plan and implemented it for the primary purpose of evaluating its institutional effectiveness. By implementing appropriate assessment processes and generating performance periodic monitoring of academic and institutional management is achieved. This allows for the incorporation of findings in strategic planning. The integration of planning, resource allocation and assessment, plays a fundamental role in institutional effectiveness and improvement. The institution developed an electronic platform in which each unit (academic and support services) must upload the Working Plan for the next operational cycle. This platform allows an alignment of the WP with institutional goals, objectives, and priorities in order to develop activities pursuing the assessment close the loop cycle **(S5-501)**. Therefore, UAGM -GC ensures that its model of institutional assessment is entwined with planning processes and decision-making as a strategy to demonstrate that results are used for continuous process improvement, the achievement of the mission, and closing the loops. Through the UAGM integration process, the assessment model has

been reviewed considering the competency-oriented approach of the continuing improvement process at all the institutional levels.

The Office of Assessment is responsible for overseeing assessment efforts throughout the institution and assisting all levels and units in the development, implementation, and use of assessment data to achieve the expected institutional effectiveness. The appraisal office provides support to all units, thus ensuring a formative, relevant and effective appraisal process for the continuous improvement of the institution by the coordination of different workshops to the faculty as well as administrators, through constant contact by email, Teams, and regular visits to the additional locations (Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa). The institution has been working on an Assessment Model for Institutional Effectiveness, which establishes the road to the operationalization of the Assessment Plan (AP) for each unit, both academic and administrative. Figure 5.3 includes a representation of the Model.

Figure 5.3. New Assessment Model for Institutional Effectiveness (AMIE)



Over the past few years, the assessment process has become more agile using technology to help mitigate such events as Hurricane Irma and María (2017), the UAGM integration process (2018), and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). Said evolution includes the use of different platforms such as Survey Monkey, Microsoft Forms, and the use of Blackboard. UAGM-GC continues to adapt and innovate by seeking new technologies and applications that simplify and standardize assessment and learning processes that will advance the achievement of the students’ goals and professional success.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) exists at the institutional level. This committee accounts for representation of both instructional and non-instructional areas of the institution. The Dean of Institutional Effectiveness performs as a committee chair and works hands-on with the Assessment Director. The IEC provides a forum for sharing challenges and best practices and for discussing cross-college assessment issues. Meeting at least two to three times per semester, the IEC has helped the institution in establishing an assessment leadership structure within each academic division or school, and through the entire institution (**S5-513**). The committee is the forum that serves to promote the discussion on assessment findings that require attention, the review of continuous improvement strategies, and enhanced communication about effective student learning across academic and non-

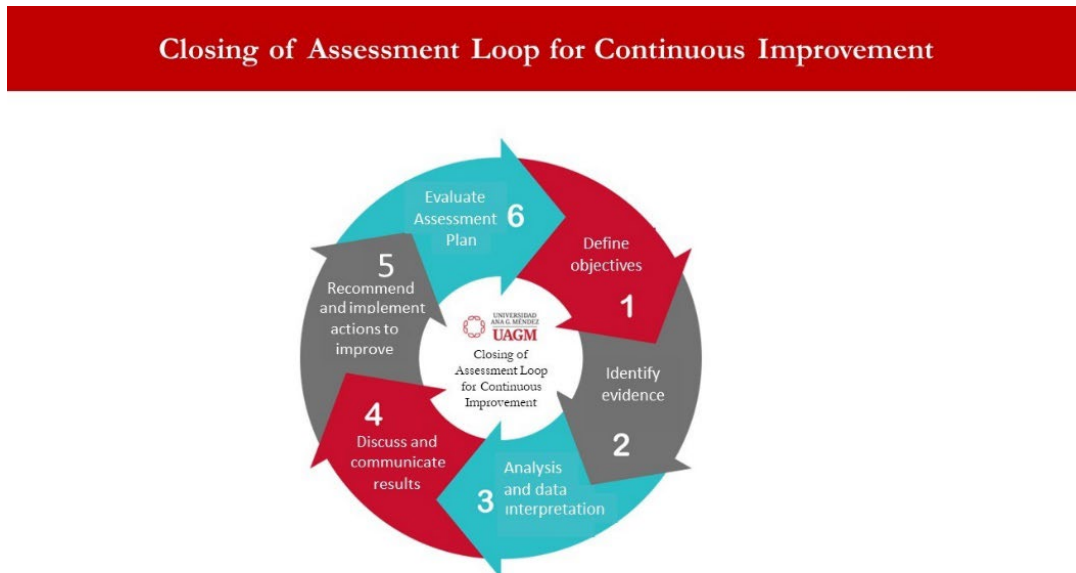
academic areas of the institution. It is committed to fostering continuous improvement and the propulsion towards excellence.

The Integrated Assessment Model is part of the institution's strategic planning and annual reporting procedures. It is continuously evaluated to ensure accurate student learning results. The Office of Assessment consults faculty, administrators, deans, and the vice chancellor/CEO, to improve and incorporate assessment instruments and techniques. The plans are evaluated in the context of the strategic development guidelines (SDG) (**S1-101**) and institutional improvements, which include the following:

- Participatory process supported by faculty and administrators.
- Performs assessment in all administrative, support services, and academic areas.
- Compliance with the institutional mission, vision, goals, objectives, and values.
- The use of findings for planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.
- The use of multiple instruments to create a balance between quantity and quality measures.

The objective of this assessment model is to evaluate the mission and goals in the academic area, promote changes in teaching and support services, and ensure that institutional processes and resources support adequate learning for students and graduates. The UAGM Assessment model establishes processes to demonstrate compliance with institutional mission using effectiveness indicators, at the institutional level, as well as academic program and course levels (**S5-505**). These indicators, aligned with UAGM's mission, strategic vectors, institutional goals, objectives, and data collection techniques, are the result of internal and external consultations conducted in different units of the institution, and by comparing the model with best practices of other higher education institutions. Figure 5.4 illustrates the “Closing the loop” cycle for continuous improvement and the evidence **S5-501** demonstrates the direct and indirect measures used during assessment.

Figure 5.4 Closing the Loop for Continuous Improvement



RQ 3	To what extent are student learning outcomes at the institutional and degree/program levels consistent with the mission and goals, and how well are communicated to students and the community?
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Student Learning Outcomes

UAGM-GC mission emphasizes the commitment to academic excellence, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization, and the socio-humanistic development of a diverse population. Through the development of academic and professional skills, citizens capable of contributing to the local and global community are formed. The institution can also demonstrate it, through the implementation of a competency-based curricula and support of the international exchange of professors and students through conferences, research, and academic programs; and through collaborative proposals that foster and strengthen the local economy and the socioeconomic well-being of disadvantaged communities in Puerto Rico.

Every academic program has established student learning outcomes assessed each semester according to the student profile and curriculum map (**S5-509**). The institutional level learning outcomes are also aligned with the general education competencies and are addressed in general education and beyond as can see in the GE Assessment Plan (**S5-512**). The programmatic student learning outcomes of each program are reflective of the UAGM-GC mission and goals and are responsive to the current market demands. The diverse academic programs are aligned with the mission and goals of UAGM-GC by design. All curricular activities are guided by the Student Learning Outcome (SLO).

The evidence provided suggests that UAGM-GC planning processes, see Chapter 6, resources allocation, structures, academic program, and services, are aligned with each other and fulfill its mission and goals and continuously assess programs and services as part of the institutional effectiveness process for continuous improvement.

The UAGM-GC is committed to a culture of review, assessment, evaluation, dissemination of findings, and using findings for decision-making. In UAGM-GC measurement, assessment, planning, and budgeting are articulated through an orderly process between the Associate Vice-Presidency of Assessment and Evaluation of Academic Programs, and the Associate Vice-Presidency of Licensing and Accreditation. The outcomes of these measurement initiatives, assessment, and planning are properly evaluated by institutional bodies among which are the UAGM-GC Vice Chancellor's-CEO Office, the UAGM-GC Academic Senate, and the UAGM University Board. Evidence **S5-514** and **S5-520** demonstrate reports and presentation made of assessment results to University Boards and stakeholders.

As previously established, the Assessment Model for Institutional Effectiveness (**S5-500**) is one component of the institution's overall assessment. The plan outlines efforts at the institutional level and provides guidelines for operational units to develop assessment strategies as part of their respective work plans. The model identifies and suggests systematic processes to obtain relevant data to determine each program's effectiveness (**S5-505**). This process includes evaluating the expected outcomes assessed by reviewing graduation rates, alumni satisfaction, employer satisfaction, employment rates, passing rates, and number of students pursuing further education. To reach the expected results, each program follows an evaluation plan with the support of the institutional assessment office. UAGM- GC recognizes that successful institutions are self-reflective and continually seeking to improve. The overall improvement of educational quality and the enhancement of effective

teaching and learning occur when faculty and administrators work together to implement institution-wide assessment to measure desired outcomes.

The assessment of student learning has the student as its primary focus of examination. Thus, UAGM-GC recognizes that the assessment of student learning first occurs on an individual student basis within a particular course, is mainly reflected at the program level, and is supported by the institution as well as a tool to validate the mission elements has been accomplished through an adequate level of the competency acquisition.

Also, the assessment has the purpose of keeping track of the accountability, which is demonstrated to our accrediting agencies, governing bodies, constituents, and other interested parties. It allows the Institution to demonstrate that are effective in achieving its vision, mission, and particular institutional goals and competencies. Assessment activities also provide helpful information to concentrate on those outcomes that are most important, widely accepted by the various constituents, meaningful, sufficiently explicit, and interconnected among the various academic levels and curricula making sure that are consistent with UAGM's mission and with the standards of higher education within the individual disciplines.

The assessment process has led to courses as well as programs improvement. The assessment of student learning at UAGM-GC is a decentralized process that is conducted by the faculty, students, and other stakeholders, in each academic division or department. Identifying key learning competencies, determining how outcomes will be measured, carrying out assessment activities, analyzing results, and using those results in program planning to improve student learning and closing the loop occur. at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

UAGM-GC reviewed Academic Division/Program educational objectives and Student Learning Outcomes by the following activities.

- Review of the institution's, college's, and department's mission statements
- Review of outcomes assessments criteria, along with definitions and examples of key terms
- Writing of program educational objectives that could be linked to the department's mission statement.
- Identification of course and program learning competencies.
- Identification of assessment strategies, methods/tools, metrics to assess the achievement of Institutional objectives, and learning results.
- Establishment of measures and data collection and analysis
- Each academic and non-academic unit will make the required changes based on data analysis and assessment results.
- Program planning to improve student learning and closing the loop occur.

UAGM-GC, academic program, and non-academic offices, provides students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders information related to the programs and accreditation status. Stakeholders can search for information about the programs on the web page, which include description, curriculum, mission, vision and goals, students learning outcomes admission/graduation requirements, course descriptions and passing rate, among others. The institutional website and electronic mail are the most widely used methods of communication within the university campus and school communities.

RQ 4	How does the periodic assessment of student learning results be used to improve academic programs and support, learning resources, and student success indicators (e.g., board exam performance, job placement)?
RQ5	What faculty-led processes has the institution implemented to gather, organize, analyze, and use data to determine the effectiveness of academic programs and student learning?

Use of Assessment Results

A well-constructed formative and summative assessment system allows students to demonstrate their abilities and knowledge and then reflects how close they are to meeting educational goals and standards. Evidence from assessments can be directly beneficial to students. Assessment is a process that is embedded in the culture of an institution. The institution should be able to provide evidence that the assessment of student learning and the use of results is an ongoing institutional activity performed by each program,

Assessment results are reviewed yearly to identify areas for improvement. All survey results are discussed in faculty meetings for analysis and corresponding actions (**S5-513, S5-514, S5-520**). Aggregated data is analyzed, disseminated, and used to foster each programs' improvement. The mission, goals and student learning outcomes were revised to incorporate the changes that occurred as part of the integrating process at Universidad Ana G. Méndez.

The need for curriculum revisions has become an important part of the integration process **S1-120**. This curriculum revision provoked an evolution from content-based learning to competency-oriented courses and programs. In addition, curriculum alignment and integration occurred as result of the UAGM restructuring process. Each program faculty initiated a process of revision and alignment of course objectives and SLO (**S5-521**). This analysis and curricular mapping and the revision of courses syllabus have been taking place over the las two years (**S1-120, S5-509**). The move towards the use of more technology in the assessment process has sparked a need to strengthen the culture of classroom assessment by developing a systematized plan for data entry of learning outcomes, rubrics, and other assessment instruments being entered into the Blackboard platform. Workshops for faculty members are being offered each semester to make sure that all faculty are on board in the process (**S5-515**).

Assessment has also played an important part in the areas of support services, such as retention, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and others. For example, the early referrals through the Early Alert Retention System (EARS) application documents referrals and interventions of at-risk students to help monitor and take actions pursuing students' achievement of the required competencies and degree completion.

Another important action in assessment has been to monitor the passing rate of state boards in each program that requires a test for licensing or certification. Analysis of results from board examination are discussed in the faculty meetings and a systemic committee has been established to develop mock test for each program. The assessment process has shown that the mock tests results have been good predictors of student success on licensing exams.

Each academic and support unit revises and implements their assessment processes and uses their findings to implement corrective measures. All units have assessment leaders who coordinate the assessment process in their unit who are a part of the Committee of Intuitional Effectiveness (CIE).

Assessment reports are prepared by the academic units and include the following:

- AR Course Level Assessment reports must be completed and submitted by the professor to the leader of the academic program of the academic division and the Office of Assessment.
- AR Program Level Assessment reports are generated annually by the program leader and submitted to the Institutional Assessment Office.

The annual assessment reports provide information relevant to: (1) courses and programs goals, objectives, and competencies, (2) specific courses where the objective (s) is/are attained, (3) assessment tools, (4) expected results, (5) corrective actions and recommendations for improvement, and (6) outcomes resulting from the corrective actions of the previous cycle (**S5-501**).

Student learning outcomes are clearly articulated at all levels (institutional, school, program, and course). They are integrated with one another, consonant with the institutional mission, and with the standards of the relevant discipline and specialized accreditations. The processes and procedures that are used by UAGM-GC to assess student learning are aligned with the goals and objectives of the institutional and school missions. Institutional syllabi and study guides delineate the specific student learning outcomes and evaluation measures in the course guide.

UAGM-GC utilizes diverse approaches to monitor curriculum development, course design, and the quality of instruction, which include mentoring practices and performance reviews, and student academic success through departmental exams, final papers, projects, practicum, exhibitions, retention, and graduations rates among others. It also relies on its advisory committees, regular interactions with key employers, and prominent alumni as additional assessment tools.

Faculty Participation in Assessment

Faculty play a key role in administering assessment instruments, analyzing the data, and presenting their recommendations in their assessment reports. Through the former Assessment Model, the Assessment Report (AR1) and (AR2) collected evidence about students' progress and learning outcomes acquisition and used the collected data to make decisions about resource allocation in planning for each program's effectiveness and overall institutional effectiveness. Furthermore, AR3 was used to improve academic programs and additional locations, enhance the environment provided for teaching and learning, and measure overall student success. To track students' performance over time the programs concentrate on the key courses at each level to ensure that the student is acquiring the necessary skills for the profession, as per seen in the curriculum map of each program. Actually, the new assessment reports (AR), provide similar information from each course, and collect recommendations for improvements as well as key findings from the assessment cycle. These reports are collected directly from the Blackboard course platform. Each professor must complete the report at the end of the semester. The report includes sections for faculty recommendations for improvement at course level, program level, academic unit as well as the institutional level (**S5-511, S5-501**). The results of the assessment process are collected, the data are organized for each program and division, and shared to the academic leaders and CIE to make decisions regarding current findings and upcoming actions, and previous actions taken that measure interventions from the previous assessment cycle. It is noteworthy to mention that assessment at UAGM-GC is:

- A participatory process supported by faculty and administrators. Including Main Campus

(Gurabo) and additional locations (Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa)

- occurs in all administrative and academic areas.
- complies with the institutional mission, vision, goals, objectives, and values.
- utilizes findings for planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.
- use of multiple instruments to create a balance between quantitative and qualitative measures.

Institutional assessment results are used to improve each of the activity areas in the six (6) step cycle in the continuous assessment process, as can be seen previously in figure 5.4.

Institutional documentation, strategic planning, administrative structures, methods, and use of assessment results demonstrate coherence with the assessment plan. The information obtained from the outcomes of the assessment strategies is analyzed by the Office of Assessment who shares results with the administrative units, schools, and additional locations, Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa. The US branches are governed by the institutional assessment model aligned with the requirements of the accrediting agencies, in the case of nursing and social work programs. The analysis is used to improve institutional effectiveness and the learning process. Designated professors and program directors, in collaboration with the Assessment Director participate in completing annual progress reports and making recommendations for: 1. Action plans when benchmarks are not met 2. Curricular changes 3. Changes in assessments instruments and rubrics 4. Implementation and changes in direct and indirect assessment instruments 5. Incorporating text, media, information resources, electronic and multimedia, and other course materials.

Between 2019-2020, academic programs began with the development of a competency-based curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The professional competencies were determined by faculty according to each accrediting agency or discipline and considered the institution's expectations and teaching level. The graduate profile for the professional core (degree) and the specific programs was reviewed and aligned to the respective academic division and institutional mission. The Conceptual curriculum and general education component explain in detail the relationship of the institutional educational goals and each of the eight competencies (**S5-509, S5-512**). Each academic program establishes its educational goals aligned with the institution's mission and institutional goals considering their curricular maps and the eight institutional competencies, in addition to the program's professional courses. This process was developed among program directors and their faculty to identify the level of competency that will be assessed considering the four levels (basic, developing, competent, and proficient) and the institutional and professional competency that is measured across the program.

RQ 6	How interrelated are educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels with each other, with relevant educational experiences, and the institution's mission?
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Educational Goals and Experiences

Through the development of academic and professional competencies we form citizens capable of contributing to the local and global communities. UAGM-GC's resources support its post-secondary, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education academic offer, using diverse teaching and learning modes, by following the highest standards of quality. Each program is carefully developed, implemented, and evaluated to guarantee excellence in its offerings. UAGM's mission emphasizes the provision of broad higher education academic offerings of the highest standards of quality. UAGM is

committed to excellence in teaching, research, innovation, internationalization, and social-humanistic values. By a fair and equitable policy of admissions, it serves a diverse student population through a multi-campus structure that includes additional locations though the island. The UAGM has the purpose of contributing to the formation of citizens committed to the well-being of the local and global community. Graduates are leaders committed to serving Puerto Rico and other countries and to perform their duties with strong ethical and moral principles from an interdisciplinary and global perspective. Through the Office of International Affairs, students can immerse themselves in global learning experiences that contribute to the achievement of their professional as well as institutional competencies.

All curricular activities are guided by the Strategic Learning competency base model. Documentation included in this self-study confirms that the programs. design provides ample opportunity for students to achieve SLO's and Program outcomes and the necessary competencies to become skilled professionals in their respective areas. Additionally, the institutional mission is aligned to all academic divisions and programs, and all programs demonstrate this alignment through the integrated student profile. Evidence **S5-509**, demonstrates how the institutional competencies as well as professionals are aligned and facilitate the achievement of the UAGM mission. The mission and program alignment are periodically assessed. The mission and goals are clearly presented in the graduate profile which are aligned to the educational goals.

RQ 7	To what extent do the processes of academic program accreditations generate useful information for curricular improvement? Do the self-studies and assessment processes of these programs serve as a model for other majors at the institution?
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Self-Study and Curriculum Improvement

The rigorous process of analyzing and reflecting on programs that takes place during an accreditation generates rich and useful data that helps make decisions about the effectiveness of the program and institution. Each accreditation agency is different, but its data requirements are crucial to creating a data-driven program. All the processes included in an accreditation have helped create a model of decision-making unique to the program based on data used to demonstrate the program's effectiveness. The self-studies and assessment processes of the programs have served as a model for other majors at the institution. These processes ensure quality in student preparation. Accreditation is a validation and quality control process that guarantees all programs prepare students to know their subjects, and career related competencies. It also provides a framework that pushed the programs to continually self-assess and conduct evidence-based analysis of their programs and their efficacy. These evidence-based shifts, rooted in continuous improvement, are helping to ensure that the programs are more likely to produce successful graduates that excel in their professions and community.

The processes of accreditations generate useful information for curricular improvement to a significant extent. Accreditation is a rigorous evaluation process that has helps UAGM-GC assess the quality and effectiveness of each academic program, service, and the institution in totality. The accreditation process and attainment provide peer-reviewed validation that educational outcomes are met and maintained, and that a culture of accountability and continuous improvement is evident.

During the MSCHE accreditation process, the programs have been evaluated against the established criteria and standards of the MSCHE, while also providing additional quality assurance seals of approval

from specialized accreditation agencies. This self-assessment has facilitated the identification of UAGM-GC's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement within the curricula, and the institution as a whole. By examining the effectiveness of the UAGM-GC educational offerings, the reflective process has led to gather valuable data and insights to enhance the learning experience of the students and helps UAGM steer in the direction of its mission of excellence in education.

Faculty recommendations have been instrumental in guiding curricular improvements, as they bring in fresh ideas and insights from each course perspective. Professors have the primary and most contact with students, and this self-study allows their voices to be heard and provide impact regarding faculty and student issues.

Furthermore, the self-study and assessment processes have served as a model for guidance at the institution. The rigorous evaluation and self-reflection involved in the accreditation process promotes a culture of continuous improvement. The institution has learned from the best practices, self-reflection, and assessment strategies that come from within and outside of the institution. This has allowed UAGM-GC to identify issues of concern and establish a framework for evaluating and enhancing curricula across the board. This promotes consistency, quality, and alignment with educational standards throughout the institution. It also encourages a culture of accountability and data-driven decision-making, which are crucial elements for sustained curricular improvement and institutional growth and development.

In addition to MSCHE, specialized accreditation agencies have established standards and indicators of quality that guide programs in educating competent professionals ready to be immersed in their career fields. Note with standing compliance with accreditation standards ensures the quality, integrity, rigor, and competencies demanded from higher education to prepare a workforce that is able to solve real professional and communal problems of the 21st Century. The processes of participating in institutional and academic program accreditations have become a reflective process that ensures UAGM-GC goals and objectives are also aligned with industry/discipline standards, needs, demands, and competencies required in today's workforce. It is a process dominantly focused on evidence driven data that is derived from the assessment and continuous improvement cycle in which assessment results are compared to accreditation standards and institutional benchmarks to provide an opportunity to make immediate corrective action when benchmarks, standards, and competencies that are not aligned or not in compliance. Corrective actions are then implemented, and subsequently measured for their effectiveness during the next assessment cycle as part of the continuous improvement process of the institution. In summary, the processes of academic programs and institutional accreditations generate valuable information for curricular improvement, support services, and learning experiences that benefit all stakeholders.

RQ8	How are the planning, budgeting and assessment processes articulated for the delivery of academic programs and services?
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Planning for Academic Programs and Services

The Office of Planning, in collaboration with the Office of Assessment, collects diverse data relevant to institutional performance from students, faculty, alumni, administrators, and employers, which is used to support institutional planning and budgeting processes (**S5-506**). The budget assigned to each unit is supported by assessment results derived from the annual assessment reports of the academic units and from the institutional studies office. The information collected from all reports is fundamental in the

planning and budgeting processes. They are shared with the Planning and Finance Assistant Vice Presidents, directors, and administrative units.

The responsibility for enacting and reviewing the assessment of institutional effectiveness is closely tied to the strategic planning. Thus, there is a responsibility inherent to UAGM-GC leadership in evaluating the assessment results and taking action to correct those not meeting the expected benchmark.

The Office of Planning will monitor the enactment of the plan through the institutional level assessment activities outlined, through reviews of unit level strategic plans, and through annual reports. Academic and administrative units will revise and execute assessment plans and use findings, recommendations, and corrective measures, for strategic planning and annual reporting procedures.

In an ever-evolving educational environment, UAGM-GC has recognized the need to adapt to external changes while still providing quality academic services. The institution has become proactive in meeting its mission, enhancing academic offerings, maintaining accreditations, and implementing administrative changes for continuous improvement. Significant efforts have been taking place to make its undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs relevant to the needs of the community and professions of today and tomorrow. By recognizing the importance of catering to diverse educational needs, the institution has invested in focusing its curriculum to focus on competencies that tackle real problems. By offering a wide range of programs, UAGM-GC ensures that students have access to quality education that aligns with their goals and aspirations.

In today's rapidly changing world, educational institutions face numerous challenges that require resilience, adaptability, and innovative solutions. The UAGM-GC is a prime example of an institution that has successfully navigated adverse circumstances while maintaining its commitment to providing a quality education. While mitigating adversities, UAGM-GC has responded to challenges, managed curricula, supported distance education, and enhanced teaching effectiveness.

The socio-demographic challenges faced by the institution that were provoked by the impact of Hurricane María in 2017, earthquakes in 2019-2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have influenced student enrollment levels across educational institutions in Puerto Rico. Despite these challenges, UAGM-GC has persevered and implemented strategies to stabilize the decline in enrollment. Through a commitment to quality and effectiveness, the institution has maintained regional and specialized accreditations and adhered to regulatory and licensing requirements. UAGM-GC's commitment to academic excellence, quality student support services, and technological innovation ensures that it remains a leading educational institution that serves Hispanic students. By embracing change, maintaining accreditations, and addressing institutional priorities, UAGM-GC continues to evolve and provide exceptional learning experiences.

The institution has demonstrated remarkable resilience by consolidating its expenses and using its current revenues in those areas most critical to maintaining high-quality programs and services. Despite facing challenges such as decreased enrollment and the impact of natural disasters, UAGM-GC has strived to provide a safe learning environment and forged continuity of studies for its students. By developing new and appropriate academic programs, it has remained at the forefront of educational innovation. Despite challenges, UAGM-GC continues to adapt to meet the evolving needs of its student population and the community it serves.

Quality and Effectiveness has placed a strong emphasis on standardizing and implementing compliance and assessment processes. By monitoring and adjusting the quality and effectiveness of its academic, administrative, and student services, the institution demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement while providing excellence in its educational offerings. The development and implementation of an accountability structure and evidence culture enable UAGM-GC to measure its operations' efficiency and effectiveness accurately in its operational and academic endeavors.

The self-study conducted by UAGM-GC aims to assess the institution's continuous improvement in achieving its mission and addressing institutional priorities. It focuses on evaluating the integration of academic and student support services to fulfill the institution's mission effectively. With a foundation in programmatic accreditations and familiarity with standards, UAGM-GC has learned to adopt a structured and cohesive inquiry process when engaging in self-study.

UAGM-GC fosters student engagement and the development of competencies through various experiential learning approaches. Real-life projects, research opportunities, internships, and entrepreneurship exercises enable students to apply their knowledge and gain practical skills. Co-curricular activities, such as seminars, training, cases studies real-life projects, research with industries and agencies, simulations, and businesses' tours, internships, among others, enrich students learning experiences at all levels and keep students updated on the ever-changing professional environment. The UAGM exemplifies resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges. By consolidating expenses and the responsible use of revenues, UAGM-GC has been successful in developing new academic programs, managing curricula, supporting distance education, enhancing teaching effectiveness, and demonstrating its commitment to providing a quality education. Despite adverse circumstances during the last few years, UAGM-GC has remained at the forefront of educational innovation and continues to proactively adapt to changes by utilizing effect assessment practices.

UAGM provides a comprehensive technological infrastructure to support teaching and learning. This includes Wi-Fi access, classrooms equipped with internet access, TVs, DLP projectors, two-way distance educational technology, and computer facilities. These resources empower faculty members to enhance the teaching-learning process through various modalities. Additionally, tools like blogs, chat rooms, and emails facilitate communication and interaction between faculty and students. The availability of the UAGM faculty webpage (web-for-faculty) further streamlines processes such as electronic grade reports and student referrals.

To facilitate faculty integration of technology into their courses, UAGM offers workshops, seminars, conferences, and training sessions on instructional technology every semester. These opportunities equip faculty members with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize technology in their teaching face-to-face and remote/distance educational practices. The virtual platform, Mi UAGM, serves as another valuable tool that supports the school's teaching strategy and enhances the learning experience for students. Furthermore, all students and faculty can access a free version of Office 365 and the virtual library to support their educational tools and learning processes. UAGM-GC's modern facilities for teaching and learning, and the many software programs, simulators, and laboratories for sciences and computers demonstrate that UAGM-GC make a considerable effort to meet the needs of P3, which revolves around technology and infrastructure.

During the pandemic period, students enrolled in laboratory-based courses were provided with remote access to computers in classrooms. The institution provided laptops to those students in need in order

to facilitate the remote learning experience. This arrangement ensured that students had access to the required software for their learning process, even in remote learning environments. By leveraging technology, the institution has successfully maintained continuity in the learning process and ensured that students had the necessary resources to meet their learning objectives.

The integration of technology has significantly enhanced teaching and learning experience. By utilizing diverse technological resources and offering comprehensive training programs, the UAGM ensures that faculty members are equipped to incorporate technology effectively. The emphasis on assessment and continuous improvement further strengthens the quality of education provided using technology and assessment.

As previously mentioned, the Institution has embraced a culture of continuous assessment, with findings driving curriculum changes and improvement initiatives. UAGM has established an Assurance of Learning (AOL) program that evaluates the effectiveness of the curriculum and the students' academic experiences in alignment with the UAGM-GC mission and goals. The program examines student learning assessment to ensure consistency with the desired knowledge, skills, and competencies, which provide valuable information for decision-making and contribute to continuous improvement.

This chapter provides evidence that exemplifies and validates the commitment of UAGM -GC with the allocation of resources, strategic planning, and attention to assessment findings in order to facilitate the process of continuous improvement of programs and services, which in turn the professional academic development of each student.

AREAS OF STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

1. UAGM-GC has built a strong culture of assessment of student learning outcomes, with strong participation among all academic units as well as student service component.
2. Assessment data collection has continued providing a guide to improve student learning although Puerto Rico has suffered numerous challenges related to hurricanes, earthquakes, and the pandemic.
3. UAGM integration has facilitated and strengthened collaboration between campuses and additional locations in standardizing assessment tools to maintain quality collection throughout the academic year and across programs.
4. UAGM – GC provides professional development, support, and tools for evaluating educational effectiveness.

Challenges

1. Establish an assessment committee integrating leaders from campus and additional locations to foster current and emerging assessment practices in UAGM Gurabo Campus.

Conclusions

The Institution has worked continuously to promote and enhance a culture of an evidence-based decision-making environment. The student learning assessment process is integrated across all academic programs. In the last ten years, numerous strategies have been implemented to assess student learning and institutional needs and identify the best practices to improve assessment results.

UAGM-GC has a strength assessment culture that has resulted in a consistent data collection serving for strategic planning and resources allocation that strengthen the processes of continuous improvement, and the effectiveness in the learning of its graduates.

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.

This chapter provides evidence on how UAGM-GC complies with the Standard criteria, Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) 10, 11 and, Self-Study Institutional Priority 3 in the context of the nine (9) Research Questions of the inquiry conducted by Working Group 6.

RQ2	To what extent does the institution engage in transparent and participatory planning and improvement processes that are clearly stated, guided by the campus mission, and based on assessment?
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Planning and Institutional Improvement

The planning procedure at UAGM-GC is a structured, coordinated, and comprehensive process. It is directed by the Planning Office of the UAGM-GC in collaboration with the university community as described in the Strategic Development Guidelines (SDGs) **(S1-101)**. Furthermore, these SDGs respond directly to our mission, which establishes that the UAGM-GC and Campuses at Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce and Yabucoa are committed to "academic excellence, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization, and the socio-humanistic development of a diverse population." Similarly, the SDG responds to the diversity of programs and academic levels, through which we develop academic and professional skills to educate responsible citizens who will impact local and global communities.

The review and approval process for the 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 UAGM Strategic Development Guides was developed during the 2020-21 academic year. This was coordinated by the Vice Presidency of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (VPPIE) and included the consultation and participation of all managerial levels of the institution (Presidency, Vice Presidencies, Gurabo Precinct and each one of the university campuses), as well as faculty, students, and administration **(S6-600)**.

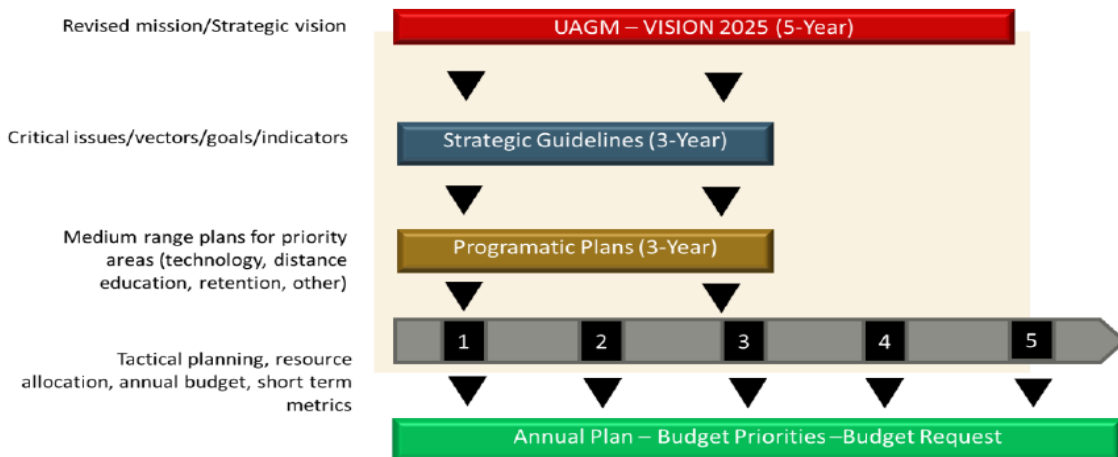
PLANNING LEVELS

The institutional planning processes in the SUAGM are structured and developed in three (3) basic levels:

- **Strategic Level (3-5 years):** Stipulation of critical issues and strategic priorities that will guide the development of AGMUS and its institutions in the long term. Identification of critical areas of development at the System level, revised vision and missions, and specific goals of the Institutions by strategic areas or components.
- **Programmatic Level (3 years):** Specification of objectives and main projects to be developed in a period of three (3) years of the period, in harmony with the vision, mission, policies, and goals established at the strategic level. At this level, specialized plans are in priority development areas, such as in the areas of technology, internationalization, student retention, among others.

- **Operational Level (annual):** Preparation of the work plans and the annual budget requests in line with the priorities derived from the previous levels. Figure 6.1 illustrates these levels of planning and their overlapping features.

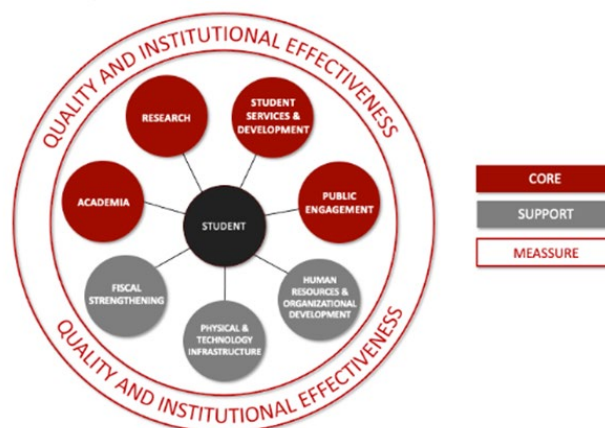
Figure 6.1. Levels of Planning



The 2021-2024 Strategic Development Guidelines structure has eight (8) *strategic vectors*. The vectors are areas that have been identified as essential for the operation, strengthening, and development of the institution. For each of these vectors, the institution must identify strategic issues, goals, objectives and achievement indicators for the planning period. Vectors are classified as core (*Academia, Research, Services and Student Development, and Public Function*), Support (*Human Resources and Organizational Development, Physical and Technological Infrastructure, and Fiscal Strengthening*), and measurement and improvement (*Quality and Institutional Effectiveness*). Figure 6.2 illustrates the cohesive and interrelationship of these vectors.

The SDG UAGM-GC (2021-2024) also considered the Mission and Vision of UAGM (**S1-100**). This process involved faculty, students, and administration. It was also approved by the Academic Board and Administrative Council. The strategic goals are implanted annually through the implementation of each unit’s work plan that contains measurable goals and objectives (**S6-601**).

Figure 6.2. UAGM Strategic Vector



For the preparation of the annual plan, the following are taken into consideration: (a) Institutional needs identified by the assessment processes (b) priorities identified by the Vice-Chancellor. All units at Gurabo Campus and additional locations workplans are reviewed and consolidated into the Institutional Work Plan **(S6-602)**.

The UAGM Offices of Institutional Research, Planning, Assessment and Deanship of Institutional Effectiveness maintains an intense focus on continuous improvement and support university wide assessment activities by providing access to abundant institutional data, analytical support, and reporting for all stakeholders. The offices are proactive in helping faculty and administrators for mining institutional data and supporting the development of data collection and analytical strategies and tools.

The planning office involvement in all aspects of university evaluation and assessment ensures that assessment projects are aligned with the institution strategic plan and drive continuous improvement. Extensive resources, including a website: uagm.blackboard.com are available to support assessment efforts across the campus. The Assessment Office staff provide support to faculty and staff in Gurabo Campus as well as the Centers at Yabucoa, Cayey, Ponce and Barceloneta in conducting assessments and using results to make improvements.

RQ3	To what extent does the institution practice an evidence-based budgeting process that is assessment-driven and allows for the allocation of resources at the campus and departmental levels for the attainment of its mission and goals?
RQ4	How well does UAGM-GC define its decision-making processes and structures for planning and resource allocation and administration, and how clearly are responsibility and accountability assigned?

Planning and Resource

The integration of planning, assessment and budget has served to distribute resources to improve student learning, student support services, strengthen student retention, increase technology equipment, expand, and improve academic offerings, physical infrastructure development, highly qualified faculty, strengthen the assessment, and general education. All planning starts with the institutional goals, objectives, and results of the assessment cycles. Chapter 5 provides more details regarding the interrelationship between assessment and decision-making processes.

Work Plan Development and Institutional Budget Request

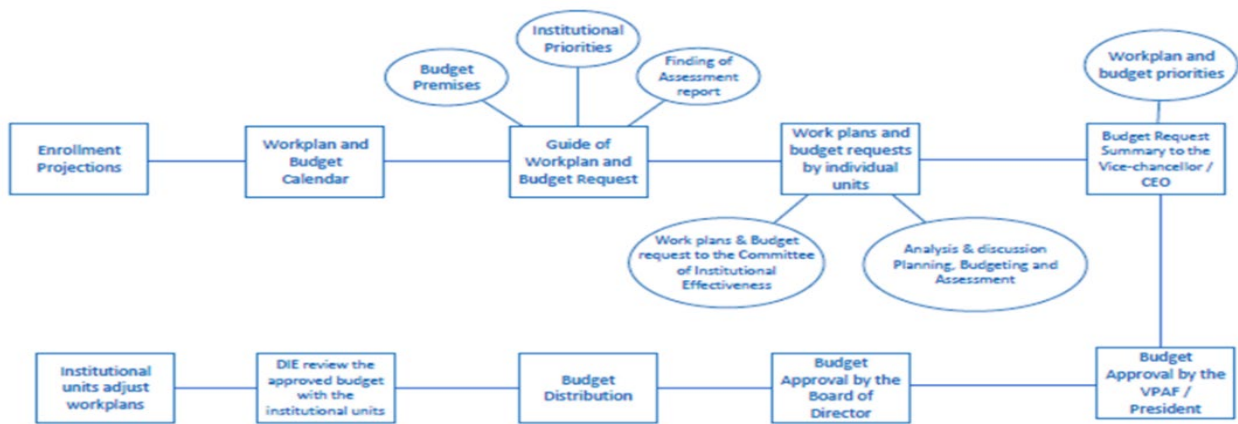
The financial planning, resources allocation and budgeting processes guarantee effective communication among units and provide for constituent participation. The process details each of the stages required by the annual budget request cycle and the preparation of the work plan **(S6-603)**. The purpose is to guarantee that the budget request contemplates the fiscal commitments that the Campus and additional location has. In addition, the requirements for allocation of funds to carry out new projects are established in the strategic development guidelines of the Institution.

To develop the work plan and the budget request, the Institutional Assessment, Planning, and Budget Committee (IAPBC) will be activated. This subcommittee responds to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) and is composed of the Directors of Planning, Budget, Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources, and Assessment.

The budget is established based on the preceding operating budget, changes in enrollment, revenue assumptions, and expense priorities. Tuition revenues allow the institution to provide quality administrative support services to the teaching learning process, expand research opportunities, improve physical facilities, and provide new equipment and technology infrastructure for laboratories and administrative offices to support the academic environment. The institution is aware that it must hold tuition fees at a reasonable level and balance, as deemed necessary, and this is contemplated during the long- and short-term goals of the strategic development plan. The Vice-Chancellor (CEO) and the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness carefully review proposed initiatives to ensure that the resources are allocated effectively and consistently with the strategic planning process (S1-101).

The planning and budget allocation processes have been successful given that: (1) individual and work unit plans are tied directly to the university’s strategic plan, which reflects key aspects of the mission statement, and (2) they integrate assessment findings with the planning process to allocate resources and strengthen institutional effectiveness. Figure 6.3 illustrates the flowchart of the budget allocation steps.

Figure 6.3. Budget Allocation Flowchart



RQ8	How does the institution ensure sustainability through sound fiscal and management practices and seek diversification of funding through external resources?
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Fiscal Resources

Unforeseen catastrophic and natural events have impacted our main source of revenues, tuition, and fees; therefore, cost constraint measures had to be made to compensate for the lost revenues. Adjustments and changes have been made to our plans and operational budget to stay current with demand and be able to respond rapidly to unexpected events. Table 6.1 shows the campus budget allocation from 2018 to 2022, where the significant reductions taking place during the years of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 6.1. UAGM Gurabo Operating Funds, 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

Fiscal Year	Allocated budget General Fund
2017-2018	\$ 73,875,978.00

2018-2019	\$ 70,443,141.00
2019-2020	\$ 68,197,349.00
2020-2021	\$ 59,802,758.00
2021-2022	\$ 60,541,753.00

UAGM-GC derives revenues primarily from tuition, fees, and grants received from federal and state government agencies. Table 6.2 shows the summary of resource allocation for years 2017-18 to 2021-22.

Table 6.2. Summary of Resource Allocation for Years 2017-18 to 2021-2022

Category	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Tuition and fees	\$109,270,392	\$105,016,678	\$103,635,503	\$82,109,317	\$66,419,018
Grants and contracts	\$10,241,434	\$13,438,820	\$14,902,749	\$34,511,061	\$50,381.118
Total	\$119,511,826	\$118,455,498	\$118,538,252	\$116,620,378	\$116,800,136

Distribution of Revenues

As a rule, generally an 80/20 distribution of revenues is expected between the institutions and the Central Administration to cover administrative related expenses in any given year. Nevertheless, specific conditions determine the actual distribution of funds and the contribution to be made to the Central Administration by the institutions each year. For the past four years, UAGM-GC contributed approximately **15%** of its tuition and fees revenues to the Central Administration.

Funds available for expenses at the institutional level are subject to the Vice Chancellor/CEO, but certain guidelines must be taken into consideration: existing salary and fringe benefits expenditures, debt service payments must be funded, and maintenance of facilities expenses should be evaluated and properly budgeted (**S6-605**). While external circumstances beyond UAGM-GC control have proven difficult, the institution continues to become more agile and has taken measures to address the fiscal challenges to provide adequate fiscal and human resources, including physical and technical infrastructure. Table 6.3 delineates the cost control measures that were taken by the institution to ensure fiscal responsibility and operational effectiveness.

Table 6.3. Examples of Cost Control and Savings Achieved

Cost Control Measures	Total Reduction
1. Incentivized Withdrawals	\$4,153,294
2. Layoffs - annual saving	\$2,221,778
3. 20% Reduction in wages (May 2020 to June 2022)	\$8,503,267

4. Freeze of vacancies (Positions Control Committee)	\$2,861,267
5. Freeze construction projects and use the funds to cover operational costs	\$11,722,482
6. AFICA Settlement	\$14,925,533
7. Student debts settlement FY20 & FY21	\$5,963,410

Central Administration management has assumed leadership in the efforts to continue the transformation of the Institution to be able to overcome the economic hardships of the last years and provide students with an education of excellence. The prevalent economic conditions and the uncertainty in terms of the future tuition and fees for the next academic year due to the direct impact of the Covid-19 pandemic obligated the institution to take fiscal adjustments. For example, the Institution's President determined and communicated that effective May 1, 2020 **(S6-606)**, all the university's employees will have a one-day reduction in their respective workweeks, and as a result, a 20% reduction in their salaries. This decision was based on the negative impact on the Institution's budget cash flow and financial statements of Puerto Rico. In addition, in 2020, the Fiscal Control Committee was established to monitor the use of institutional resources adequately and efficiently **(S6-607)**. Also, the Deanship of Institutional Effectiveness was created to manage and monitor the institutional units' expenses and compliance with policies and procedures. We continued in a comprehensive restructuring and reduction of operational costs to maintain the fiscal viability of UAGM -GC **(S6-608)**.

The Position Control Committee has been another effective tool for achieving savings in wages and fringe benefits from vacant and newly created positions **(S6-609)**. Also, with the federal funds for the pandemic (CARES / HEERF) made it possible to cover several of the operational expenses of the campus, which allowed that with the savings that there were in those expenses.

SUAGM's Audited Financial Statements as of 2018-2022 demonstrated financial sustainability attributable to effective institutional monitoring practices for budgeting and resource allocation **(S6-610)**. As a result of the most recent audits procedures performed, no internal control deficiencies were identified, nor communicated to management.

However, to provide a better understanding of UAGM-GC financial position, a breakdown of the audited financial results and projections are presented in the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Activities for the years ending on July 31, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 and the financial highlights are presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4. *Financial Highlights of SUAGM from 2018 to 2022*

Financial Highlights					
<i>(balances in thousand)</i>	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
<i>Summary- Statement of Financial Position</i>					
Total Assets	\$ 405,375	\$ 365,299	\$ 347,577	\$ 358,405	\$ 362,738
Total Liabilities	154,079	150,276	161,845	180,954	177,735
+ Total Net Assets	251,296	215,023	185,731	177,451	185,003
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	405,375	365,299	347,576	\$ 358,405	\$ 362,738
<i>Summary- Statements of Activities</i>					
Total Revenues	\$ 295,887	\$ 289,382	\$ 275,381	\$ 272,604	\$ 291,401
Total Expenses	\$ (259,614)	\$ (260,089)	\$ (267,101)	(280,156)	(287,666)
Change in Net Assets	\$ 36,273	\$ 29,293	\$ 8,280	\$ (7,552)	\$ 3,735

UAGM is an enrollment driven institution relative to budgeting. The basis for the budget funds is the projected headcount and credit hours for the year per institution. Trends in revenues and expenditures in the previous years and the estimated costs of new projects or initiatives are also considered when structuring the overall budget.

Four funds compose the budget: Operational Fund, Technology Fund, Endowment Fund, and External Resources. The funds related to the construction and technological fees are also managed at the Central Administration level for facilities improvements, and technological development and they are not distributed according to the 80/20 distribution formula. Funds related to General Fees, which amount to approximately \$24 million annually, are assigned to the maintenance of classroom buildings, or administrative office buildings and major improvements to existing facilities. Technological fees are assigned for the acquisition or substitution of technological equipment (computers, servers) and corresponding software. Technological fee funds are distributed according to the priorities established by the Information Technology Central Office. The determination of these priorities is part of the annual planning process of the cycle of the workplan and budget petition process in which all departments, specialized schools and additional locations participate.

Tuition revenues total more than 90% of SUAGM revenues, and therefore are monitored daily with reports detailing the enrollment results. Each semester, the Budget and Analysis Office compares and evaluates actual tuition and enrollment results with the budgeted goals. Adjustments are made accordingly, if necessary, although if additional funds are produced by an institution, distributions of additional funds are made to cover expenses associated with the added educational activity. If budget goals are not met, the corresponding institution's Vice-Chancellor, in coordination with the Budget and Analysis Office, makes the necessary adjustments to balance the institution's budget.

Sponsored Programs

In addition to the institutional budget, external funds allow the institution to develop and improve innovative projects, research, and student services aligned with strategic goals and needs. In the last five years, UAGM-GC has developed approximately **267** sponsored projects **\$49,926,792** awarded to bring scholarships, stipends for students, tutoring services for students, acquired laboratory equipment, among many other categories (**S6-611**). Additionally, the federal government assigned UAGM-GC **\$131,387,998** from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF); of these funds, \$53,736,258 million were used to provide emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operation due to the coronavirus and \$77 million to development of virtual

classrooms, and the acquisition of laptops for students and faculty members. Tables 6.5 and 6.6 outline the funds awarded for sponsored projects, funds under CARES, HEERF.

Table 6.5 Total Funds Awarded Sponsored Projects

2018	\$ 9,745,263
2019	\$ 11,121,182
2020	\$ 8,050,358
2021	\$ 10,620,272
2022	\$ 10,389,717
TOTAL FUNDS	\$49,926.792

Table 6.6 Total Funds Awarded from Cares and HEERF

Inst.	\$ 70,014.303
Aid	\$ 53,736,258
MSI	\$ 7,637,437
TOTAL FUNDS	\$131,387,998

Table 6.7 shows how the institution increased its resources to obtain additional funds not related to Tuition and Fees to support student success, research, faculty development, public services and facilities improvement aligned with UAGM, GC strategic priorities. Now, UAGM has a new policy OE 52-2023 Unrelated Business Income (UBI) to guarantee the necessary resources are available and administered effectively for educational and institutional administration purposes (**S6-612**).

Table 6.7 Funds Received until July 2022

Funds Received until July 2022					
Source of Funds	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Grants and contracts	\$ 27,093,663.00	\$ 27,455,322.00	\$ 33,586,716.00	\$ 82,057,544.00	\$ 112,626,392.00
Private gifts and grants	\$ 2,318,355.00	\$ 1,737,908.00	\$ 1,563,060.00	\$ 1,138,207.00	\$ 720,154.00
Auxiliary enterprises	\$ 1,924,616.00	\$ 2,407,133.00	\$ 1,711,767.00	\$ 620,847.00	\$ 1,475,339.00
Other sources	\$ 21,231,048.00	\$ 15,436,620.00	\$ 18,510,769.00	\$ 16,996,726.00	\$ 11,426,498.00
Total Funds as Audited Financial Statements	\$ 52,567,682.00	\$ 47,036,983.00	\$ 55,372,312.00	\$ 100,813,324.00	\$ 126,248,383.00

RQ6	How well do facilities and resources respond to the educational needs of faculty and students, and the administrative needs of staff?
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Physical Resources

UAGM-GC has a total of **619,225** square feet in physical facilities to provide educational and support services to students and fulfill the mission. The institution has a physical facilities Master Plan 2021 (**S1-106**) which main purpose is to establish the planning and effective use of the land and facilities to fulfill the institutional mission and vision (teaching, research, service/innovation, entrepreneurship).

Every three (3) years the Master Plan was reviewed by the Institution. The revised Master Plan contemplated the following developments:

- Relocation, redistribution, reforms, new construction (School of Veterinary Medicine phase II)

- Design of functional blocks for the principle operational units of the main campus to support enrollment integration.
- Location for the new priorities' offerings (Doctorate in Dental Medicine (41,067 square feet) and Veterinary Medicine (31,697 square feet))
- Design areas to locate new doctorate development.
- Strategies to recuperate/substitute classrooms among other necessities.

Hurricane Irma (September 6, 2017) and Hurricane María (September 20, 2017) had devastating effects on the island's infrastructure, people, and overall services (power, water, food, and all telecommunications). María entered through the municipality of Yabucoa on the southern tip of the island with a direct hit over all of Puerto Rico. UAGM-GC and its four Centers at Yabucoa, Cayey, Barceloneta, and Ponce suffered significant structural damages due to the high winds, rain, and flooding, which required the institution to clean all debris to restart academic and administrative operations. These physical developments were implemented with federal funds and capital improvement funds. The institution has been able to develop key projects for a total investment of **\$13,592,746**. The following table 6.8 shows some of the projects developed in the last 5 years.

Table 6.8 Projects Developed from 2017-2022

Area Projects	Investment
Classrooms and Laboratories Gurabo Campus improvement	\$2,915,947
Laboratories, classrooms, and outside student space improvements to University Centers Ponce, Yabucoa Cayey and Barceloneta Remodel laboratory space for the Design and Architecture Program at Barceloneta University Center	\$1,726,737
Relocation and redistribution of the School of Naturopathic Medicine	\$728,112
School of Dental Medicine laboratories and operation rooms	\$1,700,000
Relocation and redistribution of the Division of Health (Nursing, Nutrition and Speech Therapy programs)	\$2,658,600
Security Camaras and Leisure Space	\$309,347
Replacement of mechanical equipment and installation of building management systems	\$1,629,869
Swimming Pool restoration	\$200,000

These developments were based on the Strategic Development Guidelines **(S1-101)** and the UAGM Gurabo Physical Facilities Master Plan 2021 **(S1-106)** in compliance with the mission and vision of Gurabo Campus.

RQ1	How is institutional priority P3 achieved considering the standard criteria?
RQ7	How are technological and physical infrastructure development and maintenance addressed in institutional planning, budgeting, and improvement processes?

Technological Resources

Technology services are mainly administered by the Informatics and Telecommunications Division under the Vice-President of Telecommunications and Academics Technology in the Central Administration. Currently, the institutional IT division is staffed with nine (9) associates; the IT Director, two (2) IT Supervisors, ten (10) IT User Support Specialist on a permanent basis. Regarding the branch campuses in Florida, IT services are provided through the third party administrative and academic service provider. There are five (5) IT support specialists that provide services to UAGM Gurabo students, as well as students from the other UAGM institutions.

Since the last MSCHE accreditation process, mayor enhancements to both UAGM WAN (wide area network) and UAGM LAN (local area network) have been implemented providing Internet bandwidth increase and redundancy. Bandwidth connections have been increased at the UAGM Gurabo main campus to 1 Gbps up to 10 Gbps, also three trunks have been installed for Intranet & Internet Access, one of them at 250 Mbps and two of them at 1Gbps. At Barceloneta, Cayey, Ponce, and Yabucoa university centers two trunks have been installed for Intranet & Internet Access, one of them at 50 Mbps and 250 Mbps for the second one. Funding has also been used to upgrade and expand the Wi-Fi network at the UAGM Gurabo main campus and its four university centers. This has been accomplished by installing state-of-the-art CISCO Meraki wireless technology. Also, the virtualization infrastructure has been upgraded to the CISCO UCS Blade Center with NetApp Storage and VMWARE virtualization software. UAGM-GC has twenty-two (22) academic computer labs at the main campus and fourteen (14) at the four (4) university centers, in addition, each branch campus in Florida has one (1) computer lab available to service UAGM Gurabo students. The local computer network has 25+ virtual servers and 4,500+ computers workstations installed in the academic and administrative units. Security infrastructure technology to protect information systems assets, servers, workstations, students, faculty, researchers, financial, and administrative data is a priority for UAGM. To safeguard all data including student data from our branch campuses in Florida, UAGM Security infrastructure technology includes:

- IT Network Security Program FortiGate Next Generation Firewall in Each Location
- Network Antivirus
- IPS/IDS
- Content Web filtering
- Virtual Private Network
- Forti Analyzer - correlates network and security logs from network
- Forti Authenticator / ClearPass – Network Access Control for 802.1X and Guest WiFi
- UAGM Network Segmentation in three zones – staff, students, and guests
- Microsoft 365 Defender and Sentinel
- Azure and Office 365 Log correlation
- Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection – anti-spam, malware detection and phishing
- Identity Protection – Domain Controller Monitoring, Multifactor Authentication (MFA), User Login R Endpoint Protection – Antivirus, Malware detection, EDR.
- Active Directory Active Role Server - provides active directory console access in a more secure way based on least privilege and Advance Group Policy.
- Patch Management through MS System Center Configuration Manager and MS Intune for Windows OS, Office and Server OS updates and Defender for Vulnerability Patching.
- Risk Assessment

To maintain technological infrastructure up-to-date, especially network communications equipment, servers, software, computers and multimedia equipment, the institution has a Five (5) Years Technology

Replacement Plan 2023 – 2028 (**S6-613**). Table 6.09 illustrate the amount that was expended with the use of the technology fees charged.

Table 6.9. Purchases Funded by Technology Fee UAGM-GC 2017-2022

YEAR	TECHNOLOGY FEE	CARES-ACT / HEERF	TOTAL
2017-2018	\$548,793.00		548,793.00
2018-2019	\$468,910.00		468,910.00
2019-2020	\$318,231.00		318,231.00
2020-2021	\$265,774.00		265,774.00
2021-2022	\$228,843.00	\$180,573.00	409,416.00
TOTAL	\$1,830,551.00	\$180,573.00	\$2,011,124.00

The implementation of the Strategic Development Guidelines (SDG) has served to distribute resources to improve student learning, student support services, increase technology equipment throughout the institution, strengthen administrative structures, and expand academic offerings and fulfill the mission. To address student learning, resources were allocated to:

- provide faculty development that range from teaching methodologies to instructional technology strategies and WEB related platforms for on-line, WEB enhanced, and WEB assisted courses.
- foster professional accreditations.
- increase and improve academic and personal student services.
- enhance and improve technology infrastructure.
- recruit of highly qualified faculty with doctoral degrees.

Furthermore, UAGM-GC has implemented the **UAGM 2.0 project** as a high priority to address (**S1-101**). This project aims to transform the face-to-face curriculum and develop the largest possible proportion of courses supported by distance technology during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Emphasis placed on hybrid courses, "online" courses, and "virtual classroom" technology. The goal is to develop instructional technology to improve classroom delivery, achieving operational efficiency while maximizing technology infrastructure. These are congruent with Self-Study P3, technological infrastructure and resources.

Technological Infrastructure and Resources (P3)

- **Allocate the necessary resources to promote innovation through the incorporation of technology in the learning and teaching processes considering the needs of the modern learner.**

UAGM-GC has achieved institutional priority 3 allocating the necessary resources to promote innovation incorporating technology in the learning and teaching processes considering the needs of the modern learner. The Campus has a physical and technological infrastructure that supports student success and institutional priorities. The institutional financial planning process includes a comprehensive integration of existing resources in support of sustainability and the continuous improvement of physical and technological infrastructures as well as an administration of human resources consistent with the strategic vision. Even with changes in the fiscal scenario, the institution has been diligent to maintain an efficient resource allocation centered on student success. The resource allocation comes from student

general fees and external resources. Students' general fees revenues are used for acquisition of goods and services of information systems, technology, and telecommunications necessary for the daily operation of the UAGM Gurabo and maintenance of technological resources. The identified technological needs are in direct consultation with students, Deans, Faculty, Director of academic divisions and the Vice Chancellor/CEO **(S6-614)**.

Institutional access to technology and technology-enhanced instruction is a priority to achieve academic and managerial excellence. The institution has adopted mainstream modalities to remain competitive and to provide services to students, faculty, and administration. It has continued its focus on the development of technological infrastructure to support academic offerings and administrative network. UAGM-GC has invested during the past five years **\$17,237,952.00**. Funding has been invested in technological equipment, software, improvement for the local network in its main campus and the four university centers, and the conversion of 206 regular classrooms to virtual classrooms that allow face-to-face and remote classes.

Library

The institution invested in bibliography and electronic resources for the last five years to provide a combination of a healthy print collection (117,165 volumes) and an electronic collection (composed of newer information technologies). Both the print and electronic collections have responded to changes undergone in the institution from being solely a teaching to a teaching and research institution. During the past ten years, the library has experienced demand growth in digital resources. The electronic collection of 134 databases includes 825,925 e-books, 115,490 audiovisual resources, 2,379 newspapers, 451,707 e-Journals and other serials, and 133,766 thesis and dissertations. This increase in requests for electronic resources has been combined with user needs for research tools such as Refworks and searching technologies provided by applications from Exlibris (Voyager and Summons). While the collections have been expanding, the planning, design and implementation of library services has concentrated on developing their advance use in the academic community through an aggressive information literacy program, and provides literacy information support to faculty, students, courses, and programs to improve teaching, research, and learning. The acquisition of diverse academic tools is through the recommendation of the faculty in support of the courses they are offering or to update the bibliographies of exiting records, on the departments recommendation for new programs or it is a resource or a recommended database in compliance with an accrediting agency. The recommendations are received via email using a form designed for that purpose. After UAGM unification process, an online form was designed to receive individual requests from the Campus and University Centers. The electronic collection (journals, databases, and e-books) is accessed through the Virtual Library remotely from any computer device on and off campus. Table 6.10 outlines UAGM-GC's investment in information resources from 2018 to 2022.

Table 6.10. Investment in Bibliography and Electronic Resources from 2018 to 2022

Institutional investment in Bibliography and Electronic Resources from 2018 to 2022					
YEAR	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Investment	\$534,982.00	\$509,025.00	\$506,186.00	\$474,372.00	\$286,811.00

RQ5	What policies and procedures are in place to effectively attract, retain, and foster the continuous improvement of human resources for the attainment of the institutional mission and goals?
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Human Resources

The Vice Presidency for Human Resources is designed to include various units that support the institution, such as the Recruitment and Talent Management, the Compensation and Benefits, Organizational Development and the Training and Information Systems. These units are aligned and bring support to the institution's needs in all aspects related to human resources of the campuses. The Human Resources Office is responsible for ensuring the proper allocation of its human resources, faculty, and its staff. A report on human resources which were identified through the work plan and the budgetary process, is presented to the Vice-Chancellor **(S6-615)**. In collaboration with the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources Director and the Director of Budget Analysis and based on the institutional work plan and proposed budget for the following year, the Vice-Chancellor determines which vacancies or new positions will be recommended to the Committee of Positions Control. This committee is responsible for evaluating the creation of new positions, recruitment to vacant posts and the availability of funds according to the provisions of the positions control policy **(S6-616)**. During fiscal years 2017- 2022, the percentage of the total budget allocated to wages and salaries has fluctuated between 55 and 61 percent.

As part of the reorganization process for the unification, Universidad Ana G. Méndez (2020) has an administrative structure focused on meeting the students' needs. It has three components: Students Affairs Dean, Academic Affairs Dean, and Institutional Effectiveness Dean. At present there are 181 full time faculty members, 215 full time associates. The number of active faculty and staff members is aligned with the student enrollment.

The institution allocates resources for training both faculty and administrative staff. The Training Division provides numerous workshops and training opportunities for its staff, aligned to the Training Model **(S6-617)** and based on surveys **(S6-618)**, needs assessment and performance evaluation results. Based on the findings, we have made decisions to provide a work environment that promotes the professional development of our employees **(S6-619)**.

Responsibility and Accountability

The decision-making processes and assignment of responsibilities and accountability are well defined. The assignment of responsibilities flows from the Board of Directors to the President and to the administration. The responsibilities of board members, board committees, university board, academic senate and the president are described in the UAGM Bylaws. The organizational structure and roles are clearly defined and facilitate accountability. Employee and faculty responsibilities are clearly stipulated in the in-Employee Handbook **(S2-202)** and Faculty Handbook 2015 **(S1-114)**. The recruitment, development, and evaluation procedures for faculty and administrative personnel are clearly stipulated in these documents. The roles of the employees are set out on the job description sheet. The Employee Performance Evaluation System includes specific work plans and competencies for each employee that are aligned with the SDG.

The responsibility for the decision-making and implementation process of the SDG is distributed through the existing management structures in the UAGM with a view to promoting greater participation of the

university community. The process of implementing the SDG considers the new governance of the UAGM.

RQ9	How effective are UAGM-GC strategies and mechanisms to periodically assess institutional effectiveness?
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Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

-UAGM, GC integrates institutional planning, resource allocation, and assessment. This is the primary process that allows the institution to measure institutional effectiveness.

In accordance with the excellence standards of MSCHE (2015), UAGM reviewed its assessment plan and implemented it for the primary purpose of evaluating its institutional effectiveness. By implementing appropriate assessment processes and generating performance periodic monitoring of academic and institutional management is achieved. This allows for the incorporation of findings in strategic planning. The integration of planning, resource allocation and assessment, plays a fundamental role in institutional effectiveness and improvement. The institution has been developing an electronic platform in which each unit (academic and support services) must upload the Working Plan (WP) for the next operational cycle. This platform allows an alignment of the WP with institutional goals, objectives, and priorities in order to develop activities pursuing the assessment close the loop cycle **(S5-502)**.

Assessing the effectiveness of the SDG and Institutional Annual Work Plan is an essential part of the UAGM -GC planning and resource allocation cycle. This process is systematic and continuous and serves to assess whether the institution meets established objectives, addresses critical issues and the adequacy utilization of institutional resources to support mission and goals. Assessment results are discussed at the Committee of Institutional Effectiveness (CIE) and shared annually to academic departments and programs to develop action plans, that are eventually incorporated into the annual work plans of each unit. The recommended actions are implemented to begin the improvement plans and set the first step for institutional, school, and unit planning and budgeting. Recommended improvement and action plan are implemented and include reassessing benchmarks/expectations (“closing the loop”) that were not met during the previous cycle.

The institution reviews its SDG every three years to evaluate the development and level of attainment of goals and objectives and makes appropriate adjustments. The Institution carried out two types of evaluation: Formative and Summative, SDG page. 22 and 23. The results of the evaluation of the SDG 2016-2020 are considered in SDG 2021-2024 and an evaluation report was prepared and presented.

Each year, objectives from the institutional and individual unit’s work plans are reexamined to determine whether these have been accomplished. This evaluation is coordinated by the Director of Planning with the participation of the IAPBC Committee. The steps of the annual work plan evaluation are described in the Procedure for the Preparation of the Workplan and Budget Request **(S6-603)**. The institutional units develop the annual report that include the progress and achievement of work plan **(S6-620)**. The Annual Report demonstrates how the institutional goals and priorities are met. This evaluative information, its findings, and recommendations, must be considered in the planning processes and allocation of institutional resources, as part of the constant cycle of institutional renewal.

AREAS OF STRENGTH AND CHALLENGES

Strength

- UAGM provides opportunities for the participation of all constituents in planning and resource allocation which have had an impact on the compliance with the mission.
- Solid technology and telecommunication infrastructure that facilitate various modalities of teaching and learning.
- The institution has developed effective strategies of fiscal control to maintain the university's sustainability.
- The institution has developed a comprehensive financial planning system that ensures student success.

Conclusions

UAGM-GC institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation. The planning, resource allocation, and assessment activities for institutional improvement are connected. UAGM-GC mission and strategic plan guide the institution's development, while assessment results provide the information for institutional improvement. The institution ensures that assessment results are considered in the planning, resource allocation, and decision making through the participative process. The institutional financial planning and budgeting process includes the integration of the institutional resources to maintain sustainability and an efficient resource allocation to support the student success consistent with the mission and SDG.

Standard VII - Governance, Leadership, and Management

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 systems, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Chapter 7 presents evidence of how the Universidad Ana G. Méndez (UAGM) enables the Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC) to meet the criteria of Standard VII, including Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) 12, 13, 14 and the three Institutional Priorities of the Self Study (**S1-101**), within the context of the seven research questions addressed by Working -Group7 (WG-7).

RQ3	What policies and procedures does the institution has established to engage its constituencies (faculty, students, and administration) in institutional governance and decision-making processes?
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UAGM Governance Structure. The result of the Governance and Administrative Structure of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez was the effort of committee work and the culmination of a process of deliberation and analysis among diverse university community sectors. This process included the active participation of the Board of Directors and institutional executives, as well as campuses and additional location representatives, as evidenced. The working subcommittees integrated vice-presidents, chancellors, vice-chancellors, personnel from the Vice-Presidency of Human Resources and its offices of Compensation and Benefits, Organizational Development, and from the offices of Budgeting, Licensing

and Accreditation, and external consultants. The Governance and Administrative Structure Committee completed the analysis and approval processes to submit the proposed Governance and Administrative Structure of UAGM in 2020. The result proposed to reinforce a centralization of policy and decision-making, particularly in the academic and student areas, and an organizational consolidation of the academic structures, by reducing the actual number of schools/divisions, which was basically triplicated across the campuses (*ROA 12*). A reduced set of academic divisions and specialized schools supervise their academic offerings with an integrated approach throughout all UAGM campuses and locations. This process integrated a total of 21 school structures (and their respective deans), to seven (7) academic divisions, and several individual specialized schools (**S1-120**). The revised UAGM governance and administrative structure was duly approved by the Board of Directors on April 23, 2020. The Board of Post-Secondary Institutions (JIP) approved the academic program, administrative and governance integration of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo Campus, Carolina Campus, Cupey Campus and their respective additional locations. The integrated license of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez is valid until November 29, 2025, as stipulated in the Agreement signed on December 20, 2018, and amended on September 28, 2020 (**S1-119**). Figure 7.1 shows the UAGM Governance structure (**S7-702**).

Analytical Report

UAGM Governance Structure

Sistema Universitario Ana G. Méndez, Inc. (SUAGM) is a private non-profit organization created in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Section 501(c) 3 of the IRS to create and administer educational entities for the benefit of the public interest.

As a result of the integration, the Statutes of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez were revised and approved in 2023. The Bylaws are the most important reference in matters of governance and their structures and functions in SUAGM and its institutions. The bylaws in 2023 supersede other policies related to these functions. They establish the purpose of the corporation and the structure, composition, and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, the President, and all key executives, including the Systemic Chancellor and the Vice Presidents at the Central Administration level (**S7-700**).

Similarly, the mission of UAGM and its nature, the new academic and administrative structure, the new governance (governing bodies), the key executives and their roles, and the duties and responsibilities of the faculty were reviewed. The revised governance structure of UAGM is clearly articulated and transparent. Among its key features are inclusiveness, transparency, and responsiveness to stakeholders.

RQ1	How is institutional priority P3 achieved considering the standard criteria?
RQ2	How is the institution’s governance structure defined and communicated to internal and external stakeholders, and how clearly are roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes established?

UAGM BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND GOVERNANCE

UAGM's Bylaws (2023) established that the Board of Directors has the primary role and responsibility for ensuring compliance with the mission, vision, and strategic plans, as well as the financial stability and sound administration of the corporation and its various units and dependencies. It is also responsible for selecting, appointing, and evaluating the President of SUAGM. It is organized into four (4) permanent working committees: governance, academic and student affairs, finance, and audit. The committees

present their recommendations for the consideration and final approval of the Board of Directors, as well as define and document the rules, policies, and procedures for the Board of Directors to communicate with the president and other members of the institution.

For the past 75 years, SUAGM has had a Board of Directors. It is composed of 13 members from Puerto Rico and the United States, who have been outstanding civic leaders and representatives in education, health, industry, public administration, and commerce, thus representing the constituents and public interest (**S7-702**). It is divided into two (2) groups: the first group is composed of five (5) permanent members, and the second group comprises eight (8) elected members, as established in the UAGM Bylaws (2023) (**S7-700**). Table 7.1 shows the members and their roles in the Board of Directors.

The UAGM follows the association of governing board (AGB) alignments [6] to evaluate and appoint new members to the Board of Directors with outstanding representation from all sectors that make up the community (**S7-703**). In addition, new members are required to attend the AGB's Annual Conference to further enhance their development as board members. Board members are selected based on outstanding leadership profiles and the necessary experience to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities as board members. They should act in a selfless manner and offer the organization their loyalty and the benefit of their knowledge and skills. Their diverse views, interests, and experiences provide a representative dimension of the governance processes under their responsibility (**S7-704**). Independence in the exercise of their functions and assurance that financial, political, or other factors do not interfere with or influence their responsibilities in the governance of the institution is required through standards of expected behavior contained in UAGM policies, manuals, and other regulations (**S7-705**).

Table 7.1. Board of Directors Members and Roles (January 2023)

Dr. René A. Soto Torres	President, Permanent Member
Sr. José F. Méndez Méndez	President of the UAGM, Permanent Member
Dr. Herminio Martínez	Permanent Member
Lcdo. Rafael A. Nadal Arcelay	Secretary, Permanent Member
Dra. Migdalia Torres Rivera	Vice President, Permanent Member
Sr. Wilfredo Cosme Ortiz	Member
Lcda. Delia Castillo de Colorado	Member
Sra. Rita DiMartino	Member
Dra. María J. Rodríguez Martínez	Member
Ing. Oscar Jiménez Mártir	Member
Lcda. Margarita T. Millán	Member
	Vacant
	Vacant

At the beginning of their term of office, the President and Secretary of the Board of Directors provide new members with information about the institution and discuss their mission, vision, institutional values, organization, programs, and plans. In addition, through meetings and participation in other corporate affairs, new members become familiar with UAGM in its entirety of the committees constituted within the Board of Directors, the Audit Committee is the Board's first line of defense in protecting the resources and reputation of UAGM. This committee reviews and evaluates financial statements and internal controls. It has internal and external auditors who are responsible for analyzing, evaluating, and advising on fiscal and procedural matters. It is also responsible for risk management and

compliance with federal and state regulations and standards that apply to SUAGM (SUAGM Board Audit Committee Charter, 2013).

An important component of the governance of UAGM is the University Board (UB), which promulgates the norms, policies, rules, and regulations, and establishes the policy of the university and its campuses, in harmony with the UAGM Statutes, the President's Executive Orders, and the Resolutions and Regulations approved by the UAGM Board of Directors (**S7-706**). The UB is the result of integration, and is constituted by the President of UAGM, who shall preside, the Systemic Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors(CEO) of the campuses (3), the Executive Vice President/Chief of Staff, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Telecommunications and Academic Technology, the Vice President of Financial Affairs, the Vice President of Human Resources, the Vice President of Administrative Affairs, the Vice President of International Affairs, the Deans of Academic Divisions, and two (2) representatives of the regular faculty of each campus, elected in a faculty assembly at the beginning of the academic year (no later than August 31 of each year). Faculty representatives shall be elected to serve the staggered terms of two (2) years. In addition, one (1) student representative from each campus shall be part of the University Board; he/she shall be the President or Vice President of the Student Council, duly elected according to the applicable regulations (**S7-707**).

UAGM-GC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Universidad Ana G. Méndez Gurabo Campus (UAGM-GC), although part of the multicampus structure of the UAGM, as an institution, has its own mission and autonomous government. In this sense, the Board of Directors limits its work to an oversight role at the policy level, always respecting the autonomy of the university. The governance structure of UAGM-GC is well organized and defined and provides clear lines of authority to support the mission statement and institutional objectives. It comprises three areas: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Institutional Effectiveness. In addition, it has four (4) additional locations: Cayey, Ponce, Yabucoa, and Barceloneta. Each location is headed by a director who reports to the Vice Chancellor (CEO). These locations have the necessary administrative structures to provide quality services to their respective students, faculty, and administrative staff. Figure 7.2 (**S7-708**) shows the governance structure of the UAGM-GC.

The governance of the Universidad Ana G. Méndez Gurabo Campus adheres to the standards established by the board of post-secondary institutions (JIP). The key governance bodies at the Gurabo Campus level are the Academic Senate and Student Council. UAGM-GC has an Academic Senate and is constituted by the Vice Chancellor (CEO), who chairs it, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, the Deans of the Specialized Schools with offerings at the campus, the Academic Department Directors, the Director of Licensure and Accreditation reporting to the campus, the Director of the Library, the Directors of the locations reporting to the campus, two (2) student representatives of the Student Council, two (2) members of the regular faculty for each Academic Division and Specialized School with offerings on the campus, and as many additional professors as required to obtain an absolute majority of the faculty. Faculty, administrative staff, and students contribute to governance through their representation and participation in the Academic Senate (**S7-700**).

In accordance with Section 6 of Article VII of the UAGM Bylaws, the Academic Senate formally recommends to the University Board or the Vice Chancellor (CEO), as the case may be, the creation or revision of policies and regulations, the implementation of academic programs, and the making of

decisions in particular cases, consistent with the UAGM Bylaws and Regulations. The Academic Senate is organized into four working committees: academic programs, award of degrees and distinctions, academic integrity, and faculty affairs (**S7-700**).

The CEO or the UAGM University Board will either approve or reject recommendations in writing; and the decision will be formalized through the approved minutes. Finally, the decisions of the UAGM President, the Vice Chancellor of the Gurabo Campus, and the Deans are duly informed to the Gurabo Campus and to the locations of the campuses through the academic, administrative, and student representatives that compose the Senate. For example, the Academic Senate meets four times during the semester, and the academic leadership reports institutional decisions at department meetings, the annual faculty assembly, biannual faculty forums (Jornadas Académicas/Faculty Assembly), student assemblies, and promotional materials and announcements in the local media, campus websites, and the closed-circuit television network.

On the other hand, academic program proposals are the result of multiple initiatives that include the evaluation of current academic offerings, external evaluations of emerging trends in the labor market, feasibility reports, and compliance with the Strategic Development Plans of UAGM and the Gurabo Campus (**S1-113**). In the development of new academic programs, there is broad participation of faculty, administrators, and students. It is in departments and/or specialized schools where the need for a new program is initially evaluated, a function in charge of curriculum committees. The Academic Programs Committee of the Academic Senate then passed a judgment regarding the programs proposed by the academic units. The recommendations of the committee are presented to the faculty, senior leadership, and students who participate as members of the senate. Relevant input and recommendations emerge from the entire process that impacts 1) physical structures (e.g., new classrooms, laboratory facilities, space for clinical services and/or related academic centers); and 2) costs and budget for the development of new academic offerings, and new academic and administrative staff. The agreements established in the Academic Senate ultimately go to the University Board for their final determination.

Students participate in the governance of UAGM-GC through the Student Council, which is the body that represents the entire student body before the University Board and the Academic Senate, as established in the UAGM Student Regulations 2023, in Article V, Sections 1-8 which describes the Student Council (**S2-208**). During the first semester of each academic year, a Student Government Assembly convened by the Dean of Student Affairs was established. Each UAGM campus (Carolina, Gurabo, and Cupey) has a Student Council.

The Student Council is composed of the following positions: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. In addition, it consists of one (1) member for each academic division or location elected by vote. The members are elected at the student assembly held in the first semester of the academic year and are composed of student delegates representing the different academic divisions and university centers of the corresponding campus.

The president or vice-president of the Student Council of each campus officially represents the student body before the UAGM University Board and before the Academic Senate of their respective campuses. As student representatives, they can present concerns and situations that affect students. They also represent the student bodies in other institutional initiatives and projects. They hold meetings with the Dean of Student Affairs to present their concerns about institutional processes and services and to

participate in the discussions of the Appeals Body. Students may also express their concerns or file personal complaints by sending them in writing to the Dean of the Student Affairs Office.

RQ4	How is the institution’s organizational structure defined and how clearly are roles and reporting relationships outlined?
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UAGM ADMINISTRATION

The President oversees all academic, student, administrative, and fiscal matters affecting the development of UAGM and its campuses and respective locations, ensuring effective compliance with the Bylaws, educational mission, and other policies and regulations of the institution. In addition, he/she convenes and presides over the meetings of the University Board and submits quarterly reports to the Board of Directors on relevant issues and significant results of the UAGM institutions. The functions, responsibilities, and duties of the president are detailed in the Job Description section (**S7-707**).

The president appoints a 10-member cabinet to help set the strategic direction of the university as well as to manage the day-to-day operations of UAGM. The university is comprised of six divisions, each headed by a vice president who reports to the president. These include Academic Affairs, Financial Affairs, Administrative Affairs, International Affairs, Human Resources, and Telecommunications and Academic Technology. The six vice presidents, together with the Systemic Chancellor and the vice chancellors of each campus (3), make up the president’s staff. Table 7.2 shows the positions that comprise the staff of the president's office.

Table 7.2 *Presidency Staff*

Vice President of Academic Affairs
Vice President of Financial Affairs
Vice President of Administrative Affairs
Vice President of International Affairs
Vice President of Human Resources
Vice President of Telecommunications and Academic Technology
Systemic Chancellor
Vice Chancellor (CEO) Gurabo Campus
Vice Chancellor (CEO) Cupey Campus
Vice Chancellor (CEO) Carolina Campus

RQ5	What procedures does the institution follow to evaluate the performance of its leadership and administration and guarantee that they are appropriate and sufficient to address its mission and goals?
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The SUAGM president and all vice presidents are recruited through a rigorous process to ensure that they possess the skills and backgrounds to carry out their assigned duties. They make administrative decisions in consideration of the mission and goals outlined in the UAGM Strategic Plan, as well as by the institution's bylaws, laws, and regulations. Since all divisions are represented by the president's staff, the decisions made within this body are collaborative. The president also met individually with the members of his staff throughout the academic year. In turn, each vice president holds meetings with their staff and other divisions. It is important to note that the different vice-presidencies that reside in the Central Administration maintain a link with the campus in terms of policies and norms that facilitate

administrative, academic, and student processes. The president and his administration engage with faculty and students in various ways to advance institutional goals. The president holds a minimum of two faculty meetings per year, in August and January during Academic Forum, and holds open office hours periodically throughout the academic year for anyone at the university who wishes to meet him.

The UAGM has several communication strategies to share information to keep stakeholders more closely connected to day-to-day academic and operational decision-making processes. For example, Public Relations creates and distributes internal communications to faculty, students, and staff, using a variety of tools and platforms, including publishing print newsletters (as needed), social media, and maintaining calendars of events for both the UAGM community and the public. The Office of Human Resources maintains a website with user-specific pages that include forms, policies, regulations, and manuals. Information of interest to both faculty and administrators is disseminated through e-mail under the "Human Resources Informs" initiative.

UAGM-GC ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the UAGM-GC falls under the figure of the Vice Chancellor (CEO), the chief executive officer of the campus. The CEO is appointed by the President of the UAGM and is responsible for the UAGM Board of Directors for the proper functioning of the institution. The UAGM Bylaws grant full authority and autonomy to the Vice Chancellor (CEO) to carry out their responsibilities. The selection and recruitment process are rigorous to ensure that the CEO possesses leadership in defining and fulfilling the institutional mission and objectives and has the knowledge and ability to effectively manage and integrate institutional, academic, and administrative activities (**S2-220**). In addition, they can oversee the proper conduct of all institutional operations and ensure proper implementation and compliance with all academic and administrative policies and institutional processes, such as assessment, planning, resource allocation, and budgeting.

The CEO's responsibilities include the planning, execution, analysis, and control of all campus and additional locations operations. Also, he/she is responsible for promoting and recommending campus development plans to achieve the objectives of fundraising and communicating the institution's image through institutional promotion. Additionally, the CEO collaborates in the development of strategic guidelines, a task entrusted by the institution's bylaws. The CEO participates in the development of the UAGM-GC master plans for physical expansion, capital improvement, and technological advancement, which are fundamental to the sustained development of the campus. All CEO's responsibilities and duties are set out in the CEO's Job Description (**S7-707**). The role of the CEO is evaluated according to the Administrative Employee Performance Evaluation Policy. The performance evaluation serves to check the degree of compliance with the proposed objectives (**S2-223**).

In terms of identifying and hiring the right personnel to carry out different tasks in the institution, the UAGM Bylaws grant the CEO authority to approve contracts and appointments of faculty and non-faculty staff on campus. The CEO's staff assists and supports the CEO in ensuring that institutional goals and vision are implemented in a positive manner. The organizational structure that supports the CEO's work reflects institutional values as well as those of the CEO. These include the deans of academic affairs, student affairs, and institutional effectiveness, who are appointed by the Vice Chancellor CEO in coordination with the designated Vice-Presidency and with the consent of the President. The same process is used for the recruitment of location directors (**S7-700**).

- Dean of Academic Affairs (CAO): Chief Academic Officer of the campus. The main functions are to supervise all academic programs and activities, coordinate and promote the implementation of various teaching alternatives, and supervise the process of evaluation and faculty development, academic research, and the evaluation program. The CAO also ensures the development, updating, and availability of necessary information resources, among others.
- Dean of Student Affairs: Promotes and maintains an environment that favors the achievement of academic goals, integral development, student retention, and quality of student life. This position supports the development of activities that promote the integration of students into the social and academic systems of the university. It also ensures compliance with federal and state procedures and regulations governing student service offices. In addition, it supervises the admission and enrollment management processes, among others.
- Dean of Institutional Effectiveness: oversees the proper development of all processes. Also is responsible for the administrative administration of the campus in accordance with applicable policies, rules, and regulations. Initiate and coordinate the processes for the preparation of the annual campus budget and review and control the budget of the dean's offices, divisions, and other units. Collaborates with the CEO on projects that foster improved relationships and institutional effectiveness among faculty, students, and administrative staff.
- Specialized School Dean: Each UAGM's specialized school will have a dean who will oversee their academic offerings at all UAGM campuses and at the locations where they are offered. This dean organizes, directs, supervises, and evaluates all the services, programs, and activities offered by his or her school. Coordinates and is responsible for the licensing, accreditation, and specialized accreditation processes of the academic programs of his/her school and for the continuous improvement of their quality, in coordination with the corresponding support units.
- Academic Department Director: These positions are recommended and appointed by the Dean of Academic Affairs. The main function is to chair the meetings of the department and represent the faculty in front of the Dean of Division or Specialized School, the Dean of Academic Affairs, or the CEO. In addition, the director prepares a strategic plan for the development of their respective academic areas, promoted the search for external funds, and ensured compliance with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook and the Hiring and Evaluation System for faculty and administrators (**S1-114, S1-115**). Implements activities that contribute to the enhancement of learning and institutional effectiveness.
- Location Director: The function is to manage and supervise the operation and development of the university center in coordination with the required areas, and in harmony with the statutes, policies, rules, and regulations in force. Ensures the quality of academic, student and administrative services of the unit.

At UAGM-GC, meetings between administrative staff and their respective supervisors ensure that their roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and accepted by those involved. Periodically, the CEO convenes administrative staff to discuss institutional issues and introduces newly appointed administrators. The Vice-Chancellor CEO convenes monthly meetings with the Academic Senate to discuss academic issues and new challenges for the faculty, students, and administrative staff. Regular staff meetings are held in all administrative units to explain the roles and responsibilities of the administrative staff. Department chairs and School deans discuss these issues with their faculty at department meetings. In addition, the CEO convenes a biannual faculty forum to report on the status of academic affairs, including the role of administrators in relation to academic affairs and the role of newly appointed administrators. The director and dean also meet annually with the faculty to present the state of the institution, report on accomplishments, and opens the space for faculty to present concerns or share information of interest from their respective departments or specialized schools.

The UAGM-GC maintains appropriate, adequate, and effective relationships among its administrators, faculty, students, and staff, so that each component is aware of and responsive to the needs and ideas of others.

- Meetings with various units (e.g., departments, specialized schools, staff, Academic Senate, biannual faculty forums, annual faculty assembly, and student council assembly)
- Ceremonies that recognize the outstanding contributions of its associates (faculty, administrators, staff) to the institution (e.g., publications, grants awarded, classroom innovation projects, and years of service); and
- Various academic activities enhance institutional relationships among all associates (e.g., Annual Researchers Forum and UAGM graduation events, concerts, artistic presentations, film forums, lectures by locally and internationally renowned speakers).
- Social activities that contribute to developing and maintaining open channels of communication among constituents (e.g., Educator's Day, Thanksgiving Day, celebration of years of service, Christmas activity, and departmental meetings).

This is demonstrated in the results of the 2022 UAGM-GC Faculty Satisfaction Survey. More than 80% of the faculty agreed that the environment at Gurabo Campus produces positive relationships among the stakeholders of the campus: students, faculty, and administrators (**S7-709**). Table 7.3 summarizes the most relevant data.

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

The UAGM's governance is reviewed and evaluated through the policy and procedure review process of the president and vice presidents during their annual evaluation process. This was done with feedback through surveys, focus groups, open meetings, and feedback provided by university faculty and students.

The Vice Chancellor (CEO), site directors, deans of specialized schools, and department chairs are evaluated annually by their respective supervisors in accordance with evaluation policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on self-assessment and pre-established goals and objectives aligned with the unit's annual work plan. Based on the outcome of the evaluation, an improvement plan including training may be recommended if deemed necessary. Additionally, deans and department heads are expected to establish the following year's goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for the next assessment cycle.

Table 7.3. Faculty Satisfaction Survey Findings (2022)

Statements	Percentage of Agreement
UAGM's environment produces positive relationships among students.	89.00%
The environment at UAGM produces positive relationships between students and faculty.	90.00%
The environment at UAGM produces positive relationships among faculty.	83.00%
UAGM's environment produces positive relationships between faculty and administration.	80.00%
Managers interact cordially with faculty.	90.00%

They should submit their writing goals prior to meeting with their immediate supervisors (**S7-710**). The Office of Planning collaborates with campus constituents to provide, compile, and disseminate the results of the Satisfaction Survey administered to alumni, faculty, staff, students, and other constituent groups, which will be used for reflection and future planning.

It is important to note that administrative units are systematically evaluated by considering the results of the annual work plan through the annual year-end reports of all administrative units.

RQ6	What policies are in place to address potential conflicts of interest and ensure impartiality in the decision-making processes?
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Integrity in Decision-Making

Integrity is one of the pillars of stewardship and one of the fundamental values that guide UAGM-GC. Integrity is fostered through the promotion of ethical, social, and cultural values in all actions as an educational entity. The defense of the value of integrity begins with the highest governing bodies. The policies of ethics, conflict of interest, and commitment to integrity are applicable to the entire university community, including administrators, employees, faculty and students, contractors, consultants, and visitors. UAGM is governed by a Code of Ethics, which aims to avoid potential conflicts of interest and establish a commitment to integrity in the actions of members of the university community (**S2-200**). This code tends to establish objectivity and integrity as essential qualities for every member of the university community. Among other behavioral obligations, this code requires that the entire university community commits to being loyal to the mission, vision, values, and objectives of the UAGM, and to comply fully with the policies, executive orders, regulations, and procedures established in the institution. Contribute to the growth and fulfillment of UAGM's objectives and fulfill the functions and responsibilities assigned to them in accordance with their roles in the university community. The Code urges our entire university community to have transparency and clarity in the processes, a process with equity, independence, impartiality, and respect. It also establishes consequences for infractions that include disciplinary, civil, and criminal actions, as appropriate.

Similarly, there are policies and regulations that prevent criteria other than the best welfare of the university from influencing administrative and academic processes. For example, policies on human resources hiring, hiring foreigners, equal employment opportunities and affirmative actions, handling requests for reasonable accommodation in employment, diversity, equity and inclusion, job control, drug, alcohol, and tobacco free community and work environment, performance evaluation, resolution of complaints, handling violence and domestic violence, sexual harassment, and compensation policy for personnel services rendered under sponsored research, programs, and projects.

To ensure operational efficiency and integrity, fair and consistent methods have been established to govern the decision-making processes. For example, aspects related to the creation, review, evaluation, and implementation of all academic programs, concentrations, or specialized degrees are matters that are regulated in detail in the statutes and are the responsibility of the Academic Senate. The composition, election, and appointment, as well as the way in which the meetings, organization, and processes leading to agreements related to this matter are carried out, do not allow external influences to interfere with the internal functioning of UAGM-Gurabo. Likewise, purchases and the way they are made are carefully regulated, preventing private individuals or public agencies from intervening in these processes. The policy governing the procurement process establishes detailed rules and procedures for

general applications. They cover solicitation, approval, processing, and purchasing, ensuring that the procurement system not only complies with Puerto Rico and federal laws and regulations but also with all institutional rules and procedures. The procurement policy designates the officials empowered to approve and sign purchase orders, the number of quotations, and establishes a hierarchy and methodology according to the amount of purchase (**S7-711**).

The administration of the UAGM-GC relies on administrative staff, identified as associates, which are governed by the Human Resources Manual (2021) (**S2-202**). This manual stipulates policies regarding the hiring, evaluation, grievances, discipline, and dismissal of employees. The Vice President for Human Resources (VPHR) complies with state and federal employment policies (e.g., the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the American Disability Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act, among others). The institution also offers professional development activities in coordination with the VPHR. These include workshops, seminars, and conferences to improve administrative skills and to keep faculty and staff abreast of changes in university procedures and best practices in higher education. Among the initiatives undertaken by the VPHR are conducting training needs surveys among faculty and administrative staff (2020) to update the Associate and Faculty Training and Development Plan, planning training activities according to identified priorities, identifying new strategies for developing competencies and strengthening the skills needed to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by our employees, and promoting interactive modules as training platforms (**S6-614**). Additionally, there are administrative scholarship programs for regular employees to obtain academic degrees related to their positions (**S7-712**).

The VPHR maintains a database of appointment types, job descriptions and definitions, requirements, duties, and responsibilities. VPHR's hiring policy announces employment opportunities, qualifications, essential functions, educational preparation, skills, experience, and application deadlines. Administrative leaders are selected through an open competitive process that begins with the appointment of a selection committee that thoroughly reviews the vacant position, followed by rigorous candidate evaluations, and a final recommendation. The VPHR provides newly appointed appointees with administrative and legal orientations that are relevant to their positions. Newly appointed members are evaluated in accordance with UAGM evaluation rules and regulations.

RQ7	How does the institution assess the effectiveness of its governing structure and administration, to guarantee that the decision-making processes and management allows the institution to continuously fulfill its purpose and respond to needs of its constituencies and the communities it serves?
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UAGM-GC Periodic Assessment of Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The Government Commission is responsible for the evaluation of the candidates for members of the Board, considering the guidelines of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) in the corresponding document for the selection of directors, and any other document that the Board determines, in addition to use and custom, always trying that the Board is as representative as possible of all the sectors that make up the community. The Members of the Board of Directors must circulate the self-assessment form adopted by the Board of Directors (**S7-704, S7-705**). The UAGM also assesses the governance through organizational climate surveys (*ROA 12, 13*).

UAGM GC institutional assessment plan started to evaluate the effectiveness of its mission and goals with respect to governance and administration through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups from various sources such as: active students, administrators, and members of the community. The institution recognizes the need and starts the process with the assessment of the integration process with the faculty, students, and staff.

AREAS OF STRENGTH AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

1. The UAGM and UAGM-GC have a clear and strong governance structure that supports the achievement of their mission and goals.
2. Faculty, students, and administrative staff is highly committed with the mission, vision, and values of the UAGM.
3. The planning process of the UAGM Strategic Plan has provided a solid direction for the development and achievement of the UAGM-GC goals.

Challenges

1. Continue promoting Employee Opinion and Satisfaction Survey participation to gather systematic evidence for continuous improvement, institutional quality, and effectiveness,

Conclusions

Universidad Ana G Mendez (UAGM) has established a governance and administration structure that enhances centralized decision-making, particularly in academic and student areas, and an organizational consolidation of academic structures. This led to the effective integration of 21 school structures into seven academic divisions and various specialized schools. The revised governance and administration structure of UAGM, approved by its Board of Directors and the Board of Post-Secondary Institutions, has been effective until November 2025. This restructuring aims to improve inclusion, transparency, and accountability to stakeholders while maintaining academic autonomy and respecting the specific missions of its campuses.

EVIDENCE INVENTORY INDEX BY STANDARD

Standard I: Mission and Goals	
Document ID	Official Document Title
S1-100	UAGM GC Mission, Vision and Values (2022)
S1-101	Strategic Development Guidelines 2021-2022 2023-2024 (SDG)
S1-102	Institutional Competencies (2020)
S1-103	UAGM Gurabo Mission Review
S1-104	Assessment Methods and Relationship to Seven (7) Mission Themes
S1-105	UAGM Catalog 2022-2023
S1-106	UAGM Gurabo Physical Facilities Master Plan 2021
S1-107	Sample of Statement of Specialized Accreditations
S1-108	Partnership Penn State University and Government of Virgin Islands
S1-109	EO 07-2023 Distance Education Policy and Courses Supported by Technology
S1-110	Sample of Online Student Services
S1-111	UAGM Gurabo Annual Report 2022
S1-112	Sample of UAGM Clinics Promotions
S1-113	EO 16- 2021, Policy to Establish Guidelines and Guide the Creation and Development of Academic Programs
S1-114	SUAGM Faculty Handbook (2015)
S1-115	SUAGM Faculty Evaluation System
S1-116	Dissemination of UAGM Mission
S1-117	EO 22-2023 UAGM Institutional Assessment Policy 2023
S1-118	UAGM-GC Strategic Development Plan-Institutional Goals Cross-Check by Mission Elements
S1-119	State Authorization to Unify UAGM Under a Single License
S1-120	UAGM Integration Project Status Reports 2021, 2020 and 2019

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity	
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S2-201	Conflict of Interest Policy 2013
S2-202	Human Resource Handbook 2021
S2-203	Executive Order #02-2022 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
S2-204	UAGM GC List of Policies and Procedures
S2-205	Admission Policy, Executive Order 14-2021
S2-206	Executive Order 13-2017 Copyright Policy 2017
S2-207	Executive Order 14-2017 Use and Reproduction of Material Protected by Copyright Policy
S2-208	UAGM Student Regulations Manual

S2-209	Policy for Human Subjects Research Protection Manual 2019
S2-210	Executive Order 43-2023 UAGM Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) - Policy and Procedures for the use of Hazardous Material
S2-211	Executive Order 23-2023 Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) Policies and Procedures
S2-212	EO# 03-2022 - Policy for a Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco-free Community and Study Environment
S2-213	Executive Order No. 40-2023 Amendment To The Sexual Harassment Policy
S2-214	Executive Order # 20-2023 - Policy for managing violence and domestic violence in the workplace and establishing institutional protocol for case management
S2-215	Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy
S2-216	Executive Order 16-2022 Transfer Credit Policy UAGM
S2-217	Title IX VAWA Law
S2-218	Manual of Service Procedures for Students with Disabilities Functional Diversity
S2-219	UAGM Manual of Students Athletes
S2-220	Executive Order 41-2023 Recruitment Policy
S2-221	Policy for the Hiring of Foreigners RH-09-2023
S2-222	EEO Policy, Availability of AAP for Inspection
S2-223	Performance Evaluation Policy Executive Order 02-2020
S2-224	Code of Conduct for Employees 2003
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S2-226	Procedure for the Investigation of Student Complaints
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S2-230	Executive Order 12-2021 Contract Policy -2021
S2-231	Executive Order 13-2022 Policy for the use of digital and electronic signatures
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S2-233	Executive Order #14-2023 Amendment To The Retention And Disposition Of Personnel Record Documents Policy
S2-234	Executive Order #11-2020 Modifications in the Student Learning Assessment System
S2-235	Policy for Human Subjects Research Protection Manual 2019
S2-236	Appropriate Use of Email Systems Policy RH-15-182-002
S2-237	Whistleblower Policy 2009
S2-238	Letter of Change of Name of the Compliance Office 2019
S2-239	General instructions for submitting studies to the UAGM Regulatory Committees 2020
S2-240	IRB Research Invitation Instructions
S2-241	Guide for registration of institutional research studies
S2-242	CITI Program Registration Instructions 2020
S2-243	Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement
S2-244	Standard Operational Procedure of COVID-19 in Physics Laboratory (2021)

S2-245	Standard Operational Procedure of COVID-19 Academic Laboratory (2021)
S2-246	Chemical Safety, Health and Hygiene Plan At UAGM Laboratories
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Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	
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S3-305	Course Syllabus Example - NURS 700
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S4-405	Student Satisfaction Survey 2021-2022
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S4-410	UAGM-GC Retention Rates 2017-2021
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S4-422	Student Organizations Handbook and Directory 2022
S4-423	Fact Sheet UAGM Gurabo 2021-2022
S4-424	UAGM-GC Graduate Level Student Profile

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S5-504	Sample of Assessment Report Model Forms (ARs)
S5-505	Institutional Effectiveness Indicators
S5-506	Work Plan digital platform
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S5-509	Graduate Profile and Curricular Mapping
S5-510	Integration of UAGM Academic Offer
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S6-604	Budget request template and Nutrition and Allied Sciences forms
S6-605	Budget Premises Guidelines 2020, 2021, 2022
S6-606	President's Communication Workload Reduction 2020
S6-607	Fiscal Control Committee Memo and Meeting Minutes
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S6-610	SUAGM Audited Financial Statements 2018-2022
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S6-612	OE 52-2023 Unrelated Business Income (UBI)
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S6-615	Vacancy Position Control Database
S6-616	Position Petition Form
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S7-705	Corporate Bylaws 2022
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S7-707	Jobs Descriptions
S7-708	UAGM-GC Organizational Structure
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