



March 21, 2017

Prof. Sylka Torres
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Dear Prof. Torres:

Greetings to you from Philadelphia. I am writing to you because you are the chief executive officer of one of the campuses of the University of Puerto Rico that is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some background and context with respect to possible negative accreditation outcomes for your institution as a result of the difficult fiscal challenges that are confronting the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the University.

We are aware that very significant expenditure budget reductions are being discussed and likely will be required across the UPR system. Depending on the nature and extent of actual budget reductions, several of the Commission's requirements of affiliation, standards, and policies could be called into question, including, but not limited to:

- Requirement of Affiliation #8 stating that: "The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability..."
- Requirement of Affiliation #3 that: "The institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs..."
- Accreditation Standard 3 that: "The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible..."
- Substantive Change requirements that require prior approval and cover the creation and closure of branch campuses and additional locations as well as the closure or merger of one or more separately accredited institution(s).

I note here for the record that in the context of accreditation, all institutional actions may have consequences. If, for instance, an institution ceases to operate as it usually would—is "closed"—for more than a few days, the Commission must consider if the institution is in violation of Requirement of Affiliation 3. Determination of lack of compliance with Requirements of Affiliation and/or accreditation standards would lead to Commission actions,

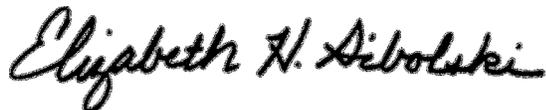
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culminating, if necessary, in the removal of accreditation. The economic impact of the loss of accreditation by an institution or the whole UPR system to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico would be significant. UPR students currently receive well over \$200 million per year in U.S. Government Pell grant revenue alone that would be lost, if students were not able to remain actively enrolled and pursuing degree programs. In addition, in order to have accreditation restored, any member institution that lost its accreditation would be required to apply as a candidate for new accreditation, a process that could take two years or more to complete.

On behalf of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, I want to assure you that we sincerely hope that the negative outcomes described above will not come to pass, and that it will not be necessary for the Commission to take any of the actions mentioned in this letter. Information provided here is intended only to keep you fully informed about potential accreditation actions that may become necessary. We will continue to monitor developments related to the operations of the University of Puerto Rico, and at a later date the Commission may ask for detailed and specific information in the form of a Supplemental Information Report. For now, we ask that you please keep us apprised of any developments that may impact the ability of your institution to remain in compliance with the Commission's requirements of affiliation, accreditation standards and policies. Please contact the MSCHE Vice President assigned to work with your institution concerning developments or with any questions you may have.

Best wishes to you during these very difficult budgetary times.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth H. Sibloski, Ph.D.
President

cc: Dr. Nívia Fernández Hernández
Interim President of the University of Puerto Rico

Dr. Tito Guerrero
MSCHE Vice President