

STANDARD V. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT



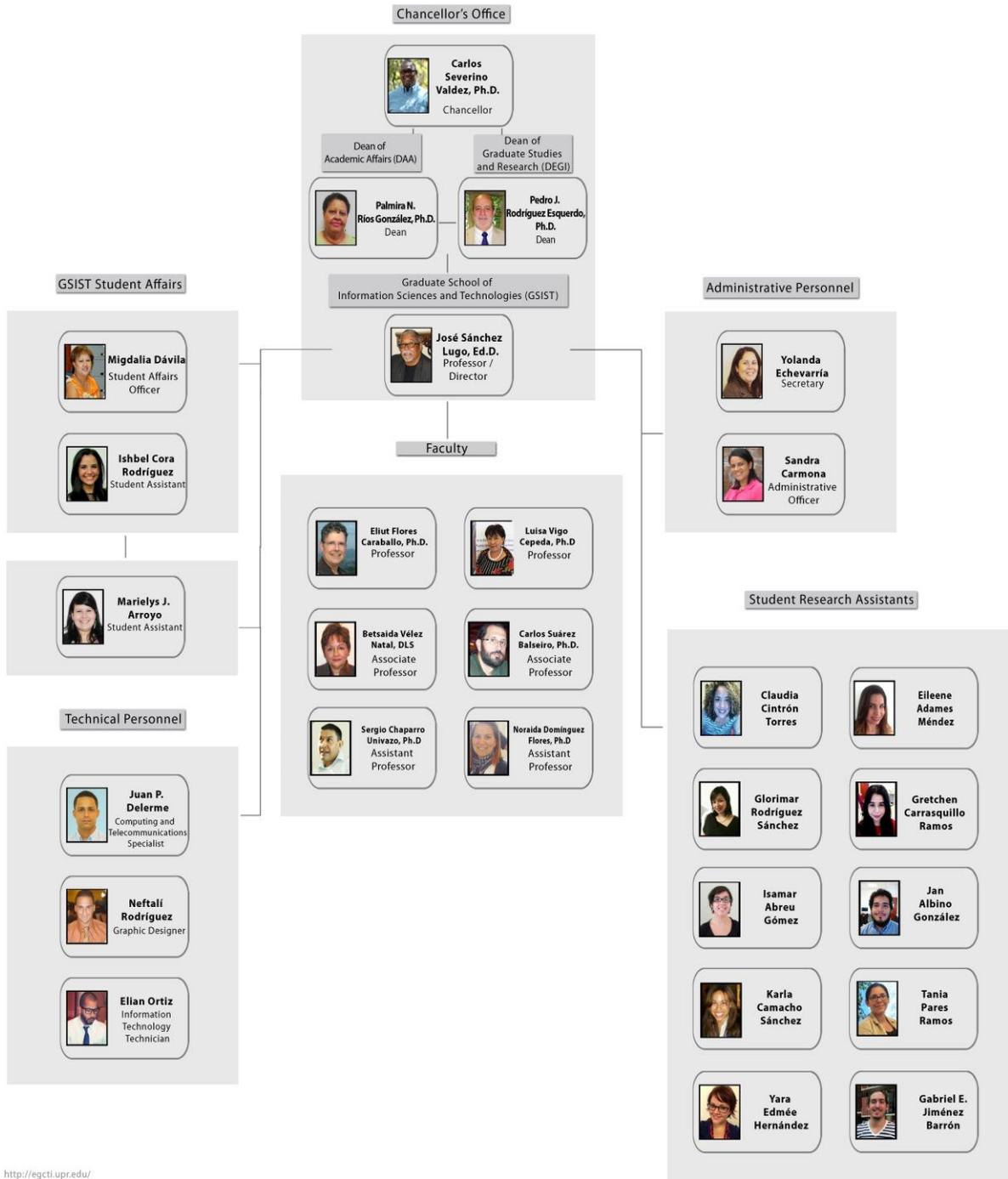
Coordinator: Dr. Carlos Suárez-Balseiro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, GSIST-UPRRP
carlos.suarez5@upr.edu

Introduction

The Graduate School of Information Sciences and Technology (GSIST) is an integral, yet distinctive, academic unit within the University of Puerto Rico; one of the leading graduate professional schools at the Río Piedras Campus. It has the autonomy, within the general guidelines of the University, to determine the intellectual content of its Program, recruit and promote its faculty, and select its students. This autonomy guarantees that GSIST can select and evaluate its faculty members; recruit and evaluate its students; and establish internal bylaws and procedures in accordance with institutional and graduate studies policies. Also, the School determines, develops, and assesses its curriculum. A process of curricular revision took place during two years and in August 2011 a completed updated curriculum was implemented.

The School is administratively under the Dean of Academic Affairs and is guided by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research in relation to academic standards and quality. The School's Organization Diagram follows:

GSIST Organizational Diagram



Like all other units on campus, the School operates within the framework of the University's administrative policies and procedures. This includes all aspects related to fiscal, contractual, personnel (including the Equal Employment Opportunity policy), curriculum, and administrative matters.

The School maintains administrative and academic relationships with other academic units on campus, such as the School of Education, the College of Social Sciences (Psychology), the School of Business Administration, the College of General Studies, the School of Communication, and the UPR-RP Library System.

For instance, the School is a member of the [Permanent Seminar on Research Methods](#) [Seminario Permanente de Métodos de Investigación], a multidisciplinary research and study group in the campus, collaborating in colloquies and other activities. Also, a faculty member is part of the SPMI web team. The School's faculty, staff, and students have the same opportunity for representation in Campus wide institutional advisory and policy-making bodies, as do those of comparable graduate schools and programs throughout Campus. This includes representation in the Council of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, representation in the Academic Senate, and student's representation in the General Student Council.

The past seven years, 2008-14, the School's Directors have demonstrated the leadership and management skills needed to expand the Program's leadership and presence at local, regional and international levels. Their open-door policy has fostered the participation of the School's constituencies in the various aspects of the program. The Directors have continuously been open, receptive and supportive to ideas and initiatives, and have encouraged and supported faculty and students participation in a variety of research and professional development initiatives and academic growth activities, including travel to conferences. They have encouraged curriculum revision, partnerships and alliances with other institutions, continuing education programs for alumni, students and practitioners. They have written proposals and obtained institutional and external funding for special projects and professional activities. In addition, they have supported the long-term relationship of the School with professional associations, and encouraged faculty and student interaction with other academic units.

There is an overall commitment from the staff toward the fulfillment of the School's mission and program goals and objectives. The School Directors have provided enthusiasm, leadership and team building to administrative and technical staff. This approach has facilitated effective decision-making and information-sharing. Faculty members working in committees are involved in academic and administrative processes, such as recruitment and admissions, homecoming, internal policies of the School, comprehensive exam (until 2011) and the portfolio requirements, distance learning, the assessment process, and the curriculum update.

The School has had consistent support from the University for its continuous growth and development. The Río Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico assigns funds based on the budget proposals submitted by its academic and administrative units and the overall institutional funding available. Although the University System budget has been somewhat reduced over the 2008-2009/2009-2010 academic years, it has been recovering last years and the School's budget show an increase trend since

2011-12 (Table 5.1). Time series graph in figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 shown similar trends between budgets in the UPR system, UPR Río Piedras Campus and the GSIST. Therefore, financial support provided by the parent institution has been within reasonable expectations, in relation to the number of faculty, administrative and support staff, and instructional resources needed to accomplish the program's objectives. In addition, through the support of the Chancellor's Office, the School has overcome some limitations of the annual budget with approval of additional institutional funding, particularly for the acquisition of information technology. Compensation for the Director, the faculty, and the administrative staff is sufficient to attract, support and retain the personnel needed to attain Program's goals and objectives. Financial aid to the School's students is available through the University, in the same way as in comparable units of the Campus and the UPR system. The School has been proactive and successful in seeking external funds from different sources.

Table 5.1: Comparative Annual Budget between GSIST, UPR, and UPR-RP

Years	Total Income (GSIST)	Budget (UPR)	Budget (URP-RP)
2008-2009	1,445,717	1,065,762,626	275,171,025
2009-2010	1,367,126	1,040,655,138	275,102,712
2010-2011	1,254,137	935,038,000	235,807,671
2011-2012	1,113,231	919,158,951	238,246,233
2012-2013	1,263,080	995,013,006	232,454,596
2013-2014	1,361,879	1,031,754,000	236,295,466
2014-2015	1,328,516	1,013,179,000	243,648,040
Grand Total	9,133,686	7,000,560,721	1,736,725,743

Figure 5.1: GSIST Budget 2008-2015

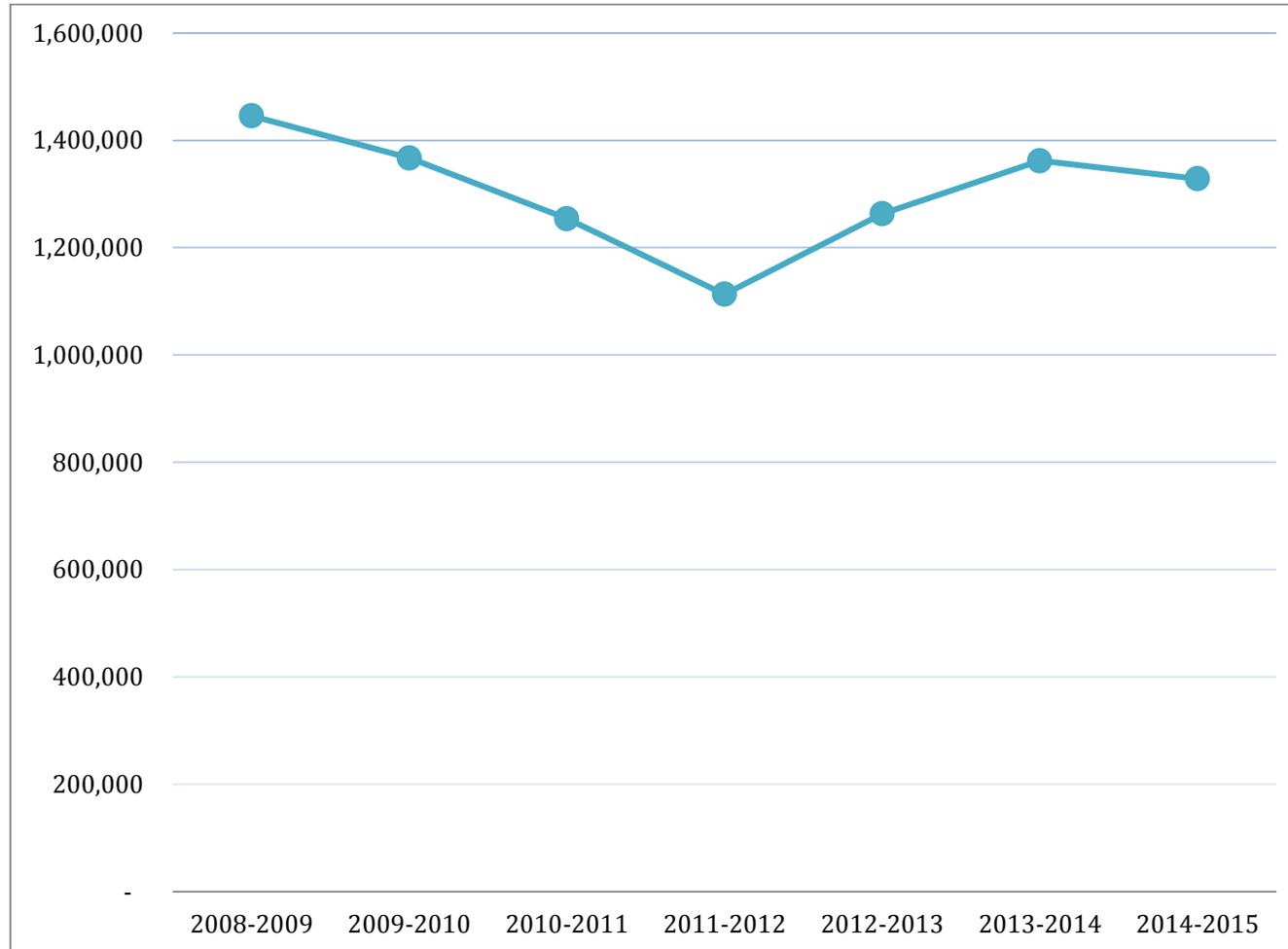


Figure 5.2: GSIST Budget vs. UPR-RP Campus Budget (2008-2015)

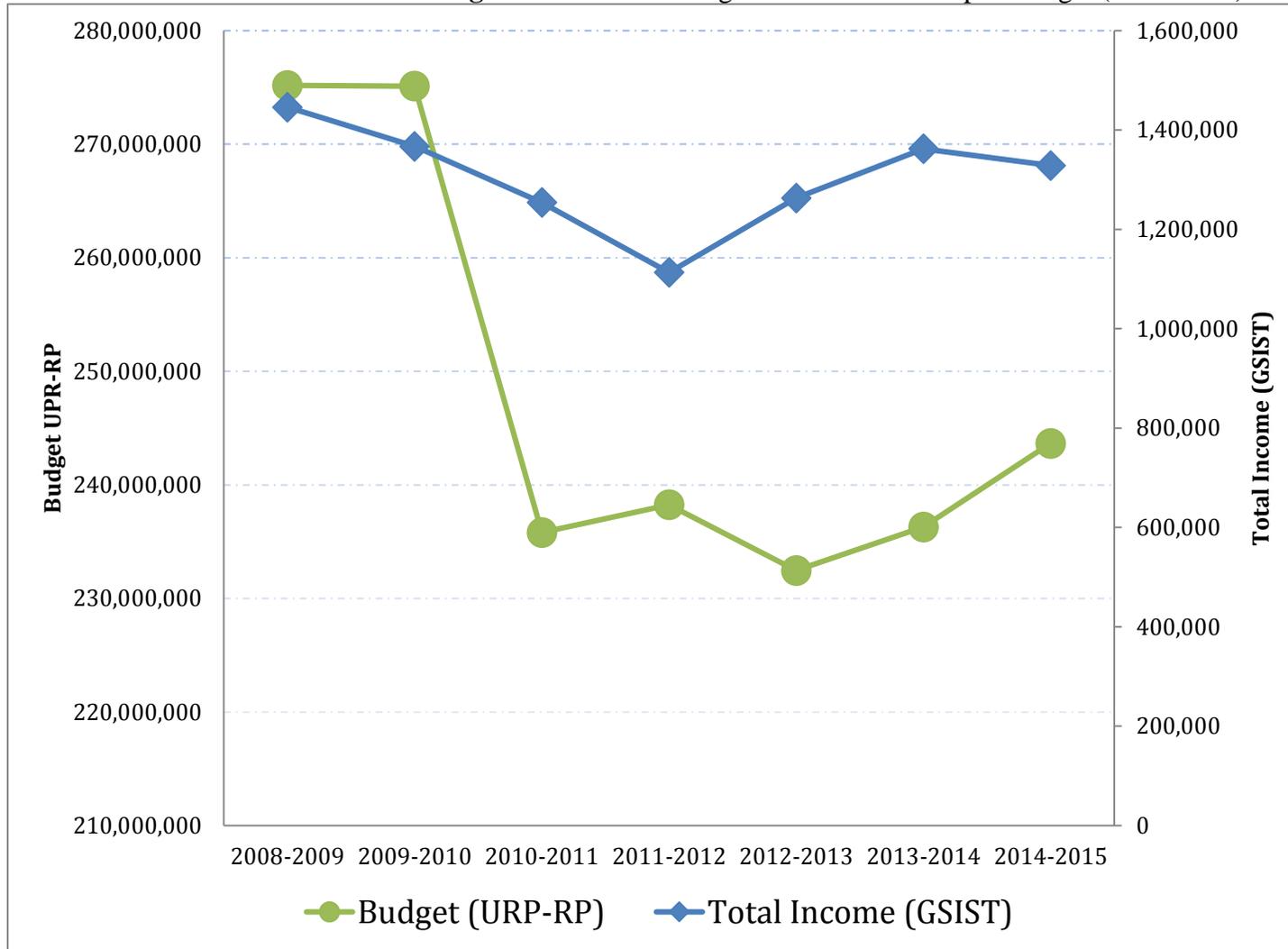
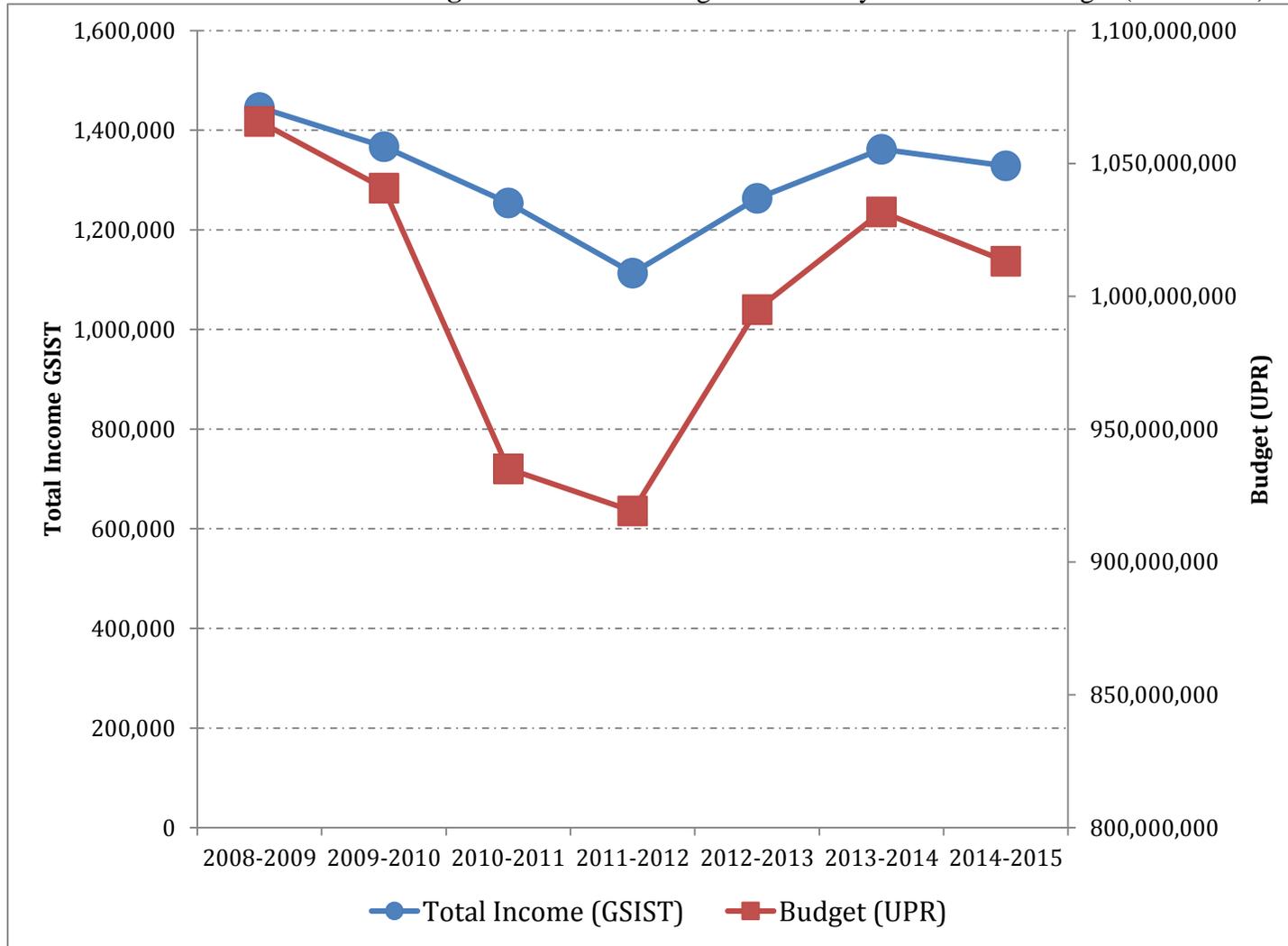


Figure 5.3: GSIST Budget vs. UPR System General Budget (2008-2015)



Throughout the past seven years, from 2008-2014, the GSIST strengthened its leadership role in the library and information field at the University of Puerto Rico, and at the state and regional level. Moreover, the School's leadership in implementing institutional projects, particularly integrating educational technology throughout the curriculum and delivering distance learning has projected the School as a model for other graduate programs in Campus. This has been possible, mainly through implementing both its Strategic Plan, and the Assessment Plan. The School has consistently observed its Strategic Plan 2008-14; revised from 2012-2016, to guide its development efforts. The School's assessment plan, in place since 2000 revised continuously, has contributed to sustain and improve the quality of the Program. The assessment process implemented during the past six years has resulted in developing and using a variety of procedures and instruments, as well as accumulating electronic documents and data for classification, interpretation and analysis. All sectors of the School are involved in one way or another in the evaluation process. Evaluation instruments have been revised on a constant basis. Assessment results are discussed with the faculty in retreats and at regular meetings to improve the Program and the overall student learning experience.

The following section of this report provides evidence that the School complies with *Standard V: Administration and Financial Support*. This Standard covers areas such as the distinctiveness and autonomy of the School, representation and administrative relationships, management and academic environment, administrative and financial support, information about the executive officers and the support staff; as well as the decision-making processes, planning and evaluation. These and other related areas are presented as a response to different sections of the Standard. These sections are aligned with related Program objectives. They include a description of the School's achievements, evidence, challenges, and steps to be taken in relation to each section of the standard.

Standard V.1 [Part 1]: <i>The school is an integral yet distinctive academic unit within the institution.</i>
--

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The GSIST is one of the leading graduate professional schools at the Río Piedras Campus of the UPR. It is an integral unit of the Institution with a clear distinctiveness and autonomy. From its inception in 1969 until 1981, its Director reported directly to the Chancellor. Following recommendations of the Middle States Association in 1981, the School became a unit under the direct supervision of the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Communication School and the Planning School are the other two units supervised by the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs. In addition, the GSIST has a direct relationship and communication with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, which provides institutional policy guidelines, quality standards and support for all graduate programs on campus. The School has demonstrated leadership in important initiatives on Campus, such as technology integration, distance learning and assessment, and has developed partnership agreements with other programs and institutions. Through an Advisory Board, the School is connected

with the professional community to monitor trends and changes in the external environment; in the field of library and information sciences.

Three GSIST faculty members were recruited to work in a key initiative during this report period: a Title V project, the Graduate Student Learning Commons (GSLC), Title V/ Promoting Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) Project, 2009-2014). This project was implemented under the leadership and responsibility of two School faculty members, a previous School's Director 2006-08, appointed by the Chancellor in 2009, and the current director appointed in 2012. The Title V project made possible integrating information technology at the campus level, and provided the impulse for distance education at the School and at other Campus faculties and units. The HSIAC/HUD is contributing to the University's goal of serving its surrounding communities.

Achievements

1. Since 2009, the status and position of the School as a distinctive unit of the University has been strengthened and become more visible within the broader institutional environment, as well as in the larger community. This is partly due to one of the School's faculty involvement in the Title V HISAC/HUD projects, with important federal grants.
2. Since 2009 the School has been an active member in a campus-wide Technology and Distance Learning Board. This opportunity has led the School to have an active participation in this advisory level.
3. The past and current School's directors, faculty and students have been active, taken leadership roles, in campus educational affairs, particularly related to information technology, distance learning and assessment.
4. A faculty member has been active in campus initiatives to implement an electronic document management plan in collaboration with University Central Archives.
5. A new proposal to offer the MIS program online has been prepared and will be submitted through the University channels.
6. The faculty has contributed to the development of an internal policy for guiding the distance learning activities and best practices on campus carried out by the Title V project.

Evidence

1. Organizational Chart of the University Campus (On-site/Online)
2. Río Piedras Campus Organizational Chart (On-site/Online)
3. GSIST Organizational Diagram (On-site/[Online](#))
4. Proposal for a Distance Learning MIS Program (On-site/[Online](#))
5. GSIST Guidelines for Distance Learning (approved) (On-site/Online)
6. Board of Trustees Policy for Distance Learning at the University of Puerto Rico (Cert. 13, 2006-07) (On-site/[Online](#))

7. Appointments letters from the Chancellor office to faculty members as advisors in areas of information technology, distance learning and assessment. (On-site)
8. Guidelines for GSIST distance learning activities (Manual de Conversión de Cursos y Plantilla para la Conversión de Cursos) (On-site)

Challenges

- Approval and implementation of the proposed distance learning MIS program developed by the School (to be implemented in the Fall of 2015).
- Encourage, cultivate continuously, and develop a spirit of collaboration and interdisciplinary initiatives with all UPR faculties and departments.

Steps to be taken

- Organize roundtables of faculty and students from different areas to identify common interests and share perspectives on potential joint projects.
- Complete the conversion of all courses to be offered in the distance learning modality.

Standard V.1 [Part 2]: *Its autonomy is sufficient to assure that the intellectual content of its program, the selection and promotion of its faculty, and the selection of its students are determined by the school within general guidelines of the institution.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School has the autonomy, within the general guidelines of the University, to determine the intellectual content of its Program, recruit and promote its faculty, and select its students. Within these guidelines, the School can propose new courses, modify existing ones, and revise its full curriculum. However, changes in the curriculum must be approved on various campus and institutional levels, including the Council of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board, and the University System Board of Trustees. Decisions relating to the curriculum and requirements of the program, selection and promotion of faculty and selection of students are carefully considered by the faculty as a whole, based on recommendations from GSIST committees.

There are six faculty committees, as established in the [School Bylaws \(Rev. 2014\)](#): the Admissions Committee, Personnel Committee, the Student Joint Committee, and two newly created committees: Assessment of Student's Learning, and Continuing Education and Professional Development. The Director is an ex-officio member of these Permanent committees. Members are elected for two years and may be reelected. Ad hoc committees are appointed to deal with transitory issues or faculty team responsibilities.

Committee members are elected or reappointed at the Retreat faculty meeting of each academic year. With the exception of the Personnel Committee, student representatives participate in the majority of these committees. Committees maintain a record of their work, and deliver reports on their accomplishments at faculty

retreats, strategic planning sessions, and at an evaluation meeting at the end of each semester. This provides valuable input for the overall evaluation process.

The School's Personnel Committee participates in the yearly institutional workshops organized by the Dean of Academic Affairs for faculty recruitment and evaluation. The Personnel Committee reviews all faculty recruitment, promotion, tenure and sabbatical applications. It provides advice to the Director, who in turn evaluates the recommendations and presents the results to the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Dean then submits recommendations to the Río Piedras Campus Chancellor, for the Administrative Board, who makes final decisions.

The School designs and articulates promotional strategies to recruit the most qualified students for the Masters program.

Candidates apply to the Masters program through the online platform of *Apply Yourself* available from the website of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The Admissions Committee, constituted by a faculty member as chair, a Student Council member and the Students Affairs Officer, establishes entrance criteria in accordance with institutional requirements for graduate admissions. It evaluates and interviews candidates, and submits final recommendations for admission to the Director. The Director makes final admissions decisions.

Achievements

1. Since 2008/2009 two graduate students have been working with two faculty members to ensure that the program is continued effectively. The recently reinstated institutional Assessment Office provides support for all program assessment efforts.
2. The school has updated its curriculum since 2011 as a result of an assessment process. The GSIST [MIS program](#) has two tracks and the courses sequences are more flexible for student's conveniences.
3. The new curriculum eliminated the Comprehensive exam, the required thesis or research project component and incorporates a research [Capstone experience](#).

Evidence

1. Academic Senate [Certification #38](#): Foundations for graduate studies at UPR , (On-site)
2. GSIST Bylaws ([Reglamento de la EGCTI](#)), (On-site/Online)
3. GSIST Bulletin ([Boletín Informativo de la EGCTI](#)), (Onsite/Online)
4. Graduate Studies application form [Apply Yourself](#)
5. GSIST Committee member lists (On-site)
6. Minutes of the Personnel, Curriculum and Admissions Committees (On-site)

Standard V.1 [Part 3]: *The parent institution provides the resources and administrative support needed for the attainment of program objectives.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The parent institution, the Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico, provides the School with the necessary resources and administrative support for its continuous operation and the achievement of its program objectives. Although almost 90% of the annual budget assigned is for salaries, the School has received funds from other institutional sources. For example, the Office of the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research has provided funding for research and innovation projects from its programs, such as *Fondo Institucional para Proyectos de Investigación* (FIPI) (http://graduados.uprrp.edu/investigacion/fipi_que_es.htm#) and *Renovación, Innovación y Transformación de los Estudios Graduados* (RIT) (http://graduados.uprrp.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=240&catid=11&Itemid=507&lang=es), to faculty submitting competitive proposals. The Campus Technology Board has provided funding from the Students Technology Fee to acquire and update computer and software technology. In addition, the Office of the Academic Dean has provided funding for guest lecturers.

The institutional commitment to the School is also reflected in the continuous administrative support and advice received from different offices on campus. The School has always received administrative support and guidance from the office and staff of the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. In addition, support from the offices of Human Resources, Communications, Finance and Budget, the Academic and Administrative Technology Division, and the Professional and Continuing Education Division, has been invaluable to coordinate the operational details needed to accomplish the School's responsibilities, projects and initiatives. The School's Director and administrative staff directly communicate with these offices, which facilitate the coordination process.

Achievements

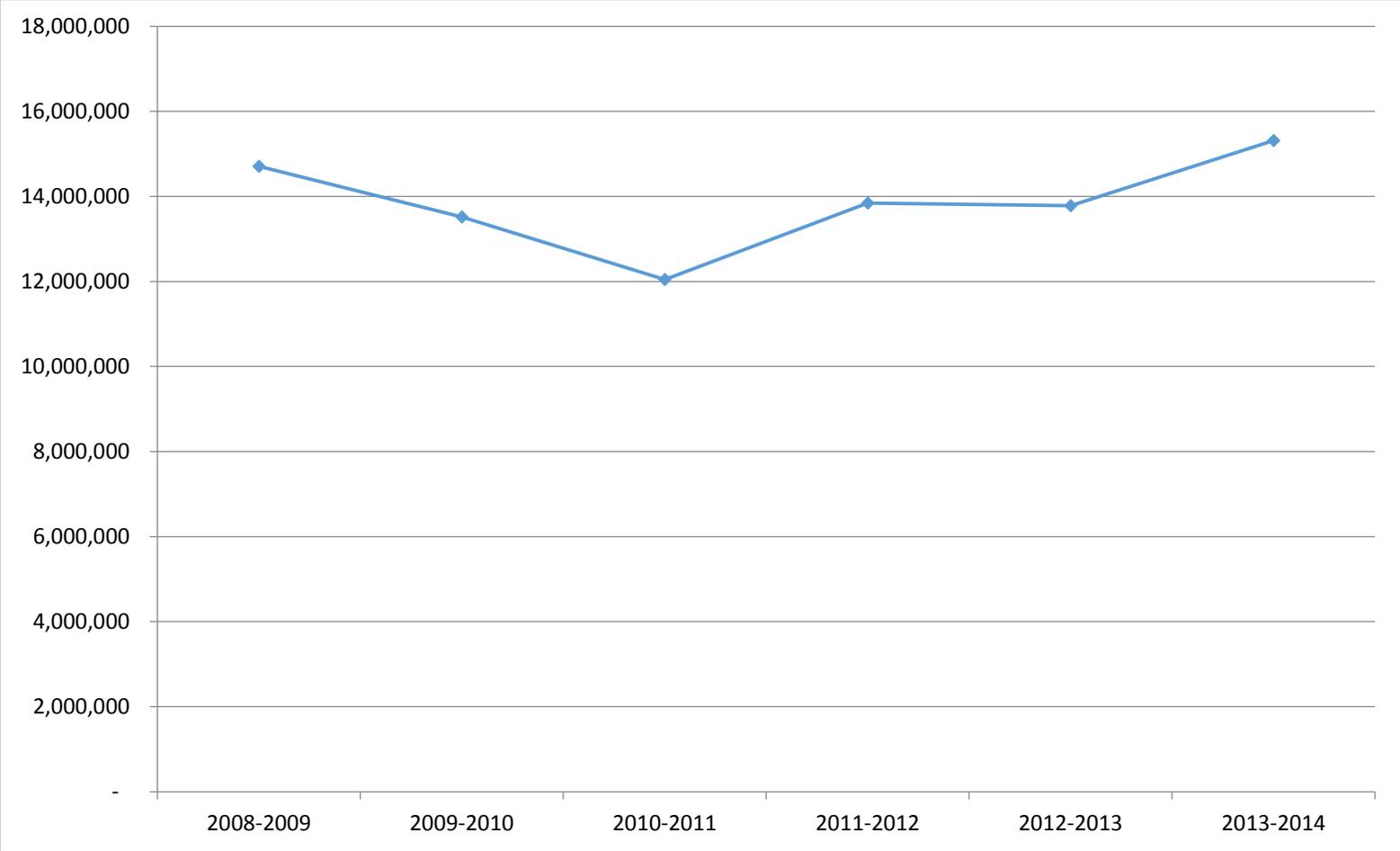
1. Two new full-time faculties have been recruited until 2014-2015 academic year using funds approved and assigned by the University.
2. The recurrent budget allocation for information resources and services has widened and strengthened the acquisition and updating of learning resources in the collection of the Library Science and Informatics Library (BCBI- Biblioteca de Ciencias Bibliotecarias e Informática) (Figure 5.4).
3. In 2012-13, the School coordinated efforts with the Academic and Administrative Technology Division to have its new server placed at their facilities, in order to receive technical upgrades and maintenance. Thanks to this coordination, the School benefits from the technical expertise and support available from this institutional division.

4. In 2009-2014, three faculty members submitted proposals to the FIPI and RIT programs of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. A total of \$67,866.00 has been obtained as additional institutional funding from this office to develop research and innovation projects on various topics aligned with faculty's research lines.
5. In 2009-2014 the Campus Technology Board has assigned the School a regular special funding (\$20,000) for computer and software upgrades. Furthermore, in 2008-09 the School received \$49,434.49 and \$42,440 in 2011-12. This special funding has been the result of the School's careful technological planning. Requests have been made to the Campus Technology Board for equipment and software needed to improve and enhance the School's teaching strategies and student learning process.

Evidence

1. Letters from the Office of Academic Affairs, President's Office, and Dean of Graduate Studies & Research indicating approval of special funds for research and academic innovation projects. (Online and On-site)
2. Memorandum of the Campus Technology Board approving disbursement of funds. (Online and On-site)
3. The portal of the School at <http://egcti.upr.edu>
4. List of 2009-14 research projects ongoing and completed supported by external funds (Online and on-site)

Figure 5.4: LIS Library Budget



Standard V.2 [Part 1]: *The school's faculty, staff, and students have the same opportunity for representation on the institution's advisory or policy-making bodies as do those of comparable units throughout the institution.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The school's faculty, staff, and students have the same opportunity for representation in Campus wide institutional advisory and policy-making bodies, as do those of comparable graduate Schools and programs throughout Campus. These include representation of the GSIST faculty and students in the Council of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, representation of the GSIST faculty and students in the Academic Senate, and student representation in the General Student Council.

The School, as other units under the Academic Dean, is represented in the Administrative Board by the Dean of Academic Affairs. In addition, the Dean is part of the Chancellor's staff meetings, with the rest of the academic deans of different faculties. Faculty, staff, and students participate in institutional planning processes through regular School committees.

Achievements

1. School representatives in the Student Council, in the Academic Senate and the Council on Research and Graduate Studies are very active in these bodies. They have the opportunity to collaborate and discuss important issues with students and faculty from other disciplines.
2. The current Director of the School is a member of the UPR System Executive Committee for Distance Learning, an institutional committee in which the School has had representation and has played a leadership role.
3. Since its establishment in 2003-04, there has been a faculty member in the Campus Technology Board. This is the committee that plans every year the distribution of student technology fees used to fund the acquisition and upgrading of technological equipment and software throughout the campus units.

Evidence

1. University Student Council Bylaws (*Reglamento de Estudiantes*) (On-site/Online)
2. University Bylaws (*Reglamento General de la UPR*) (On-site/Online)
3. Bylaws of the Council for Graduate Studies (CEGI) (On-site/Online)
4. GSIST Permanent Committee members list, 2009-2014, including student and faculty representatives to the Academic Senate and Council of Graduate Studies. (On-site)
5. Board of Trustees Policy for Distance Learning at the University of Puerto Rico (Cert. 13, 2006-07) (On-site)

Standard V.2 [Part 2]: *The school's administrative relationships with other academic units enhance the intellectual environment and support interdisciplinary interaction; further, these administrative relationships encourage participation in the life of the parent institution.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The GSIST continued to strengthen its role as an academic and administrative leader at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus; and has proved its leadership at the local and regional levels in the information field. This has been possible through the implementation of its Strategic Plan and Assessment Plan, and the leadership and vision of its Directors.

The GSIST's [Students evaluation and assessment plan](#), that has guided the School for the past six years, has been presented as a model to other faculties on campus. The School was one of the three units at the Río Piedras Campus with this type of plan. Moreover, the Directors' leadership in institutional projects has resulted in the School serving as a model for other graduate programs. The Title V project and the Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities project (HISAC), both of which were implemented at the institutional level with the leadership of the School faculty members, have created great visibility for the GSIST campus wide.

Achievements

What follows is a description of some of the School's administrative relationships, joint initiatives, and coordination of activities with other academic units, which have enhanced interdisciplinary interaction and the School's participation in campus life.

1. The Title V Project, Strengthening Higher Education Hispanic Institutions that ended in 2014 and ran for five years, was administered and led by a GSIST faculty contracted for those purposes. This project, exploiting the potential of new technologies, electronic information resources and multimedia to improve undergraduate ability to become skillful consumers and producers of information, had a wide campus impact. Project activities of great importance to the Campus included: a) integration of technology and information skills to first year basic courses in humanities and social sciences, at the General Studies faculty, in collaboration with the library system; b) strengthening the campus technological infrastructure in collaboration with the Office of Information Systems (including the Schools of Communication, Education, Social Sciences, and General Studies), c) developing a decision support system for administrators and a campus wide evaluation system in coordination with the Planning Office. The project also provided the necessary funding to acquire two institutional servers for the distance learning technological platform and software programs, making possible distance education for other faculties and units.

2. From 2009-2014, the School was also benefitted with the exposure to the Graduate Student Learning Commons (GSLC), of the Title V/PPOHA project, which contributed to the University's goal of serving its surrounding communities. This institutional community project had as its purpose to Expand Access to Post-Baccalaureate Education through Distance Education and Design and Implementation of a Graduate Student Learning Commons (GSLC). Funds for this project were obtained from the U.S. Department of Education.
3. The GSIST's Observatory for Information Related Research ([*Observatorio de Estudios Relacionados a la Información, OERI*](#)) contributes to faculty research and projects. Also the OERI serves as coordinator of Latindex in Puerto Rico.
4. The Vice President for Academic Affairs appointed the School's Director as Coordinator of the UPR System Distance Learning Executive Committee.
5. Current GSIST director have been involved at the institutional level in the institutional committee for distance learning.
6. During the academic year 2009-2014, there were several faculty initiatives for joint proposals and collaborative research with faculty of the UPR Psychology Department.

Evidence

1. Title V Proposal Annual Reports evidences participation of GSIST faculty members (On-site)
2. GSIST Annual Reports. (On-Site)
3. Joint interdisciplinary proposals from the School's faculty submitted with faculty of other departments and schools. (On-site)
4. *Seminario Permanente de Métodos de Investigación* (Permanent Seminar on Research Methods) (Website)
5. School Director's letter to the Academic Senate with recommendations of the Campus Distance Learning Committee.

Challenges

Continue the development of relationships and collaboration strategies with other academic and administrative units on Campus. Ongoing.

Standard V.3 [Part 1]: *The executive officer of a program has title, salary, status, and authority comparable to heads of similar units in the parent institution. In addition to academic qualifications comparable to those required of the faculty the executive officer has leadership skills administrative ability experience and understanding of developments in the field and in the academic environment needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The title, status, and authority of the School's executive officers are comparable to the heads of similar campus units: the School of Planning and the School of Communication.

The GSIST has had two Directors during the period of 2008-2014. Both directors have shown exemplary leadership and administrative abilities. Their understanding of trends in the field, and in higher education, has allowed them to fulfill their responsibilities in leading the School with vision and academic integrity.

In August 2014, Dr. José Sánchez-Lugo was appointed as the new Director of the GSIST. Dr. Sánchez Lugo holds an Ed.D. (degree in Educational Technology). He is a graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a seasoned academic professional with strong leadership in higher education. His academic experience encompasses teaching, research, management, training and consulting. Dr. Sánchez Lugo has embraced the GSIST's strategic and development plan, demonstrating effective leadership and management skills. He is evidencing an understanding of developments in the field, and in the academic environment, needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. He has participated in campus wide functions, worked with colleagues from different disciplines, and attended conferences of professional associations, locally, regionally and internationally. He also participates actively in research and publication, and has been proactive and successful in submitting and obtaining additional institutional and external funding for the School.

Achievements

1. The Directors of the School have had the title, status and authority comparable to heads of similar campus units, namely, the School of Planning and the School of Communication.
2. The Directors' management styles have allowed participation on the part of faculty, administrative personnel, and students in all aspects of the Program, and in the decision-making process. Both have encouraged shared leadership strategies with faculty in carrying out special projects and initiatives.
3. Significant results of the various GSIST directors leadership include several initiatives, such as: fostering and implementing the Collaborative Agreement with the School of Information Science (SIS) of the University of Tennessee; supporting the redesign and development of the School's portal; providing financial support from the School to

- students' participation in ACURIL, the ALA annual conference and IFLA congresses; and guiding the School's Assessment Plan.
4. The GSIST directors have participated in local, regional and international professional conferences in the field which has allowed them to be kept abreast of trends in the field.

Evidence

1. Graduate School Directors rank and compensation chart providing financial data about salaries of the Directors of different graduate schools on campus. (On-site)
2. GSIST Directors' Curriculum Vitae (Online)
3. The GSIST's Bylaws ([*Reglamento de la Escuela*](#)) list of Director's responsibilities (On-site)
4. The Memorandum of Understanding between the GSIST and the School of Information Sciences of the University of Tennessee signed (July 2013).
5. School's Two Year Operational Plan (2014-16), based on the Strategic Plan of the School

Standard V.3 [Part 2]: *The school's executive officer nurtures an intellectual environment that enhances the pursuit of the school's mission and program goals and the accomplishment of its program objectives; that environment also encourages faculty and student interaction with other academic units and promotes the socialization of students into the field.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School's directors, 2008-2014, have encouraged and supported faculty and students in their research, continuing education and professional development activities. They have encouraged the planning of a continuing education program for alumni, students and practitioners. They have also developed proposals and obtained institutional and external funding for the School's special projects and professional activities.

The GSIST's directors have supported faculty research projects, curriculum updates, and partnership alliances with other departments and institutions. This is reflected in faculty working with colleagues from other units, and student participation in University activities and socialization with other students. The directors have encouraged and supported faculty and student participation in local, national and international conferences; promoted continuing education activities and colloquia for faculty and students. The directors have been open, receptive and supportive to ideas and initiatives from faculty and students which have impacted their professional development and academic growth. In addition, the directors have communicated and collaborated with the Director of the LIS Library (BCBI). They have nurtured an intellectual environment in the School that facilitates accomplishment of program objectives.

Student participation in continuing education activities sponsored by the School, as well as in professional association activities, is strongly encouraged. These activities stimulate student

involvement in the field and the understanding of other fields. In addition, the long term relationship of the School with the Association of Colleges and Universities Libraries in the Caribbean and Latin America (ACURIL) has always been supported by the Director. The School provides regional travel support to a faculty member, who also leads ACURIL as its Executive Secretary. The directors have also promoted and established a partnership with a LIS accredited program in the United States at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and have established connections with colleagues in the LIS field both in Latin America and Europe.

Achievements

1. The School's directors have supported and fostered information sharing and cooperative learning among faculty and students. They have nurtured and supported: first, the organization and celebration of the IFLA 2011 Puerto Rico congress, and the ACURIL 2013 Puerto Rico Conference. Second, they have supported the attendance of four students to the 2014 ALA Conference in Washington, DC with funding from the DEGI and the School. Furthermore, the School assigned funds to facilitate the attendance of students to REFORMA (Puerto Rico Chapter); and partially funded a student to attend ACURIL 2014 Bahamas to present research. Student assistants are assigned to various faculty and administrative research projects and initiatives with funds provided by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.
2. Faculty and students participate in professional activities and conferences sponsored by international, regional and national organizations, such as IFLA, ALA, ALISE, ASIST, ACURIL; and by local organizations, such as SBPR (Puerto Rico Librarians Association), ACURIL, Puerto Rico Chapter, ASEGRABCI (the School's alumni association), ABESPRI (School Librarians Association), and REFORMA, Puerto Rico Chapter. The School usually covers registration and travel expenses. Both students and faculty have taken advantage of seminars and workshops at these events, and also have had the opportunity to make presentations about research initiatives at the School. The School encourages and supports student and faculty participation in these activities.
3. From 2009-14, the directors supported and helped to develop a proposal for a Permanent Seminar on Research Methods, coordinated and led by the Psychology Department. This project, which was funded by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, has encouraged research and interdisciplinary collaboration among various graduate programs. As a result of this collaborative and interdisciplinary effort, two School faculty members teaching the Research Methods course joined the Seminar and participated with their students in this Project. Since then, faculty and students from the GSIST, the Planning School, the School of Communication, and the graduate program of Psychology have participated and collaborated online to develop, among other things, a data base of multidisciplinary research studies.

Evidence

1. Faculty Retreat agendas
2. 2012 renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between GSIST and the School of Information Studies of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville
3. Flyers of co-curricular activities and colloquia. (On-site)
4. Continuing education and professional development materials offered to faculty. (On-site)
5. List of events and conferences attended by GSIST faculty (On-site)
6. List of faculty research and publications (On-site/Online)
7. Materials on website of the *Seminario Permanente de Métodos de Investigación* (Permanent Seminar on Research Methods)
8. Documents relating to student participation as research assistants in GSIST (On-site)
9. Students' reports on their participation in professional organization activities (On-site)
10. Roster of School's Student Council members and members of the Academic Senate and the Council of Research and Graduate Studies (On-site)
11. List of events and conferences attended by GSIST students (On-site)

Challenges

- More students need to be encouraged to participate actively in local and international professional associations to facilitate their socialization and incorporation into the field.

Steps to be taken

- Continue promoting student participation in activities of professional organizations, particularly on the local level.
- Encourage greater student socialization and interaction with students from other disciplines.
- Redefine and improve the GSIST electronic journal as a graduate students journal.

Standard V.4 [Part 1]: *The school's administrative and other staff is adequate to support the executive officer and faculty in the performance of their responsibilities.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School currently has three administrative positions besides the executive Director (one secretary, one administrative officer and one student affairs officer). It also has three technical support staff (a graphic artist, a lab technician, and a telecommunications specialist technician). These personnel are adequate to support the executive officer and the faculty in the performance of their responsibilities. The professional background and work experience of these administrative and technical employees have contributed to their support of the School's

requirements. The Officer of Student Affairs has held this position for the last twenty-eight years. This has provided stability in the orientation process and administrative support to students.

In addition to the administrative and technical personnel, two undergraduate students have been employed on a half-time basis under the work and study program to assist the Administrative Officer and the Officer of Student Affairs.

Achievements

1. There have been funds available to provide release time to faculty who are coordinating special projects, like the OERI
2. A new Administrative Officer was hired in 2012-2013 academic year.
3. Two additional assistant students were assigned to support the tasks related to the reaccreditation process.

Evidence

1. Organizational chart of the School (Online)
2. Job descriptions of the Director (On-site)
3. Job Description of the Students Affairs Officer (On-site)
4. Job descriptions of other administrative and technical staff personnel (On-site)
5. Responsibilities of the Coordinator of the OERI (On-site)

Challenges

- Maintain and update the technological skills of the administrative and technical staff.
- Retain the undergraduate students employed on a half-time basis under the work and study program to support administrative works.

Steps to be taken

- Continue the development of an in-service training program to improve professional development and staff skills with the application of information technologies.
- Negotiate with the Human Resources Office to keep the undergraduate students assignment.

Standard V.4 [Part 2]: *The staff contributes to the fulfillment of the school's mission and program goals and objectives.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

There is an overall commitment from the staff toward the fulfillment of the School's mission and program goals and objectives. The Director provides enthusiasm, leadership, and team building to the administrative and technical staff. Periodic staff meetings provide an opportunity to communicate and discuss the priorities of the School. The staff has participated in professional development activities offered by the University and by the Division of Continuing Education, which have allowed them to upgrade their abilities and skills. Staff evaluation has provided feedback to improve performance.

The commitment and collaboration of the administrative and technical personnel has contributed to the effective administration of the School. This is reflected in their daily performance and fulfillment of their job responsibilities, which contribute to effectively carrying out the necessary administrative procedures in the School. In addition, administrative personnel are receptive and willing to participate in training to improve their knowledge and skills.

Achievements

1. A new director was appointed in August 2014.
2. The administrative personnel are highly involved in the School's activities that support students and alumni. The Officer of Student Affairs and the Administrative Officer take a leadership role in organizing the annual Achievements Event at the end of every academic year, and the Alumni annual homecoming. They are supported by the rest of the administrative staff in the organization of these two important annual School events.
3. The Officer of Student Affairs, the Secretary, the Administrative Official, and the Graphic Designer have participated in campus workshops and activities related to expanding and updating their professional and technical interests and needs.

Evidence

1. Job descriptions of administrative personnel (On-site)
2. Students Learning assessment plan and evaluation instruments (Online)
3. List of workshops and seminars in which the staff have participated (On-site)
4. Evaluations of the personnel who were appointed on a permanent basis (On-site)
5. Brochures and posters developed by the Graphic Artist for special events (On-site)
6. Photos from the Students Achievement's Event and Alumni homecoming (On-site)
7. Photos from Alumni activities (Encuentro con Egresados) (On-site)

Standard V.4 [Part 3]: *Within its institutional framework the school uses effective decision-making processes that are determined mutually by the executive officer and the faculty, who regularly evaluate these processes and use the results.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

Regular faculty meetings take place with the Director to plan, monitor, and evaluate the work required at all levels in order to accomplish the School's objectives. The participatory management style goes beyond periodic meetings and includes continuous email and face-to-face communication between the Director and faculty. This approach has facilitated effective decision-making and information-sharing. Faculty members working in committees are involved in academic and administrative processes, such as faculty evaluation and recruitment, student admissions, alumni homecoming, internal policies of the School, portfolio requirements, distance learning and the assessment process.

Annual retreats involving participatory decision-making are an important strategy that has been used by faculty and the previous and current Directors to evaluate the accomplishments of each academic year; to review and update yearly plans. Strategic planning guides the operational plans of every aspect of the School, and provides an integrated perspective for managing priorities and projects. The Director and the faculty work together as a team on various projects, evaluating their results and incorporating feedback received to make needed changes or revisions.

Achievements

1. As reflected in their performance, the previous and the current Directors have demonstrated a genuine commitment to participative management. They have promoted an open-door policy, which has positively influenced the development of individual initiatives from faculty and staff. These efforts have contributed to the successful achievement of Program goals and objectives.
2. Annual faculty retreats and regular faculty meetings during academic years facilitate effective communication, shared decision-making, and collaboration.

Evidence

1. The 2008 and 2014 faculty retreat agendas, related documents and minutes show the issues, concerns and kinds of decisions that faculty has dealt with, and decisions needed to be made. (On-site/Online)
2. The GSIST Two Year Action Plan provides the framework for the development of specific projects and activities based on the Strategic Plan. (On-site/Online)
3. Minutes of faculty meetings describe the kinds of decisions made, as well as the planning involved. (On-site)
4. 2008-14 faculty meeting agendas and documentation from faculty committees (Personnel, Curriculum, Admissions, etc.) (On-site)

Standard V.5 [Part 1]: *The parent institution provides continuing financial support to develop and maintain library and information studies education in accordance with the general principles set forth in these Standards.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico assigns funds based on the budget proposals submitted by its academic and administrative units, and the overall institutional funding available. Every spring semester, the Executive Director and the Administrative Officer of the School prepare a budget request for the next academic year. Summaries of the School's accomplishments for the current year and the projections or plans for the next year are required with the budget petition. Some proposals approved from other institutional sources (dean's offices) provide additional funds for travel and materials.

The institutional budget allocated to the School from 2008-14 has provided the necessary financial support to develop and maintain its graduate academic offering, in accordance with the ALA standards and those of other institutional accrediting agencies. Nevertheless a general budget reduction at the UPR from 2008-09 to 2011-12 academic years, it has been recovering in the last three years. The School's budget has been sufficient to handle adequately current faculty and student enrollment, and to effectively support the implementation of the Program.

In 2008-2014, three faculty members submitted proposals to the FIPI and RIT programs of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. A total of \$67,866.00 has been obtained as additional institutional funding from this office to develop research and innovation projects on various topics aligned with faculty's research lines.

In 2008-2014 the Campus Technology Board has assigned the School a regular special funding (\$20,000) for computer and software upgrades. Furthermore, in 2008-09 the School received \$49,434.49 and \$42,440 in 2011-12. This special funding has been the result of the School's careful technological planning. Requests have been made to the Campus Technology Board for equipment and software needed to improve and enhance the School's teaching strategies and student learning process.

The School's budget line items include salaries and wages for faculty, for the administrative and technical staff, materials, equipment, travel, library resources, and student assistantships. Travel expenses are projected based on the School's priorities for faculty and the Director attending annual conferences of professional associations (e.g. ALA, ALISE, ASIST). Other faculty travel requests are considered and approved, based on funds available and plans for presenting papers or meeting professional development goals. In addition, there has been a permanent budget assignment during the past six years for the acquisition of library resources to support the Program.

Achievements

1. The annual budget assigned to the School has shown an increase trend for the past three academic years.
2. In addition to the regular institutional budget, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, and the President's office have granted the School additional funding for special projects.
3. Since 2008, the budget assignment for student assistantships has been stable fluctuating from \$80,000 to \$100,000.
4. The School received an annual assignment of \$20,000 to acquire and upgrade hardware and software for the computer labs and classrooms from the University's technological quota.
5. The annual budget assigned to the LIS Library has shown an increase trend for the past three academic years.

Evidences

1. School's annual budget approvals (On-site)
2. Expenditures section of the School's Statistical Reports submitted to ALISE describe the pattern of continuous institutional financial support. (On-site)
3. School's proposals submitted to grant programs of the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs and have the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research by the School to obtain additional institutional funds. (On-site)
4. Letters of approval of additional institutional funding for special projects and student assistantships. (On-site)

Standard V.5 [Part 2]: *The level of support provides a reasonable expectation of financial viability and is related to the number of faculty, administrative, and support staff, instructional resources, and facilities needed to carry out the school's program of teaching, research, and service.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School has had consistent support from the University for its continuous growth and development. Since the School's budget has increased during the past three years, the financial support provided by the parent institution has been within a reasonable expectation, related to the number of faculty, administrative and support staff, and instructional resources needed to accomplish the program's objectives. Financial support has permitted continuous acquisitions and upgrades of library resources, as well as improving physical facilities for computer and multimedia labs, administrative offices, classrooms, student council and student assistants'

offices, and the Observatory of Related Research Studies (OERI). All faculty and administrative offices are equipped with personal computers with access to the wide area network of the campus.

In addition, the School has been very proactive and successful in submitting proposals and acquiring external funding from various resources to conduct special research and service projects. The School has consistently sought the necessary fiscal resources to ensure the Program's continual growth and development.

Achievements

1. In 2014, School faculty member contracted under Title V, concluded its administration. One of the greatest impacts of this institutional grant was building capacity for distance learning and strengthening technology integration overall in the campus.
2. Travels funds have been available to faculty to participate in different local and international academic events.
3. Regular acquisition of information resources to be included in the collection of the Library Science and Informatics Library to support learning and research activities in the School.

Evidences

1. Title V Grant Final Report (On-site)
2. Library System budgetary reports including the financial support given to the Library and Information Science Library. (On-site/Online)
3. School's annual budget received from parent institution, showing increased support for the unit. (On-site/Online)
4. Letters of support from DAA, DEGI and VPAA to support faculty participation in academic events. (On-site/Online)

Standard V.6: *Compensation for the program's executive officer, faculty, and other staff is equitably established according to their education, experience, responsibilities, and accomplishments and is sufficient to attract, support, and retain personnel needed to attain program goals and objectives.*

Summary of School's compliance with this standard

Faculty salaries are based on the University of Puerto Rico's General Retribution Scale for faculty established by the Board of Trustees in accordance with their educational background or degree, rank and years of service. The Board of Trustees periodically reviews faculty salary scales to make annual increments, based on cost of living raises. In the past five years, faculty salaries have increased on an annual basis ranging from 4 to 5.3 percent. These salary

increases are established by the Board of Trustees' Certifications of the General Retribution Scale for faculty. Salary increases are part of the institutional policy to retain Ph.D. faculty at the University, and to gradually level off the pattern of compensation with universities in the United States. Since 2008, faculty salaries of the School and the monthly additional compensation of \$700.00 for the School's Director have been comparable to those of the School of Planning and other similar academic units.

Achievements

1. Faculty salaries have been leveled off with those of the School of Planning, the most comparable academic unit to the School.
2. Since 2009-14, the Director's salary has been at the same level as other academic units.
3. Faculty salaries have consistently improved throughout the past six years, with an annual increase ranging from 4 to 5.3 percent.
4. Faculty salary scales are the highest among all universities in Puerto Rico, and are gradually becoming closer to other similar institutions in the United States.
5. Although salaries for administrative and technical personnel may not be competitive with the private sector or the United States, fringe benefits somewhat compensate for this. These include a strong health plan, retirement plan, childcare services, and waiver of tuition fees for employees and their children studying at the campus.

Evidences

1. Chart providing comparative data on rank and compensations for directors of UPR's graduate programs. (On-site)
2. Board of Trustees' Certifications of the General Retribution Scale for faculty, from 2009 to 2014, authorizing salary increases. (On-site)
3. UPR Plan for Classification and Retribution of non-faculty personnel (On-site)
4. Collective Contract, non-teaching personnel describes the salary scale for administrative staff. (On-site)

<p>Standard V.7 [Part 1]: <i>Institutional funds for research projects, professional development, travel, and leaves with pay are available on the same basis as in comparable units of the institution.</i></p>

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

Institutional funds assigned for research projects, professional development, and leaves with pay have been available on the same basis as in comparable units on campus. The University offers, on a continuous basis, workshops for professional development and teaching improvement through its Center for Academic Excellence.

Throughout the past years, from 2009-14, the School's faculty and Director have submitted competitive proposals to various grant programs of the Dean of the Graduate Studies and Research, and obtained funding for research and innovation projects. The School provided release time to more faculty as a matching support for their research efforts. In addition, some faculty received contracts from the Vice President of Academic Affairs office to conduct institutional research and consulting.

Although institutional funds for travel have been limited on campus, the School has had a consistent budget allocation for this purpose, allowing faculty to attend conferences and workshops outside of Puerto Rico. Travel funds have consistently been included in the institutional budget of the School, on a yearly basis, from 2008-14. Research grants received have provided additional funds for faculty traveling and attending professional development activities.

The Dean of Academic Affairs has granted funds for visiting professors from other universities, as well as additional financial support for faculty traveling outside of Puerto Rico to make presentations at annual meetings or conferences.

Achievements

1. In the past years the School's faculty have submitted competitive proposals and obtained a total of \$67,866.00 in funding from the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research to conduct research and innovative projects.
2. An average of \$5,350.70 has consistently been approved, annually, from 2008-14 for travel funds. The amount of \$11,762.00 has been obtained as additional travel funds through research proposals approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research in 2013-14. This institutional funding has provided faculty with direct support for traveling to annual meetings of professional associations, such as ACURIL, ALA, ALISE, Latindex Technical Meeting, and other professional conferences and workshops outside of Puerto Rico.
3. During the period 2013-14, additional travel funds from the Dean of Academic Affairs allowed the School to invite a visiting professor from Spain.
4. In the summer of 2014, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research granted \$2000 to support a faculty member who traveled outside of Puerto Rico to attend a summer course at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España.
5. In the past two years, a faculty member obtained additional compensations from the Vice Presidency of Academic Affairs to conduct research and update information on academic journals of the UPR in Latindex regional database.

Evidences

1. List of proposals submitted by faculty to the FIPI (Institutional Fund for Research Projects) and the RIT (Renovation, Innovation and Transformation), programs of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. (On-site)
2. Institutional letters of grant approval. (On-site)
3. School's annual budget showing consistent travel funds assigned from 2008-14. (On-site)
4. Letters of approval from the Dean of Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research granting travel funds for invited faculty and for School faculty traveling to conferences and workshops. (On-site)
5. List of faculty members with release time for research from 2009-14 with related budget figures. (On-site)

Challenges

- The plan for faculty development needs to be revised and updated to identify professional development activities for faculty in different research and teaching areas.
- More faculty members need to apply for institutional and external research funds available, in order to increase the research and publication success rate of the School.
- The School should continue to regularly invite recognized international scholars from other universities to benefit faculty and students, exposing them to new trends, ideas and developing areas in the field.

Steps to be taken

- Continue encouraging and guiding faculty to develop competitive proposals to be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Graduate studies and Research and to external funding sources.
- Continue providing release time for research as the budget situation permits.
- Identify potential international faculty to be invited to the School, and request funds from institutional programs to carry this out.
- Re-examine and update the faculty development plan to make sure that it clearly identifies professional development activities for faculty in areas of their research and teaching expertise.
- Revise and update the faculty research plan on an annual base.
- Re-examine and update the functions of OERI to improve its capacity to support research effort in the School.

Standard V.7 [Part 2]: *Student financial aid from the parent institution is available on the same basis as in comparable units of the institution.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

Financial aid to the School's students is available through the University in the same way as in comparable units of the campus and the UPR system. There is no difference in availability of student financial aid from the University among different graduate and professional programs. These funds include student loans and student assistantships. The Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research has been instrumental in this area. The funds provided by this office have doubled during the past four years, allowing the School to provide more scholarships and student assistantships. This has benefited the international Latin American students registered in the program who have received financial support.

In addition, the School has received external funds from foundations and private entities to cover students' participation in special events and activities.

Achievements

1. The Dean of Graduate Studies and Research has assigned funds, fluctuating from \$80,000 to \$100,000, for student assistantship. This allocation of funds has been proportionally similar to the assistantship funds granted to the School of Planning and the School of Communication on campus.
2. In 2012 the School received a donation of \$10,000 from the W.H. Wilson Foundation to directly benefit students. The School allocated these funds to cover student special tuition fee and partial travel assistance to ACURIL conferences.

Evidences

1. 2008-14 letters of funds approval for student assistantships from Dean of Graduate Studies & Research. (On-site)
2. Letter of approval of the H.W. Wilson Foundation for student scholarships. (Online and On-site)

Standard V.8 [Part 1]: *The school's systematic planning and evaluation process includes review of both its administrative policies and its fiscal policies and financial support.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School has consistently used its Strategic Plan 2008-11, 2012-2016, to guide its development efforts. The plan has been updated based on the UPR's systemic planning and priorities. The Strategic Plan was reviewed at the faculty Retreats, focusing on areas that needed more detailed planning.

At the beginning of each academic year, the operational plan is evaluated. Areas of strengths are identified, as well as areas that need further attention. New objectives and activities are added, as new projects are planned and implemented.

The Strategic Plan is evaluated in accordance with the results of the School's Students Evaluation and Assessment Plan. Evaluation and assessment strategies are implemented annually.

Fiscal policies and financial support are included as part of the School's planning and evaluation process. An evaluation of administrative policies included in the [School's Bylaws](#) was undertaken. Budgetary requests reveal specific needs of the School, such as funds for research and travel, and the continued development and maintenance of an adequate technological infrastructure.

Achievements

1. The School has been involved in a continuous planning process, in accordance with the Río Piedras Campus and the University of Puerto Rico system strategic plans. Strategic plans from the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and the Dean of Academic Affairs were taken into account in the School's planning efforts.
2. An [Advisory Board](#) was reactivated in 2014 to impact and support the strategic planning process within the context of the greater information professional community. This process includes both administrative and fiscal policies and financial support.
3. Bi-annual, yearly or semester work plans are drafted by the Director, the Administrative Officer and the Curriculum Committee.
4. An analysis of the School's financial needs is submitted annually with the Budget Request Proposal.

Evidences

1. GSIST strategic plan (On-site)
2. Other strategic planning documents and annual plans developed at faculty annual retreats and faculty meetings include examination of administrative and fiscal policies and financial support. (Faculty retreat documents; Faculty meeting documents available on-site)
3. 2014 Technology Committee Plan (On-site)
4. 2014 summarized plans of the Committees (On-site)
5. Annual Budget Request Proposals current (On-site)

Challenges

- A new Strategic Plan has to be aligned to the Río Piedras Campus Strategic Plan, [*Vision University 2016*](#), and based on the results of the School's self-study for reaccreditation and curriculum revision process.
- An ongoing evaluation of administrative policies, including the process of strategic planning needs to be continued, involving faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Steps to be taken

- Review the Strategic Plan, aligned to the campus and University strategic planning activities.
- Continuously evaluate administrative policies, exploring ways to actively involve faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
- Advise and stimulate active participation of faculty and staff in the process of strategic planning.

Standard V.8 [Part 2]: *Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, staff, students, and others are involved in the evaluation process. Evaluation is used for ongoing appraisal to make improvement and to plan for the future.*

Summary of School's compliance with this section of the standard

The GSIST has had a formal program evaluation mechanism since 2001. Evaluation procedures are implemented annually in compliance with the established plan. This includes formative and summative evaluation strategies. Evaluation instruments such as the comprehensive exam, tests, course grades and questionnaires provide the data needed to assess specific aspects of the program. Other instruments, such as interviews, focus groups, student portfolios, fieldwork, and student self-assessments help gauge factors like compliance with program objectives, and student satisfaction with various aspects of the program.

The assessment process implemented during the past six years has resulted in developing and using numerous procedures and instruments, as well as in accumulating electronic documents and data for classification, interpretation and analysis. Evaluation instruments have been revised regularly. Assessment results are discussed with the faculty during retreats and at regular faculty meetings.

All sectors of the School are involved in one way or another in the evaluation process. This includes faculty, support staff, students and graduates. Faculty is involved in the evaluation of students and peer evaluation. Students participate in the evaluation of their classes, professors and the program as a whole. A variety of different approaches, including student portfolios, are used by the faculty to evaluate students. The Director evaluates support staff. Staff members also evaluate their own work and job responsibilities, and make suggestions for

improvement. The results of the evaluation process are carefully examined. They form the basis for decisions made to improve the Program, as well as for planning future projects and activities.

The School's Student Learning assessment plan has been operational since the completion of the last curriculum revision (2011). The assessment process has contributed to sustaining and improving the quality of the Program. During the academic years 2011-2014, various evaluation strategies were used to critically examine the School's performance and its diverse components, including student services.

Student Learning assessment strategies implemented through the past four years have included a student survey focusing on all the aspects of the program, a focus group on the academic advising process, an exit interview for graduating students of the Master's and the Teacher librarian certificate Programs, and an evaluation of student portfolios. Students also complete a survey to evaluate the Post-graduate certificate on Archival and Document Management.

Exit interviews have revealed that graduates are satisfied with the knowledge acquired through the Master's program. They consider that the curriculum and other educational experiences at the School have provided them with the necessary competencies to function effectively as information professionals. Students who chose to do a clinical experience valued this practice highly in terms of the skills acquired, and recommended that it should be compulsory for the Master's program.

Students who have worked at the School as Research Assistants value the opportunity to develop additional professional skills that allowed them to find a job immediately after graduation. Overall, they have considered that the School's facilities are good, including computer labs, hardware and software resources that are used to satisfy curricular needs.

Achievements

1. The [Student Learning Assessment Plan](#) was updated in 2013-2014. This plan was aimed at the faculty, and proposed changes to existing course evaluation strategies. [Rubrics](#) have been adopted to establish criteria to evaluate student work.
2. The results of student learning assessment activities are documented, discussed and analyzed with the faculty each year.
3. The [core and required courses](#) were revised to reflect results of evaluation activities.
4. Faculty and students are committed to analyze and implement the results of the evaluation process.
5. Administrative decisions have been guided by evaluation evidence.

Evidence

1. Student Learning Assessment and Evaluation Plan (2013-2014))
2. Annual Student Learning Assessment Reports 2013-2014 (Onsite/Online)
3. Faculty evaluation instruments (Online)
4. Course evaluations (Online courses instrument: Onsite courses instrument)
5. Survey Questionnaire, interview and focus group results (See Assessment documents / Online)
6. Electronic portfolio evaluations (On-site)
7. Administrative staff evaluations (On-site)
8. Rubrics developed for learning assessment (On-site/Online)

Challenges

- It is necessary to re-examine the results of the various evaluation instruments to incorporate these into the strategic planning process. It is particularly important to identify and take action needed to improve areas identified as weaknesses.
- The new Student learning assessment plan needs to be evaluated. After one semester, evaluations professors receive from students need to be examined. Courses need to be reviewed to identify any changes and improvements needed in the teaching-learning process.
- The faculty and administration need to evaluate assessment strategies used during the past years and improve them. The ultimate goal will be to use a knowledge sharing/management model to handle the School's administrative documentation and evaluation processes.

Steps to be taken

- Review and update the Student Learning Assessment Plan
- Administer all survey questionnaires, interviews and possibly a focal group at the end of the second semester of 2014-15.
- Continue to revise and update the rubrics for assessment.