# SELF-STUDY REPORT
# PREPARED FOR THE
# MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

September 2021

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Albizu University has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1974 by complying with all standards of accreditation and requirements for affiliation. The university received reaffirmation of accreditation in 2015.

In 2019, Albizu University's Self-Study process initiated the journey towards the reaffirmation of institutional accreditation. It has been an honest and transparent community-wide evaluation of the continuous fulfillment of our mission to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.

The Self-Study process necessitated and promoted meaningful engagement from our academic community. The Executive Team, the Self-Study Steering Committee, and seven workgroups participated in assessing and evaluating our undertakings, opportunities, and challenges that led to the following conclusions and recommendations.

Standard I: Mission and Goals

While the wording of Albizu's mission statement may have changed over time, the intent has never varied: to educate professionals committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities. The development of statements of mission and goals resulted from collaborative processes that engaged the university community—the most recent examples being the creation of a vision statement and the revision of the mission statement in 2017. This mission statement framed three strategic goals of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 related to academic affairs (licensing passing rate, online learning strategy, and enrollment and retention).

Recommendations

1. Engage the university community in visioning conversations on goals as a preamble to the development of the 2022-2025 strategic plan.

2. Highlight the vision and mission statements through campus-wide activities and communication strategies that specifically target students and staff.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethical behavior is an institutional value that is embraced by the Board of Trustees, the president, administration, faculty, staff, and students. Operational transparency is an institutional value affirmed by presidential leadership.

Recommendations

1. Engage in an organized and systematic process to (1) determine new policies and procedures or normative letters that need to be adopted (such as updating the copyright and intellectual property

rights policies and policies on distance education), and (2) update policies and procedures and manuals to reflect changes in Albizu's organizational structure and positions and to ensure accuracy in position titles and descriptors.

2. Maintain efforts to improve the institutional website and intranet to ensure disclosure of compliance data on university procedures and outcomes, and enhance navigation capabilities for easy identification of resources.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Dr. Carlos Albizu established the university in 1966 with a theory of education premised on his philosophy that "Knowledge that is based solely on logic and reason may become dehumanizing and is not at the service of humanity. Education that is guided by love emphasizes social welfare more than it does individual competition." More than fifty years later, this passionate conceptualization of education guides the design and delivery of student learning experiences characterized by excellence. The faculty lead curricular revisions that are aligned to the institutional mission.

Recommendations

1. Use language in the catalog and other institutional documents that is simple, concise, and consistent for all programs.

2. Review the internal process for academic program development to reduce the time to completion and become more agile in responding to market needs.

3. Evaluate the policies on moratorium and new program development to ensure they are inclusive in the engagement of additional stakeholders at the outset.

4. Develop the three-year institutional academic plan that is required under the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and ensure that its implementation addresses the need for institution-wide curriculum alignment, faculty development, and research.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Comprehensive activities to support the student experience are in place, such as advising, tutoring, and career services. Although Albizu has academic programs in mental health and clinics that offer services to the outside community, mental health services available to Albizu students are limited. There is a need to increase levels of uniformity and standardization across assessment processes for student support services.

Recommendations

1. Institutionalize a Student Success Program that integrates counseling, wellness, and financial aid and provides access to emergency grants.

2. Increase access to mental health services to support students and retention efforts.

3. Create an institution-based scholarship once a new development officer joins the office of the president.

4. Evaluate the feasibility of providing career services institution-wide.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

The assessment program implemented at Albizu University since the reaffirmation of accreditation in 2010 has progressively built the capacity to measure and track institutional effectiveness. The assessment processes are faculty-led and evaluate student achievement of institutional and program goals in an organized and systematic manner. However, the institution lacks a central repository for assessment data/results to make the information accessible to stakeholders. The institution needs greater consistency in assessment strategies, particularly when degree programs are offered at multiple locations. The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan included three goals related to assessing educational effectiveness. Specifically, Goal 1: Increase the Licensing Exam Passing Rates for the doctoral programs in clinical psychology and the master's program in speech and language pathology; Goal 2: Fully Develop the Institution's Digital Learning (Online) Functionality; and Goal 3: Increase Enrollment and Retention.

Recommendations

1. Foster a culture of assessment that is unit driven and that will maximize the use of findings generated by institutional review.

2. Evaluate the assessment practices in place since the establishment of three-year cycles for assessing learning competencies.

3. Create synergies and improve collaboration between the two campus-based Student Learning Assessment Committees, especially for programs offered at both campuses.

4. Automate and digitize the assessment process.

5. Formalize the dissemination of assessment results.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution has a planning culture. Throughout leadership transitions, Albizu has successfully used three strategic plans to remain anchored and focused on the implementation of the mission. The leadership team is active in monitoring progress and adjusting to ensure success. Planning engages all levels of the organization and involves two-way communication. The involvement of faculty, administrative staff, alumni, students, and trustees has been vital to elaborate, execute and achieve the institutional plan goals. Financial planning is a mission-driven interactive process focused on continuous improvement. The university has established a comprehensive, integrated, and institution-wide assessment process that informs planning. Within administrative divisions, assessment is a two-pronged process, comprised of assessment of strategic plan objectives as well as division-specific objectives that

are not directly tied to the strategic plan. There are opportunities to foster a stronger culture of assessment as well as to standardize, automate, and digitize institutional assessment.

Recommendations

1. Evaluate current assessment processes.

2. Foster a culture of assessment that is unit driven and that will maximize the use of findings generated by institutional review.

3. Formally integrate into the planning process the findings of external evaluations of programs receiving funding from Title V and HRSA grants.

4. Standardize the employee performance evaluation system across campuses.

5. Engage in long-term financial planning using strategic scenario planning.

6. Engage in enrollment management integration.

7. Appoint a compliance officer to monitor the implementation of the single audit action plans.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Albizu University has a clearly defined and transparent governance structure, with bylaws and regulations in place to define roles and responsibilities at each level. Albizu's President, the chief executive officer, has the necessary qualifications and authority to implement changes that benefit the university. Since the President's hiring in 2017, these have included developing a new strategic plan and implementing a new organizational structure, resulting in enhanced institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Albizu's academic and administrative staff members are qualified and effective at their work. In addition to classroom activities and departmental meetings, they regularly engage with each other and with the students through mechanisms established and supported by the university. Assessment mechanisms are in place to ensure that governance, leadership and administration are operating smoothly and effectively and that problems are quickly identified and addressed. The Board of Trustees continues to engage in introspection regarding their role and responsibilities.

Recommendations

1. Adopt and operationalize the Function Responsibility Matrix to ensure clear and consistent distinctions between governance and management and between policy and implementation. As indicated by NCHEMS, such clarity will help assure "consistent messaging and coordination," as well as promote accountability and focus efforts by the Board, President, and Chancellors on institutional priorities.

2. Develop and implement a comprehensive and functional assessment system for administrative units.

3. Two years after the adoption of bylaws for the Academic Board, it has become clear that the standing committees are not active and that their work needs to be guided by a work plan aligned with the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

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Looking forward, the seven Self-Study workgroups have been tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement for the seven standards.

The Self-Study process was preceded by hurricanes and accompanied by earthquakes, floods, COVID19—adversities that we faced with resolution and determination as one institution. It is as one that Albizu remains committed to continuous self-improvement.

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## INTRODUCTION

Albizu University is a private, independent, non-profit institution of higher education, founded in 1966 in Puerto Rico. It is considered a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) by the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Carlos Albizu-Miranda founded the University as the Puerto Rico Institute of Psychology, with the objective of offering a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology.

Albizu University offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees and certificate programs in psychology, speech and language, education, ESOL, criminal justice, and human services. The university's doctoral programs in clinical psychology (Psy.D. and Ph.D.) are accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). The master's program in speech and language pathology is accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The institution has a total enrollment of 3,146 students, as reported to IPEDS in 2020.

The university expanded from the original campus in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to a branch campus in Miami, Florida, in 1980 and a university center of the San Juan Campus in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, in 2015. There are 88 full-time faculty, administrators, and professional staff, with another 207 adjunct faculty and part-time staff providing academic, administrative, student, and other services. The institution has a $40 million annual budget. Albizu University is licensed by the Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias in Puerto Rico and the Commission For Independent Education in Florida.

Our institution has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1974; the university received reaffirmation of accreditation in 2015. In 2019, Albizu University's Self-Study process initiated the journey towards the reaffirmation of institutional accreditation. It has been an honest, transparent community-wide evaluation of the continuous fulfillment of our mission to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.

Throughout this process, relevant documents have been gathered as part of the Evidence Inventory. Within the Self-Study, documents are identified using the following naming convention: Title of the document (Standard #. Criterion #). For example, (II.1) is used after each document title of evidence for Standard II, Criterion 1. Documents presented as evidence for the Requirements of Affiliation follow a similar format; for example, (A.3) refers to evidence for Requirement of Affiliation 3.

The Self-Study process necessitated and promoted meaningful engagement from our academic community. The Executive Team, the Self-Study Steering Committee, and seven workgroups participated in evaluating our undertakings, opportunities, and challenges, culminating in the conclusions and recommendations presented in this report. The workgroups have been tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the ongoing process of self-improvement.

The Self-Study process was preceded by hurricanes and accompanied by earthquakes, floods, COVID19—adversities that we faced with resolution and determination as one institution. It is as one that Albizu remains committed to continuous self-improvement.

<div align="center">**STANDARD I: MISSION AND GOALS**</div>

*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.*

## Compliance with Criteria and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard I and its criteria. The institutional mission and goals guide educational objectives, the academic programs offered, clinical training, and research activities.

Our narrative is submitted also as evidence that Albizu University meets the two Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

#7: *The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education*—addressed particularly through the 2017 Vision and Mission Revision (A.7), accomplished through the collaborative engagement of the governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

#10: *Institutional planning is integrated into institutional effectiveness, student achievement, and assessment*—addressed particularly through policies and activities. The related policies are the Institutional Policy on Assessment of Student Learning (A.10) and the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness Policy (A.10). The four concurrent activities are annual planning, strategic planning, institutional assessment, and student learning assessment processes. Details are provided in Self-Study chapters for Standard V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment) and Standard VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how the mission and goals guide all aspects of the university; (2) how successful the university is in fulfilling its mission and goals; and (3) innovative pathways to fulfill the University's mission and goals. The exploration of these research questions allowed the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding the mission and goal statements.

## Analysis of Key Issues

*Clearly defined vision, mission, values, and goals*

Albizu's stated vision, mission, and values are as follows:

> ***Vision***:     To be an international leader in academic innovation, research, and community service, promoting diversity to generate a transformative social impact.

*Mission*:        Albizu University educates professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.

*Values:*        At Albizu, "love reaches beyond knowledge"
Excellence in academic programs and services
The integral and humanistic development of the student is essential at Albizu
Respect for diversity
Commitment to social responsibility
Updating and integration of knowledge with technological advances
Ethical behavior at all organizational levels
Commitment to the development of our human resources
Openness to academic community participation
Operational transparency and administrative efficiency

The goals, listed in the Faculty Handbook (I.2 and I.3) are:

1. Promote the development of human potential.
2. Promote the integration of knowledge, positive values, and human behavior.
3. Promote academic excellence, reflective thinking, critical analysis, creative capacity, and the willingness to act.
4. Incorporate historical, social, economic, and political perspectives as its base.
5. Promote respect and sensitivity toward different ethnicities and cultures.
6. Promote leadership skills and training in scientific and professional matters.
7. Promote social conscience, responsible participation in social and economic affairs, and be able to lead in conflicts and stressful life events in a rational and informed manner.
8. Ensure that scientific and professional efforts are directed towards the benefit of the individual and the community.
9. Promote understanding and efforts toward cooperation between and among diverse individuals, communities, organizations, and social groups.
10. Promote the acquisition of more than one language and exposure to various cultural traditions.
11. Promote a life-long search for knowledge and keep up to date concerning the requirements and new trends in the professions represented by our disciplines of study.

These goals are the basic principles of education at the University. They express the genuine commitment by the faculty and administration to the formation of outstanding professionals with enthusiasm for their vocation and contributing significantly to our educational environment. These goals were derived from the institutional values and for that reason are not uniformly specific and measurable. However, three of the five goals in the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (I.1) are viewed as extensions of these goals. The five Strategic Plan goals are increasing the licensing exam passing rate, developing digital functionality, increasing enrollment and retention, increasing sources of revenue, and defining the marketing and branding strategy. The first three are measurable goals that focus specifically on student learning and related outcomes.

Similarly, seven institutional core competencies reflect Albizu's mission/vision and are used as objective, measurable expressions of the institutional goals. See Chapter/Standard V for detailed discussion of the seven core competencies.

While the eleven goals listed above serve as a foundational resource, a community-wide review and conversation on institutional goals would be timely prior to development of the 2022-2025 strategic plan. The future review and refinement of institutional goals was noted as part of the Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Presentation (I.4) to members of the Board at their 2021 annual retreat.

The table below illustrates how institutional goals are derived from institutional values, and how institutional goals frame and influence strategic plan goals.

Table 1. Relationship between Values, Institutional Goals, and the Goals of the Strategic Plan

| Values | Institutional Goals | Strategic Plan Goals |
|---|---|---|
| At Albizu, "love reaches beyond knowledge" | | |
| Excellence in academic programs and services | Promote academic excellence, reflective thinking, critical analysis, creative capacity, and the willingness to act. | Strategic Goal 1: Increasing the licensing exam passing rate. |
| The integral and humanistic development of the student is essential at Albizu | Promote the integration of knowledge, positive values, and human behavior | Strategic Goal 3: Increasing enrollment and retention |
| Respect for diversity | Promote respect and sensitivity toward different ethnicities and cultures. | |
| Commitment to social responsibility | Ensure that scientific and professional efforts are directed towards the benefit of the individual and the community. | |
| Updating and integration of knowledge with technological advances | | Strategic Goal 2: Developing digital functionality. |
| Ethical behavior at all organizational levels | Promote social conscience, responsible participation in social and economic affairs, and be able to lead in conflicts and stressful life events in a rational and informed manner. | |
| Commitment to the development of our human resources | Promote the development of human potential. | Strategic Goal 3: Increasing enrollment and retention |
| Openness to academic community participation | Promote understanding and efforts toward cooperation between and among diverse individuals, communities, organizations, and social groups | |
| Operational transparency and administrative efficiency | | Strategic Goal 2: Developing digital functionality. |

The vision and mission statements are publicized and widely known since they are displayed in the lobbies and offices of the buildings located in San Juan, Mayagüez, and Miami, making them visible to all

constituents of the University and visitors. Also, vision and mission statements are included in documents such as the Academic Board Meeting Presentation (I.1), Presidential Task Force Agenda (I.1), Institutional Compliance Committee Minutes (I.1).

*Collaborative development of mission and goals*

In 2016, groups representing the governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students began creating a vision statement and revising the mission. The process included Mission and Vision Development 2017 Community Forums (I.1 and 1.4) led by the chancellor of the Miami Campus. In 2017, the Board of Trustees convened the new president and representatives from the campuses to finalize the revision presented through the Vision and Mission New Proposal (I.4) which was approved in 2017 through the board motion on the Mission and Vision Revision (I.1). The values and goals developed in the1990's remained the same. The institution recognizes the need to engage the community in visioning conversations on goals as a preamble to the development of the 2022-2025 strategic plan.

From its beginnings, Albizu University has been a mission-driven institution. In 1966, Dr. Carlos Albizu founded the Puerto Rico Institute of Psychology (Instituto Psicológico de Puerto Rico) with the specific objective of offering a master's program in clinical psychology in response to the need for culturally sensitive professional training. At the time, there were very few mental health professionals in Puerto Rico, and most of them received their professional education abroad. Upon completing their studies, returning mental health professionals were forced to adapt their training to Puerto Rican sociocultural realities. Thus, the evolving institution's philosophy became to train professionals to work within the cultural context of the persons served.  This included adapting standard models of psychological assessment and intervention to the sociocultural characteristics and needs of the populations served.

This educational philosophy has remained constant as the institution evolved from the Institute of Psychology to the Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies (Centro Caribeño de Estudios Postgraduados); expanded through the establishment of the Miami Institute of Psychology; became Universidad Carlos Albizu; and changed its name to Albizu University with a campus in San Juan, a branch campus in Miami, and the Mayaguez University Center as an additional location.

The original mission statement described the institution as follows:

> *The University is an institution of higher education dedicated to academic excellence and research from a pluralistic and multidimensional perspective. We educate students to be able to serve a highly complex and diverse society with sensitivity towards those most in need. We contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in our communities by training professionals with multicultural competencies. We distinguish ourselves through an educational philosophy based on a commitment to social responsibility which is characteristic of our programs and services.*

The original mission statement evolved into statements about the future and the present. The current vision statement presents the institution's future aspiration as a leader and the desired impact of academics, research, and services:

> *To be an international leader in academic innovation, research, and community service, promoting diversity to generate a transformative social impact.*

The new mission focuses on the current role of the university educating professionals beyond the discipline of psychology:

> *Albizu University educates professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.*

*Mission as a guide for planning and decision-making*

Since 2013, Albizu University has developed three strategic planning documents. They are the Effectiveness Indicators for Institutional Development 2013-2018 (I.1); Strategic and Operational Initiatives 2017-2019 (I.1); and the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (I.1). The mission statement has provided a consistent framework for the development of the strategic initiatives in these plans in periods of leadership turnover, as evidenced by the tenures of five presidents during a period of eleven years.

The Strategic Plan 2019-2022 is a blueprint for current institutional development driven by the mission statement. The mission statement served as the frame of reference when a comprehensive SWOT analysis was conducted to identify and evaluate internal and external forces. As noted previously, five strategic plan goals emerged from this self-evaluation: (1) Increase the licensing passing rates; (2) Fully develop the institution's digital (online) functionality); (3) Increase enrollment and retention; (4) Increase sources of revenue; and (5) Defining the marketing and branding strategy. These goals follow from the mission and are clearly connected to the central educational role of the university. The first three goals are directly related to achieving the mission of educating professionals. The last two relate to critical activities that support the execution of the mission: revenue, marketing, and branding. Increases in revenues and brand awareness allow the university to be sustainable and grow.

*Mission as a guide for academic programs and student learning assessment*

The assessment of student learning is an integral component of the institutional effectiveness in fulfilling the mission of educating professionals. As such, in 2011 Albizu implemented an organized and sustained process for the assessment of student learning, promoting the use of formative, course-embedded assessment techniques to enhance student learning and for the modification of instructional strategies when necessary, while at the same time providing valuable data for curricular renovation (i.e., summative assessment). Assessment is completed on a term-basis at the course level, under the purview of each faculty member, and on an annual basis at the program level, under the purview of department directors. The Assessment Plan and Report (I.4) for the M.S. in Speech and Language Pathology illustrate how a plan focusing on applying professional skills and maintaining sensibility to diverse clients guides the periodic assessment of academic programs and student learning.

*Embedding the core competencies into the curriculum through assessment practices*

The Institutional Policy on Assessment of Student Learning (I.4) provides the operational framework for embedding the core competencies into the curriculum and for assessing how each academic program

demonstrates through student learning outcomes that the institutional mission and goals are fulfilled. Chapter V on Educational Effectiveness Assessment provides details and an example of how individual program competencies reflect the institution's core competencies.

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria of Standard I, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. While the wording of Albizu's mission statement may have changed over time, the intent has never varied: to educate professionals committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.

2. The development of statements of mission and goals resulted from collaborative processes that engaged the university community—the most recent examples being the creation of a vision statement and the revision of the mission statement in 2018.

3. The vision and mission statements are active statements that are displayed and discussed.

4. Of the five strategic goals in the  Strategic Plan 2019-2022, three are anchored in the mission statement and are directly related to student learning and academic affairs.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the University should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to mission and goals.

1. Engage the university community in visioning conversations on goals as a preamble to the development of the 2022-2025 strategic plan.

2. Highlight the vision and mission statements through campus-wide activities and communication strategies that specifically target students and staff.

# 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.*

## Compliance with Criteria and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard II and its criteria. Ethical behavior at all organizational levels and operational transparency are institutional values.

Our narrative is submitted also as evidence that Albizu University meets the five Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

#5: *Compliance with all applicable government laws and regulations*—addressed particularly in the following articles on governance of the Corporate Bylaws (A.5): 2.5.1 on the legal duty of the members of the Board of Trustees and 2.5.2 on the supervisory role of the committees of the Board of Trustees; the audited financial statements; and the institutional eligibility for Participation in Title IV Student Financial Aid Programs. This information is accessible to staff, faculty, and students through the institution's intranet.

#8: *The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes—*which is covered under Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

#11*: Fiscal management, annual budget, and external financial audit*—addressed particularly in the following articles of the Corporate Bylaws (A.11)**:** 2.4.6 on fiscal integrity, 2.4.9 on internal and external audits, 2.4.10 on academic freedom, Article 7.7 describing the role of the Audit, Compliance and Institutional Integrity Committee, and Article 7.9 on the obligations of the Finance, Investments, and Planning Committee. This information is accessible to staff, faculty, and students through the institution's intranet.

#12*: Governing body responsibilities for integrity* —addressed particularly in the following items or articles of the Corporate Bylaws (A.12): 2.4.6 on fiscal integrity; 2.4.9 on internal and external audits; and Article 7.7 describing the role of the Audit, Compliance, and Institutional Integrity, all of which are accessible to staff, faculty, and students through the institution's intranet.

#14: *Disclosure of information to the Commission*, which is demonstrated by our accreditation history and status.

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how the Albizu Strategic Plan reflects our community's commitment to demonstrate ethical behavior and integrity in all activities and (2) whether Albizu's policies, procedures, and processes are implemented in an ethical manner. The exploration of these research questions allowed

the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding ethical behavior and integrity.

## Analysis of Key Issues

The university promotes an environment of freedom and respect among students, faculty, and staff as exemplified in such areas as academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights, among others detailed below.

*Academic and intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression*

The Faculty Handbook (II.1) adheres to the principles identified by the American Association of University Professors' 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Academic freedom is defined under Part IV: Faculty Rights and Benefits as "the ability for faculty to teach their subject of professional competence with honesty and objectivity within the scope of intellectual and moral responsibility." According to the handbook, "…these special privileges, characteristic of the academic environment, should be extended to all members of the institution's community (i.e., Core Faculty, Adjunct, Visiting, and staff) as well as students instructed on the campus and those students associated with the institution via distance learning programs."

Albizu faculty members are not restricted in their research, and they have the latitude to assign grades within the bounds of objectivity, fair standards, and ethical responsibility. They are given autonomy to select course material and present their courses as they see fit, in accordance with course requirements and syllabi and with the ethical and objective standards set above. This right is reaffirmed in two policies: (1) Faculty development policy (II.1) and (2) the proposed Social Media policy, which is scheduled for adoption by the Board of Trustees in the fall of 2021.

The University does not control personal opinions or the expression of these ideas in public and does not interfere with their expression or sanction, punish, or discipline faculty, visitors, or students for possessing their opinions or airing them in public, assuming no conflict exists with policies on harassment and discrimination, or with legal, moral, and socially expected standards. Faculty and students have the freedom to discuss their academic subjects without facing censure from the University.
The right of students to explore ideas is not curtailed by Albizu University in any form. Clubs, organizations, and class cohorts provide students with spaces for student expression. The student councils, for example, host assemblies to bring issues of concern to the campus leadership. The Self-Study chapter on Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience addresses how these groups contribute to the Albizu educational experience.

*Academic integrity*

Albizu adheres to academic integrity with a commitment to institutional transparency, as evidenced, for example, by the Student Right to Know (II.2) document published under the webpage on Policies, Procedures and Consumer Information and which contains graduation and completion data for the cohort of the first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduates.

Also, the University has a clear definition of and sanctions for academic dishonesty and plagiarism, defined in the General Policies and Disciplinary Procedures Manual (II.2) as the act of misrepresenting another's work in an academic context, presenting another's insights or research as one's own, or failing to grant attribution. The University shows respect for intellectual property rights, except as outlined by boundaries and exceptions of fair use, as outlined in the Institutional Policies on Rights of Authors (II.2) published by the Miami Albizu Library.

Duplication of material is permitted for personal and instructional use. Adhering to a long-standing principle of the psychological profession, students and faculty retain ownership of their intellectual property to use as they see fit, except when they directly produce work on behalf of the University and/or for the University. Student dissertations and doctoral projects are the intellectual property of both the student and their advising faculty members.

*A climate that fosters respect*

Respect through diversity is one of the values of Albizu University. It is a value from our past that is well-lived in our present. In 1982, our founder, Dr. Carlos Albizu, addressed a letter to "all members of the academic community" of the Miami Campus of the Caribbean Center for Postgraduate Studies. In this letter, he stated, "A community provides support to and is accepting of its members. In a community, there may be differences among its members, but never rancor." Today, respect for diversity is at the center of our academic, research, and community service activities. Respect for diversity at Albizu is evidenced in four areas:

1. Organizational stability that resulting from the respect among the different constituencies (governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students) has allowed the institution at different levels to resolve differences. The relationships between the Board of Trustees and the president and between the president and the chancellors are characterized by respect. There remains a need to adopt and operationalize the Function Responsibility Matrix (II.2) to ensure clear and consistent distinctions between governance and management and between policy and implementation. This is described more fully under Standard VII.

2. Official documents, such as the following:

   a. Policy against Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (II.2), which affirms the institutional commitment against sexual harassment and discrimination on our campuses and in activities related to the university by directors and supervisors, teaching and nonteaching personnel, students, and non-employed persons.

   b. Employee Handbook (II.2), which addresses institutional policies on equal employment opportunity (5.1), non-discrimination policy (5.2), and sexual harassment (5.4). Employees must read and sign the Employee Manual (2018) during onboarding and must participate annually in training on sexual harassment.

c. Accessibility Statement (II.3) which expresses the commitment to make the university experience available to all our students, prospective students, interns, alumni, and partners, including those with disabilities.

3. Recruitment and retention activities that evidence the institution's commitment to meet the needs of a diverse student body include the Institutional Admission Policy (II.2) that prohibits discrimination under Article 8 and includes exceptional admissions criteria under Article 4. Anchored by the Offices of Student Affairs on each campus, Albizu is committed to promoting student success through accessible and supportive environments that seek to facilitate the intellectual, personal, social, and professional development of each student. This is discussed more fully in the chapter on Standard IV.

4. Recognition in the academic catalogs of English as the official language for the Miami Campus and English and Spanish for the San Juan Campus and the Mayaguez University Center. In recognition of each locality's unique cultural and linguistic diversity, in Puerto Rico, although Spanish is the predominant language in the classroom, students may express themselves in English. Should a sufficient number of students (at least 10) request it, classes may be given in English. In Miami, recognition that the campus serves a multilingual community that cannot exist in linguistic isolation led to establishing an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Albizu recognizes the barriers and challenges faced by LBGTQ students placed in clinical training sites. This finding is a result of the unit-driven assessment of recent trends in student needs conducted by the Dean of Students of the San Juan Campus and is addressed under key recommendations below.

*A grievance policy, and fair and impartial policies and procedures*

The university policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and the president has a deep commitment to ensuring this environment. The institution adheres to a strict policy of non-retaliation for those who submit a complaint or are involved in a grievance procedure. The grievance mechanisms are described in the following documents:

1. Employee Manual (II.3) applies to all staff, including faculty. The Employee Handbook delineates in section 5.12 the administrative procedure for handling complaints and solving conflicts. Specifically, it describes the two methods to resolve conflicts: informal and formal. The levels of the formal method are immediate supervisor, human resources, chancellor, and president.

2. General Policies and Disciplinary Procedures Manual (II.3*)* applies to students and is under revision. This document applies to part-time and full-time students, as well as to non-degree seekers. It also applies to faculty in relation to grade or academic grievances and their participation in the matters governed by these rules. The current manual differentiates between minor and major violations. In the case of minor violations, the manual states that Albizu:

> …encourages informal attempts to solve any grievances between the concerned parties. Grievances that have not been resolved by such attempts will be brought to the attention of

the appropriate Program Director. If not resolved, the aggrieved party or appropriate functionary will file a complaint with the appropriate Program Director, who will include the conduct allegedly in violation of CAU's Code of Conduct, the specific dispositions of the Code, the time and place of the occurrence, and a list of witnesses.

In the case of minor violations, an informal hearing procedure is conducted. The appeal procedure for an informal hearing currently includes five channels of appeal:  director of student services; chancellor; vice president of academic and student affairs; president, and board of trustees.

The manual indicates that:

> A formal hearing is mandatory in cases of major violations. The corresponding Program Director or designee may appoint a Quality Assurance Committee composed of two Faculty members or will, at his/her discretion, request from the Chancellor the appointment of an Examining Officer (EO), who may be a person from outside the CAU. The Chancellor concerned must present all requests for the appointment of an Examining Officer to the President of the CAU.

The appeal procedure for a formal hearing currently includes five channels of appeal:  Director of Student Services; Chancellor; Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs; President, and Board of Trustees.

3. The Policy against Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (II.3) was submitted for revision in 2020 to comply with the revised regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Act of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex by recipients of federal financial assistance. The revised regulations included detailed new procedural requirements for sexual harassment cases and changes to the scope of conduct subject to Title IX. The university developed a comprehensive discrimination and harassment policy and accompanying grievance process that addresses employee, student or third-party complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation against a member of the Albizu community. The discrimination and harassment covered under this policy includes discrimination on the basis of sex, race, national origin, color, disability, age, and other bases required under state law.

This new broad policy highlights the University's commitment to providing a prompt and fair complaint policy and procedure that recognizes both the seriousness of the misconduct under the policy and the importance of providing due process to the parties involved. It provides Albizu students, employees, and other community members with a one-stop policy and procedure for complaints relating to any type of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

The implementation of the new policy will be the responsibility of the currently designated Title IX Coordinator.  This individual has the responsibility for all types of discrimination and harassment covered under the new policy. All University employees will be responsible for reporting misconduct that they observe or learn about to the Title IX Coordinator. Senior University officials, the Title IX Coordinator, and all University managers will be considered "officials with the authority to take corrective action."  Notice to any of these officials constitutes

notice to the University that triggers its legal obligation to respond to the possible misconduct through a defined reporting chain.

*Avoiding Conflict of Interest*

Albizu University is committed to avoiding conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest in all activities and among all constituents. The Institutional Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Guidelines to comply with the Institutional Policy on Conflicts of Interest (II.4) cover all Albizu constituents, including trustees, managerial employees, staff, and faculty members. It is designed to:

1. prevent Albizu employees from pursuing institutional or personal interests that could interfere with the performance of their duties,
2. prevent employees from using their positions for personal, familial, business, or professional gain,
3. protect the university's tax-exempt status, and
4. ensure disclosure of any conflict of interest.

Implementation of the policy requires an annual certification and disclosure through a statement that affirms that the copy of the policy has been received, the policy has been read and understood, compliance is agreed, and that the university must primarily engage in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes. It assigns the responsibility to administer the policy to the Audit, Compliance and Institutional Integrity Committee of the Board of Trustees, the President, and managerial staff. This obligation of this committee is delegated by the Board in Section 7.7 of the Corporate Bylaws.

In the policy, the responsibility to implement the policy for staff and faculty members is delegated to Albizu's Human Resources Department's executive director. The Board of Trustees is the ultimate decision-making authority over substantive matters of conflicts of interest. For trustees, penalties for violations include institutional disciplinary action and requested resignation; for managerial employees, staff, or faculty, penalties range from institutional disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. All not in compliance are subject to penalties imposed by the Law of Intermediate Sanctions (Section 4958 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code).

Section 3.2.6 of the Faculty Handbook (III.4) states:

> All faculty members must disclose, on a yearly basis, any volunteer or remunerated commitment of a professional nature held with third parties outside the Institution. They must submit a written disclosure about the existence or intention of involvement in volunteer or remunerated professional activities outside the Institution. If it is determined that such activity constitutes a conflict of interest, or interferes with the requirements of their position, they may be required to end such activity if they wish to continue their employment with the University.

The implementation of the policy demonstrates Albizu's compliance with these criteria. The Board considers the implementation of this policy of utmost importance. In fall 2020 (as detailed under Standard VII), the Board responsibly asked the administration to develop a corrective action plan to address any identified conflict of interest issues through training, compliance, dissemination, and accountability activities. Mandatory training was offered to all university employees; specific training was provided to

the Human Resource staff addressing the policy and its implementation. The online Smartsheet platform was set up to gather the annual certification forms and monitor policy compliance through reports and metrics. The institution recognizes the importance of creating a webpage and a dedicated space in the intranet to disseminate the policy and educate constituents on conflicts of interest.

Three other policies address the avoidance of conflict of interest:

1. Policy on Code of Conduct for Financial Aid Employees (II.2) mandates that employees of the University will not benefit personally from providers of student services; will not accept gifts from any banking institution which serves the Federal Loan Program; will not receive any compensation for participating in advisory boards of student loan service providers; will not provide any advantages to student service providers; and will make proper use of the lender list according to the provisions of the USDE. Although the policy does not provide guidelines for implementation, the administration created an annual certification that the employees of financial aid are required to complete using the online Smartsheet platform.

2. Policy about the Employment of Members of the Firm of External Auditors (II.2) At this time the University is in compliance since presently neither the president nor the chief financial officer has been employed by FPV & Galíndez, the institution's external auditors.

3. Policy about the Limitation on the Services offered by Firm Conducting Professional Services related to Auditing (II.2). At this time the University is in compliance since FPV & Galíndez has only been contracted to issue a report on whether the financial statements are fairly stated and free of material misstatements and to perform single audits.

In addition, the new Institutional Director of Human Resources is evaluating the feasibility of using the ADP platform to automate acknowledgement of receipt of these and other policies and procedures.

As evidence of ethics on research, the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center operate two Independent Review Boards (IRB) that are registered with the Office for Human Research Protection of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The IRB determines whether research projects at Albizu's Puerto Rico locations are in compliance with scientific ethical standards as required by federal regulations regarding the protection of human participants. In addition, the IRB represents the institution before the relevant regulatory bodies. The IRB, which selects its own members, includes two Albizu faculty members and at least two distinguished individuals from the community who are not affiliated with the University. An administrator coordinates the meetings and reviews proposals to be considered. All research proposals require the evaluation and approval of the IRB.

The Miami Campus secured the services of the Biomedical Research Alliance of New York (BRANY), located in Lake Success, New York. BRANY is a national organization accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs that offers highly efficient review processes and clinical trial solutions, as well as support to investigators. The BRANY Independent Review Board (BRANY IRB) enables the Miami Campus to uphold the highest level of research integrity and meet the compliance needs of the scientific community. Before initiating research activities, faculty, staff, or students conducting research that involves human participants or animals submit the required application

to the BRANY IRB for review and approval. Prior to the submittal to BRANY, students must obtain approval from the appropriate Albizu compliance committee(s), such as his/her dissertation committees.

Two other publications are pertinent. The Policy and procedures for responding to allegations of research misconduct (II.4) designates a faculty member as the institutional Research Integrity Officer. The second document, Procedures for the Protection of Human (II.4), ensures that members of the IRB who review research have no conflict of interest and that investigators have no compromising financial interest.

*Fair and impartial practices in human resource management*

Albizu University is an equal access/equal opportunity employer. As stated in the Faculty Handbook (II.5), the institution is committed to employ, train, discipline, classify, compensate, and promote qualified personnel without regard to race, color, gender, religion, political idea, age, lifestyle, national or ethnic origin, handicap or other protected categories, in compliance with all federal and state legislation and regulations pertaining to non-discrimination. The institution completed affirmative action plans for 2019 and 2020 and a comprehensive human resources assessment for both campuses in 2020 as part of enterprise risk management activities.

Results of these reviews were presented to the president, chancellors, and human resources personnel. The overall findings regarding affirmative action and human resources compliance emphasized the importance for everyone involved in the recruitment process to comply with the processes and to assume responsibility and ownership for each regulatory requirement. The new Institutional Director of Human Resources is using this information as a model for the use of external assessment results at the unit level and to demonstrate Albizu's commitment to ongoing assessment and using results for continuous improvement. This model has been adopted for other areas such as safety and facilities. Areas of opportunity included these: (1) improve human resources management, (2) maintain the proper documentation and record-keeping according to the applicable laws and regulations, and (3) maintain objectivity, consistency, accuracy, uniformity, and information reliability in all processes to avoid any discriminatory practice in the workplace. Action plans were developed and implemented to address areas of opportunity in talent acquisition and development. In late 2020, the President's Office commissioned a compensation study on salary differentials for academic directors.

The Employee Handbook (II.5) recognizes in section 3.1. that:

> All employees have basic rights in the workplace, including protection against health or physical integrity risks, the right to participate in religious services, the right to privacy, subject to the Employer's legitimate interests of protecting his business, property, and workplace, according to the law. Likewise, all the University's personnel has the right to not being discriminated, in accordance to the terms and conditions of their employment, nor shall they be subject to reprisals in agreement with the criteria banned by law. Moreover, the dignity of all employees shall be respected, including protection against abusive attacks to their honor and reputation.

Albizu also extends flexible and reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities by having an accessible campus facility and by permitting flexible work hours and altered schedules as necessary,

arranged in conjunction with the employee's supervisor. Additionally, the university extends time and days off as required by law for those who are victims of domestic violence, aggression, and stalking.

Albizu University complies with federal laws and regulations concerning immigration status. All new employees are required to fill an I-9, the Employment Eligibility Verification Form. Beginning in 2020, the university contracted an external consultant firm to ensure annual compliance with this requirement.

*Honesty and Truthfulness in External and Internal Communications*

Operational transparency is an institutional value that frames external and internal communications. Albizu demonstrates compliance with the criteria on transparent communications. Section 5.5.2 of the Corporate Bylaws (II.6) grants the president the duty and responsibility for certifying the truthfulness and correctness of all university reports to accrediting, licensing, and regulatory entities, as well as to any department, agency or instrumentality of the federal government and the Government of Puerto Rico, including but not limited to filing the forms required by the federal and Puerto Rico internal revenue codes. In addition, he or she shall certify the truthfulness and delivery of all reports submitted by the University to any creditor, donor, and general public; and to external auditors, the Board of Trustees or any of its committees. The president is in full compliance with this requirement. Twice a year, the president conducts town hall meetings at each locality where in full transparency, he presents the state of affairs of the institution, including the financial situation. Campus chancellors regularly conduct special meetings (such as town halls or forums) to discuss important matters.

Two implemented policies address disclosures. They are the General Policy on Cleary Act (II.6) and the Sex Offender Registration Disclosure Policy (II.6). Compliance with the Cleary Act is demonstrated through the annual publication of campus statistics and sexual offenders in a section of the website. The Student Right to Know Act Fall 2013 Miami Campus Cohort (II.8) disclosure is available on the webpage section of Policies, Procedures and Consumer Information. Disclosures on substantive changes affecting programs include the Disclosure on Dual Enrollment (II.8) and Disclosure on the new Psy.D in Clinical Psychology curriculum (II.8).

Paid advertisement for recruitment campaigns is a tactic under the chief marketing officer's responsibility, whose role includes ensuring compliance with the expectations of accrediting and licensing agencies. The administration created the Albizu Academic Program Locator (II.6) in the online Smartsheet platform to serve as a reference library of each program by detailing the degree offered, the number of credits, CIP code, delivery modality, language, campus, and concentrations, specializations, and minors. The Albizu Academic Program Locator is used by advertising, social media, public relations, and communication consultants to describe program offerings accurately. Images and human interest stories used in advertisements, print collaterals, announcements, and the webpage feature current and former students, staff, and faculty who volunteered and signed media consents to support recruitment efforts.

*Services that Promote Affordability and Accessibility*

Seventy-eight percent of the students in the Miami Campus and 67% of the students in Puerto Rico rely on financial aid. The offices of financial aid, the offices of student affairs, the libraries, and the faculty

work together to promote affordability and accessibility. Programs promoting affordability and access include:

1. federal student aid;
2. institutional or privately funded scholarships, such as the Presidential Scholarships, Dr. Carlos Albizu scholarships, Give Miami Day, and GivingTuesday Puerto Rico;
3. grant-funded scholarship programs, such as the HRSA Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, Psychology Training Fellowships, HRSA Opiod Training Fellowship, and USDE Title V PPOHA Graduate Fellowships;
4. and scholarships through state funds such as the Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias and the State of Florida.

Outreach and funding distributions are based on criteria such as financial need or merit. For example, the implementation of the HRSA and USDE programs required that the institution develop selection criteria based on grant objectives. Programs from private funders used the Policy for the adjudication and disbursement of the Endowment Fund (II.7) as model to award grants based on merit or financial need.

The deans of students' offices, the deans of academic affairs, and the library actively promote internal and external opportunities for grants, loans, scholarships, and work opportunities and support students in the application process. Programs promoting accessibility include payment plans at the Miami Campus through a third-party provider; access to the Presidential Scholarship, emergency grants through the Catastrophic Fund (which assisted students impacted by Hurricane Maria, the earthquakes, and floods in Puerto Rico), and tuition discounts to students employed by Miami Dade County or transferring from Miami Dade College or Broward College. Tuition and costs are published on the website and catalogs. The Financial Aid Webpage (II.7) provides links to financial aid opportunities and resources, including Net Price Calculator Center, College Navigator Website, and College Scorecard Website. One of the highest costs to students, in addition to tuition, is the purchase of textbooks and other educational materials. To mitigate these costs, professors notify the library each semester of the books used in each course, and the library obtains a copy of the textbook. In this manner, students who cannot purchase the books can access them through the Library Reserve Collection.

*Compliance with Applicable Federal, State, and Commission Reporting Policies*

Compliance is demonstrated by current good standing with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias in Puerto Rico, Council for Independent of Education in Florida, and the USDE as a recipient of Title IV funds. Audited financial statements and single audits have been issued without material findings.

*Assessment*

Multi-level assessment of policies, processes, and practices on ethics and integrity take place at the board, administration, and unit level. Findings have led to corrective or preventative actions or action plans leading to improvements in effectiveness. For example, the external audit commissioned by the Board of Trustees resulted in the creation and implementation of a remediation plan with corrective and preventative activities, the automation of annual conflict of interest disclosures, , and the revision and

creation of new policies. At the unit level, internal audits conducted by the Institutional Compliance Officer for Title IV have led to remediation activities, such as training and the issuance of disclosures. The University values and respects assessment results, external and internal, and acts upon them. Action plans implemented to address the USDE Title V Virtual Technical Assistance Report (II.9).

As a result of assessment activities conducted by the Board of Trustees, a new Policy on values and standards of ethical conduct (II.9) was enacted on May 23, 2021. This policy constitutes a mechanism for education, prevention, and control of unethical conduct for the university. It establishes twelve standards of ethical conduct related to loyalty to the university and its mission, fair treatment, respect, compliance, absence of conflict of interest, accountability, confidentiality, responsibility with digital and electronic media, rejection of fraud and corruption, promotion and action to protect the environment and mental health, participation in attending to community, and the use and care of university resources.

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria of Standard II, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. Ethical behavior is an institutional value that is embraced by the Board of Trustees, the president, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

2. Operational transparency is an institutional value, affirmed by presidential leadership.

3. Compliance with the policy and procedures on conflict of interest is a priority.

4. Albizu is an equal opportunity/equal access employer and reflects the founder's legacy of embracing diversity.

5. The university has secured funding from private and public sources to increase affordability.

6. The deanships of academic and student affairs, in partnership with the libraries, facilitate accessibility.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the University should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to ethics and integrity.

1. Engage in an organized and systematic process to (1) determine new policies and procedures or normative letters that need to be adopted (such as updating the copyright and intellectual property rights policies and policies on distance education), and (2) update policies and procedures and

manuals to reflect changes in Albizu's organizational structure and positions and to ensure accuracy in position titles and descriptors.

2. Maintain efforts to improve the institutional website and intranet to ensure disclosure of compliance data on university procedures and outcomes, and enhance navigation capabilities for easy identification of resources.

3. The creation of an inter-campus ad hoc committee, led by the Title IV Compliance Director and the Dean of Students, to address issues of diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ students placed in clinical training sites. This initiative is directly connected to student learning and resulted from the unit-driven assessment of recent trends in student needs, conducted by the Dean of Students of the San Juan Campus.

**STANDARD III: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

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

## Compliance with Standard and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard III and its criteria. The student learning experience's design and delivery are conducted with rigor, periodically assessed, and financially supported. The institutional mission and goals guide educational objectives, the academic programs offered, clinical training, research, and faculty development activities. Three goals of the current strategic plan advance teaching and learning:

> Goal 1: Increasing the Licensing Exam Passing Rates by creating the Presidential Task Force on Licensing Examination Outcomes (III.8) as a mechanism to ensure the alignment of the curriculum to the tests and enhancing assessment through the innovative Competency Based Outcomes Project (III.8).

> Goal 2: Developing the Institution's Digital Functionality through Faculty Training on Distance Learning (III.1)

> Goal 3: Increasing Enrollment and Retention through curricular revisions and the creation of new academic programs, such as New PsyD Program Curriculum (III.1)

Our narrative is also submitted as evidence that Albizu University meets the four Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

*#8: Systematic evaluation and dissemination of findings*—addressed particularly through the institutional policies on institutional effectiveness and student learning and their implementation at the campus and central administration level.

*#9: Rigor, coherence, and assessment in the design and delivery of student learning*—evidenced through programmatic accreditations, licensing in Puerto Rico (A.9) and Florida (A.9), and the use of assessment for continuous improvement.

*#10: Institutional planning linked to institutional effectiveness through assessment*—addressed particularly by the structured process to add or modify academic offerings, the use of assessment findings in budget decisions, the use of quarterly assessment to document and track progress on the strategic plan, and in the creation of faculty development plans.

*#15: Core faculty and resources*—evidenced by faculty members' caliber and commitment and the range of resources funded to support student learning activities that include clinical training and research.

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how Albizu's mission is addressed in the programs offered and (2) how Albizu programs achieve the highest standard of academic excellence. The exploration of these two research questions allowed the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding general education requirements, graduate education, program development, faculty, resources, and assessment.

## Analysis of Key Issues

Albizu University's mission is to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines committed to research, improving quality of life, and serving diverse communities. Dr. Carlos Albizu established the university in 1966 with a theory of education premised on his philosophy that "Knowledge that is based solely on logic and reason may become dehumanizing and is not at the service of humanity. Education that is guided by love emphasizes social welfare more than it does individual competition." More than fifty years later, this passionate conceptualization of education guides the design and delivery of student learning experiences characterized by excellence.

The university offers rigorous and coherent programs at the certificate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels in psychology, speech and language, human services, criminal justice, and education. The majority of the current program offerings are at the graduate level, which reflects Albizu's origin as a professional school of psychology and leader in graduate professional education. Table 2 below presents a summary of current program offerings. The Enrollment Report (III.1) presents the historic enrollment by program.

Table 2. Current Academic Offerings

| Degree | Program/Offering | San Juan Main Campus | Mayaguez Univ. Center | Miami Branch Campus (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ESOL | | | On campus |
| College Credit Certificate | Autism Spectrum Disorder | | | On campus |
| College Credit Certificate | Science Education (Grades 5-9) | | | On campus |
| College Credit Certificate | Mathematics Education (Grades 5-9) | | | On campus |
| College Credit Certificate | Early Childhood Education | | | On campus |
| AA | General Education (2) | | | On campus |
| BA | Elementary Education | | | HybridOn campus |
| BA | Exceptional Student Education | | | On campus |
| BBA | Business Administration (Moratorium) (3) | | | |
| BS | Psychology | | | Fully OnlineOn campus |
| BS | Criminal Justice | | | On campus |
| BI | Interdisciplinary Baccalaureate, specialization in Psychology | On Campus | On campus | |
| BI | Interdisciplinary Baccalaureate, specialization in Speech and Language Therapy | On Campus | On campus | |
| Post-Bachelor/ Graduate Certificate | Autism | On Campus | On campus | |
| Post-Bachelor/ Graduate Certificate | Forensics Psychology | On Campus | | |
| MS | Autism and other Neurodevelopmental Disorders | On Campus | On campus | |
| MS | Psychology | | | On campus |
| MS | Counseling Psychology | On Campus | On campus | |
| MS | Industrial and Organizational Psychology | On Campus | On campus | Fully OnlineOn campus |
| MS | School Psychology | On Campus | On campus | |
| MS | Speech and Language Pathology | On Campus | On campus | On campus |
| MS | Exceptional Student Education | | | Fully Online |
| MS | Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) | | | Fully Online |
| MBA | Business Administration (Moratorium) (3) | | | |
| MBA | Business Administration in Healthcare Management | | | Fully OnlineHybridOn campus |
| PhD | Clinical Psychology | On Campus | | |
| PhD | Industrial and Organizational Psychology | On Campus | On campus | |
| PhD | Human Services | | | Hybrid |
| PhD | Psychology, specialization in Consulting, Research and Teaching | On Campus | | |
| PsyD | Clinical Psychology | On Campus | On campus | On campus |
| PsyD | Counseling Psychology | On Campus | On campus | |
| | | | | |
| **Notes** | | | | |
| (1) All academic offerings for all institutional units are listed according the state licensing agencies records: San Juan and Mayaguez -- Puerto Rico Board of Postseondary | | | | |
| (2) AA in General Education is available, but with no enrollment. (3) BBA & MBA and PhD in Clinical Psychology from the Miami Campus are in moratorium, but still recognized and authorized by the state licensing agency (CIE) | | | | |

Program coherence and quality are validated by the licensing of the educational units that comprise Albizu University. In Puerto Rico, the San Juan Campus and Mayaguez University Center are licensed to offer academic programs by the Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias (JIP), as evidenced by the Puerto Rico 2016 Renewal License (III.2). The application for renewal of the license is currently under review with an expected date of renewal in the fall of 2021. The Miami Branch Campus is licensed annually by the Florida Commission for Independent Education, as evidenced by the Miami Campus 2021 Annual Licensure (III.2).

Academic programs are accurately listed in the catalogs, webpage, and promotional material. The institution created the Academic Program Locator Smartsheet (III.1) to provide a mechanism for internal and external stakeholders to have access to specific and updated official information on program offerings. The Office of Accreditation uses this Smartsheet platform to share information with the chief marketing officer and agencies that develop and implement marketing strategies in social and print media. The catalog provides comprehensive and up-to-date program information for each program, such as description, goals, objectives, curriculum, expected time of completion, requirements, and related policies and procedures. Faculty and their research interests are included for each program in the catalog but not on the new website.  The marketing department began the process to include research profiles in September 2021.

Both catalogs (III.3) are available on the website under the sections Academics and Policies, Procedures, and Consumer Information. Each catalog is comprehensive, but improved language clarity is recommended. Reviewing and updating the catalog is the responsibility of all academic and administrative unit directors.  A new catalog is published every other year unless there are major changes or developments in the institution that require the publication of a revised catalog.  During the spring semester prior to the publication of the new catalog, each director receives a draft of the document with a request to update those sections that have changed. The assistant to the chancellor is responsible for updating the document, requesting the Chancellor's approval for publication, and assuring that the revised document is published on time. Periodic updates are provided through disclosures to the campus community.

The university monitors enrollment trends and uses this data in decision-making and planning.  Figure 1 below provides university enrollment trends by degree level. Additional details on enrollment and retention are provided later in this chapter of the Self-Study.
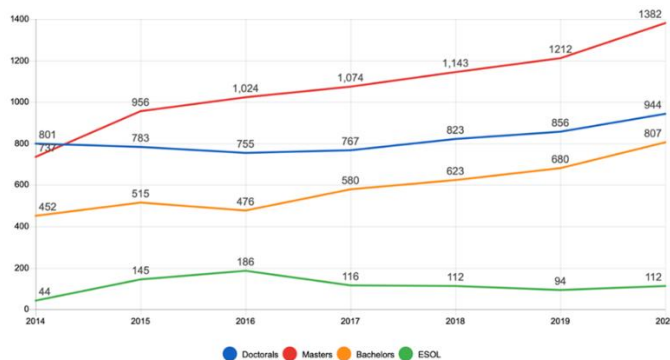


Figure 1. Enrollment by degree level

The following example illustrates how Albizu uses enrollment data in planning. At the Miami Campus the enrollment for all but the M.S. in Exceptional Student Education and the M.S. in TESOL confirms that there is market demand for these offerings and that sufficient revenues are generated to sustain and grow these programs. The enrollment in the M.S in Exceptional Education and the M.S. in TESOL is low and requires engaging in a root cause analysis. Under shared governance, the campus submitted a proposal to modify the M.S. in Exceptional Student Education by creating a concentration in applied behavior analysis. The proposal was approved by the Academic Board and is pending approval by the Board of Trustees.

Overall, the master's degree offerings have substantial enrollment which generates sufficient resources to support these programs. Cost per program is an internal benchmark to assess the viability of programs and to target enrollment numbers for these programs. It has been shared with the university community, the leadership team and the Board of Trustees since 2018. The 2021-2022 Budget Presentation (III.8) is an example of the use of this information for resource allocations.

It is important to note that there is significant overlap in the foundation courses for these master's programs. At the San Campus and the Mayagüez University Center, all the master's programs in psychology have foundational courses that sometimes are shared between them. For example, in a Lifespan Human Development course, it is common to have students from school, industrial and organizational, and counseling psychology. At the Miami Campus, the M.S. Psychology programs in Mental Health, Family and Marriage Therapy, and School Counseling have several foundation courses that overlap among programs: Counseling Theories and Practice; Human Growth and Development; Cross Cultural Counseling; Ethical, Legal, and Professional Conduct for Counselors; Theories of Personality; Advanced Abnormal Psychology; Research Methodology and Program Evaluation; and Substance Abuse.

On March 16, 2020, all courses at the university that were face-to-face or hybrid successfully shifted to remote instruction. At the Miami Campus, the undergraduate B.S. in Psychology was converted to online modality and transitioned to a fully online academic offering. The impact of COVID-19 on the student learning experience is presented in the COVID-19 Addendum to this Self-Study.

New program offerings or program modifications follow institutional policies to ensure that they are developed, designed, and appropriately assessed. This decision-making process includes internal and external review. New programs are developed by faculty and subject matter experts as part of the shared governance model. This process is initiated through a request from an academic program director to place a program in moratorium, or by an academic program director or faculty member to create or modify a new program. The process requires the dean's engagement of academic affairs, the chancellor, the institutional academic board, the president, and the Board of Trustees. New programs or program modifications require an academic director or faculty member to notify the chancellors in writing eighteen months to two years in advance of the program's intended opening date. On average, the cycle lasts approximately six to eight months. This time frame does not include the time required to secure approval by licensing and accrediting agencies. The institution recognizes the need to review the internal process to reduce the completion time to become more agile in responding to market needs. Current policies limit the submission of moratoriums, new program proposals, and program modifications to program directors and/or faculty, which excludes or limits other stakeholders' engagement at the outset.

Evidence of how the institution applies these polices is presented below:

1. Policy for Moratorium or Elimination of Academic Programs (III.1) has been applied to three program offerings of the Miami Branch Campus:  Bachelor of Business Administration, the Master's in Business Administration, and the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. These programs were placed on an internal moratorium in 2015. At the San Juan Campus, the policy was applied in 2015 to the Bachelor of Science Program with Concentrations in Psychology or Speech and Language Therapy, which were placed on official moratorium.

2. Policy for the Creation of Academic Programs (III.1) is used as a guide to present new programs or program modifications to the Academic Board. This policy was used in 2018-2019 when the San Campus and the Mayagüez University Center modified nine programs through the Albizu Curricular Transformation 2026.  At the Miami Campus, the policy was used to conduct a significant curricular revision of the Clinical Psychology Psy.D. program, which reduced the number of credits from 134 to 99 to bring the program credit requirements in line with similar programs at other institutions and making it more attractive to prospective students. In 2021 the Miami Campus created and secured approval of an M.B.A. in Health Care Management. The San Campus and the Mayagüez University Center created and secured approval of three new program offerings: Interdisciplinary Baccalaureate with a specialization in Cyberpsychology, and  Graduate Certificates in Human-Animal Interaction and Animal Assisted Interventions.

Programmatic Accreditations evidence the rigor and coherence of the student learning experience at Albizu, as validated by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Albizu has earned the most extended periods of accreditations, as presented in the Summary of Programmatic Accreditations (III.2)

*Rigorous and coherent clinical training experiences*

At Albizu, clinical training is central to the student learning experience. The Albizu Clinics in Puerto Rico and the Goodman Center in Miami are part of Albizu's practical teaching program for students pursuing master's and doctoral degrees in psychology and speech and language.

Evidence-based services are offered by students under the supervision of clinical supervisors at the clinics, satellite centers, and practicum sites. Both campuses have internship programs for students in the Clinical Psychology program. In Puerto Rico, this internship has been accredited since 2016 by the American Psychological Association (APA) and is available to eligible students of the Psy.D. and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology of Albizu University. In Miami, the APA internship program was approved in 2018 for the maximum period of ten years.

*Advancing the delivery of learning experiences through strategic goals*

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan included three strategic goals that address the design and delivery of student learning experiences: (1) Increase the Licensing Exam Passing Rate, (2) Fully Develop the

Institution's Digital (Online) Functionality, and (3) Increase Enrollment and Retention. Funding from budget allocations totaling $557,000 for 2019-2020 and $915,900 for 2020-2021 has provided adequate support to implement these strategic goals by allowing curricular alignments and course conversions to hybrid and online modalities.

Strategic Goal 1, increasing the licensing passing exam rates, has impacted teaching and learning. Two significant initiatives implemented are the Test Innovations Project in Puerto Rico and the Competency-Based Objective Project at all three units. Table 3 summarizes activities to date of these important initiatives.

Table 3. Activities to support Student Learning and Achievement

| San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center | Miami Campus |
|---|---|
| 1. 100% of courses at the San Juan Campus and the Mayaguez Center were aligned with Puerto Rico licensing examination and the EPPP.<br>2. Ensure test preparation: Test Innovations trained faculty on exam questions design, exam design, and question bank.<br>3. Require comprehensive exams: Faculty completed the integrated version of the comprehensive master exam. This version was administrated in October 2020.<br>4. The Miami Campus offered licensing exam reviews while the Mayagüez University Center offered test preparation session through the San Juan Continuing Education unit, both face-to-face and online.<br>5. Programs continue assessment efforts. | 1. 100% of the courses at the Miami Campus were aligned with the EPPP.<br>2. An EPPP Virtual Study Room was created, with online materials for Psy.D. students, including academic review and preparation materials.<br>3. Materials were uploaded and available to all students in the Psy.D. program, including the San Juan Campus.<br>4. Psy.D. program integrated EPPP material into the comprehensive exam.<br>5. Active learning experiences included: therapy demonstrations, scientific research article presentations, role-playing, clinical case studies and psychological testing administration, scoring, and write-up. |

Strategic Goal 2 is to fully develop the institution's digital (online) functionality. Albizu has provided faculty training to promote the design and delivery of active learning and online instruction through internal and external resources. Investments through the U.S. Department of Education Title V grants have provided the Miami faculty with professional development opportunities both at the undergraduate level through Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions and at the graduate level through Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans Program. These five-year individual development grants, as well as institutional investments at the San Juan Campus and the Mayagüez University Center, have allowed the institution to build a robust online learning capacity, as demonstrated by having 100% of the faculty trained and 760 courses meeting Quality Matters (QM) standards. Assessment of these activities is described within the chapter for Standard V.

Strategic Goal 3 is to increase enrollment and retention. The strategies related to the design and delivery of the student learning experience are intended to increase the range of academic programs, standardize the curricula, develop academic plans, and create bilingual curricula. In 2018 the institution initiated curricular revision initiatives at both campuses. As a result, the institution has made substantial progress in modifying existing academic programs but limited progress in adding new programs. The San Juan Campus added the M.S. in Autism and other Neurodevelopment Disorders. The institution recognizes the need for agility of process for approving new programs. Retention, which is covered in the chapter on

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, is on track to meet the undergraduate level target for the San Juan Campus but lagging for the Miami Campus and the Mayagüez University Center. Graduate retention is on track to meet the target at the San Juan Campus, is lagging at the Mayagüez University Center, but has been exceeded at the Miami Campus.

This information, presented in Table 4, is part of the Albizu University Scorecard (III.8).

Table 4. KPI's on Enrollment and Retention

| 2019 -2022 Albizu Strategic Plan KPIs | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Puerto Rico | | | | U.S. | | Albizu |
| | San Juan | | Mayaguez | | Miami | | Global |
| | Actual Status | Target | Actual Status | Target | Actual Status | Target | Target |
| Indicators: | | | | | | | |
| Total Enrollment | 1,831 | 1,771 | 519 | 509 | 922 | 1,100 | |
| Undergraduate Retention Rate | 81% | 85% | 75% | 85% | 67% | 80% | |
| Graduate Retention Rate | 88% | 90% | 80% | 90% | 89% | 85% | |
| Graduation Rate (FTFT) | NA | >60 | NA | NA | 100% | >60 | |

In 2018, the San Juan Campus and the Mayagüez University Center engaged the entire full-time faculty in a comprehensive curricular revision known as Albizu Curricular Transformation 2026. Faculty members participated in two full-day retreats and follow-up working meetings that led to the adoption of the Albizu Education and Academic Model and the revision of academic programs. The Albizu Education and Academic Model has five themes that were embedded into the curricula: (1) the student at the center and the integral formation of the student; (2) academic excellence; (3) innovation, entrepreneurship, and self-management; (4) interculturality and internationalization; and (5) flexibility and link to the environment. They are viewed as transformational axes of the Academic Model that drive academic and administrative activities related to teaching, research, services, community engagement, and support services. During the 2018 faculty retreats, each program's faculty conducted a comprehensive SWOT analysis and proposed modifications in content, curricular sequences, and credit hours. The program modifications, summarized in Table 5, were presented to and approved by the Institutional Academic Board and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2019.

Table 5. Revised Curricula influenced by the Albizu Education and Academic Model

| Curricular Revisions | Academic Program | Campus/Unit |
|---|---|---|
| Revised Curricula in Effect as of Fall 2019 | | |
| Revised curricular alignment, course revisions, and credit redistribution or reduction | M.S. in Counseling Psychology | San Juan and Mayagüez |
| | M.S. in School Psychology | San Juan and Mayagüez |
| | Ph.D. in Psychology with specialization in Consulting, Research, and Teaching | San Juan |
| | Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology | San Juan |
| | M.S. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology | San Juan and Mayagüez |
| | Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology | San Juan and Mayagüez |
| | Interdisciplinary Baccalaureate (B.I.), concentration in Psychology | San Juan and Mayagüez |
| | Interdisciplinary Baccalaureate (B.I.), concentration in Speech and Language Therapy | San Juan and Mayagüez |
| Revised Curricula in Effect as of Fall 2020 | | |
| Revised curricular alignment with licensing exam domains, reduction in credits | Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology | San Juan and Mayagüez |

In 2019, the Miami Campus revised two program offerings. The Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program reduced total credit hours from 134 to 99, and the Bachelor of Science in Psychology added a minor in Speech Pathology. The Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology program at the Miami Campus over the years grew in the number of required credits to a point that it was quite likely the most credit heavy of any Psy.D. curriculum in the country. Requiring 134 credits forced students to carry heavy loads each semester and to incur sizable debt. Problems with student attrition and length of time to completion were also identified as byproducts of the current curriculum. When put side by side with curricula from other programs, the Miami campus Psy.D. program was not competitive in terms of credits required and cost.

In summer 2018 the Psy.D. faculty, with the assistance of the chancellor, began to meet in order to produce a revised curriculum that, while maintaining its compliance with the APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA) Standards of Accreditation, would require fewer credits, pace requirements better, and be less costly. Soon after this work began another goal was added. For many historical reasons, a disconnect had developed between the program and the Goodman Psychological Clinic on campus. In fact, few Clinical Psychology Psy.D. students were doing any of their practicum training at the Clinic. The New PsyD Program Curriculum (III.1) successfully accomplished these important goals: reduced required credits from 134 to 99, in line with many other programs; paced requirements better; integrated Albizu's Goodman Clinic with the training program, thus again becoming a training clinic; and kept costs for students in line with other programs while maintaining acceptable levels of tuition revenue for the campus. Upon implementation of this change, enrollment increased from 23 to 45 for the 2020-2021 academic year.

In 2020, the Miami Campus decreased the total number of credits in the Ph.D. in Human Services from 69 to 57. The modification reduced the courses in research and statistics from three to two; infused the remaining courses with content on ethical standards, multicultural competencies, and crisis intervention; and expanded the number of credits to complete an empirical dissertation from 12 to 15 credits.

The development of a three-year academic plan to analyze current and future academic offerings is a strategy to increase enrollment. The development of this university-wide academic plan has been designated a priority for 2022, once a chief academic officer is on board. The chief academic officer will be part of the central administration team reporting to the president and will be a peer to the campus chancellors. The chief academic officer will work with the campus chancellors, the academic deans, and the faculty to create the plan. The Miami Campus developed a five-year plan in 2019 that embraced the conceptualization of the academic model of governance presented in the Albizu Education and Academic Plan developed by the San Juan Campus and the Mayagüez University Center in partnership with the Presidency.

The Planning for Sustainability at Carlos Albizu University presented to the Board by the National Center on Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) in 2019 underscored the need for student mobility across the two campuses. The report stressed the need to share resources across and within campuses. Facilitating improved curriculum articulation between the San Juan and Miami campuses will require increased university-wide collaboration in the design of learning and delivery of the student learning experience. The first step towards advancing the strategic priority of articulated curricula was creating the Psy.D. Cross-walk between the Clinical Psychology Psy.D. programs of the two campuses. However, next steps have not yet been formalized. At the Presidential Task Force on Licensing Examination Outcomes, the need to create inter-campus conversations of assessment results of comparable programs was identified, particularly between the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology in San Juan and Miami.

*General education at the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center*

At the undergraduate level, the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center offer Interdisciplinary Baccalaureate (B.I.) programs with concentrations in psychology or speech language therapy. These programs align and reflect the mission of Albizu University and the institution's goals. Albizu University's vision is to be an international leader in academic innovation, research, and community service, promoting diversity to generate a transformative social impact, while its mission is to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology and other disciplines, committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities. The interdisciplinary bachelor's degree program's mission is to provide a solid foundation of general education courses that deliberately and systematically integrates the arts and sciences to identify interconnections among the disciplines. This integration allows us to exceed the limits of the disciplines to explain phenomena, solve problems, propose new questions, produce knowledge, and understand the world around us. In addition, the Psychology and Speech Language Therapy majors have the purpose of preparing professionals who are sensitive to cultural diversity and respectful of individual differences, and who contribute to the improved quality of life of the people they serve.

Institutional goals are reflected in the alignment with overarching program goals directed at:

1. Promoting the integral formation of its students to prepare them to become successful professionals
2. Providing students with an intercultural and global perspective by integrating opportunities of learning a third language, sign language, and an intercultural competencies development course
3. Fostering an attitude of critical thinking concerning local and international events and experiences, thus contributing to the formation of individuals who are knowledgeable about the history and reality of Puerto Rico without being closed to the wider spectrum of events happening outside the Island
4. Developing interest and skills in interdisciplinary research throughout the curriculum and in a capstone research seminar
5. Providing students with a solid intellectual foundation that will contribute to their success in future graduate studies and professional work.

The alignment of the undergraduate degree program with institutional goals is also evidenced in the curricular map of both majors. The curricular map aligns all degree courses with program objectives and institutional goals.

General education requirements were determined taking into consideration the importance of providing students with depth and breadth of educational experiences that will allow them to be exposed to a global perspective and intercultural awareness to prepare them to work well with others. In addition, general education courses are designed in a way that builds competencies and knowledge in important life and professional skills such as written and oral communication, information literacy, scientific inquiry and critical thinking, integrative thinking and problem solving, ethical and social responsibility, project management, self-efficacy, and teamwork capacity. Finally, selection of courses was also guided by taking into consideration the competencies required to successfully navigate higher level major courses. For example, students in the Speech Language Pathology program need to have a foundation base of physics to understand sound and the application of physics in courses such as acoustics.

Although university-wide learning goals are primarily driven towards graduate education competencies, most of them include expected learning outcomes that apply to all undergraduate majors. These include: Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups, Understanding appreciation and application of ethical principles and professional standards, Information Literacy, Communication Skills, and Quantitative and statistical reasoning for the analysis of problems that support decision-making.

The bachelor's degree program underwent a curricular revision in 2019, yielding a reduction in the number of credits in general education courses. Instead of 72 credits in general education, the Speech and Language Therapy major now requires 60 credits in general education courses, while the Psychology major also requires 60 credits in general education courses. The document General Education Requirement at Albizu (III.5) compares the general education requirements for both programs. The reduction in general education requirements allows for students to have more flexibility in choosing a learning experience that is tailored to their interests. The courses were chosen to reflect areas of analytical thinking, arts, Spanish and English composition, humanities and social sciences, and natural sciences. The courses are designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop and enhance skills that can

prepare them to become sensible and aware citizens who are knowledgeable of themselves and the world around them.

In the past five years, there have been discussions to review general education offerings to achieve closer alignment university-wide. The initial bachelor's degrees were revised in 2019, yielding such changes in the general education offerings as the adding of an intercultural development course and general education electives. This task was the responsibility of the department of undergraduate studies, which includes the program director, coordinators, and faculty, the curriculum committee, and the institutional academic board.

Every year, the institution selects the institutional competencies that will be assessed. These competencies are aligned with the undergraduate competencies. The general education courses that are aligned with the competencies are chosen. Faculty in those courses are informed and tasked to collect student learning assessment data throughout the academic term. The assessment of learning is guided by using the American Colleges and Universities Association Value Rubrics, course assignments, and tests. The assessment results have been used to improve general education offerings and student learning outcomes by prompting faculty workshops in topics such as active learning, student engagement, retention; integrating Intercultural Development Competencies in all curricular experiences; establishing research labs; revising teaching practices; and redesigning curricular planning.

The end of the year Undergraduate Program Institutional Effectiveness (III.5) summarizes how the program is using assessment results to improve the student learning experience and engaging in innovation. The program is in the process of integrating Intercultural Development Competencies in all the curricular experiences, promoting competent intercultural behavior by having all students and faculty complete the Intercultural Development Inventory, and implementing an early alert system for identifying students at risk, in collaboration with the IT office and the Student Retention Committee.

*General education at the Miami Campus*

The Miami Campus offers five undergraduate degrees:  B.S. in Psychology, B.S. in Criminal Justice, B.A. in Education, B.A. in Elementary Education, and B.A. in Exceptional Student Education. All courses taught in the Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Bachelor of Arts in Education, and Master of Science in Education programs were designed by credentialed (i.e., Master or Doctoral level) professionals, many of whom also are currently in-field with practical hands-on experience in their respective areas. The courses are constantly upgraded and modified. In the past five years over 45 courses have been converted from traditional face-to-face format to hybrid or online modality.  The resources used in these course conversions (e.g., texts, videos, exercises, test banks, supplemental materials, etc.) were the latest editions available from publishers and other sources.  Selected full-time and adjunct faculty have completed the Quality Matters, PVC Albizu Training, and/or the Title V PPOHA Graduate Grant training in preparation for developing, designing, implementing, and maintaining success with distance learning (i.e., virtual) courses. Further, all teaching instructors have either a Master's or Doctoral degree in the discipline that they teach.

The general education courses offered in the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees are integrated into the different academic disciplines (i.e., psychology, education & criminal justice).  These

general education courses, presented in the document General Education Requirements at Albizu (III.5) for the B.S. in Psychology program, are referred to as "foundation courses," and they must be successfully completed with a grade of C or better. The courses are designed to support and elevate students' oral communication, reading and writing skills; and align logical reasoning and critical thinking with inductive and deductive reasoning. Additionally, science and mathematics knowledge, computer technology, and presentation skills are included in the academic disciplines of the General Education program. Foundation courses are infused with principles in cultural diversity education to address multiculturalism.

The general education courses are constantly reviewed for discipline respective revisions and are upgraded to include new research in the field via the required foundation and academic concentration. This is within all the general and specialized psychology and education courses. A part of this review is an emphasis on cultural awareness, cultural competence/complexity, and the preparation of students for reasoning skills and fair judgement analysis. Courses in cross-cultural studies and racial groups embrace causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination with approaches to resolving conflicts due to inter-group differences. Courses encompass critical thinking skill building, humanities, research methodology, ethics and professional conduct. This engages students' cognitive processes, expanding their cultural/global sensitivity/awareness, highlighting their specific academic track, as well introducing areas outside of academia.

The undergraduate general education foundation courses include subjects that prepare students to be competent in presenting and writing information, scientific reasoning, and critical thinking. Courses such as Professional Writing (EAP300), Professional Speaking (ASP 102), Interpersonal Communication (PSY341), Introduction to Computers (CGS200), Statistics in Psychology (PSY408), and Introduction to Philosophy (PHI101), prepare students for ethical practice and instill valuing diversity and inclusion. All undergraduate degree programs have their specific student learning assessments and outcomes.

In alignment with Albizu University's mission, the coursework in the various undergraduate degree programs in psychology, education, and criminal justice educates students, with a focus on developing minorities, while preparing them to join the workforce with appropriate knowledge, skills and aptitudes (KSA's), and the competencies required to help those in need. Of particular interest to our mission is to build cultural competence skills in all courses that are applicable in working with diverse populations. The Behavior Analysis and Speech and Language minors allow students to find jobs in the helping professions upon graduation with a Bachelor's degree. Graduates from these undergraduate programs are counseled on the advantages of a pathway into Albizu University's master's and doctoral degree programs. As such, the design and delivery of Albizu's undergraduate and graduate programs are broadly aligned with the University's institutional goals.

The general education requirements for Albizu's (Miami Campus) baccalaureate degrees are aligned with the State of Florida, Department of Education (FLDOE), Commission on Independent Education (CIE) guidelines. FLDOE prescribes general education competency areas for inclusion in all accredited Bachelor degree programs. These competencies are reflected in the 42-48 credits of general education required in all Bachelor programs. These competencies include critical thinking, presentation/oral communication skills, professional writing, knowledge of basic science, mathematics and statistics, conducting research, and computer literacy, among others.

Although the competencies are the same, there are minor differences in the number of general education credit requirements among the baccalaureate degrees, as follows: B.S. in Psychology: 48 credits, B.S. Criminal Justice: 45 credits, B.A. in Elementary Education: 42 credits and B.A. in Exceptional Student Education: 42 credits. The difference in number of credits among the Bachelor degree programs is tied to the specific content areas (i.e., major concentration) of each discipline. For example, Introduction to Computers (CGS200) is not required in Education as there is the concentration course Introduction to Educational Technology (EDF103) required for degree completion.

Review of general education offerings, which is the responsibility of the program director, the full-time program faculty, and the Dean of Academic Affairs, has been carried out in the past five years. After the Chancellor's approval, program modifications are presented to the Institutional Academic Board.

Consistent with university strategic goal #2: Fully Develop the Institution's Digital (Online) Functionality, the baccalaureate degrees have been redesigned with the infusion of distance/online learning and virtual technology. Through a Title V grant awarded to Albizu University, over 36 courses from the three Bachelor's degree programs were converted from face-to-face to a hybrid format, thus aligning with the university strategic goals. Some general education courses were converted to hybrid, including English Composition I, English Composition 2, and Introduction to Literature. Currently, the complete Bachelor of Science in Psychology curriculum is being converted to a fully online degree program following the Quality Matters guidelines for distance learning.

All courses (i.e., general education and concentration) are assessed through midterm and final examinations, research papers, article review/critiques, small group assignments, quizzes, projects, clinical observations at schools, and internship experience for Elementary Education students, among others. General education courses must be passed with a grade of 'C' or better. To graduate from the program, students in the BS in Psychology must have a 2.0 minimum GPA, and students in the BA in Education must have a 2.5 GPA. (Education graduates who aspire to teach in the State of Florida must have a 2.5 GPA--thus our minimum GPA requirement.) Additionally, the last four years of data demonstrate that graduates hired as instructors/teachers have been successfully completed Florida Department of Education exams for continued employment, ESOL Endorsement criteria, and Reading Certification licensure. Agendas at the Director's regular core faculty meetings include analysis of assessment results that have impacted successful delivery of courses, and student performance. Also, assessment results and faculty input have led to modifications to course content, social presence, and modality of delivery (e.g., Hybrid vs. Face-to-Face vs. Online). This has further led to implementing measures of continual improvement for synchronous and asynchronous class direction, in support of students' learning experiences.

*Graduate education to develop research, scholarship, and independent thinking*

The University's initial and ongoing goal has been to fulfill an ever-increasing need for graduate programs in mental health adapted to Puerto Rico and South Florida's socio-cultural realities. Although the University has opened undergraduate programs in later years, its emphasis continues to be on graduate education. Table 6 presents fall enrollment for graduate and undergraduate programs from 2014 to the present.

Table 6. Degree Program Enrollment from 2014 to 2020

| Category | Fall Enrollment | | | | | | | 5 Years Annual Change (%) | Last Year Change (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020p | | |
| **by Academic Level** | | | | | | | | | |
| Doctorates | 800 | 783 | 755 | 767 | 823 | 865 | 944 | 3.8% | 9.1% |
| Masters | 736 | 956 | 1,024 | 1,074 | 1,138 | 1,254 | 1,382 | 7.6% | 10.2% |
| Bachelors | 452 | 515 | 476 | 580 | 623 | 682 | 807 | 9.4% | 18.3% |
| ESOL | 44 | 145 | 186 | 116 | 112 | 109 | 112 | -5.0% | 2.8% |
| **by Campus** | | | | | | | | | |
| San Juan | 1,060 | 1,231 | 1,180 | 1,359 | 1,457 | 1,628 | 1,814 | 8.1% | 11.4% |
| Miami | 972 | 1,031 | 1,033 | 929 | 900 | 843 | 912 | -2.4% | 8.2% |
| Mayaguez | 0 | 137 | 228 | 249 | 339 | 439 | 519 | 30.5% | 18.2% |
| **Total*** | **2,032** | **2,399** | **2,441** | **2,537** | **2,696** | **2,910** | **3,245** | **6.2%** | **11.5%** |
| *Excludes Non-Degrees Students and LOAs | | | | | | | | | |

Graduate education, in alignment with the Institutional Policy on Assessment of Student Learning (III.8), seeks to develop and assess seven competencies according to the programs' particular specializations. These competencies, which are closely related to the institutional mission, include: (1) Mastery of theory and practice in their chosen field of study; (2) Mastery of Clinical/Professional Competencies; (3) Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups; (4) Understanding, appreciation and application of ethical principles and professional standards; (5) Information Literacy; (6) Communication/Interpersonal Skills; and (7) Life-Long Learning. Course syllabi evidence the incorporation of these competencies in the delivery of student learning experiences.

Accredited programs have program-specific competencies that are assessed by the faculty through formative and summative evaluations. ASHA's professional competencies are (1) accountability; (2) integrity; (3) effective communication skills; (4) clinical reasoning; (5) evidence-based practice; (6) concerns for individual served; (7) cultural competence; professional duty; and (8) collaborative practices. Graduate speech-language pathology faculty include discussions of these competencies as part of the student orientation and the courses. The Telesupervision Manual for the M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology Program (III.6) describes how the evaluation of graduate student practitioners is conducted online through the CALIPSO platform. Once the evaluation is completed, the supervisor discusses it with the graduate student practitioner using videoconferencing technology. The evaluation rating is automatically calculated in CALIPSO. The tele-supervisor is responsible for supporting the student's acquisition of skill and knowledge in areas of speech-language pathology (articulation, fluency, voice and resonance, receptive and expressive language, hearing, cognitive aspects of communication, social aspects of communication, modalities of communication) according to the clinical experience.

APA's professional competencies are aligned with their nine standards of accreditation. They are (1) research; (2) ethical and legal standards; (3) individual and cultural diversity; (4) professional values, attitudes, and behaviors; (5) communication and interpersonal skills; (6) assessment; (7) intervention; (8) supervision; and (9) consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills. The competencies are evaluated using course grades, practicum grades, written exams, practicum evaluations, internship evaluations, and doctoral projects. The PhD in Clinical Psychology Program Clinical Training Manual (III.6) and the PsyD in Clinical Psychology Program Handbook (III.6) include rubrics to assess student learning for Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan Rubric (III.8) and Psychological Evaluation Rubric (III.8).

Clinical training experiences at the graduate level for psychology programs seek to develop competencies in five target areas of professional development and awareness: (1) clinical and organizational intervention skills, with due regard for the behavioral norms, values, and belief systems of the client; (2) appropriate assessment skills, taking into consideration multicultural variables, the special needs and qualities of group members, and the integration of research findings into the assessment process; (3) awareness and understanding of the psychological needs and behaviors of different ethnic groups within their sociocultural contexts; (4) clinical and/or organizational skills through supervised experiences; and (5) research skills through supervised research experiences.

*Rigorous and coherent research training experiences*

Consistent with its mission, Albizu University has worked to improve its research infrastructure for both faculty and students and to foster research productivity by developing an Institutional Center for Scientific Research (known as CIIC, by its Spanish acronym); by adopting an external independent review board, the Brain Research Alliance of New York, which currently reviews and approves human subject research; and by hosting annual student research symposiums.

The CIIC was founded to foster research; increase the number of scientific publications among its students, professors, and graduates; disseminate its research; and provide information on funding sources. The CIIC has dedicated space on the San Juan Campus that gives access to ten computers programmed to analyze research data. These facilities are available to students and faculty members conducting scientific research.

The San Juan Campus is home to the Revista Ciencias de la Conducta (Behavioral Science Journal), a scientific, peer-reviewed journal founded in 1985. The journal has become one of the leading forums for clinical, scientific, and theoretical articles related to the field of mental health in Puerto Rico. Over the past 35 years, the journal has published countless articles that specifically address topics related to Puerto Rican psychology—including psychopathology, psychotherapy, psychological measurement, community work, industrial-organizational psychology, social stigma, sexuality, and studies of clinical cases—as well as countless general discussions of core areas of psychology. The journal is indexed in Latindex, an online information system for scientific journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal; a goal for the coming year is to increase by three the number of places in which it is indexed.

Significant research is being conducted at the Miami Campus by the Clinical Psychology Psy.D.

program. In 2019, the Miami Campus secured a Title V Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans grant that included the establishment of a Graduate Student Center. The PPOHA Evaluation Report (III.8) of the first year of implementation documented success in meeting and exceeding the outcome of developing an overall system for online/on-campus graduate student writing and research assistance. The project staff created and implemented 100% of the system for online and on-campus graduate student writing and research assistance programs. This included creating the shell for the Graduate Student Center in BlackBoard, which is operational; conducting a Graduate Student Needs Assessment; and developing seminars on the IRB process, APA Format, Choosing a Research Topic, Master Thesis Process, and Doctoral Process. The Miami Campus Student Council, Office of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs hosts annually the South Florida Student Research Symposium (III.4).

The CIIC director interacts with the Miami Campus on a limited basis. The University recognizes the need to strengthen inter-campus collaboration and increase external research funding, which was identified as a strategy to increase revenue in alignment with the institutional vision of becoming an international leader in academic innovation and research. This is demonstrated by the approval of a director of external resources, service, and academic grants in the 2020-2021 budget.

*Resources for the Delivery of Learning Experiences*

The institution provides evidence in the Budget Certification 2020-2021 (III.4) and Budget Certification 2021-2022 (III.4) to support that it has adequate and appropriate resources for academic programs of study and student progress. The academic and administrative units receive support to maintain or expand training and educational activities, materials, equipment, and physical facilities through the budget process. One example is Albizu's commitment to sponsor the two Albizu Clinics in Puerto Rico and the Goodman Center in Miami.

The Libraries are learning centers equipped with advanced technology which offer access to information that supports our academic programs. The collections include books, reference books, scientific periodicals, dissertations and doctoral projects, and videos; all collections are available in hard copy and electronic formats. The libraries provide remote access to their electronic resources through a virtual library COBIMET, as well as the library's online computer catalog Symphony. The libraries maintain membership with LYRASIS, the Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), and the American Library Association (ALA). Through LYRASIS, the libraries have access to the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), which provides the world's largest bibliographic utility as well as cataloging and interlibrary loan services. The libraries' electronic collection offers more than 70 databases in a variety of disciplines, thousands of full-text electronic journals, over 1000,000 e-books, and local and international newspapers. In addition, nearly 59,000 live-streaming videos, including educational films, are offered through Films on Demand, Psychotherapy.net, and Academic Video Online. The ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database provides full-text dissertations and theses from all over the world. Librarians monitor usage on a monthly and annual basis, and the annual report is used to make budget decisions.  The Virtual Library Statistics Reports for Puerto Rico and Miami (III.4) evidenced the use of resources to support students' academic progress.

Albizu has received federal and research program awards to fund campus-wide, programmatic, and faculty research initiatives.  The Financial Statements demonstrate how the amount of funding has

significantly increased over the past five years, from $1 million in 2015 to $5. 2 million by 2019. These grants supported strategic goals related to the student learning experience. For example, grants enabled the Miami Campus to build a new wing for the undergraduate program and a second floor for graduate and undergraduate student use, with modern facilities, educational resources, and state-of-the-art technology.

In 2017 Albizu University established the applied research Third Mission Institute (III.6), which demonstrates how programmatic and financial resources support student learning. The Institute operates as a bridge between the academy and community to facilitate the dissemination and implementation of scientific innovations in the fields of prevention and health promotion. It is founded on the premise that every university has three primary missions: teaching, research, and applying knowledge for the benefit of the community. The Institute has an active portfolio of grants amounting to $7.7 million, all with important components of capacity building, public policy analysis, and evidence-based practices. Faculty and graduate students from San Juan and Mayagüez are engaged in research and clinical training activities through the Third Mission Institute.  In 2020 a collaboration with the Miami Campus was initiated.

*Faculty role and development*

The faculty comprises all personnel holding academic rank, including anyone from Instructor to Professor, and any person designated as teaching staff. According to the Faculty Handbook (III.2), Core Faculty are those who hold an academic rank and enjoy employee benefits. Albizu University has a roster of 88 full-time and 207 adjunct faculty members, as presented in the Faculty Profile (III.2). Their credentials and areas of interest are included in the academic catalog. Table 7 presents the instructional personnel by FTE and the student to faculty ratio.

Table 7.  Instructional Personnel as reported to IPEDS

|  | Fall 2016 | | Fall 2017 | | Fall 2018 | | Fall 2019 | | Fall 2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | San Juan | Miami | San Juan | Miami | San Juan | Miami | San Juan | Miami | San Juan | Miami |
| FTE instructional staff | 91 | 50 | 89 | 44 | 97 | 43 | 105 | 41 | 113 | 50 |
| Student-to-FTE-faculty ratio | 14:01 | 17:01 | 14:01 | 18:01 | 18:01 | 17:01 | 17:01 | 12:01 | 17:01 | 12:01 |

Faculty members are at the center of the design and delivery of the student learning experience. Faculty members are encouraged to embrace Albizu's founder's belief that "love reaches beyond knowledge" in the context of a learning community that promotes change, critical inquiry, and cultural production. The ethos of the founder is present 37 years after his passing, particularly because there are faculty members who were his students.  Each year, at the date of the anniversary of the founder, the institution hosts an activity to encourage the faculty, in addition to students and staff, to embrace Dr. Albizu's aspiration.

At Albizu, as noted in the Faculty Handbook (III.2), the role of the faculty "is to encourage a climate conducive to excellence in teaching, training and learning within a framework of academic freedom, professional responsibility, high ethical standards, and cultural sensitivity to issues of diversity."  Faculty

have multiple responsibilities: prepare and teach courses; provide academic counseling and mentorship; maintain academic counseling records; attend faculty meetings; be actively involved in academic affairs; supervise dissertation and practicums; participate in curriculum revisions; participate in faculty development activities; attend graduation; and contribute to academic research, creative work and proposal writing.

Essential among these duties is student mentoring. All academic programs have faculty assigned to provide mentorship in a variety of areas, such as research, registration, general student support, and advisement. Every program at Albizu requires students to schedule meetings with their mentors as part of their programs. Some programs, such as speech-language pathology, have manuals on mentoring for faculty members; others have official forms where mentoring and advising sessions with students are recorded.  The Alternative Pathways to Excellence Program (III.4) for the M.S. in Speech-Language Psychology is a pilot being implemented at the Miami Campus designed to bridge the gap between an undergraduate education and demands of the master's program. Specifically, the program will assess student support, academic advising, professional advising, mentoring on research, and orientation on tools for success.

Faculty play an essential role in Albizu's shared governance model and participate in the governance process through their meetings and committees. Both campuses have a faculty representative and an alternative faculty representative on the Academic Board.  Faculty members are critical to advancing the strategic goals of increasing the licensing exam passing rates, fully developing the institution's digital (online) functionality, increasing enrollment and retention, and increasing sources of revenues through grant funding.  Faculty has been engaged in advancing institutional goals through participation in task forces and meetings related to planning, institutional effectiveness, and assessment.

The Faculty development policy (III.2) provides the framework to align the continuous development of faculty with the University's mission and educational objectives. Each program formulates and implements faculty development plans, and each academic program director is expected to hold regular meetings with each faculty member to establish individual faculty development goals. A Faculty Career Development Plan Sample for 2019-2020 (III.2) illustrates the creation of an outline of career goals and outcomes and the process to establish target dates and success indicators for research, publications, teaching, service, and other areas such as mentoring.

The university has established an annual Professional Development Fund for full-time and part-time faculty members, as communicated to the faculty in 2018 through the Faculty Development Letter (III.2). The annual amount varies by program and campus and ranges from $1,000 to $2,350 per year per faculty member. These funds can be used for activities related to a faculty member's area of expertise, the purchase of published materials on teaching and institutional responsibilities, and the enhancement of a faculty member's knowledge of pedagogy and/or the integration of technology in teaching. Funds to attend conventions and conferences are available to core faculty members, and awards are made contingent on fiscal resources availability.

In 2020-2021, all academic program directors submitted Faculty Career Development Plans to the academic affairs deans. This information is used to plan faculty support at the campus level. For example, the Dean of Academic Affairs at the San Juan Campus made a request to the central administration to

secure funds to supplement the allocation from the Professional Development Fund to offer training on active learning.

Since 2018, faculty development aligned to the institutional mission has contributed to better design and delivery of the student learning experience. The pandemic provided an opportunity to offer training related to the pivot to remote instruction using the same content across units. The institution recognizes the need for and benefit of greater institution-wide collaboration in providing faculty development opportunities.

*Assessment and Planning*

Albizu conducts periodic assessments of the effectiveness of programs, following the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness Policy (III.8). At the campus level, the dean of academic affairs, program directors, and faculty are responsible for collaborating in data gathering and collection of effectiveness indicators related to the student learning experience. As established in this policy, the programs must demonstrate that graduates achieve seven institutional competencies, and these must be assessed in accordance with the specialization of each program. The chapter on Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment covers these processes in depth and presents results.

Albizu is one university with a campus in San Juan, Puerto Rico, a branch campus in Miami, Florida, and a university center in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Institutional directors reporting to the president ensure university-wide consistency in planning and assessing the student learning experience. Upon his arrival in 2017, the president created the Academic and Institutional Excellence Board. This monthly forum creates the space to ensure that campus decision-making is aligned with the vision of one university. In addition, the institution recognizes the need to implement university-wide systems to standardize the collection of assessment information. The new position of chief academic officer was created to ensure integration of assessment and planning at the central administration level, between campuses, and between the central administration and the campuses.

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria of Standard III, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. The founder's conceptualization of education guides the design and delivery of student learning experiences characterized by excellence.

2. The Albizu Educational and Academic Model influences curricular revisions.

3. The faculty has been highly involved in the creation of new programs and modification of existing ones.

4. New programs and program modifications characterized by academic rigor and efficiency will not only alleviate student debt and decrease attrition and time-to-completion but will also release student time to prepare for advanced academic requirements or attain occupational opportunities.

5.  The institution supports faculty development at different levels.

6.  Research and clinical training activities are robust and align with the institutional mission.

7.  The budget supports the design and delivery of the student learning experience.

8.  Multiple assessment activities to measure institutional effectiveness are in place.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the University should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to the design and delivery of the student learning experience.

1.  Use language in the catalog and other institutional documents that is simple, concise, and consistent for all programs.

2.  Review the internal process for academic program development to reduce the time to completion and become more agile in responding to market needs.

3.  Evaluate the policies on moratorium and new program development to ensure they are inclusive in the engagement of additional stakeholders at the outset.

4.  Develop the three-year institutional academic plan that is required under the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and ensure that its implementation addresses the need for institution-wide curriculum alignment, faculty development, and research.

**STANDARD IV:  SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

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

## Compliance with Standard and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard IV and its criteria. The institution is committed to student retention, persistence, completion, and success, which is facilitated by professional staff and systems. The institution is actively advancing support of the student experience through two goals of the current strategic plan.

Our narrative is also submitted also as evidence that Albizu University meets the two Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

*#8: Systematic evaluation and dissemination of findings*—addressed particularly through the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on student satisfaction that is shared at all levels of the organization and guide programmatic and budgeting decisions.

*#10: Institutional planning linked to institutional effectiveness thorough assessment*—addressed particularly by the development and implementation of retention plans, strategies to improve student satisfaction, re-engineering of admission and recruitment processes, and optimizing the constituent relationship management system.

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how the Strategic Plan drives recruitment and admission for all programs and (2) how Albizu's mission is reflected in and achieved through effective support services. The exploration of these two research questions allowed the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding support for student success.

## Analysis of Key Issues

The integrated and humanistic development of Albizu students is an institutional value that serves as the foundation to support the student experience. The institution invests in empowering students by providing them with an environment that enhances their university experience and facilitates their learning and success. The institution supports students from admission through graduation, using integrated initiatives to meet student needs and promote retention and degree completion.

Efforts to develop an empowering educational environment are part of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (I.1). The two specific sub-goals addressing student support are increasing the number of student self-service

modules implemented (Subgoal 2.1) and increasing enrollment and retention (3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7). These priorities are championed by the dean's offices of student affairs and by an inter-campus information technology team led by the institutional director of information technology. Assessment information on progress towards these sub-goals is presented later in Chapter V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

*Providing Students with the Support Needed to Achieve Success*

Student support services at the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center, and the Miami Campus are offered by the following campus departments: enrollment management, student affairs, finance, financial aid, registrar, and information technology. Under the leadership of campus chancellors, these offices provide integrated programs and services throughout the student life cycle. Support provided to students includes tutoring, advising, counseling, psychological services, mentoring, career services, and financial assistance.

In 2020, the Board of Trustees commissioned an assessment of the university organization and structure that identified the need to view enrollment management as a strategic function. NCHEMS recommended the "appointment of a qualified individual to develop, monitor, and implement enrollment management strategies institution-wide that embrace context/culture differences across sites."  The 2021-2022 budget included an allocation for this role, and a Student Life-Cycle Management Lead was designated to evaluate and optimize the strategic integration and standardization of activities impacting the student life cycle—to ensure continuous quality improvement, innovation, and the appropriate allocation of institutional resources, while taking into account the contextual and cultural differences of each campus.

*Admissions*

The Institutional Admission Policy (IV.1) establishes uniform admission parameters for all campuses, consistent with state licensing authorizations and programmatic accreditations. The document lists the admissions criteria to be considered, while stating that the academic programs may establish other standards. The policy also presents the minimum admission requirements, exceptional admission criteria, documentation requirements, admission procedures, and a non-discrimination statement. Standardized tests, as requested by the academic programs, include the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or College Board for undergraduates. For graduate admissions, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Examen de Admisión a Estudios de Posgrado (EXADEP) were used until 2020. This year the Educational Testing Services discontinued the administration of the Examen de Admisión a Estudios de Posgrado (EXADEP) used in Puerto Rico for graduate admissions. The prior 30% allocation of this test on the evaluation rubric was distributed among the other criteria.

Candidates with special needs can request reasonable modifications in the admissions process to assist them in fulfilling the established requirements. This guarantees fair treatment of these candidates. Similarly, as described below, exceptions in the admissions process have been established for those candidates who possess exceptional characteristics, particularly regarding the minimum academic index required for the academic program to which they are applying. In both circumstances, candidates are treated fairly, and the process enables them to demonstrate their abilities and competencies.

The effort to admit students with exceptional criteria started with the desire to identify and support students who were not adequately prepared to study at the level for which they had applied, to help them attain appropriate educational goals. Students admitted under the exceptional criteria option are evaluated individually through Albizu's Academic Improvement Plan (IV.1). This tool, used at the San Juan Campus and the Mayaguez University Center, identifies academic, personal, and vocational areas of concern and includes counselors, advisors, and program directors in the review process. Tutoring and counseling services are compulsory for these students to develop appropriate study habits and build the necessary academic skills. At the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center, the use of the Academic Improvement Plan complies with Puerto Rico Law 250-2012, "Law for extended admission, reasonable accommodation and retention for students with a disability or functional diversity in the transition from secondary school to graduate and post-graduate studies." The institution developed the Puerto Rico Law 250 Implementation Manual (IV.1) to ensure compliance with this law. The following table presents the number of students admitted under exceptional criteria and their progress.

Table 8.  Students admitted under Exceptional Criteria – San Juan Campus and Mayaguez University Center

| Term | Academic Improvement Plans | Progressing academically | Retained |
|------|------|------|------|
| Fall 2019 | 10 | 9 (90%) | 7 (70%) |
| Spring 2020 | | | |
| Fall 2020 | 14 | 13 (93%) | 11 (79%) |
| Spring 2021 | 24 | 12 (50%) | 19 (76%) |
| Fall 2021 | 21 | -- | -- |

*Retention*

Student retention is a priority at Albizu University, as reflected in Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022, "To Increase Enrollment and Retention." The plan delineates four sub-goals to increase retention:

*Subgoal 3.4    By 2022, undergraduate Fall-to-Fall retention at the SJC and MUC will reach 85%.*
*Subgoal 3.5    By 2022, graduate-level Fall-to-Fall retention at the SJC and MUC will reach 90%*
*Subgoal 3.6    By 2022, undergraduate Fall-to-Fall retention at the Miami campus will reach 80%.*
*Subgoal 3.7    By 2022, graduate-level Fall-to-Fall retention at the Miami campus will reach 85%.*

The major challenge for student retention at Albizu University is for undergraduate students, mainly at the Miami and Mayaguez units, as presented in Table 9. Except for Mayaguez, current graduate student retention rates are already near or above the target rates established in the Strategic Plan. Nonetheless, we need to ensure that these rates are not only maintained but increased.

Table 9.  Target vs. Current Retention by Institutional Unit

| | Undergraduate | | Graduate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institutional Unit | Current Rate | Target Rate | Current Rate | Target Rate |
| San Juan | 81% | 85% | 88% | 90% |
| Miami | 67% | 80% | 89% | 85% |
| Mayaguez | 75% | 85% | 80% | 90% |

Several student characteristics contribute to the retention rates. At the San Juan Campus, most undergraduate students are traditional students. For instance, in Fall 2019, the majority of undergraduate students at the San Juan Campus were in the age range of 18-24. Also, the majority of graduate students at the San Juan Campus were 34 years old or younger. This age profile indicates that most of its students are traditional; also, most of them are full-time students.

Economic condition profiles vary significantly between undergraduate and graduate students at the San Juan Campus. While nearly half of the undergraduate students (47%) were characterized as economically disadvantaged, 70% of students at the graduate level were so characterized. The high percentage of graduate students may be related to the fact that both the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology and the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology programs essentially require that students carry a full-time load, thus leaving little time for employment. Most of them take student loans to pay tuition and living expenses. At the San Juan Campus, only 12.5% of undergraduate students were first generation. When considering retention, the San Juan Campus has the advantage that most of its students are traditional and non-first generation.

The current undergraduate retention rate at the Miami Campus is 13 percentage points below the strategic plan's target. One important characteristic of undergraduate students at the Miami Campus (Fall 2019) is that they were 25-34 (45.5%). The age range is also higher for graduate students, where 55.7% of the students were in that range. This characteristic indicates that most undergraduate students at the Miami Campus are non-traditional. In terms of economically disadvantaged students, the percentage was higher for undergraduate students than for graduate students at the Miami Campus, and 30% of undergraduate students at the Miami Campus were first generation. Those characteristics suggest that undergraduate students on this campus have a higher risk of attrition. To address this disparity, the university created the position of academic counselor and retention specialist in 2019. Since the start, this position impacted 59 of 67 student referrals through counseling and supported 91 students through academic coaches.

In San Juan, at the graduate level, both the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology and the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology have the highest retention rates, closely followed by the M.S. in Speech and Language Pathology and the M.S. in School Psychology academic programs. At the graduate level in the Miami Campus, both the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology and the M.S. Speech and Language Pathology have the highest retention rates. At the Mayaguez University Center, both the M.S. in Speech and Language Pathology and the M.S. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology programs have higher retention rates. Contrary to the other Albizu institutional units, where the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology academic program has one of the higher retention rates, that is not the case for the Mayaguez University Center, specifically for new students. This difference at the Mayaguez Center may be attributed to the fact that the

program does not yet have APA accreditation. The university has initiated the process for obtaining APA accreditation for the Mayaguez Center program.

Under the leadership of the deans of student affairs and in partnership with other departments, campus-based retention strategies based on three institution-wide goals are part of the Student Retention Plan 2019-2022 (IV.1). Common objectives include establishing retention committees, linking academic and support services, strengthening strategic communications, and implementing best practices. The most effective practices have been the implementation of a student mentoring program at the San Juan Campus and the Mayaguez University Center and the use of academic coaches at the Miami Campus.

*Enrollment and Finances*

A prospective student's first contact with the institution is with the enrollment management offices. Staff members provide academic program brochures, enabling prospective students to understand the expectations and requirements for each degree or certificate. The Institutional Consumer Information Manual 2020-2021 (IV.1), located on the website, is a comprehensive document that includes the notice of the availability of institutional and financial aid information, comprehensive information on financial aid, the cost of attendance, the refund policy, requirements for withdrawal and return of Title IV financial aid, student rights, and student responsibilities.

Enrollment goals are established as part of the budget process through a collaborative process led by the director of planning, institutional research, and compliance that engages institutional directors with the campus leadership. The conversion of enrollment into revenue is monitored before the semester start at the monthly meetings of the president's cabinet known as the Academic and Institutional Excellence Board meetings.  This information is used to determine future budget allocations for programs and activities supporting the student experience. For example, in 2020, a new integrated student services officer was added to the Mayagüez University Center. The Enrollment Status Memo Fall 2021 (IV.6) from the institutional director of planning, institutional research, and compliance to the leadership team illustrates how an enrollment report becomes an assessment tool that is purposely linked to the budget. In this case, scenarios are presented to address early any potential operational revenue shortfall for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

The university uses a comprehensive general ledger structure to track financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayments, and refunds. Albizu distributed $40.7 million in federal student aid in 2018-2019, as presented in Table 10. This aid includes grants and student loans. Average enrollment cost corresponds to the tuition cost average per student per semester.

Table 10.  Federal Financial Aid Disbursement by Campus

| | | | San Juan* | | | | Miami | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 |
| Average Enrollment Cost | | | $7,006 | $7,221 | $7,868 | $7,284 | $12,384 | $12,384 | $12,444 | $12,444 |
| Total Disbursed | | | $19.9M | $14.6M | $23.14M | $27.14M | $15.14M | $13.93M | $14.16M | $13.60M |
| * Includes Mayaguez University Center | | | | | | | | | | |

Sixty-seven percent of the students in Puerto Rico and 79% in Miami rely on financial aid. In 2020, the institution awarded $1,056,540.47 in scholarships. Table 11 summarizes scholarship funds distributed through federal grants, state allocations, and private funds. The 2021-2022 budget included an increase in the amount of institutional scholarship funds.

Table 11.  Scholarship Report

| Grant | Total 2020 | Total 2019 | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opiods HRSA Grant | $ 16,666.72 | $ - | $ 16,666.72 |
| Title V PPOHA Grant | $ 40,000.00 | $ - | $ 40,000.00 |
| HRSA MS in Psy  Grant | $ 220,000.00 | $ 155,000.00 | $ 65,000.00 |
| HRSA MS in Psy Grant | $ 82,500.00 | $ 105,000.00 | $ (22,500.00) |
| | | $ 30,000.00 | $ (30,000.00) |
| Endowment Fund | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Presidential Scholarship | $ - | $ 6,603.00 | $ (6,603.00) |
| HRSA SDS Grant | $ 649,988.00 | $ 649,984.42 | $ 3.58 |
| JIP | $ 34,437.75 | $ 17,203.52 | $ 17,234.23 |
| Endowment | $ 4,900.00 | $ - | $ 4,900.00 |
| Presidential | $ 8,048.00 | $ 10,624.11 | $ (2,576.11) |
| | $ 1,056,540.47 | $ 974,415.05 | $ 82,125.42 |

The enrollment and financial services provided throughout the student life cycle are valuable student support resources. However, the institution recognizes the need to improve communications on consumer information. Although this information is available online and in the office of financial aid, it is not being distributed in a way that effectively reaches the entire student body. In the past, several available scholarships have not been awarded. The institution recognizes the need to address this missed opportunity for students. In the fall of 2021, Albizu will develop a protocol to standardize the distribution of scholarships supported by the endowment, institutional allocations, and private funders.

Since 2019, funds for graduate students have been secured through grants from HRSA and Title V. To improve the distribution of scholarships from endowment funds, the Policy for the adjudication and

disbursement of the Endowment Fund (IV.1) was revised in 2020. An inter-campus workgroup is responsible for its implementation, as well as the process of awarding scholarships from Give Miami Day and Giving Tuesday PR.

The enrollment process is currently under review through quality improvement and re-engineering projects in partnership with external consultant Quality for Business Success. Project participants have received training through group sessions offered on each of the campuses. Individual consultation sessions were also provided to key personnel. The Development and Implementation of the Continuous Improvement of Services Plan (IV.6) presented to the Board of Trustees in 2020 summarizes the first phase results, which was known as SIPOC. In Miami, the Enrollment Office was reorganized to assign one enrollment specialist per academic program, ensuring more specialized attention to students, including international students. In San Juan, the interview process was re-engineered, resulting in a coordinated process that increased agility and applicants' satisfaction. From a systems perspective, the second phase resulted in the Recruitment and Admission Process Optimization Report (IV.6). Three recommendations related to the integration of recruitment and admissions systems are being implemented by the chief marketing officer in partnership with the campus enrollment staff. In addition, the information on optimization was presented to the team from Ellucian responsible for migrating services to the cloud and optimizing Student Self-Service modules and Financial Aid, beginning in the fall of 2021.

*Orientation, Advising, and Counseling*

The deans of students lead efforts to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience through orientation, advising, and counseling services provided within the cultural context of each campus of the university. As discussed later in this section, support services university-wide are offered through the Ellucian Self-Service platform.

Campus-specific support services at the San Juan Campus and the Mayaguez University Center

The Albizu Student Advisor Project, started in Spring 2018 as a pilot at the San Juan Campus, has been very successful. Fourteen student advisors worked with 93 first-year undergraduate students to help with adjustment and integration into university life. Eighty-eight percent of the participating students successfully enrolled in the Spring 2019 semester, and 97% achieved satisfactory academic achievement, as defined under the Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress (IV.1).

Albizu students benefit from counseling services that address a variety of student needs, as presented in the Student Support Services Report (IV.1). These numbers represent the counseling services offered at the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center. The Miami Campus recently hired a counselor to provide similar services and to help address attrition. Prior to the hiring of this counselor, services were provided on a limited basis by the director of student success. Students from the San Campus and the Mayaguez University Center received mental health services during the pandemic through a third-party provider. For the 2021-2022, APS was contracted to provide a broader scope of services. The proposals for the Student Assistance Programs (IV.5) are presented as evidence.

As a component of its commitment to improving accessibility and expanding payment methods for students, Albizu has developed specific proprietary platforms to facilitate the areas of enrollment,

payment, and financial aid. An additional virtual counseling portal focuses on student well-being, providing a confidential space to access various services. Within the portal, applications for basic needs assistance can be found, including food vouchers offered to students in need. These vouchers benefitted over 23 students at the San Juan Campus in 2017-2018. One hundred percent of these student were retained. In 2018-2019, 43 students received vouchers, representing an 86% retention. Sixty-seven students received vouchers in 2019-2020. As a result of this impact, a fundraising appeal for the Catastrophic Fund was made after the 2020 earthquakes to provide for the immediate needs of affected students enrolled in the Mayagüez University Center.

Campus-specific support services at the Miami Campus

The Peer Mentoring Program, part of Albizu's Title V Interactive Learning and Support for Hispanic and Low-income Students grant, was launched in the spring of 2018 and served the undergraduate education, criminal justice, and psychology programs at the Miami Campus. Upper-level Albizu students served as peer mentors in the program and provided leadership, direction, resources, and camaraderie to fellow students. Student satisfaction outcomes reported by program mentors who had mentoring appointments between November 2018 and July 2019 indicated that mentees were extremely satisfied with this program, with an average score of "5" (with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest) on survey statements about how helpful/capable the mentors were and whether the mentee would recommend this service to other students.

Institutional support services

In 2019, the Information Technology and Student Services departments announced the implementation of the Ellucian Colleague Self Service System (IV.1), enabling students to access assistance remotely via the internet. This migration represented a major institutional-wide initiative to support innovation through continuous institutional improvement. Through the system, students can plan their courses and schedules for their entire Albizu careers. They can ask a counselor ("advisor") to review their plans, and the counselor can suggest changes. Students can also see how many credits/courses they have completed, planned, and missed in their progress to complete their degrees. The system also allows students to enroll in their choice of sections for their scheduled courses and pay their tuition or make payment plan agreements that culminate in verifying their enrollment, thus facilitating the completion of the enrollment process. The platform allows students to access their demographic information, view their grades, request credit transcripts, view and accept financial aid, and verify documents missing from the Financial Aid Office.

*Services for Students with Disabilities or Functional Diversities*

Students who need accommodations due to physical or learning exceptionalities are offered services at all three locations in compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Relevant information can be found in the Student Guide to Reasonable Accommodations (IV.1). Each location has a disability services coordinator, who oversees accommodation applications and the services provided, and an ADA coordinator, who oversees issues and grievances related to institutional policies. Students can request reasonable accommodations to ensure their ability to undertake and complete their studies

successfully. These include exam and classroom accommodations and assistive technologies. A formal application and certification from a medical provider are required.

The institution acquired Ally in the fall of 2018. Ally is a revolutionary product that integrates seamlessly into BlackBoard and focuses on making digital course content more accessible for all users. Ally provides scores to measure the accessibility of content. Accessibility scores are determined by the content accessibility issues in each digital file. Once instructors locate the accessibility score for a piece of content, they can begin to explore accessibility issues, and improve the content to raise the score.  The Ally Usage Report (IV.1) is monitored by the educational technology managers to identify faculty training needs.

Puerto Rico Law 250 also established a mechanism to assist students with a disability or functional diversity to access higher education institutions equitably without impediment and with responsiveness to their needs. It assigns responsibilities to graduate and post-graduate institutions aimed at guaranteeing barrier-free admissions methods for students with disabilities. During orientation, institutions must administer a questionnaire to new students who volunteer to complete it to successfully identify and address their educational needs.

*Student life and other extracurricular activities*

Albizu University understands that classroom activity alone will not fulfill its mission to improve quality of life and serve diverse communities, and enable students to achieve important learning, professional, and social development outcomes. The institution continuously seeks to expand interdisciplinary collaborations between academic and student affairs. Albizu is committed to  developing and promoting the accurate assessment of student learning, satisfaction, and needs in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Albizu also aims to continue efforts for student well-being and to create and provide a multidisciplinary approach to student life and welfare.

The extracurricular and co-curricular activities offered at Albizu are consistent with the institution's mission, vision, and objectives. The vision is to encourage higher education leaders to generate a transformative social impact. Under the office of the dean of students, the student councils offer a link between students, faculty, and the administration that promotes communication, cooperation, and understanding. The deans of students encourage student leaders to create, maintain, and expand student organizations to promote a lasting social impact within and outside the institution. There are currently 18 active organizations at the San Juan Campus, 13 at the Miami Campus, and 6 at the Mayagüez University Center. These extracurricular activities are governed by the Student Council and Associations Regulations Manual (IV.4), which is available on the website under the section on Policies, Procedures and Consumer Information.

In addition to university-sponsored events, the on-campus clubs and organizations and the academic programs hold their own events, leading to a robust schedule month after month. For example, at the Miami Campus, the goal is to have at least one student life event every week when students are on campus. Despite these efforts, Student Life usually has the lowest rating in the annual Student Satisfaction Survey. This is due partly to the difficulty in holding events and club meetings regularly because the students in charge are focused on their academic requirements, especially toward the end of their

programs when practicum and internships become common. It can also be challenging to schedule student life events at times when students are available, due to time commitments outside of the university, including full-time jobs and families, for most of the Miami Campus students. Albizu attempts to address these issues by diversifying the student life offerings to include weekend and evening events and options that will engage the small but growing online population.

*Enhancing the successful achievement of students' educational goals through best practices*

Albizu students are provided with services designed to help them achieve their educational goals, whether that is to graduate from the university or transfer to another institution and succeed postgraduation. Students are informed of these services during student orientation and through course syllabi and the website. The university understands that not every student who enrolls has an adequate level of preparation for higher education. Best practices, highlighted below by campus, are in place to support these students.

Advising

At the San Juan Campus and the Mayagüez University Center and as noted under the Orientation, Advising, and Counseling section, the institution implemented in Puerto Rico the Student Advisor Project in 2018 as a best practice. This intervention seeks to foster self-confidence, self-reliance, academic administration knowledge, and social skills to help students adapt to university studies. First-year students enroll in the project during their orientation period. In the project's inaugural year, 14 undergraduate and graduate students served as student advisors for 93 first-year students, of whom 97% subsequently achieved satisfactory academic progress. New doctoral and master's level students also complete the Graduate Students Profile, which helps identify previous knowledge of and interest in improving specific academic knowledge and skills. The New Graduate Student Profile (IV.1) administered in Spring 2018 to San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center students resulted in 108 graduate students completing the profile. The results showed that students mostly have English deficiencies, with 19.4% identifying the need for improvement. Students also identified the need for improvement in statistics (50.9%), APA style (58.3%), research (55.2%), English and Spanish oral communication skills (45.2%), spelling (42.5%), grammar (41%), drafting (48.6%), and computer programs (49.5%).

Tutoring

Tutoring services are provided in the three locations by professional and peer tutors both on campus and online. At the Miami Campus, tutoring services are offered by four peer and four professional tutors. Requests for services increased by 92% when the university pivoted to remote instruction in the spring of 2020, and the increase in utilization has been sustained. Targeted tutoring services focused on writing and research are offered to graduate students through the Graduate Student Center created under the Title V PPOHA Grant. At the San Juan Campus and the Mayagüez University Center, tutoring services are provided by student tutors. The Student Support Services Report (IV.1) provides historic data by academic program at the San Juan Campus/Mayaguez Center. Consistently, most of the students benefitting from tutoring are from the counseling programs, followed by the clinical psychology and bachelor's programs. Most of the tutoring sessions are provided to master's degree students, followed by students in the clinical psychology programs.

Career Services

At the Miami Campus, career services are offered to support job placements, including assistance with resumes, CVs, cover letters, job searches, job applications, and placement referrals. Albizu frequently has employers visit campus to advertise available positions and holds a career fair at least once per year. The Miami Campus is also implementing the Handshake Career Services platform, allowing all students and alumni to create free profiles linking them with relevant career materials, employers, mentors/mentees, and jobs. Once launched at the Miami Campus, the platform will be expanded to the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez Learning Center. The Student Support Services Report (IV.1) presents the use of Tutoring and Career Center services by students on the Miami Campus during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years. Career services are provided at the San Juan Campus and the Mayaguez University Center through counselors, but a stand-alone center is not available to those students.

*Tracking student success*

Albizu University tracks three key indicators related to student success. They are IPEDS' Graduation Rates, Institutional Graduation Rates, and Completions. Each one of them measures the academic success of our students from different perspectives. The IPEDS Graduation Rate measures the percentage of first-time full-time (FTFT) undergraduate students that finish their degrees within 150% of the expected time. In our case, this is six years. The only location that had a First-Year Student cohort six years ago was the Miami Campus. For that reason, we only report the IPEDS's Graduation Rate for Miami, which is presented in Table 12. This indicator at Miami shows high variability because the cohorts are very small, having no more than ten students annually. In 2022, Albizu will begin to report this rate to IPEDS for the San Juan Campus, which will include data for the Mayagüez University Center.

Table 12. Graduation Rates reported to IPEDS

| | Cohort | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Graduation Rate*** | **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** |
| San Juan | na | na | na | na | na | na | na |
| Miami | 17% | 50% | 42% | 53% | 70% | 100% | 33% |
| | | | | | | | |
| Note: For full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students | | | | | | | |

A broader indicator that may give us a better measure of student success is our Institutional Graduation Rates (IV.1). This rate is measured for programs at all academic levels and for all new students, not only first-time or full-time students. However, we still use the 150% criteria for each academic program. Our Institutional Graduation Rates figures show that this rate is higher in undergraduate academic programs than in graduate programs. Since most of our graduate programs require a thesis, practicums, and internship, most of our students finished their degrees after the 150% expected amount of time.

In addition, we monitor the Completions time series which allows us to identify the annual number of students who finished their degrees without considering the number of years they needed to finish. Compared to the enrollment trend for the same period, there is a high difference in growth rates since the enrollment of San Juan should also include Mayaguez enrollment, and most of the academic programs at Mayaguez were just starting, as presented in Table 13. They were adding enrollment but no completers to the equation. On the Miami campus side, both the enrollment and completers figures declined with similar rates for the same period.

Table 13. Historical Overview of Completions

| Completions | Fiscal Year | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 |
| **San Juan Campus** | | | | | | | |
| Bachelor's degree | 51 | 31 | 92 | 28 | 23 | 49 | 72 |
| Master's degree | 166 | 165 | 332 | 224 | 240 | 243 | 212 |
| Graduate certificate | | | 16 | 14 | 11 | 10 | 24 |
| Doctoral degree | 78 | 91 | 126 | 56 | 48 | 51 | 49 |
| **Total San Juan** | **295** | **287** | **566** | **322** | **322** | **353** | **357** |
| **Miami Campus** | | | | | | | |
| Bachelor's degree | 91 | 86 | 96 | 49 | 55 | 38 | 41 |
| Master's degree | 177 | 147 | 143 | 96 | 78 | 124 | 143 |
| Doctoral degree | 28 | 36 | 48 | 54 | 64 | 46 | 34 |
| **Total Miami** | **296** | **269** | **287** | **199** | **197** | **208** | **218** |
| **Total Albizu** | **591** | **556** | **853** | **521** | **519** | **561** | **575** |

*Maintenance and release of student information and records*

Albizu University adheres to strict guidelines regarding the protection of student privacy, safeguarding student information and records conscientiously. It acts in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including providing clarification to students regarding directory information, directory information waivers, and why directory forms should be submitted. The offices of the registrar are responsible for maintaining student information and records. All students are provided with the FERPA Annual Notification of Student Rights (IV.3), delineating student privacy and protection parameters. To ensure institutional compliance with privacy guidelines and regulations, FERPA training is conducted for faculty and staff. The FERPA guidelines are posted in the catalog, the offices of the Registrar, and the website. Access to financial and academic records is granted to school officials as allowed by the university's security classifications and profiles. All university staff members undergo appropriate training and sign contracts that affirm an understanding of FERPA regulations, policies, and procedures.

A prospective student's file is created during the admissions process, using one of two methods to capture the applicant's information securely. In the first method, the applicant chooses to submit an electronic

application via a secure website. The application is then routed to the Admissions Office and processed by a qualified admissions staff member. In the second method, the applicant chooses to submit a physical application to the Admissions Office. The data from the physical application is then entered into Albizu's secure information system. Each hardcopy file is created and stored in a secure area of the Admissions Office and is accessible only to qualified admissions personnel. Supporting documentation for each file is routed to the Admissions Office and processed. Access to the file is granted to faculty members once the applicant is up for review and/or interview and then only to the department to which the applicant is requesting admission. Each file is delivered by an admissions staff member and signed for by the receiving department's secretary or staff using a delivery form, logging each person who receives and views the file.

Students can obtain information from the Registrar Department about their records while they are enrolled or after they graduate. Students can also apply for graduation using our Self-Service portal. Additionally, students can request official transcripts through The National Student Clearinghouse. In January 2019, Albizu's president appointed the University's director of innovation technology as chair of the Institutional Committee for Cybersecurity, as reported in the Cybersecurity Committee Announcement (IV.3). This committee, serving at the institutional level, approves information security rules and procedures to protect student information. As a result of the assessment conducted by the Institutional Compliance Committee, Albizu acquired in 2021 the KnowB4 platform to conduct staff, faculty and student training on cybersecurity awareness and training. An initial assessment on the use of this platform is documented in the Cybersecurity Committee Minutes on the Effectiveness of Awareness and Training Activities (IV.3).

*Exit counseling*

If students have received a subsidized loan, an unsubsidized loan, or a Plus Loan, they are required to complete exit counseling whenever they drop below half-time enrollment, graduate or leave the university. The Financial Aid Department receives attrition, graduation, and withdrawal reports from the Registrar Department every semester. Every student who has received a subsidized loan, unsubsidized loan or a Plus Loan receives notifications from Financial Aid with instructions on how to complete the exit counseling, as well as additional relevant material. The university also has an internal form that departments must sign before the diploma is released. Financial aid is one of the departments that must sign the form. Students must go to financial aid to confirm that they have completed exit counseling.

*Transfer of credits*

Albizu University is transparent about policies and procedures regarding transfer of credits from outside institutions. This information is published in the catalog under the Transfer of Credit Policy section. Information is also included in the Transfer Students webpge (IV.2) and is available from the Office of the Registrar. A Transfer of Credit Form is available for students seeking academic credit for courses completed at other higher education institutions. The document lists policies and procedures, including documents required, processing fees, and contingencies to transfer credit approval. Each student also can discuss the transfer of credits when meeting with an admission representative or program director. The staff member explains the desired program's curriculum in detail and reviews potential transfer credit courses and credit hours. The Admissions Office ensures the credits are officially transferred and recorded

and keeps the student and the academic department aware of approval or denial. The catalogs detail the transfer of credit policy for each academic program.

*Assessment process for continuous improvement of student services*

The Student Satisfaction Survey (IV.6), administered to all active students during the Summer term each year, is the primary method of assessing student services at the University. The survey is specific to each campus and focuses on a student's level of satisfaction with each student service area. Following the data collection period for the 2017-18 survey, the Retention Taskforce at the Miami Campus suggested an overhaul of the survey. It was concluded that the existing survey did not accurately represent a full review of all aspects of the student service areas. For example, the Finance Office section consisted of only three statements that students rated according to their level of agreement with the statement (with the two highest levels indicating "satisfaction"): 1) The office hours for Finance are appropriate for my needs; 2) The Finance Office staff is knowledgeable, helpful, and approachable; and 3) The Finance Office provides appropriate and timely resolutions regarding my student account. In comparison, the computer labs section consisted of nine statements, ranging from the hours of the computer labs to the training received on using the online platform Blackboard. Therefore, it was determined that each section of the survey should consist of a base of similar statements, along with additional specialized questions that more accurately address potential student concerns. Upon a formal review and revision process, a new Student Satisfaction Survey was adopted and was first administered during the Summer 2019 term. The items in the survey were presented as questions rather than statements. The answer options were changed to the following: 'very satisfied,' 'somewhat satisfied,' 'neutral,' 'somewhat dissatisfied,' 'very dissatisfied,' 'N/A' (have not used or not sure). Thus, the outcomes were changed from 'agree' and 'disagree' to a more aligned 'satisfied' and 'dissatisfied.'

The new Student Satisfaction Survey (IV.6) begins with demographic questions, including what program(s) the student is in, the number of semesters completed at the institution, and the student's age. These questions will assist in better assessing the opinions of Albizu's diverse groups of students. The new survey added questions for the students' experiences with the service they receive from the administrative component of their academic programs and a section for the dining services. Additionally, each student service section is comprised of seven questions. The first three are the same or very similar for all areas (i.e., hours of operation, staff knowledge, and amount of time taken to address questions and concerns). The other four questions are specific to the service area and were selected to assess a student's most relevant areas of concern for that office or service. Each section also allows for write-in comments. Finally, the new survey concludes with three questions about overall satisfaction: 1) Do you intend to continue your studies at Albizu University?; 2) How likely are you to recommend Albizu University to a friend or family member?; and 3) How satisfied are you with the value of your Albizu University education?

The surveys administered previously led to each student service department addressing areas of concern; however, the formerly used survey examined only a small subset of each service area. The new Student Satisfaction Survey allows for a more robust analysis of the services offered and will lead to more significant improvements for Albizu students. The Student Satisfaction Report (IV.6) presents the satisfaction levels by area and unit for 2020-2021. This information is presented to the Board of Trustees, the chancellors, and academic and administrative program directors during the annual planning and

assessment day. Consistently across units, the level of satisfaction is higher for undergraduate than graduate students. For the majority of the categories, satisfaction decreased from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020. Overall satisfaction, measured by how likely students recommend Albizu or are satisfied with the university's value. Percentages on recommending Albizu decreased from 2019 to 2020 across units but increased in 2021. The percentages were higher in Miami, although still less than 75%. Scores on value were higher than for recommending Albizu but showed the same pattern of a decrease in 2020 and an increase in 2021. The decrease is associated to the pandemic, while the increase reflects proactive measures to increase overall student satisfaction.

The university recognizes the survey results and trends as a source of concern. During the initial budget meeting with the Finance Committee of the Board, a summary of these results was presented. The need to include budget allocations to address areas of low student satisfaction was discussed and established as a budget priority.

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria of Standard IV, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. Each Albizu location has developed new student orientation events that focus on each population's needs and particular characteristics. These allow newly enrolled students to start their experience in Albizu with the knowledge and resources needed to integrate more easily into the community. Furthermore, each semester, skills workshops are offered to existing students to help them refresh and improve upon their basic writing skills and writing for research, time management, study habits, and other skills.

2. The Tutoring Center provides students with academic materials, workshops, and one-on-one and study group sessions. Services are available to all students, both undergraduate and graduate. Tutors are also trained to serve as academic coaches for Albizu students. Furthermore, tutoring services collaborate with faculty to ensure that students are tutored based on current course materials and content; this integration of services results in better service and support to students.

3. There is a need to increase levels of uniformity and standardization across assessment processes for student support services.

4. Implementation in 2018 of BlackBoard Ally expanded the faculty tools to support students with disabilities or functional diversity.

5. Implementation in 2019 of Student Self Service modules improved the business continuity capacity.

6. Student mental health is an issue faced by institutions of higher learning. Although Albizu has academic programs in mental health and clinics that offer services to the outside community, mental health services have been offered historically through referrals to other clinics and only recently through a third-party provider.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the university should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to support of the student experience.

1. Institutionalize a Student Success Program that integrates counseling, wellness, and financial aid and provides access to emergency grants.

2. Increase access to mental health services to support students.

3. Create an institution-based scholarship once a new development officer joins the office of the president.

4. Evaluate the feasibility of providing career services institution-wide.

# 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.*

## Compliance with Standard and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard V and its criteria. Institutional assessment processes are collaborative and structured to improve educational outcomes.

Our narrative is also submitted as evidence that Albizu University meets the three Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

*Requirement #8:* The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public their results—particularly addressed through the assessment cycle of institutional learning competencies.

*Requirement #9:* The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are assessed with rigor and coherence –particularly evidenced by implementing policies for assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness.

*Requirement #10:* The institution's plans integrate educational assessment goals—particularly addressed through three goals of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022: increasing the licensing exam passing rate, developing the digital functionality, increasing enrollment and retention.

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how the mission and Strategic Plan are reflected in expectations of student learning and achievement and (2) how Albizu ensures that student learning assessments lead to outcomes used to improve the student learning process. The exploration of these research questions allowed the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding institutional assessment.

## Analysis of Key Issues

*Assessment of student learning*

Processes for educational effectiveness assessment at Albizu University have evolved over recent years. In 2013, Albizu University adopted the Institutional Policy on Assessment of Student Learning (V.1). According to the policy:

> The assessment of student learning is at the core of the Institution's mission and an integral component of its effectiveness. As such, in 2011, the CAU has implemented an organized and

sustained process for the assessment of student learning, promoting the use of formative, course embedded assessment techniques to enhance student learning and for the modification of instructional strategies when necessary, while at the same time providing the valuable data for curricular renovation (i.e., summative assessment).

The policy lists and defines the seven Institutional Learning Competencies: (1) Mastery of theory and practice in the chosen field of study; (2) Mastery of clinical/professional competencies; (3) Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups; (4) Understanding, appreciation, and application of ethical principles and professional standards; (5) Information literacy; (6) Communication/Interpersonal skills; and (7) Lifelong learning.

In 2015, an institutional cycle of student learning assessment was established during the current accreditation period, staggering our seven institutional competencies over three years. This improvement allows focusing on two to three competencies per year, as shown in Table 14. Having completed two cycles, the institution is currently in the third assessment cycle. Completing each cycle provides an opportunity for self-reflection and improvement at the institutional, campus, department, program, or course level. The process is coordinated by an assessment specialist in the central administration, as described in the Assessment Specialist Job Description (V.2). The assessment specialist works with academic deans, members of the Student Learning Committee, and the academic program directors.

Table 14.  Assessment Cycle of Institutional Learning Competencies

| Student Competency | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mastery of theory and practice in the chosen field of study | X | | |
| Mastery of clinical/professional competencies | | X | |
| Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups | | X | |
| Understanding, appreciation, and application of ethical principles and professional standards | X | | |
| Information literacy | | X | |
| Communication/Interpersonal skills | | | X |
| Lifelong learning | | | X |

At present, the campus annual assessment process begins at the start of the academic year. However, there is a need to start this process in advance instead of at the beginning of the semester. The process to develop the student learning assessment plan has five steps. First, the academic program selects at least one course for each of these levels: introductory, reinforcement/intermediate, or capstone. In the second step, they align their curricular maps to the institutional, programmatic, and accreditation (when applicable) competencies and the areas that must be mastered in any licensing exam, as illustrated in the Miami Student Learning Assessment Alignment Chart for the M.S. in Industrial Organizational Psychology (V.2).

In the third step, they select the direct and indirect measures that will facilitate measuring the competencies' level of mastery. Each program selects the direct assessment strategy from a menu of 11 strategies: Competency-based questions in an exam, Clinical Practice Rubric, Clinical Practice Evaluation, Research Paper assessed with a rubric, Oral Presentation assessed with a rubric, Written

Report assessed with a rubric, Case Study, Research Practice rubric, Dissertation rubric, Comprehensive/Degree Exam, and Other.

The completed forms are submitted, and data is aggregated to generate analytical reports. At present, this process is manual, but the need for digital automation is acknowledged.  Table 15 and Table 16 aggregates the results for all programs. The data demonstrates that a greater than 80% level of mastery has been achieved across competencies. There is a slight decline from 2016-2018 that was reversed from 2018 to 2020.

Table 15.  Institutional Competency Assessment Cycle for the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center

| Competency | 2013-14 Year 1 | 2014-15 Year 2 | 2015-16 Year 3 | 2016-17 Year 1 | 2017-18 Year 2 | 2018-19 Year 3 | 2019-20 Year 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Mastery of theory and practice in their chosen field of study | 92% |  |  | 84% |  |  | 95% |
| 2.  Mastery of clinical/professional competencies |  | 88% |  |  | 84% |  |  |
| 3.  Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups |  | 92% |  |  | 88% |  |  |
| 4.  Understanding, appreciation, and application of ethical principles and professional standards | 92% |  |  | 83% |  |  | 94% |
| 5.  Information literacy |  | 89% |  |  | 84% |  |  |
| 6.  Communication/ Interpersonal skills |  |  | 89% |  |  | 93% |  |
| 7.  Lifelong learning |  |  | 90% |  |  | 92% |  |

Table 16. Institutional Competency Assessment Cycle for the Miami Campus

| Competency | 2013-14 Year 1 | 2014-15 Year 2 | 2015-16 Year 3 | 2016-17 Year 1 | 2017-18 Year 2 | 2018-19 Year 3 | 2019-20 Year 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Mastery of theory and practice in their chosen field of study | 92% |  |  | 88% |  |  | 93% |
| 2.  Mastery of clinical/professional competencies |  | 88% |  |  | 91% |  |  |
| 3.  Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups |  | 92% |  |  | 88% |  | 93% |
| 4.  Understanding, appreciation, and application of ethical principles and professional standards | 92% |  |  | 89% |  |  |  |
| 5.  Information literacy |  | 89% |  |  | 89% |  |  |
| 6.  Communication/ Interpersonal skills |  |  | 89% |  |  | 98% |  |
| 7.  Life-long learning |  |  | 90% |  |  | 93% |  |

In 2019-20 these institutional competencies were assessed: Competency 1: Mastery of theory and practice in their chosen field of study, and Competency 4: Understanding, appreciation, and application of ethical principles and professional standards. Figure 2 presents the results that ranged from 93% to 96%. Table 17 and 18 presents summaries by academic program for the San Juan Campus.
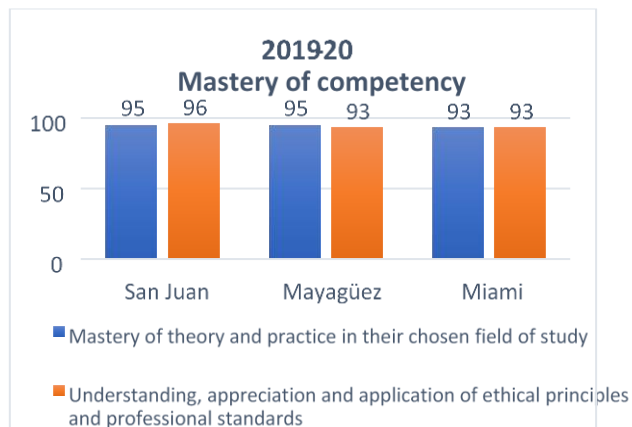


Figure 2. Mastery of competency

Table 17. Competency assessment results by program for the San Juan Campus

| Academic year: 2019-20 | Competency 1: Mastery of theory and practice in their chosen field of study | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Program** | Year average | Course level | | | |
| | | Introductory | Intermediate | Capstone | Minimum Threshold |
| | 95 | 98 | 99 | 92 | |
| BI specialization in Psyc | 96 | 96 | 96 | | 80 |
| BI specialization in SLT | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 80 |
| MS Counseling Psy | 84 | 84 | | | 80 |
| MS I/O | 100 | | | 100 | 80-90 |
| MS School Psy | 89 | | 98 | 80 | 90 |
| MS SLP | 96 | 100 | 100 | 87 | 80 |
| Ph.D. Clinical Psy | 100 | 100 | 100 | | 90 |
| Ph.D. IO Psy | 86 | | | 86 | 90 |
| Ph.D. Psychology in CRT | 96.7 | 90 | 100 | 100 | 90 |
| PsyD Clinical Psy | 100 | 100 | | | 80 |
| PsyD Counseling Psy | 100 | 100 | | | 80 |

Table 18.  Assessment summary by program

| Academic year: 2019-20 | Competency 4:  Understanding, appreciation, and application of ethical principles and professional standards | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Program** | Year average | Course level | | | Minimum Threshold |
| | | Introductory | Intermediate | Capstone | |
| | 96 | 96 | 95 | 92 | |
| BI specialization in Psychology | 100 | 100 | | | 80 |
| BI specialization in SLT | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 80 |
| MS Autism | 80 | | 80 | | |
| MS Counseling Psy | 74 | 73 | 88 | 61 | 80 |
| MS I/O Psy | 100 | | | 100 | 80-90 |
| MS School Psy | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 90 |
| MS SLP | 100 | 100 | 100 | | |
| Ph.D. Clinical Psychology | 100 | 100 | | | |
| Ph.D. I/O Psy | 100 | 100 | | | |
| Ph.D. Psychology in CRT | 97 | 90 | 100 | 100 | |
| PsyD Clinical Psychology | 100 | 100 | | | 80 |
| PsyD Counseling Psychology | 100 | 100 | | | 80 |

If progress is not evidenced, the program determines instructional strategies to facilitate student mastery of the competency, including such options as these: review course content, add a new activity or practice, or provide tutoring. Brief summaries of assessment activities and improvement strategies by campus are presented in Table 19. The institution recognizes the need to track and assess the course-specific strategies when the course is offered again.  In the fifth step, the academic program director submits a one-page summary. The summary includes the results of the academic year by term and course, as well as noting how the program shares and discusses the results within the faculty, presenting evidence-based actions, and identifying areas for improvement. The summary includes three student work samples with low, average, and high scores.

Table 19. Assessment summary by location

| San Juan Campus |
|---|
| 1.  Twelve programs developed their student learning assessment plans. |
| 2.  A formative assessment was carried out in 36 courses aligned with Competency #1 and 33 courses with competency #4. |
| 3.  Most used direct assessment strategies: competency-based questions in an exam and written report assessed with a rubric. |
| 4.  Changes implemented based on assessment results: provide tutorials, review the course content, and add an activity or practice to the course so that students will achieve mastery of the competency. |

| Mayagüez University Center |
|---|
| 1. Six programs developed their student learning assessment plans. |
| 2. A formative assessment was carried out in 16 courses aligned with Competency #1 and 17 courses with Competency #4. |
| 3. Most used direct assessment strategies: rubrics and case study. |
| 4. Changes in strategies based on assessment results: provide tutorials, add an activity or practice to the course of the course and review the content so that students will achieve mastery of the competency. |
| 5. For the 2020-21 year, programs will adopt the teaching strategies included in this year, include assessment activities, or review the course syllabus. |
| Miami Campus |
| 1. Eight programs developed their student learning assessment plans. |
| 2. A formative assessment was carried out in 28 courses aligned with Competency #1 and 25 courses with Competency #4. |
| 3. Most used direct assessment strategies: competency-based questions in an exam, and rubrics (oral presentations & research paper). |
| 4. Changes in strategies based on assessment results: add an activity or practice to the course, provide tutorials, and review the content so that students will achieve mastery of the competency. |
| 5. For the 2020-21 year, programs will adopt the teaching strategies included in this year, include assessment activities, or review the course syllabus. |

Each campus has a Student Learning Assessment Committee. This committee includes the dean of academic affairs, the academic program directors, faculty representatives, and the institutional assessment team. The institutional assessment team meets three times a year with the campus committees to discuss results and progress. The Student Learning Assessment 2021 Meeting (V.2) is submitted as evidence of the work of the Committee for the San Campus and the Mayagüez University Center.

At the end of the academic year, the Office of Evaluation, Assessment, and Institutional Accreditation collects all data for programs at each location. To digitalize and speed up the student assessment planning process, the Smartsheet Platform is used. The institution recognizes the need to improve collaboration between the Student Learning Assessment Committees of both campuses, particularly for the programs accredited by APA and ASHA.

*Use of Student Learning Assessments for educational effectiveness*

The Student Learning Assessment Progress Reports (known as SLAs) are the mechanism used to evidence the alignment of assessment techniques with intended student learning outcomes. As described in the policy, the reports are completed on a term-basis at the course level by each faculty member and annually at the program level by the department directors in partnership with the faculty. Examples of these documents are the Assessment Plan (V.2) and the Assessment Report for the Speech Therapy (V.2) program at the San Juan Campus for 2020.

Provided below as evidence of how assessment results are used to improve educational effectiveness are details on four programs:

Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology (San Juan)
Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (San Juan
M.S. in School Psychology (San Juan)
B.S. in Psychology (Miami)

Student Learning Assessment Process Summary for the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology (San Juan)

During the 2014-15 academic year, student learning assessment focused on three basic institutional and programmatic competencies: 1) Ethics and Professional Conduct, 2) Mastery of Clinical/Professional competencies, and 3) Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups. The courses selected by the program to conduct the student learning assessment for the fall 2014 semester were PSY 505 Ethics and Professional Conduct and PSYC 617 Advanced Techniques of Psychotherapy; and for the spring 2015 semester, the courses selected were PSYC 516: Techniques of Psychotherapy and PSYC 634 Cross-Cultural Psychotherapies. The results were the following:  For the PSYF 505 Ethics and Professional Conduct course, 98% of students achieved the competency by obtaining a final grade of 80% or more. Results exceeded performance standards.  For psychotherapy courses (PSYF 616 and PSYF 617), 80% of students scored 80% or more on mid-session and final exams. Results met the performance standards.  By comparing student performance during 2014 with 2015, it was evident that students were able to gain essential competencies related to ethical issues and psychotherapy, such as dual relationships (100%) and informed consent (90%).  Students demonstrated difficulty in two ethical matters for the second time: legal vs. ethical matters (78%) and clinical supervision (60%). Results for these competencies failed to meet performance standards. In response, the program developed different teaching strategies such as case presentation, the use of multimedia, and cooperative learning. Courses incorporate pre-and post-test tools to assess learning progress.

During the academic year 2015-2016, these institutional competencies were assessed: #6 Interpersonal communication and #7 Lifelong Learning.  For the assessment of Interpersonal Communication, the clinical practicum evaluation was used to provide information about basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of mastery.  Twenty-two percent of the students demonstrated a minimum of 4 out of 5-point scale rubric; 78% obtained less than 4 out of the 5-point scale rubric. During the final evaluation, 100 % of the students obtained more than 4 points out of a 5-point scale.  A significant improvement from the mid to the final evaluation was noted. The analysis concluded that the supervisors offered a more conservative evaluation at the mid-term evaluation. At the academic program meeting, the faculty agreed to revise the clinical evaluation rubric that will be used to complete the next SLA. For assessing institutional competency #7, the program decided to use the dissertation process to provide outcomes. The program noted that the dissertation process does not have a unified standard of assessment. These outcomes resulted in the development of a rubric for the colloquium and dissertation defense.

The student learning assessment plan results for the academic year 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 were used to develop ten new programmatic rubrics and initiate the review of the rubric for the clinical practicum experience.  The ten new rubrics were included in the September 2017 APA Self-Study Report, which was developed using new APA Standards and Profession Wide Competencies.  The program developed

new program competencies, and all the master syllabi and the curricular sequence were reviewed and updated based on the new competencies. Due to Hurricane María and its impact, outcomes from the program's 2017 APA Self–Study Report were used to provide information on the Student Learning Assessment process.

During the academic year 2017-2018, the main objective was to evaluate and assess the clinical practicum and dissertation process's effectiveness as a fundamental part of the program's academic learning experience.  The assessment of these experiences is a key point in the students' lifelong learning process and the development of their future professional careers. Six different clinical practicum experiences were evaluated: PRAC 591 and PRAC 592 as basic/introductory level, PRAC 593 and PRAC 594 as intermediate level, and PRAC 595 and PRAC 596 as advanced level.  These experiences corresponded to the first three years of clinical practice.  Data analysis was performed using the clinical practice rubric results from the midterm and final evaluation for communication skills items and rubric results for the colloquium/proposal presentation.  The data obtained were analyzed, and outcomes were provided. *Clinical Practice Rubric Results:* In the mid-evaluation of the Clinical Practicum, 100% of the students demonstrated more than 4 points out of a 5-point scale rubric.  During the final evaluation, 22% of the students obtained more than 4 points out of a 5-point scale but less than 5 points, and 78% obtained a perfect score of 5 points. *Dissertation Results*: 100% of the student obtained 90% or more in the *colloquium* and defense evaluation rubric.  During a faculty meeting, the results of 2017-2018 were presented. The faculty decided to continue reviewing the Clinical Practice Rubric, adopting the program rubrics, and initiating in the 2018-19 academic year their regular use in every academic experience.

During the academic year 2018-2019, the Clinical Practicum Rubric was reviewed using the new APA Standards from the 2017 APA Self-Study Report. The rubric was digitalized, utilizing a program that allows easy access to the program's data to report the outcomes. The Clinical Practicum Rubric was reviewed, and the program will continue to use it going forward.

During the academic year 2018-2019, the institutional competencies assessed were these: #6 Interpersonal communication and #7 Long Life Learning.  For the assessment of Interpersonal Communication, the clinical practicum evaluation was used to provide information about basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of mastery.  During all levels of mastery (basic, intermediate, and advanced), the outcomes show that the students' performance was beyond the performance standards.  For assessing the institutional competency #7 Lifelong Learning, the program decided to use the dissertation process to provide outcomes.  For the colloquium, 100% of the students obtained more than 80%, and 100% obtained more than 90% in the defense rubric. The results met or exceeded the performance standard, so no changes in the program were made.

In 2019-2020 these program competencies were assessed:  Research, and Ethical and legal standards.  The program has continued with the revision of all program rubrics, including the clinical practicum and dissertation rubrics. All levels were assessed using the clinical practicum rubric.  The outcomes were the following: Introductory level—At the midterm evaluation, 69% of the students obtained 4 out of 5-point scale rubric; 31% of the students obtained 4.5 out of 5-point scale rubric; and the average score was 4.15. In the final evaluation, 77% of the students obtained 4.4 to 4.5 points out of a 5-point scale; 29% obtained 4.5 points out of a 5-point scale; and the average score was 4.48. Intermediate Level, Spring 2020—In midterm evaluation, 33% of the students obtained 4 to 4.5 out of 5-point scale rubric; 9% (n=1/11) of the

students obtained 4.58 out of 5-point scale rubric, and 58% obtained 5 out of 5-point scale; the average score was 4.89. In the final evaluation: 33% of the students obtained more than 4.5 out of the 5-point scale rubric; 9% (n=1/11) of the students obtained 4.43 out of the 5-point scale rubric, and 58% obtained 5 out of 5-point scale; the average score was 4.86. In the Capstone Level, Spring 2020, the midterm evaluation: 45% of the students obtained 4 to 4.5 out of 5-point scale rubric; 55% of them obtained > 4.5 out of 5-point scale rubric. Of this 55%, 33% obtained 5 out of 5-point scale; the average score was 4.5. In the Final evaluation, 45% of the students obtained 4.5 out of 5 point-scale rubrics; 55% obtained > 4.5 out of 5-point scale rubric. Of this 55%, 66% obtained 5 out of 5-point scale; the average score was 4.6. For the research competency, the Colloquium and Defense Rubric outcomes were: 100% of the students obtained 90% to 100% percent score using the Colloquium Rubric, and 100% of the students obtained an 88% to 100% score using the Defense Rubric.

Using these results, no changes have been made in the content of the Clinical Practicum rubric. However, upcoming changes may result from the new Competency-Based Outcomes Module Project Initiative which is described under Assessment and Planning later in this chapter. Specifically, the intention is to improve the evaluation method to differentiate introductory, intermediate, and capstone levels in practicum rubrics. The program will create an additional rubric for dissertation documents, as student progress is not evaluated in this area. The Clinical Practicum Rubric has been uploaded to Blackboard as part of the CBO pilot project to provide an appropriate way of producing reliable and valid outcomes data about the student learning process. The program will improve the evaluation method to differentiate introductory, intermediate, and capstone levels. The dissertation rubric for the written document is currently in development to assess student progress in this area.

Student Learning Assessment Process Summary for the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (San Juan)

The Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology program has had a continuous Students Learning Assessment process for all clinical and research competencies required by APA and chosen by the program to develop clinical psychologists who are both clinically and research competent.

During the fall of the academic year 2014-15, the Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) focused on two core institutional and program competencies. The Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology assessed course competencies aligned to the institutional competencies of (1) mastery of the clinical/professional skills deemed relevant to their area of specialization, and (2) psychosocial and humanistic qualities, as well as responsibility and sensitivity to clients/patients and their families, the profession and society. In Fall 2014-2015, the courses selected across the program engaged in ASL for competencies previously noted were PHCP-528 (Techniques of Psychotherapy), PHCP-643 (Psychotherapy Research and Clinical Practice), and PRAC-593 (Clinical Practicum). In the PHCP-528 (Techniques of Psychotherapy) class, 31 of 34 (92%) obtained a score of 80% or more in the video class. First-year students obtained a passing rate of 92%, which compares favorably with students' performance standard in their first year of clinical training. In the evaluation of clinical practicums, 76 of 76 students (100%) obtained a score of 80% or higher on the clinical practicums (PRAC-591, PRAC-593, and PRAC-595). A 100% passing rate compares favorably with students' performance standards in their first year of clinical training. Based on review of these results, the program made a series of changes implemented for the next incoming class. The program also created two additional clinical practicum modules in year four, so that students could accumulate more face-to-face clinical hours.

For the academic year 2015-2016, the program focused on the continuing evaluation of curriculum courses and activities related to these areas. For the academic year 2017-2018, the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology program focused on reviewing the curricular sequence with the addition of one course and one seminar. Specifically, faculty assessed the development of specific competencies related to Family Therapy competencies with the addition of one course. Program faculty also reviewed the clinical activities related to conceptualization with the new seminar: Conceptualization and Formulation. During this period and as the result of the SLA process, faculty identified a need to integrate recent research on the area of human emotions, cognitions, and development. This led the program to design and include in the curriculum the course "Emotions and Cognitions: A human development perspective," which includes an integration of the most recent research in these areas. Concerning research competencies, in 2015 the Second Year Research Proposal was implemented, and from 2017 until the present, the SLA process for all areas of program competencies has continued. The results of this SLA process for 2019-2020 indicate that that mastery of theory and practice and communication skills achieved 100%. Mastery of Clinical/Professional Competencies achieved 80%. As a result, the assessment activity for the next academic year was revised to further assess clinical/professional competencies.

Student Learning Assessment Process Summary for the M.S. in School Psychology (San Juan)

The program report was submitted in June 2018 for the 2017- 2018 academic year, using the Year 2 institutional competencies of the Albizu assessment cycle. The report begins by clearly stating the institutional and program competencies associated with Albizu's mission to educate professionals committed to research, improve quality of life, and serve diverse communities. The relevant competencies and related courses are shown in Table 20.

The selected courses were assessed to provide evidence of student mastery of the 2017-18 institutional competencies, program competencies, course learning objectives included in the assessment, and best practices in school psychology. The four courses' assessments were evaluated and discussed by the core graduate faculty in the School Psychology program before submission to the Office of Evaluation, Assessment, and Institutional Accreditation.

A faculty member assessed SPSC-502 through a conceptualization case presentation carried out during class hours. The faculty evaluated the results through a rubric, and 90% of the students showed a mastery of the competencies. The faculty assessed SPRA-530 during the Fall 2017 semester. It is important to note that, during the semester, Albizu faced several obstacles related to Hurricane Maria, one of them being that schools stopped holding classes and became community centers, eliminating a traditional venue for school psychology practicums. Nonetheless, the students demonstrated their mastery of the competencies by working under supervision at the community centers, helping children, parents, and school personnel manage the recovery crisis from the hurricane. The community work hours were counted as practicum hours because they corresponded directly with school psychology roles and best practices. SPSC-502 was assessed through pre-test and post-assessments, given in the classroom at the beginning and end of the semester. The results demonstrated that 95% of the students showed a mastery of the competencies.

Table 20.  San Juan Campus M.S. in School Psychology course alignment to competencies for 2018-2019

| Institutional Competencies | Program Competencies | Courses |
|---|---|---|
| Mastery of clinical/professional competencies | Assessment | SPSC-502 social-behavioral Assessment (level 2), offered Spring 2018 |
| | Intervention | SPRA-530 Intervention Practicum (level 3), offered Fall 2017 |
| | Consultation and interprofessional/ interdisciplinary skills | SPRA-530 Intervention Practicum (level 3) |
| Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups | Individual and cultural diversity | SPRA-512 Advanced Conceptualization and Diagnostic Practicum (level 2), offered Fall 2017; SPRA-530 Intervention Practicum (level 3) |
| Information literacy | Research | SPSF-625 Program Competency of Research, offered Fall 2017; SPSC-502 Social-Behavioral Assessment (level 2), offered Spring 2018; SPSF-625 Introduction to Research (level 1), offered Summer 2018 |

The aggregated data shows that the M.S. in School Psychology program's courses aligned with Albizu's mission by preparing students for successful careers, meaningful lives, and improving others' quality of life through service to the community.

The program report stated that the M.S. in School Psychology program's core faculty had established a continuity plan in the event of future disruptions of planned professional development activities. The faculty also decided which courses would be used to assess student achievement in 2018-2019 by aligning program competencies with the institutional competencies in Year 3 of the assessment cycle.  The planned alignments are presented in Table 21.

Table 21.  San Juan Campus M.S. in School Psychology course alignment to competencies for 2018-2019

| Institutional Competencies | Program Competencies | Courses |
|---|---|---|
| Communication/interpersonal skills | Professional values and attitudes | SPRA-510 SPRA-509 SPSF-662 SPRA-540 |
| | Communication and interpersonal skills | |
| | Consultation and interprofessional/ interdisciplinary skills | |
| Lifelong learning | Communication and interpersonal skills | SPRA-510 SPRA-509 SPSF-662 |
| | Assessment | |
| | Intervention | |
| | Consultation and interprofessional/ interdisciplinary skills | SPRA-540 |

The M.S. in School Psychology program report presented its learning assessment strategies as either direct measures of student learning (such as "Case study of a patient with an assigned neurogenic condition, accompanied by the rubric (Final Project), or a clinical observation of a treatment session

and/or an evaluation session") or indirect measures of student learning (such as course exams). The program faculty analyzed the results of these measures and concluded that 78% of the students met the program's established criteria of 80% mastery of the competencies. After analyzing the problems encountered by students that impeded them from reaching the minimum level of 80%, the faculty concluded that the difficulty was related to the accessibility of external practicum sites. As a result, the program committed to providing better transportation coordination to practicum sites and more time to achieve the expected skills.

Student Learning Assessment Process Summary for the B.S. in Psychology (Miami)

Analyses performed by the undergraduate psychology program in 2017-2018 examined student achievement of the following Albizu institutional competencies: Competency #2: Mastery of clinical/professional competencies, Competency #3: Sensitivity to the cultural realities of diverse social groups, and Competency #5: Information literacy. These competencies were assessed based on student performance in the following three courses, progressing from introductory to advanced level: PSY-200 Foundations of Psychology, PSY-350 Careers in Psychology, and PSY-406 Abnormal Psychology.

The analyses suggest that students demonstrate mastery in their given areas of study and apply these concepts to integrate their learning in more advanced courses. In two courses (PSY-200 and PSY-406), faculty members used performance results to modify teaching strategies and course methodology— including scheduling in-class reviews of midterm examinations to clarify learned material, providing students with written exam reviews, and addressing diagnostic identification and general psychology topics in exam questions—thus providing additional strength to the assessment measures. Concerning Competency #5, all three courses modified educational and teaching strategies by adding exam questions related to accessing literacy sources in psychology, incorporating material from scholarly publications on careers in psychology, and advocating the use of websites to locate the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (Fifth edition; DSM-5). These modifications strengthened learning acquisition and assessment results.

*Assessment and planning*

The Strategic Plan 2019-2022 included three goals related to assessing educational effectiveness—Goal 1: Increase the Licensing Exam Passing Rates for the doctoral programs in clinical psychology and the master's program in speech and language pathology; Goal 2: Fully Develop the Institution's Digital Learning (Online) Functionality; and Goal 3: Increase Enrollment and Retention. The approved budgets for 2019-2020 included creating an institutional assessment specialist position responsible for unifying campus assessment activities.   Linking assessment needs, such a full-time position, to the budget was facilitated through the use of the Planning Assessment Annual Plans 2019 Calendar (V.3)

Two promising institution-wide assessment initiatives under the first goal of increasing licensing are currently under implementation. Both initiatives, the Competency-Based Outcomes Module Project and the Examination for the Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) Project, received significant three-year budget allocations and are discussed below.

Competency-Based Outcomes Module Project

In 2019 Albizu acquired the Blackboard Competency-Based Outcomes Module. The CBO Presentation at the Academic Board Meeting (V.3) documents the roll-out of this innovative project. This module aims to allow a summative assessment of competencies at the program and campus-level. The implementation process began in Spring 2020 with five programs participating in the pilot: Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology (SJ/MZ), M.S. and Psy.D. in Counseling Psychology (SJ/MZ), M.S. in School Psychology (SJ/MZ), and M.S. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology (SJ/MZ). During the first year of implementation, the following was achieved: faculty was trained on rubrics development, and programs developed a goal workbook, which aligned the curricular maps with the institutional competencies, programs competencies, professional accrediting competencies, and the licensing exam domains.

During the second year of implementation, the M.S. pilot programs are aligning and administering their comprehensive exams. The assessment coordinator has access to the comprehensive exam reports that show the performance achieved by goal and student in the exam.

Faculty in the M.S. in Counseling Psychology program at the Mayagüez University Center used the report to provide students with individual reports of their performance in the second part of the comprehensive exam. This served two purposes: 1) Those students who did not perform well on the exam could know which areas to give more attention to when retaking the exam, and 2) Students who performed well on the comprehensive exam could learn which areas to prioritize when preparing for the licensing exam. The Example CBO Report MS Counseling Mayaguez Fall 2020 (V.3) course performance report displays information showing how a single Blackboard Learn Course performs against a selected set of goals. Performance targets and a range of acceptable performance for the course can be determined when running the report. Data includes averages for the entire course as well as breakdowns for individual students and goals.

In the spring 2021, the development of a dashboard for student and program performance is in progress. Three new programs are working on their goal workbook to be incorporated in the CBO module: M.S. in Speech and Language Pathology (SJ/MZ/MIA), B.I. in Psychology (SJ/MZ), and Psy.D. Clinical (Miami).

Examination for the Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) Project

In 2019, Albizu began collaborating with Test Innovations to work with San Juan and Mayagüez faculty to develop a knowledge inventory and practice test exams for the EPPP. In Fall 2020, the campus administered the knowledge inventory. Students rated knowledge for each of the eight domains, which was compared with their results in each of the eight domain tests. Table 22 presents the highest correct answers in the items related to Biological Bases of Behavior. The purpose of these tests is to help students develop reasoning skills comparable to those required to pass the licensing exam. For both (knowledge inventory and practice tests), the students received individualized results with suggestions for reviewing or relearning specific areas, and professors received a copy of their students' reportsThe company provides a similar analysis for the other areas. The Test Innovations Task Force 2021 Presentation (I.3) presents these results in depth. The project continues in Spring 2021.

Table 22.  EPPP Results for the Biological Bases of Behavior Domain

| BIOLOGIAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR | N of Items | Percent Correct | Mean Raw | Standard Desviation | Min. Score | Max. Score | Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "KN1.0 FUNCTIONAL CORRELATES AND DETERMINATS OF BEHAVIOR" | 17 | 64 | 10.88 | 2.64 | 7 | 16 | |
| "KN2.0 PSYCHOPARMACOLOGY" | 6 | 53 | 3.19 | 1.18 | 1 | 5 | |
| "KN3.0 COMBINED TREATMENTS" | 2 | 94 | 1.875 | 0.33 | 1 | 2 | |
| "KN4.0 DISORDERS" | 8 | 55 | 4.375 | 1.5 | 1 | 7 | |
| "KN5.0 NEUROIMAGING" | 5 | 39 | 1.94 | 1.144 | 0 | 4 | |
| Total | 38 | 58 | 22.25 | 4.62 | 16 | 33 | 0.68 |
| N=16 | | | | | | | |

*Assessment Outcomes Lead to Continuous Improvement*

Since Albizu's last Self-Study in 2010, the University has continued to develop its student learning assessment processes, leading to an improvement in academic offerings, new educational strategies, and the development of faculty competencies that are part of faculty evaluation and development. However, developing institutional faculty development goals would allow a clearer linkage between faculty development and assessment findings. Programmatic accreditations are presented as evidence of educational effectiveness as demonstrated by our APA (Miami Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology Miami and San Juan, and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology San Juan) and ASHA (M.S in Speech-Language Pathology Miami, San Juan and Mayagüez) accreditations for eight and ten years respectively, the maximum time granted.

Chapter VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement presents the assessment of academic and administrative departments. The addendum on COVID-19 includes the results of the assessment of remote instruction.

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria for Standard V, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. The assessment program implemented at Albizu University since the reaffirmation of accreditation in 2010 has progressively built the capacity to measure and track institutional effectiveness.

2. The university has established clearly stated student learning outcomes, at both the institution and program levels, that are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission.

3. The assessment processes are faculty-led and evaluate student achievement of institutional and program goals in an organized and systematic manner.

4. The institution lacks a central repository for assessment data/results to make the information more accessible to stakeholders.

5. The institution needs greater consistency in assessment strategies, particularly when degree programs are offered at multiple locations.

6. The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan included three goals related to assessing educational effectiveness. Specifically, Goal 1: Increase the Licensing Exam Passing Rates for the doctoral programs in clinical psychology and the master's program in speech and language pathology; Goal 2: Fully Develop the Institution's Digital Learning (Online) Functionality; and Goal 3: Increase Enrollment and Retention.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the university should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to educational effectiveness assessment.

1. Foster a culture of assessment that is unit driven and that will maximize the use of findings generated by institutional review.

2. Evaluate the assessment practices in place since the establishment of three-year cycles for assessing learning competencies.

3. Create synergies and improve collaboration between the two campus-based Student Learning Assessment Committees, especially for programs offered at both campuses.

4. Automate and digitize the assessment process.

5. Formalize the dissemination of assessment results.

**STANDARD VI: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**

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

## Compliance with Standard and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard VI and its criteria. At Albizu, an integrated planning and budgeting approach has resulted in sustainability and growth.

Our narrative is submitted also as evidence that Albizu University meets the three Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

#8: *Systematic evaluation of all programs*—addressed particularly through integrated planning and assessment activities.

#10: *Institutional planning*—addressed particularly through mission integration in programmatic and financial areas.

 #11: *Financial resources*—addressed particularly through a viable financial position that responds to mission related needs and is in compliance with accounting standards, rules, and regulations.

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how Albizu's processes, resources, and structures are consistent with the University's mission and Strategic Plan, and (2) how Albizu assigns resources according to new challenges in the educational and social fields. The exploration of these research questions allowed the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding mission alignment to strategic and financial planning, and integration of strategic planning with resource allocation, compliance, and assessment.

## Analysis of Key Issues

Since its founding in 1966, Albizu has been under a continuous process of growth and change.  Sound planning and financial management have allowed the institution to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines—graduates committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities. Albizu has evolved from one specific objective of offering a master's program in clinical psychology at the Puerto Rico Institute of Psychology to offering certificates, undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs in psychology, speech-language pathology, speech-language therapy, education, criminal justice, and human services at the San Juan Campus, the Miami Branch Campus, and the Mayagüez University Center. Albizu continues to grow its enrollment. It also evolves by launching new academic programs sensitive to the cultural realities of different ethnic groups. As we grow and change, we have anchored strategic and financial planning to our mission.

*Mission Alignment to Institutional Planning*

The institutional planning process at Albizu University occurs in three timeframes: long-term, mid-term, and short-term, presented in Strategic Planning Framework (VI.2). These three planning timeframes are vertically aligned. Long-term planning is the foundation for mid-term planning, and mid-term planning guides short-term planning. Long-term planning visualizes the future beyond the mid-term (3-5 years) planning. Long-term planning is an activity that the executive team initiated in 2020 through scenario planning exercises. The institution recognizes the value of the information thus obtained, which confirms the need to initiate visioning conversations with all stakeholders in 2021. Strategic planning at Albizu is the mid-term process that campuses undertake every 3-5 years, in coordination with the central administration. In this process, each campus creates a workgroup that performs SWOT analyses, identifies priorities, and identifies the implementation strategies. Afterward, all the information generated through the workgroups is consolidated into a single document called the strategic plan. Operational planning addresses the short-term and is linked to the institutional budgetary cycle, thereby promoting a link between both important processes. Also, operational planning at Albizu benefits from the information collected through assessment processes, which serve to identify needs. Through the operational planning process, we seek to act, plan, and make budget allocations to meet the needs identified by the assessment processes so that institutional renewal is promoted.

Since the prior MSCHE evaluation visit, the institution adopted a strategic plan for 2013-2018, transitional institutional goals for 2017-2019, and the current strategic plan for 2019-2022. The first plan was implemented under the presidencies of four chief executive officers, three of whom served as interims. In 2017, Dr. José Pons Madera became president and initiated developing transitional institutional priorities to guide operations until the adoption of the new strategic plan. The evolution of the strategic goals illustrates how the periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness has led to change and renewal, as detailed in Figure 3.



| Strategic Plan 2013-2018 | Institutional Priorities 2017-2019 | Strategic Plan 2019-2022 |
|---|---|---|
| • Strengthen our legacy<br>• Disseminate our history<br>• Strengthen our operational funds | • Strengthen the foundation ns<br>• Progression to the digital world<br>• Addressing local, regional, and international opportunities<br>• Diversification of sources of revenues | • Increase the licensing exam passing rate<br>• Fully develop the institution's digital (online) functionality<br>• Increase enrollment and retention<br>• Increase sources of revenue<br>• Define the marketing and branding strategy |

Figure 3. Strategic Goals Evolution

Each of these three strategic planning activities is discussed below.

Strategic Plan 2013-2018 (VI.1)

In 2014 the Board of Trustees ratified the Strategic Plan 2013-2018: Effectiveness Indicators for Institutional Development. The plan was aligned with the former institutional mission and vision statements. Figure 4 presents the three strategic goals and 13 corresponding objectives. The three goals

were met, and a majority of the objectives were completed. This was achieved through an institutional effectiveness initiative that linked goals and objectives to indicators operationalized for each campus. For example, Objective 1.2: Continue to improve the quality of the academic programs was operationalized in terms of the number of applications for accreditation, accreditations obtained, licensing pass rates, and employer satisfaction with the performance of alumni. This collaborative, university-wide process followed the tenets of the Policy on the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness (VI.9) in effect in 2014. Assessment results were considered in the planning and budgeting for each subsequent academic year.

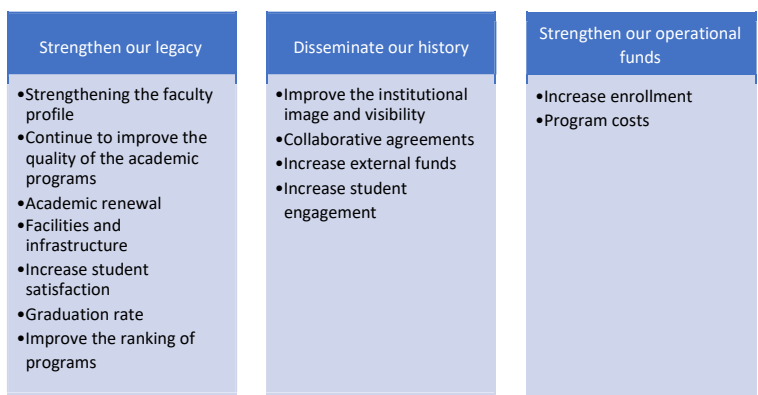| Strengthen our legacy | Disseminate our history | Strengthen our operational funds |
|---|---|---|
| • Strengthening the faculty profile<br>• Continue to improve the quality of the academic programs<br>• Academic renewal<br>• Facilities and infrastructure<br>• Increase student satisfaction<br>• Graduation rate<br>• Improve the ranking of programs | • Improve the institutional image and visibility<br>• Collaborative agreements<br>• Increase external funds<br>• Increase student engagement | • Increase enrollment<br>• Program costs |

Figure 4.  Goals and Objectives of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan

Institutional Priorities 2017-2019 (VI.1)

Following a period of leadership transitions between 2013 and 2016, the university has benefited from the steady, seasoned leadership of Dr. José Pons Madera, who was named president in January 2017. Along with the University's senior staff, he oversaw the implementation of the later stages of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018.

In May 2017, four months into Dr. Pons Madera's tenure, the Board of Trustees approved the Strategic Operational Plan 2017-19. It aligned the university's strategic priorities with the later stages of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018 to better equip Albizu in dealing with the existing financial circumstances of Puerto Rico and the status of U.S. higher education. These strategic priorities are the outcomes of a task force appointed by the president in February 2017 and comprised of representatives of senior management from the San Juan Campus and Miami Campus, as well as from the Presidency. After reviewing the key performance indicators of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and consulting with representative members of the Albizu faculty, administration, students, and trustees, the task force members conducted an institutional SWOT analysis. They identified potential key initiatives summarized into the four strategic priorities that comprised the Strategic Operational Plan, presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5.  Strategic Goals of the Strategic Operational Plan 2017-2019

Considering the impact of the 2017 hurricanes and the difficult fiscal situation in Puerto Rico, the university's administration was very judicious in prioritizing fiscal resources in accordance with the university's strategic objectives and the desire to provide excellent educational experiences to students. In the aftermath of the hurricanes heightening the sense of urgency imposed by the challenges faced during FY 2017-18, the president secured approval from the Board of Trustees to use the Strategic Operational Plan approved in May 2017 as the foundation for the fiscal year 2018-2019 budget.

Under Albizu's strategic planning framework, the strategic plan rolls out into unit operational plans. The San Juan Campus Operational Plan of the Deanship for Enrollment Management (VI.1) illustrates this vertical alignment. The document incorporates the general strategic goal, which is sub-divided into strategies, objectives, activities, and indicators. The final column contains the dates for the presentation of assessment reports. The implementation of this plan has resulted in a 9% annual compounded growth rate in enrollment since 2014. This growth was even sustained in the spring semester of 2018, right after Hurricane Maria impacted Puerto Rico. The institution uses a Smartsheet platform to dynamically track enrollment progress through funnel metrics as illustrated by the Funnel Metrics 2018 Smartsheet (VI.1) and Funnel Metrics 2018 Dashboard (VI.1) for the San Juan Campus.

2019-2022 Strategic Plan (VI.1)

Five strategic pillars represent the current long-term planning at Albizu: (1) Develop and strengthen academic programs and management, (2) Improve services and academic programs' performance, (3) Diversify income sources, (4) Complete the digitalization process, and (5) Increase collaborations with national and international institutions. These pillars served as the foundation for the collaborative process begun in 2018 to create the Strategic Plan 2019-2022.

The president kicked-off the process by communicating, through the Announcement of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (VI.2), the intention to undertake a strategic planning process. The Office of Institutional Planning drafted a roadmap, and planning teams were constituted on each campus. Each campus chancellor assigned staff to campus planning teams. Assessment data were gathered and disseminated among the participants of the planning teams.

External environment assessments were conducted by two consultants, Puerto Rico External Environment (VI.2) and South Florida Higher Education Landscape Analysis (VI.2) and shared with the planning

teams. Each campus planning team decided how to promote participation among the campus community. For the San Juan Campus and Mayaguez University Center, a full day strategic retreat was conducted, allowing participation from different constituencies, including faculty, non-faculty staff, graduate and undergraduate students, alumni, and non-academic directors. Miami promoted campus participation through campus-wide surveys and community dialogues that are summarized in the Miami SWOT Summary (VI.2) and Miami Survey Results Summary (VI.2). It is also documented in the Strategic Planning Miami Campus Committee 2019 Report (VI.2).

The information gathered from the community dialogues, surveys, and the strategic retreat was consolidated in a draft strategic plan document presented to chancellors, the Board of Trustees, and each campus student council. New recommendations arose from those meetings, as was dividing the goals into sub-goals, a recommendation made by the Board of Trustees. Once the Board approved the document, the president shared through a letter that five strategic goals would direct our institutional development for the next three years. As noted previously, these goals are:

1. Increase the licensing exam passing rate
2. Fully develop the institution's digital (online) functionality
3. Increase enrollment and retention
4. Increase sources of revenue
5. Define the marketing and branding strategy

The president also stressed that "the strategic plan will guide all campus-level planning efforts, thus ensuring both lateral and vertical integration of the institutional planning processes. The plan will also guide budget allocations for the next three years. It is a dynamic document that will respond effectively to abrupt changes in the external environment." The letter served as the preamble to town hall meetings conducted for the San Juan Campus, the Mayaguez University Center, and the Miami Campus. On October 19, 2019, the president met with both chancellors at a President's Strategic Plan Execution Meeting. In this meeting, the president presented this vision for execution, and the five goals were discussed in depth. The President's Strategic Plan Execution Roadmap Smartsheet platform (VI.5) was used to guide high-level conversations on progress between the president and the chancellors.

The Albizu University Strategic Plan 2019-2022 is available to the public on the website. In addition to five institution-wide goals, the plan includes campus-specific goals. For the San Juan Campus, the campus-specific strategic goal is to address the issue of physical facility space constraints. For the Miami Campus, the campus-specific strategic goals are to promote community engagement and to strengthen the organizational climate of the campus.

These localized goals reflect the challenges and opportunities unique to each campus. For the San Juan Campus, the capacity to grow is impacted by limitation in physical space. For the Miami Campus, leadership transitions and enrollment declines established the need for stability. At present, the San Juan Campus has contracted a commercial realtor to identify and evaluate space for possible relocation of the Albizu Clinics, which would release significant space for classrooms. At the Miami Campus, the enrollment decline trend has been reversed, resulting in organizational stability.

The key performance indicators and progress to date for all the goals are presented later in this chapter in the Institutional Research and Statistics section. The Board and the administration conducted the Strategic Plan COVID-19 Review (VI.9) which served as white paper on the impact of the pandemic and its implications.

Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Development of the next strategic plan was announced in the Strategic Plan Development Process (VI.2) letter shared in the summer of 2021. The process began with an assessment of the planning process and the outcomes through the Strategic Plan Assessment Survey (VI.9).

The Assessment Results of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (VI.9) indicated the need to educate the community about the strategic planning process; explicitly address research, clinical training, and the internship programs; improve stakeholder engagement; and enhance the communication and dissemination of information. These findings were discussed with the Board of Trustees by the institutional director of planning, institutional research and compliance, as documented in the Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness 2020 Board Retreat Presentation (VI.2 and VI.9).

*Mission Alignment to Financial Planning*

Albizu's financial planning and budgeting processes are clearly linked to the institution's strategic plans and the academic and administrative units' operational objectives. The budget cycle described in the 2016 Monitoring Report remains in place with two important modifications: initiation of the budget cycle in the fall instead of the spring and the presentation of the budget's strategic direction at the outset. Two forces prompted the changes: (1) a delay in the approval of the 2019-2020 budget due to the transition from an institutional director of finance to a chief financial officer, and (2) recommendations made to the Board of Trustees by consultants from the National Center for Higher Education Systems (NCHEMS) to:

> *Sequence the budget development process so that a set of guidelines set against strategic priorities are outlined by the President and the Board from the beginning. Ensure that the President is authorized to make difficult choices about the proposed requests that are in conflict at the final stage of budget preparation, prior to the budget being advanced to the Board for final approval.*

This recommendation was operationalized in December 2020 through the Budget Strategies 2021-2022 Presentation (VI.3) made by the president and the chief financial officer to the Finance, Investments, Compensation, and Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees. After the committee endorsed the proposed strategies, the campus budgets were adjusted to reflect a 3% increase, thus allowing for raising the minimum wage to $12 per hour, making significant investments in technology, and funding new positions for instruction and student support, as communicated in the Salary Increase Letter from the President (VI.3).

Letters on the Budget Process from 2019 (VI.3) and 2020 (VI.3) provide evidence to demonstrate that budget requests migrated from Excel to an automated Smartsheet and earlier starts of the budgetary cycle in 2020 (February) and 2021 (October). The Budgetary Calendar and Working Plan 2020-2021 (VI.3) provides for constituent participation and incorporates the use of assessment results. The Board of

Trustees, the central administration, and the campuses are involved, and how the process links assessment findings and enrollment forecasts at the beginning and concludes with the preparation of annual operational plans for individual units.

Through a systematic and integrated budget and planning process, the institution has successfully allocated resources to the key areas identified in the strategic plan. Priorities were determined by the strategic plan, and the annual budget process is the formal mechanism through which funding allocations are decided. The approved budgets for fiscal years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 include an annual budget allocation for each of the five goals under the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. The Allocations for Strategic Initiatives (VI.3) totaled $1,474,099 in FY2020-21, compared to $1,117,000 in FY2019-20. The focus of financial planning has been both short-term and mid-term.

*Financial viability*

The Audited Financial Statements for June 30, 2020 and 2019 (VI.7) demonstrate financial sustainability attributable to effective institutional monitoring practices for budgeting and resource allocation. The Financial Audit 2020 Findings and Action Plan Letter (VI.7) with the corresponding Financial Action Table (VI.7) present the follow-up to seven findings related to compliance and internal control matters.

The financial responsibility composite scores for six consecutive years provide evidence of financial responsibility without oversight:

Table 23.  Financial Responsibility Composite Scores

| 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2.5 | 3.0 | 2.4 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.99 |

Interim financial statements, actual versus budget reports, and current versus previous year expenditures are presented to the president, chancellors, and institutional directors monthly at the meetings of the Academic and Administrative Excellence Board. At these meetings, the chief financial officer analyzes fluctuations and engages in a discussion with the leadership team. Previous to the start, at the start, and at the end of each enrollment period, actual versus budget enrollment and tuition reports are also reviewed. Evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is demonstrated by the discussion that evolved from the July 2020 Enrollment and Revenue Forecast (VI.3) when the chief financial officer projected an 8% shortfall in fall revenue through an analysis of enrollment trends. The discussion led to the implementation of coordinated enrollment management strategies resulting in an enrollment growth of 5% for fall 2020.

Interim financial statements are shared with the Finance Committee of the Board monthly, included in the quarterly Report of the President to the Board of Trustees, and presented during the ordinary quarterly meetings of the Board. In compliance with institutional statutes (Sections 5 and 7), at the end of each fiscal year, a financial statement audit, Title IV compliance audit, and state funds audit are conducted by an independent CPA firm to ensure proper administration and internal controls.

Table 24 presents a summary of audited financial results trends since 2015. Total revenues have increased at a compound rate of 9% since 2015. Drivers for this growth are tuition revenues and income from

grants. Fiscal year 2014-2015 reports a positive operating income of $765,508; however, change in net assets reflects a $321,720 loss mainly due to a decrease of investments' value. As explained in the 2016 Monitoring Report, market conditions in Puerto Rico required recognition of an unrealized loss on investments in the amount of $2,571,723. Since fiscal year 2014-2015, Albizu University has increased total revenue, reflecting a sustained positive change in net assets during the last three fiscal years (2018-2020).

Table 24.  Historical Summary of Financial Statements

|  | AUDITED | | | | LE | BUDGET |
|  | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenues, gains and other support:** | | | | | | |
| Tuition and fees | $ 23,271,670 | $ 24,349,084 | 26,071,145 | 27,558,338 | 30,942,862 | 33,837,120 |
| Other revenue | 1,571,715 | 2,055,151 | 2,744,949 | 4,718,856 | 514,300 | 900,425 |
| Services revenues | 376,088 | 213,577 | 72,890 | 1,280 | 123,658 | 1,080,726 |
| Grants | 2,429,946 | 2,672,347 | 3,865,793 | 2,659,352 | 6,755,350 | 10,349,647 |
| In-Kind Services | 115,702 | 83,095 | 35,950 | 310,077 | 282,776 | 165,000 |
| **Total revenues** | 27,765,121 | 29,373,254 | 32,790,727 | 35,247,903 | 38,618,946 | 46,332,918 |
| **Expenses and other deductions** | | | | | | |
| Educational and general expenses | 29,185,706 | 29,638,618 | 32,713,229 | 35,214,310 | 37,396,685 | 47,685,475 |
| **Income (loss) before non- operating (expenses)** | (1,420,585) | (265,364) | 77,498 | 33,593 | 1,222,261 | (1,352,557) |
| **Non -operating income (expenses):** | 190,438 | 4,713,719 | 2,838,593 | 1,593,581 | 2,194,750 | 1,478,285 |
| **Change in Net Assets** | (1,230,147) | 4,448,355 | 2,916,091 | 1,627,174 | 3,417,011 | 125,728 |

Albizu University continues to show improvement in the Statement of Financial Position. The university has consistently increased the investment account by re-investing investment income, following the Investment Policy (VI.4). The external investment manager strictly follows the investment objectives, return objectives, risk tolerance, asset allocation, and diversification requirements of this policy.

Obligations have remained consistent during these years, as no new commitments resulting from our operations have been incurred. In 2019, the institution re-financed the outstanding debt of the mortgage of the property in Doral, Florida, where our Miami Campus is located. This action resulted in savings on future interest expense and an earlier maturity date.

Fiscal years 2014 to the present reflect a continued increase in enrollment revenue at the institutional level. This growth is attributed to three strategic actions. First, under the leadership of the new president in 2017, admissions and recruitment units integrated enrollment management units that began to use funnel metrics to track the progression from lead to registered student. Second, enrollment grew due to new or modified academic offerings responsive to the needs of local markets or from the reputation of quality offerings with programmatic accreditations, such as from the American Psychological Association or the Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Third, the 2019-2020 budget included (1) a significant increase in the marketing and advertising budget allocation to create an institutional marketing office, and (2) increased expenditures in social media.

In 2017, the leadership team reviewed the market feasibility study completed in 2016. One of the seven programs included in the study was adopted and contributed to enrollment growth: the Psy.D. in Counseling Psychology, which was launched in the fall of 2018. Several other actions had a positive impact on enrollment. A new Master of Science in Autism and Other Neurodevelopmental Disorders contributed to enrollment growth for the San Juan Campus and the Mayagüez University Center,

beginning in 2019. In addition, the Mayaguez University Center began offering the Ph.D. in Industrial Psychology in 2020, and the Miami Campus reduced the credit load for the Psy.D. program.

The university continues to analyze cost by programs to determine their profitability and to establish enrollment goals. In 2018 the president of the university presented the program cost structure in town hall meetings. This information has been shared with the Board through the President's Quarterly Report to the Board and in meetings held in 2019. The new chief financial officer revised the model by incorporating indirect costs, which as recently as January 2020 provided the Finance Committee a profit analysis per campus. In spring 2020 and in preparation for the 2020-2021 budget, the university commissioned an economist from Advantage Business Consulting to validate the model and estimate future enrollment growth. As a result, enrollment and revenue projections for fiscal year 2020-2021 were adjusted down. Two contingent scenarios (-10% & -20% reductions) were also incorporated into the budget 2020-2021 in consideration of COVID-19 uncertainty. Enrollment and revenue projections were exceeded for fall 2020 and spring 2021 and are discussed under the COVID-19 addendum to this Self-Study.

*Compliance*

Financial statements for the past six years, in the independent auditors' opinion, present fairly in all material respects, the financial position of the university and the changes in net assets and its cash flows. Regarding the report on internal controls over financial reporting and on compliance, the administration has taken a proactive approach to address previous deficiencies, significant deficiencies, and in one single case, a material weakness. For these instances, the administration has developed, implemented, and monitored action plans to address internal controls presented to the Audit, Compliance and Integrity Committee of the Board of Trustees. The chief financial officer has the duty to follow up with the campus or units. In 2020, the administration created the Institutional Audit Committee to ensure adequate systems and training are in place. The committee meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by the chief financial officer.   Members include campus finance directors, chief of staff, institutional compliance officer for Title IV funds, institutional accountant, registrars, financial aid directors, and other staff members as needed. During its first year, the committee has focused on optimizing the no show process and finding a solution for cybersecurity training, as detailed in the Institutional Audit Committee 2021 Minutes. The need to appoint a compliance officer to this committee has been discussed by the chief of staff and the chief financial officer with the president.

*Planning for Facilities, Infrastructure and Technology*

The Facilities Management Department supports the Albizu University mission by providing a safe, efficient, and inclusive learning and working environment that supports student and community success. According to the Facilities Management mission statement: "The facilities management of Albizu University strives to gain the trust of those we work with by providing professional service based upon efficiency and knowledge of our respective areas of expertise. We strive to dignify our entire campus community by always treating each other with respect and courtesy. We agree to promote, in both actions and speech, an environment that encourages learning and professional growth."  Planning for facilities is driven by the annual operating budget allocation and the capital expenditures plan. While the institution

has not developed a campus master plan, this has been identified as an institutional need and priority. A decentralized facilities management structure has impacted the capacity to engage in long-term planning.

However, the Capital Budget 2022-2022 (VI.6) included a capital expenditures plan by individual building that is being monitored by the chancellors, the chief financial officer, the chief of staff, the directors of administration, and the directors of finance. In 2020, and for the first time, three major assessments through external consultants were completed: Facilities Risk Management Assessment (VI.6), Margolis Healy's Safety and Security Program Assessment (VI.6), and the Cybersecurity Risk Analysis (VI.6). The information from these reports resulted in budget allocations such as migrating the enterprise resource planning system to the cloud, cybersecurity training, and improvements to the Baldorioty and Calle Luna buildings in San Juan.

The wrath of Hurricane Maria caused significant damage to the Baldorioty Building of the San Juan campus that required emergency planning for business continuity and recovery. Damages totaled $1.6 million, of which 80% percent was covered by insurance.

Federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education have played a significant role in the development of adequate instructional, support services, and technological infrastructure. In 2019, the institution received grants for each campus from the U.S. Department of Education Emergency Assistance for Institutions of Higher Education, totaling $255,700 for the Miami Campus and $88,250 for the Miami Campus. These funds covered recovery expense at the Miami campus after Hurricane Irene and the acquisition of a generator for the Baldorioty Building at the San Juan Campus. The Miami Campus has benefited from Title V grants under the HSI and PPOHA to construct and enhance instructional and support services spaces that included a recording studio for online and hybrid instruction, a graduate student writing lab, classrooms, and tutoring space.

Major construction or renovation projects at the Miami Campus include an $1.1 million expansion of the second floor to create space for student support services, completed in 2020. In addition, upgrades to the air conditioning system valued at $602,000 were initiated in 2020. Projects totaling $14,000 to improve student life began in 2019 and include a new cafeteria opening in 2021. More than $18,000 was invested in modifications to comply with city and county codes. The capital expenditures at the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center total $1.2 million since 2018. They resulted in improvements to the mental health clinic and new spaces for collections, videoconferencing and recording, storage, and supplies.

In 2019, the Mayaguez University Center moved to a new location to accommodate growth. This additional location received an allocation of $750,000 to renovate space being leased in a new location into 12 classrooms, conference space, and 15 clinic rooms. The budget allocation resulted from an extraordinary budget request to the Board since it was not included in the 2018-2019 budget.

Technology Planning

Technology planning is a collaborative effort between the institutional director of information technology and the campus directors of information technology; this planning takes places as part of the annual budgeting process. The university does not have a technology replacement plan but intends to develop one

in 2021. A consulting firm conducted a cybersecurity assessment to identify vulnerabilities. This sensitive document was used to determine the budget allocations for cybersecurity that were included for the first time in the 2019-2020 budget and which totaled $195,138 to date.

Two major technology infrastructure activities were initiated in 2020. First, the institution invested in electronic health record solutions. This project is covered in depth in the COVID-19 addendum. Second, the university decided to migrate to the cloud and optimize the enterprise resource planning and constituent relationship management infrastructure in partnership with Ellucian This major initiative will kick-off in the fall of 2021 and end in 2023. The approval of this investment was the result of the assessment of four major reports: (1) the Ellucian Finance Modules Implementation Status Report (VI.8) in 2018; (2) the Operational and Financial Risk Assessment Corrective Action Plan (VI.9); (3) the Ellucian ERP Internal Evaluation (VI.8) in 2020; and (4) the Ellucian ERP Operational Findings and Recommendations (VI.8) in 2021.

*Institutional effectiveness assessment*

At Albizu, periodic institutional effectiveness assessment is established through the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness Policy (VI.9)*,* which stipulates the process and indicators to measure effectiveness at all levels. The components of the institutional effectiveness assessment cycle are Mission and Institutional Goals, Strategic Plan Implementation, Institutional Effectiveness Assessment, Data Analysis and Disclosure, and Results for the Strategic Plan. The primary processes that allow the university to measure institutional effectiveness are two: (1) planning and assessment and (2) institutional research and statistics. Assessment of student learning, administrative support, and student support is covered in depth under Standard V.

Planning and Assessment

As part of the linkage between planning and assessment, in the spring semester the Offices of Institutional Evaluation and Accreditation and Institutional Planning and Research meet with the leadership team of each location to discuss the work calendar and processes for that academic year. During the year three meetings are held. During the first meeting the expected level of compliance with each objective is shared for each location, academic program, and administrative office. The template to be used and the work calendar are presented. After this, each deanship, program, and administrative office creates an operational plan with specific objectives and indicators that are used to measure objectives through three data points throughout the year. Campus data is sent to the Office of Assessment, which uses the information to determine the level of compliance with the objectives. This information is used to conduct periodic progress discussion among the president, the chancellors, and the institutional directors to monitor progress and make adjustments to ensure institutional improvement and to identify priority areas for the next academic year. This information is discussed to establish budget priorities for the next budget cycle and, if needed, to transfer funds for priority needs. For example, in 2020, funds were identified to support new expenditures in social media marketing and advertising that were needed to increase the number of clients matched to students in clinical training.

Before 2019 planning and assessment processes were not well synchronized across units. Beginning fall 2019, the institution initiated more consistent practices in the implementation of planning and assessment

processes across units. This effort reflects the goal of becoming one university where critical processes and activities are standardized. The director of planning, institutional research, and compliance identified three challenges that became evident from the initial attempt to standardize processes across units. These challenges are culture, not using the standardized formats, and the expectation for the process to be driven by the top. The director's recommendations, which are aligned with the vision of the president to digitalize and automate assessment and planning processes, are included at the end of this chapter. The institution also recognizes the need to link the assessment of student life cycle to planning and budgeting. As noted in the chapter for Standard III, this recommendation emerged from the NCHEMS consultants.

Institutional Research and Statistics

Institutional research surveys contribute to the institutional effectiveness process because they allow for the assessment of institutional processes at the academic, student, and administrative levels. The Office of Planning, Institutional Research, and Compliance develops, analyzes, and interprets the information collected through new enrollment and satisfaction studies. However, the office also analyzes and interprets different internal databases related to students, as well as external databases for conducting benchmarking analysis.

Through a dashboard, the results are shared with the Board of Directors, the administration, and the campuses. Three new surveys in progress that will provide critical information for institutional improvement are exit interviews, alumni surveys, and drop-out surveys. In March 2020, a survey was designed to assess student satisfaction with the remote learning experience. This is discussed within the COVID-19 addendum.

Institutional statistics are published periodically though a Smartsheet dashboard with key performance indicators (KPI's) that is shared with the Board of Trustees, administration, and campuses. Current key performance indicators are aligned to the current strategic plan and are summarized in the Strategic Plan Scorecard (VI.1). The scorecard is used to report to the Board and as tool for discussion with the leadership team.

An assessment of these indicators was commissioned by the Board of the Trustees in 2020 and conducted by NCHEMS. The Review of Strategic Plan KPI's included the alignment to strategic priorities, comparison to measures common to the field, and review of the dashboard. The seven key recommendations and the status are summarized in the document Status of KPI's (VI.8)

During the approval of the Strategic Plan in 2019, the board reviewed the passing rates and asked the president to focus on the implementation of Strategic Goal #1: Increase the Licensing Exam Passing Rates. The Board approved the creation of a position of Assessment Specialist and funded investments in targeted activities related to test preparation, curriculum alignment, and competency and competency-based outcomes modules.

In November 2019, the president created the Presidential Task Force on Licensing Examination Outcomes (VI.2) to guide and oversee the implementation of this goal. The group was charged with the following tasks:

1. Perform a "root cause analysis" of the low examination pass rate.
2. Develop short-term strategies to begin improving the performance of recently graduated alumni and advanced M.A. and doctoral students.
3. Develop long-term initiatives to guarantee the success of all students in this important milestone.
4. Plan the development of digitalized data-gathering procedures, especially for student learning.
5. Assessment results, to produce periodic reports.
6. Link the work of the Task Force to designated members of the Board of Trustees.

The task force meets on a monthly basis to monitor progress on five strategies that were funded in previous and current budgets: (1) Align the curricula to the test; (2) Ensure test preparation; (3) Require comprehensive examinations; (4) Provide active learning experiences; and (5) Conduct learning assessments and academic program evaluations. On a continuous basis, the Office of the Presidency monitors progress to ensure that implementation is on track and to serve as a catalyst for change as needed. After the December 2020 meeting, the Office of the President provided funds to the San Juan Campus to hire a part-time coordinator/mentor to facilitate faculty engagement and promote student participation in the administration of knowledge inventories and practice exams by domain areas of the EPPP. The Office of the President also identified the need to hold deep-dive meetings with each campus that for the first time will incorporate representatives from the speech-language pathology and therapy programs.

Responsibility and accountability

The assignment of responsibilities flows from the Board of Trustees to the president and to the administration. The responsibilities of board members, board committees, and the president are described in the Corporate Bylaws of Albizu University (VI.5). The Board of Trustees meets with the president at the end of the calendar year to set annual performance goals that are aligned to the strategic plan. These goals cascade down into the organizational structure. The 2016 Monitoring Report indicated that the institution intended to develop a performance appraisal system. In 2017, the San Juan Campus adopted a performance appraisal system built on the Smartsheet platform that was intended to be the platform to administer salary increases based on performance and merit. The Employee Performance Evaluation System (PES) includes specific objectives and competencies for each employee that are aligned with the institutional strategic plan. The system was used at the San Juan Campus until 2018. In 2021, the system was used to conduct performance appraisals for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years. The Miami Campus uses a different system for performance appraisals. An external human resources assessment conducted for the institution in 2020 confirmed the need to review and standardize the performance appraisal processes and systems. A new institutional director of human resources was approved in the 2020-2021 budget and joined Albizu in June 2021.

Employee and faculty responsibilities are described in the Employee Manual and in the Faculty Handbook. The human resources assessment conducted in 2021 (VI.9) identified the need to revise the Employee Handbook. The first phase of this process was completed in January 2021. Faculty are evaluated through student surveys and by the program directors at the end of the hiring period. The university recognizes the need to redesign the assignment of faculty workloads at the San Juan Campus.

The new institutional director of human resources began the process of redesign, as well as the development of a process to implement salary increases consistent with the Compensation Policy approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria of Standard VI, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. The institution has a planning culture. Throughout leadership transitions, Albizu has successfully used three strategic plans to remain anchored and focused on the implementation of the mission.

2. Albizu has an effective and process-driven planning process. Priorities are not only driven by the strategic plan but also by current operational needs. The leadership team is active in monitoring progress and adjusting to ensure success. Planning engages all levels of the organization and involves two-way communication.

3. Planning is inclusive. The involvement of faculty, administrative staff, alumni, students, and trustees has been vital to elaborate, execute and achieve the institutional plan goals.

4. Financial planning is a mission-driven interactive process focused on continuous improvement.

5. The institution created a capital expenditure plan.

6. The institution needs a campus master plan for facilities.

7. The institution needs to standardize the performance evaluation system across units.

8. There is a well-defined decision-making process and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability. Albizu's webpage and intranet have links to policies and procedures, manuals, and reports, as well as to the Strategic Plan. Similarly, external audits show proper management of our financial resources. The institution has in place performance evaluation systems.

9. The University has established a comprehensive, integrated, and institution-wide assessment process that informs planning. Within administrative divisions, assessment is a two-pronged process, comprised of assessment of strategic plan objectives as well as division-specific objectives that are not directly tied to the strategic plan. The Institutional Evaluation, Assessment and Accreditation Office and the Institutional Planning Office lead assessment efforts and work closely with academic, administrative and student service divisions to generate and track data necessary to assess efficiency and effectiveness.

10. There are opportunities to foster a stronger culture of assessment as well as to standardize, automate, and digitize institutional assessment.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the University should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to planning, resources, and institutional improvement.

1. Evaluate the current assessment processes for strategic and unit-level planning.

2. Foster a culture of assessment that is unit driven and that will maximize the use of findings generated by institutional review.

3. Formally integrate into the planning process the findings of external evaluations of programs receiving funding from Title V and HRSA grants.

4. Standardize the employee performance evaluation system across campuses.

5. Engage in long-term financial planning using strategic scenario planning.

6. Link enrollment management activities to planning and assessment to ensure the strategic integration and standardization of activities impacting the student life cycle and the appropriate allocation of institutional resources.

7. Appoint a compliance officer to monitor the implementation of the single audit action plans.

# STANDARD VII: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION

*The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.*

## Compliance with Standard and Requirements

In this chapter, evidence and analysis are provided to demonstrate compliance with Standard VII and its criteria. The relatively small size of the institution allows for a close and ongoing interrelationship between the governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students. The intentional leadership of President José Pons since 2017 has focused on reducing distances at two levels: 1) the geographic distances of a campus in San Juan, PR, a branch campus in Miami, FL, and the Mayagüez University Center as an additional location; and 2) the distance that characterized previous relationships between constituencies. This has resulted in constituents truly working in unison to advance the mission of educating professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.

Our narrative is submitted also as evidence that Albizu University meets the two Requirements of Affiliation relevant to this standard:

#12: *Governance structure* and governing body responsibilities—addressed particularly in the following articles of the Corporate Bylaws (A.12): I, II, IV, VI and VII, which are accessible to staff, faculty, and students through the institution's intranet.

#13: *Governing board conflicts of interest provisions*—addressed particularly through Article IX of the Corporate Bylaws (A.13), the Policy on Conflicts of Interest and the corresponding Guidelines (A.13), and the use of the online Smartsheet platform that allows monitoring of policy compliance.

## Background

The workgroup examined (1) how Albizu's mission is implemented through its administrative structure, and (2) how Albizu's priorities are appropriate to its commitment to academic excellence. The exploration of these research questions allowed the group members to analyze key issues, identify areas of opportunity, and make recommendations regarding governance, roles and responsibilities, the operations of the Institutional Academic Board, and the assessment of administrative units.

## Analysis of Key Issues

*A Clearly Defined Governance Structure*

Albizu University has a clearly defined and transparent governance structure that specifies the roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision-making of all persons associated with the university,

including, but not limited to, the Board of Trustees (the Board), the President, chancellors, deans, directors, faculty, staff, and students.

As can be seen in the Organizational Charts (VII.3) the top level of Albizu's governance structure consists of the Board of Trustees, its Council of External Advisors (the Council), the president of the University, two chancellors (one on each campus), the associate dean of academic affairs of the Mayaguez University Center, the deans of academic affairs, the deans of student affairs, the institutional executive/senior staff, the Title IV compliance officer, the Title IX coordinator, and the director of the Institutional Center for Scientific Research.

According to the Corporate Bylaws (VII.1), the Board:

> shall be composed of no fewer than nine (9) members, nor more than eighteen (18), as determined by the Board itself. All members shall be external and independent. One Board member shall be an alumnus of the University duly validated in the exercise of his or her profession, with a valid license, with no fewer than three (3) nor more than eight (8) years following graduation. This person shall have the same rights, powers/privileges and responsibilities as the other trustees, and in no way shall it be understood that he/she has any representative capacity for the university's alumni group, or that the person is a delegate of that body. The President shall participate in the Board meetings, the meetings of the Executive Committee and executive meetings, and in the executive sessions that are a part of the annual, or special, meeting by invitation; and in the standing and special committees' meetings of the Board, with voice but not voting right and is not a member of the Board.

The powers and authority are exercised by the Board for the benefit of the University, education, and the community; and for promoting the institutional goals and objectives to fulfill the mission to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities. The Bylaws state that the Board has, among others, the power and authority to "uphold a governance structure with a deliberate and systematic plan to assure continuity of leadership on the Board and in management.

As of August 2021, the Albizu Board of Trustees had fourteen members (eight men and six women) and one emeritus member. Three members reside in the continental United States, ten in Puerto Rico, and one in an island in the Caribbean. In addition to their various experiences and interests, the Board members represent generational, social, economic, entrepreneurial, educational, and cultural diversity. Future vision, abilities and compatibilities, Board development, and the particular needs of the Board or the University are assessed when considering new members. The Board includes members with education and work experience in psychology, health sciences, finance, business, with the most recent appointee representing for the first time the field of speech and language therapy. One current Board member is the former President of the American Psychological Association. The Board accomplishes most of its work through a variety of smaller groups known as standing, special or ad-hoc committees, and task forces. These deal with specific responsibilities set in the Bylaws or by resolution. Standing committees study, evaluate, and recommend institutional action or policy on ongoing processes, including requirements of accrediting or licensing agencies, or address specific assignments. Ad-hoc or special committees are formed for a limited period to address specific needs or to carry out specific assignments, or a task force

can be formed if there is an objective that can be achieved in a relatively short period of time. These are the standing committees of the Board: Executive; Academic and Student Affairs; Audit, Compliance, and Institutional Integrity; Capital Development and Institutional Advancement; Finance, Investments, Compensation, and Planning; Institutional Infrastructure; and Nominations and Governance. The committees are quite active and regularly invite relevant staff to participate in the meetings.

Several documents outline roles and responsibilities of various constituencies: Corporate Bylaw (VII.1), Regulations of the Council of External Advisors (VII.1), Academic Board Bylaws (VII.1), Employee Manual (VII.1), and Faculty Handbook (VII.1).

Corporate Bylaws (VII.1)

The corporate bylaws, revised on June 25, 2019 and amended on December 20, 2019, spell out the powers and authority of the Board, duties of the officers of the Board, responsibilities of committees and task forces of the Board, powers and authority of the President of the University, and the duties of the administrative officer of the Board.

Regulations of the Council of External Advisors (VII.1)

The Council members, nominated in 2018 as external advisors to the board, are volunteers whose specialized knowledge and well-known abilities and expertise complement the capabilities of the trustees. The Council is committed to the mission and vision of the University, and its purposes, functions, and limitations are clearly defined in its regulations.

Institutional Academic Board Bylaws (VII.1)

During its regular meeting on April 26, 2011, the Board of Trustees created the Institutional Academic Board as the official forum of the Albizu academic community. It was created in response to the growth of the institution and resulting updates to the organizational structure. It is a mechanism intended to provide proper representation to all sectors of the University. It has resulted in integrated engagement that fosters communication among the campus in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the branch campus in Miami, and the additional location in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

On October 4, 2018, the Institutional Academic Board adopted bylaws that were ratified by the Board of Trustees on June 26, 2019. This board is comprised of 17 members, including:

1. the director of evaluation, assessment, and institutional accreditation, who serves as chairperson;
2. the deans of academic affairs, one from each campus;
3. the associate dean of academic affairs representing the additional location affiliated with a campus;
4. the deans of students, one from each campus;
5. the academic library directors, one from each campus;

6. the representatives of the academic and clinical program directors, one per campus and additional location;
7. a representation of the faculty members, one per campus and additional location;
8. a representation of the students, one per campus and additional location.

The president of the institution and the campus chancellors serve as ex-officio members with voice but have no voting rights. The documents delineate the election and appointment of members, the role of the chairperson and the standing committees, the organization of meetings, and the decision-making processes for agreements and recommendations. Under these bylaws, Academic Board actions require final consent and ratification from the President and the approval of the Board of Trustees. Two years after the adoption of the bylaws, it has become clear that the standing committees of the Academic Board are not active and that their work is not aligned with strategic priorities. The bylaws were revised on September 2, 2021 to include these committees: Academic and Student Affairs, Faculty Development, and Policies and Procedures. Chairs and members of the committees have been appointed.

Rules and Regulations Specific to Faculty, Staff, and Students

The president, through delegation from the Board of Trustees, is responsible for the administration of the university. The primary document to govern staff is the Employee Manual (VII.1). On the other hand, the Faculty Manual (VII.1) and specific sections of the Employee Manual govern the faculty. The rights and responsibilities of students are addressed in the Albizu University Academic Catalogs for San Juan (VII.1) and Miami (VII.1), the Student Council and Student Associations Manual (VII.1), and the General Policies and Disciplinary Procedures Manual (VII.1). There are also policies and procedures published on the website and intranet addressing specific areas of compliance, such as the Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures (VII.1).

*A Governing Body with Designated Roles and Responsibilities*

The Albizu Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, strategic planning, and fiscal well-being of the University. This accountability is evidenced by Albizu's (1) mission and goals, (2) fiscal responsibility, (3) community outreach, and (4) academic performance, as documented below using the Corporate Bylaws (VII.1) as points of reference:

1. Section 2.4.1 Determine, review, and periodically amend if necessary, the Vision, Mission, and Values. In 2018, the Board adopted a new mission statement that expands the educational scope of the institution to include students in fields besides psychology and reaffirms the founder's commitment to diversity and multiculturism (see additional information in Standard I: Mission and Goals): *Albizu University educates professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.*

2. Section 2.4.6 Set goals, design strategies and adopt corporate policies to achieve sustainability and fiscal integrity for the University. The Board exercises fiscal responsibility through the approval of the annual operating and capital expenditure budgets; making asset management investment decisions; establishing and keeping current institutional policies for all university areas and

directing their implementation, through the respective committees; and utilizing internal fiscal control systems and related mechanisms to monitor policy compliance (see additional information in Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

3. Community outreach is evident in the Board's budget allocations to support clinical training activities in mental health and speech and language pathology, as well as speech and language therapy that takes place on campus at the Albizu Clinics and within the surrounding community at satellite practicum sites (see additional information in Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience).

4. Section 2.4.7 Establish the necessary policies to sustain the highest levels of academic quality and set standards for compliance and establish the systems for their supervision with the prior evaluation and recommendation(s) of the pertinent committee(s). The administration implements such policies, sometimes through the creation of task forces entrusted with specific assignments, such as monitoring licensing exam pass rates or monitoring key performance indicators through the Albizu Dashboard (see additional information in Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment).

The specific roles and responsibilities of the Board are discussed below.

Serving the Public Interest

Since Albizu's founding in 1966, the University has sought to improve individuals, and, by extension, communities and societies, by training professionals to adapt standard models of psychological assessment and intervention to the sociocultural characteristics and needs of the populations they serve. By ensuring that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, the Board serves the public interest. The Board also sets goals, designs strategies, and adopts corporate policies to achieve sustainability for the university, thus enabling it to continue to carry out its mission.

Operating Independently and Responsibly

The Albizu Board of Trustees, solely composed of external and independent trustees without financial or contractual relationship with the university, has the independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution.  This independence is also exercised via the Audit, Compliance and Institutional Integrity Committee. Through the Institutional Policy on Conflicts of Interest (VII.2), the Board has established clear guidelines regarding family and financial relationships that could result in real or apparent conflicts of interest.  In fall 2020, the Board responsibly asked the administration to develop a corrective action plan to address audit issues through training, compliance, dissemination, and accountability activities (see additional information on Conflict of Interest in Standard II).

In 2019, the National Council on Higher Education Management Systems was hired by the Board to study and report on "Planning for Sustainability at Carlos Albizu University." Subsequently, in 2020, NCHEMS was hired to produce "A Review of the Organization and Structure and Online Learning Development of Carlos Albizu University." Both reports highlight the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the administration.  The 2020 report recommended the adoption of a Function Responsibility

Matrix (VII.2) to differentiate governance from management and to establish deliberate distinctions between policy and implementation. NCHEMS also called for an organizational structure that is deliberate "about how it separates the authority to establish and monitor such policies from the requirement to carry them out." As a result of the needs pointed out by NCHEMS, both the Board and the administration acquired an increased awareness of challenges mutually faced and developed a commitment to address the issues at different levels. The administration presented a set of recommendations addressing the NCHEMS report, and the Board incorporated governance in new onboarding modules for board members. The President commissioned a normative letter to guide internal communication and plans for conversations on the Function Responsibility Matrix with the chancellors and executive team beginning in the spring of 2021. The NCHEMS report brought clarity to an ongoing challenge and served as a catalyst to foster cooperation and operational improvements.

The request for a normative letter evolved into the Board of Trustees and President of the University Interaction and Collaboration Policy (VII.2) approved on April 15, 2021 and implemented by the president through the Letter from President on Communications with the Board of Trustees (VII.2).

Developing and Overseeing Institutional Policies

Through committees that divide the work into manageable tasks, the Board of Trustees establishes the necessary policies through which it ensures that the University is managed in accordance with the highest possible governance, administrative, fiscal and academic practices. Policy areas mainly include (a) academic and student affairs, (b) audit, compliance, and institutional integrity, (c) capital development and institutional advancement, (d) finance, investments, compensation, and planning, (e) nominations and governance, and (f) institutional infrastructure. The Board's engagement in policy development is exemplified by a new Compensation Policy (VII.1) adopted in 2021. This same year, the Board worked in collaboration with the administration to create the following policies:  Policy on Succession Planning (VII.1), Institutional Policy for Computer Replacement (VII.1), and Institutional Policy against Economic Fraud (VII.1).

Providing Fiscal Oversight

The Board provides fiscal oversight of the university and is directly involved in institutional activities for capital development, as well as in the evaluation of internal controls regarding financial reports. This includes the annual review of audited financial statements and periodic reviews by the Finance, Investments, Compensation Committee of the operating and capital expenditures budgets, as well as other documents and accounts related to the fiscal viability of the institution. Additionally, through its Audit, Compliance, and Institutional Integrity Committee, the Board evaluates processes and outcomes jointly with Albizu's external auditors. New fiscal budgets do not go into effect until the Board approves them. This was the case for the 2019-2020 budget when the departure of the Institutional Director of Finance caused a delay in budget submission.  NCHEMS recommended that the Board and administration sequence the budget development process in such a manner that it begins with the development by the administration of broad guidelines which require the approval of the Board. This revised process of a proactive fiscal oversight was implemented in December 2020. This action is a stepping stone to support the Board in balancing the long-term financial health of the institution with immediate operational needs.

Hiring and Supervising Albizu's President

The Board is responsible for conducting the search process for the president of the University and hiring a new president when necessary. President José Pons began his tenure as president in January 2017. He will be retiring, effective January 29, 2022, as announced in the July 30, 2021 Statement from the Board of Trustees on the Retirement of the University President (VII.3). The Board of Trustees proceeded to appoint a search committee, in compliance with the Policy for the Search of a President for the Carlos Albizu University (VII.3), and to initiate steps to designate an Interim President, in accordance with the Policy on the institutional leadership succession plan (VII.3). The implementation of this policy included the roll out of the Executive Development Program to position the institution for a leadership transition.

The Board establishes the compensation package and reviews the President's performance annually. Three documents guide the annual evaluation of the President:

1. Section 5.3 of the Corporate Bylaws establishes that the criteria shall include, but are not limited to, adherence to the Certificate of Incorporation; the by-laws; the institutional vision, mission, and values; and the strategic plan, as well as compliance with the requirements of accrediting, licensing and regulatory institutions. The reports which the president of the university is required to submit to the Board may be used during this evaluation. These reports shall include the performance, on a comparative basis, of the academic, financial, and operational indicators that have been adopted by the Board on the recommendation of the relevant committee.

2. The Policy on the evaluation of the university president (VII.1) that indicates that the Executive Committee and the Nominating and Governance Committee conduct a summative evaluation using performance standards related to goals and objectives, specific responsibilities, achievement, challenges and opportunities, fundraising, licensing, accreditation and financial exemptions, vision and future goals, and other topics.

3. Annual performance evaluation instrument for previous year performance and goal setting for the new year.

Although the Board delegates to the President the power to manage the institution and the responsibility for implementing institutional policies and promoting the institutional mission, it also supervises and supports the President and periodically assesses the President's performance according to established evaluation criteria.

Practicing Good Governance

There are many examples of good governance practices carried out by the Board. (Board self-assessment is discussed later in this chapter.) The intense work of the Board's committees, key performance indicators, dashboards, and periodic performance reviews help align the institution's strengths and weaknesses with the opportunities and challenges of the external environment. The use of a consent agenda, a practice that groups routine business into one agenda item and thereby allows more time for critical discussions, provides space for constructive dialogues on strategic priority challenges and consideration of future developments, including possible contingencies and measures to address them. A

document entitled Roles, Responsibilities, and the Strategic Governance Model (VII.1), written in 2017 by the Board's Nominations and Governance Committee, explains this model. It also provides orientation and clarification to prevent Board interference in the day-to-day operations of the institution. The need to provide the Board with access to a central repository of the policies, procedures, and manuals was the impetus to index and archive the documents on a cloud-based platform that simplified compiling, tracking, accessing and disseminating the policies and procedures. This archive was used to publish the policies and procedures on the intranet and website, helping create better awareness of the rights and responsibilities of all constituents.  It is important to note that a recently
appointed compliance officer is helping the Board verify the integrity of institutional processes and oversee the quality and levels of compliance.

Protecting Institutional Autonomy

The Board has established policies to preserve institutional autonomy and to protect the institution from external influence. The Board determines the nominations and conditions for employment of the institutional executive officers in charge of finance, human resources, academic affairs, and similar areas and approves both their employment contracts and any termination or renewal of those contracts, in accordance with applicable law and recommendations from the Albizu President.

With the President's consent and support, the Board maintains open communication with Albizu's constituent groups—faculty, administration, and students—and participates regularly in their activities. Progress has been achieved in delineating communication protocols between the Board and constituent groups.

Albizu also upholds a governance structure that includes a systematic plan to assure continuity of leadership on the Board and in management.

*A Chief Executive Officer with the Necessary Qualifications and Authority*

Since the previous MSCHE Self-Study, Albizu University has had three presidents and two interim presidents. Dr. Ileana Rodríguez García served as president from 2007 until 2013; Dr. Ram Lamba served as interim president in 2014; Dr. Angel Collado Schwartz served as president from 2014 to July 2015; Ms. Sylvia López, CPA, served from July 2015 to January 2016 as interim president; and Dr. José Pons Madera has served as President since January 2017. Dr. Pons is completing the second year of his second three-year term. The length of time of his tenure has brought stability and continuity to the administration of the University, resulting in both enrollment and income growth.

President Pons earned a B.A. in Psychology (1976) from Salem State University and an M.S. (1979) and Ph.D. (1982) in Clinical Psychology from the Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies (now Albizu University) under the mentorship of the founder, Carlos Albizu-Miranda. As a clinical psychologist licensed in Massachusetts and Puerto Rico, Dr. Pons has over 30 years of clinical experience. He is the founder of three mental health clinics and two APA accredited internship programs. Dr. Pons has been an APA-accreditation site visitor and site visit chair since 2005, and was the director and co-principal investigator of the project to normalize the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III for Puerto Rico. Before his appointment at Albizu, he served as full professor and founder of the School of Behavioral and Brain

Sciences at Ponce Health Sciences University. Dr. Pons was president of the Puerto Rico Board of Psychologist Examiners from 2011 to 2014.

Since his appointment as president, Dr. Pons has maintained the autonomy of the institution. His leadership, as described below, has focused on the implementation of strategic planning, organizing the university structure appropriately, and measuring efficiency and effectiveness.

*Strategic Planning*

In May 2017, President Pons secured approval from the Board for four institutional priorities that became Albizu's Institutional Strategic Operational Plan 2017–2019, providing a transition from the  Strategic Plan 2013– 2018 in place at the time of his appointment to the formulation of a new institutional framework. The Board ratified additional priorities in 2018 to address challenges in Puerto Rico posed by the September 2017 hurricanes. Also in 2018, an institution-wide initiative led to the development and subsequent approval of the Strategic Plan 2019–22. This was a meaningful process that engaged all stakeholders in self-reflection, including SWOT analyses leading to five new institutional priorities that were converted into goals. (Full details on the strategic plan development are provided under Standards I and VI.)

*Organizational Structure and Staffing*

After taking his first year in office to assess the effectiveness of the various organizational levels, President Pons presented a new organizational chart to the Board, which they approved in August 2018. The President proposed several significant changes, such as restructuring the provost position into a chancellor position and staffing the Office of the President with the following new positions: chief of staff/special assistant to the president; chief financial officer; chief marketing officer;  institutional directors of information technology, accreditation and licensing, and institutional research and planning, and compliance; and an executive director for the office of the president, and one for the Third Mission Institute, a new applied research center operating multiple community services and prevention programs supported by external funds. In May 2020, the Board approved three new positions reporting to the president:  chief academic officer, institutional director of human resources, institutional director of external funds, and a director of digital learning. Two positions were included in the 2021-2020 budget: chief information officer and director of development. All of these position are consistent with the recommendations made by NCHEMS.

At the campus level, the following new positions reporting to the chancellors were created: dean of academic affairs for the San Juan and Miami campuses; associate dean of academic affairs for the Mayagüez University Center; dean of enrollment management for the San Juan Campus and Mayagüez University Center; and director of enrollment management for the Miami Campus (given that it is a smaller campus).

*Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness*

President Pons ensured the Institutional Strategic Plan 2019–2022 included key performance indicators to measure organizational effectiveness, which are tracked through a dashboard of the five strategic goals.

These goals, fully described in Standards I and VI, include increasing the licensing exam passing rates, fully developing the institution's digital functionality, increasing enrollment and retention, diversifying sources of revenue, and defining Albizu's marketing and branding strategy. As detailed in Standards I, III, V, and VI, robust systems are in place to track the outcomes of changes made at the program and institutional levels to achieve strategic goals.

*Assistance of qualified administration appropriate in size and properly credentialed*

President Pons proceeded to assemble a well-qualified administration, organized into two operational groups that are appropriate in size, as presented in the Administration Profile (VII.3). The first group, the *Presidency Administrative Team*, meets every other week and is comprised of the president and the following institutional directors: chief financial officer; chief marketing officer; chief of staff/special assistant to the president; and the institutional directors of information technology, accreditation and licensing, and institutional research and planning, and compliance. Six of the seven directors are based in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and one, the chief marketing officer, is based in Miami, Florida.

The second group is the *Academic and Institutional Excellence Board*. The members meet monthly and include the institutional directors, the chancellors for the Miami and San Juan campuses, the associate dean of academic affairs for the Mayagüez University Center, the executive director of the Third Mission Institute, and the director of administration of the San Juan Campus.

In FY 2021-2022, three new members will join both operational groups: chief academic officer; institutional director of human resources; and director of external funds. These new positions were recommended by the president to the Board in May 2020 as a result of an internal assessment and the recommendations of the NCHEMS report. The Board approved these positions under the 2020-2021 budget. The institutional director of human resources position was filled in July 2021. Active searches are under way for the chief academic officer, the director of external funds, and the recently vacated position of chief financial officer.

The talent acquisition processes followed by the human resources departments in Miami and San Juan contribute to having staff members at all institutional levels who possess credentials and experience consistent with the mission of the institution and with their functional roles.

The information technology systems (ITS) departments in San Juan, Mayaguez, and Miami oversee enterprise resource planning, constituent relationship management, learning management system, intranet, webpage, and cybersecurity. Seasoned and committed department directors and their staff who report to the chancellors rely on the expertise of the institutional director of information technology, who reports directly to the president.

Ongoing Administrative Engagement with Faculty and Staff

The Albizu University administration regularly engages with faculty and students to advance the institution's mission and goals through a variety of activities occurring face-to-face on campus or online, such as town hall meetings, dialogue series, retreats, and department and program meetings. The administration has put into a place mechanisms to ensure student success. Upon enrollment, students are

assigned mentors/advisors with whom they meet periodically to ensure that they are on track in their academic endeavors. Mentors and advisors assist students with registration and offer assistance and guidance on professional issues. They also make referrals and set up academic plans as needed. In addition, faculty members hold meetings throughout the year to discuss the academic progress of the students. These meetings focus on linking students to academic and support services, strategies that impact retention.

*Periodic Assessment of Effectiveness*

Administrative Assessment

In 2019, Albizu University initiated a systematic evaluation of all administrative units, which consisted of reviewing the progress of annual plans during quarterly meetings. Separate functions within administrative units are evaluated against the goals and objectives established at the beginning of the year. The periodic assessment of administrative activities is completed through analysis conducted by the offices responsible for institutional assessment and institutional research and planning, including review of the Strategic Plan Dashboard, course evaluations, student satisfaction surveys, the assessment of student learning, and employee performance evaluations.

However, the current assessment for administrative units is not very effective in evaluating comparable administrative and support units between campuses and lacks a mechanism through which the campuses document and quantify how assessment impacts planning and execution. The university has established this as priority and recognizes that a cultural change is needed. Thus, in the summer of 2021, the Presidency asked the campus units to engage in expanded administrative assessment by including in the Institutional Effectiveness 2020-2021 Report (VII.5) these details: previous assessment findings considered when creating the 2020-2021 Operational Plans, current challenges, and future innovation activities. The 2021-2022 budget included $40,000 in funding for an Innovation Fund under the Allocation for Strategic Initiatives to support promising ideas or activities presented at the end of the year institutional effectiveness sessions.

Achievements and areas of needed improvement are regularly discussed at institutional, campus and academic programs levels. Assessment data is used to enhance operations and guide budget requests for the following fiscal year. For example, in December 2020 the chief financial officer presented a budget goal for the 2021-2022 budget that included increasing allocations for student support areas with low satisfaction scores.

Governance Assessment

The assessment of governance is a commitment of the Board of Trustees, and the Board has engaged two consultants on this priority. In 2017, the Board initiated discussions on governance assessment as evidenced by the working document entitled, The evaluation process of the governance of Carlos Albizu University (VII.5). The discussions centered on the how the board evaluations serve two purposes: (1) to verify processes, compliance with duties and expectations, and results of efforts; and (2) to strengthen institutional leadership and make it more effective, review objectives, identify weaknesses and impose new goals. Also in May 2017, the Nominations and Governance Committee presented to the Board of

Trustees the comprehensive document on Roles, responsibilities, and the strategic model of governance (VII.1). In 2018 discussion continued, using as a frame of reference the document, "Foundations for the different assessments of performance of the governance of Carlos Albizu University" (VII.5), which aligns the evaluation of the Board of Trustees to MSCHE Standard VII and the basic responsibilities of governing boards identified by the Association of Governing Boards.

Albizu's Board of Trustees is committed to incorporating innovative practices into its governance, communication, and work plans. The Board has made strategic decisions to promote innovative and cutting-edge approaches to institutional governance. For example, the Board has adopted the use of Board Effect, an electronic platform that facilitates communication (messages, polls, meeting requests) between members of the Board, while enabling work group planning and the storage of communications and documents as a record of board activities. The use of Board Effect has improved efficiency and productivity and has allowed the Board to further support the mission and vision of Albizu University.

In addition, the Board is proactive in its efforts to follow best practice models in higher education and holds an annual retreat to strategically discuss innovative trends and best practices and decide how to effectively incorporate the most effective ones. In July 2018, the board held its retreat in Chicago, Illinois, and took the opportunity to visit Adler University, an institution with an established reputation of leadership and innovation in higher education in the social sciences. The Board members met with the Adler University administration and its president, who is an active, voting member of its board, to gather information regarding innovative strategies and models to enhance Albizu's own practices.

In 2019, the Board conducted an in-depth self-study of its composition to identify areas where new members with certain characteristics or expertise would be beneficial. As a result of this self-study, it was determined that the Board would benefit from adding more women to the group, as well as members with backgrounds in finance, law, and engineering. Incorporating more members from the continental United States was also identified as a priority. As a result, several members have recently been added to the Board that fulfill these criteria. The Board conducts regular assessments of its individual members to identify areas of strength and areas of opportunity.

In August 2019, the Board held its annual retreat in Miami, Florida. This two-day meeting focused on an operational and strategic goals review of both the institution at large and its campuses. The Board also prioritized a review of the relationship with the president and his critical role within the governance structure of the institution.

In 2019 the Board ascertained that it would be helpful to have an external perspective in laying out a variety of options to position the university in the future.  The Board engaged the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to assess options to ensure the academic and fiscal viability of the university in the long term.  NCHEMS' May 2019 report entitled "Planning for Sustainability at Carlos Albizu University" recommended to the Board a needed emphasis of operating the university more like a system "as a way to embed policies and procedures related to sharing resources for administrative tasks and, crucially, in delivering academic programs that—while not always identical—are at least complementary and aligned to the organization's core competencies, its mission, and to local workforce demands. A systems approach for CAU would require it to overcome habits by which each campus operates largely as its own autonomous entity and even each individual program at

each campus is similarly managed." Board members discussed the findings among themselves and with the President.

In 2020, the Board commissioned NCHEMS to carry out and produce a "Review of the Organizations and Structure and Online Learning Development of Carlos Albizu University," as well as to produce a "Review of the Strategic KPI's and Dashboard of Carlos Albizu University." Through these reports NCHEMS recommended the adoption of a Function Responsibility Matrix (VII.5); the appointment of a Chief Academic Officer; centrally coordinated strategic functions under a shared services approach for financial, information, technology and human resources; designating a senior member of the staff as enrollment management lead; and emphasis on strategic KPI's over tactical ones. The 2019-2020 budget included three new positions in alignment with the recommendations made by NCHEMS: a Chief Academic Officer; a Director of External Resources, and an Institutional Director of Human Resources. In November 2020, the Board endorsed the administration's proposal for a reorganization and empowered the President to implement as appropriate.

The Albizu University Board is engaged in a recurring performance assessment of its responsibilities to identify changes which could lead to more effective performance as a group, as well as the performance assessment of its President. Two policies and procedures revised in 2018 and 2019 guide these periodic assessments of the effectiveness of governance leadership and administration: Guidelines for the identification, recruitment, and selection of trustees (VII.5) and Policy for the evaluation of the performance of the Board of Trustees and its members (VII.5). Also, to help strengthen and support board performance, a variety of training and education programs have been provided. These begin with a formal initial orientation program and continue with further education in different forms. For example, a set of modules covering key aspects of governance is being developed for this purpose. The first of the Board Continuing Education Modules (VII.1) addresses the legal authority, roles, and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. Board self-assessment is discussed at committee and regular board meetings, as evidenced by the Board evaluation items in the Nominations and Governance Committee Meeting Agenda (VII.5).

## Summary of Key Findings

Framed by the criteria of Standard VII, our self-review resulted in these key findings:

1. Albizu University has a clearly defined and transparent governance structure, with bylaws and regulations in place to define roles and responsibilities at each level.

2. Albizu's President, the chief executive officer, has the necessary qualifications and authority to implement changes that benefit the university. Since the President's hiring in 2017, these have included developing a new strategic plan and implementing a new organizational structure, resulting in enhanced institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Albizu's academic and administrative staff members are qualified and effective at their work. In addition to classroom activities and departmental meetings, they regularly engage with each other and with the students through mechanisms established and supported by the university.

4. Assessment mechanisms are in place to ensure that governance, leadership and administration are operating smoothly and effectively and that problems are quickly identified and addressed.

5. The Board of Trustees continues to engage in introspection regarding their role and responsibilities.

## Recommendations

Analysis conducted in the preparation of this chapter of the Self-Study suggests that the University should consider the steps listed below. In the spring of 2021, the workgroup was tasked with presenting implementation objectives related to the attainment of these recommendations to the Executive Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee. They will also monitor the process of self-improvement related to governance, leadership, and administration.

1. Adopt and operationalize the Function Responsibility Matrix to ensure clear and consistent distinctions between governance and management and between policy and implementation. As indicated by NCHEMS, such clarity will help assure "consistent messaging and coordination," as well as promote accountability and focus efforts by the Board, President, and Chancellors on institutional priorities.

2. Develop and implement a comprehensive and functional assessment system for administrative units.

3. Two years after the adoption of bylaws for the Academic Board, it has become clear that the standing committees are not active and that their work needs to be guided by a work plan aligned with the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

# CONCLUSION

In 2021 Albizu University reached the important milestone of completing the Self-Study Report that is now being presented to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The honest and transparent community-wide introspection confirmed that we are one institution. The process allowed the members of the workgroups to strengthen the bonds between the San Juan Campus, the Miami Campus, and the Mayagüez University Center. It provided opportunities to jointly identify opportunities to improve the design and delivery of the student learning experience and the support of the student experience.

Hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and COVID19 presented challenges but demonstrated the institutional capacity to be resilient as we sought to advance our mission to educate professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines who are committed to research, to improve quality of life, and to serve diverse communities.

The continuation of this journey is different than it was ten years ago. Albizu is stable and has a greater sense of focus towards improving learning outcomes through innovative practices in assessment, such as the Competency Based Outcomes and the Test Innovations projects that were designed to increase the licensing pass rates. Albizu has strengthened planning and budgeting to ensure the proper allocation of resources in alignment with five goals of the Strategic Plan 2019-2020. Also, the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the president is one of trust framed by a new policy that establishes clearly defined interactions to foster constructive interaction between the two areas of authority and responsibility.

Our founder, the late Dr. Carlos Albizu Miranda, asked us thirty-nine years ago to work as a unified body of interacting individuals towards the common goal of continuous improvement. Moving forward, members of the Executive Team, the Self-Study Steering Committee, and seven workgroups will together monitor the process of self-improvement detailed in the Self-Study recommendations. This will allow Albizu to continue the meaningful academic community engagement that characterized the self-study process.

This process will be guided by three pillars that emerged: inter-campus articulation, innovation, and the assessment of effectiveness. The execution of the recommendations will coincide with the development and implementation of the strategic plan for the 2023-2025 period. Thus, Albizu will be able to deliberately link the findings of the self-study to strategic planning and assessment in our journey towards continuing innovation and excellence.

**COVID-19 ADDENDUM**

Albizu University Strategies to Maintain Continuity of Services during the Pandemic

Standard I: Mission and Goals

On March 16, 2020, a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in Florida, all public schools closed, and the Governor of Florida requested universities to conduct instruction and operations online. The Governor of Puerto Rico also issued an Executive Order for the same purpose. Albizu University, Miami Campus, San Juan Campus, and the Mayagüez University Center pivoted to remote operations. Since the advent of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Albizu University has diligently followed mandates and guidelines from the government, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Department of Education, to protect its constituents' health and safety.

Albizu University has kept its community well-informed, closely following MSCHE and other regulatory and accrediting agencies' recommendations, such as the Commission for Independent Education (CIE), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA). The university proactively identified an interdisciplinary team of internal and external experts who evaluated and endorsed health and safety plans, aligned to government and health agencies' guidelines.  From the outset, this approach allowed Albizu to personalize a flexible COVID-19 response. The President's Office has released consistent communications to ensure continuity of remote academic and service activities during the pandemic. In particular, the university devised an Operational Plan to support better COVID-19 measures, called "Albizu University under the New Normal." This plan encompasses all units and collects input from a variety of sectors. Specifically, it sustains the university's mission and goals during the pandemic response, organized by three fundamental pillars of people, spaces, and clinical services, operationally modified as follows:

1. Academic activities, virtually and online
2. Administrative activities, via telephone, virtually, and online
3. Clinical services via Telehealth

Both the San Juan and Miami campuses transitioned to online education and provided clinical services using a web-based platform such as Blackboard and Zoom. The campus clinic and external practicum sites continued to receive students for training, following a brief delay in the restart of practicums. Overall, these adjustments allowed the institution to continue its mission of educating professionals in behavioral sciences, speech pathology, and other disciplines committed to research, improving quality of life, and serving diverse communities.

Our grant-funded research and service projects have continued successfully but with some interruptions due to COVID-19. For example, Dr. Miriam Rodriguez of the Clinical Psychology Psy.D. Program in Miami was awarded a grant from the Florida Department of Health in February, right at the start of the pandemic. The population of interest was older adults (age 65 and older) who were identified as particularly vulnerable to the virus. Participants were coming from the 1FL Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). All ADRCs across the nation suspended providing face-to-face research activities. To

adapt, Dr. Rodriguez changed her protocol so that questionnaires could be administered over the phone instead of in person. Data collection began about seven months after the award date. For the HRSA Graduate Psychology Education Project on Opioid/Substance Use Disorders awarded to Dr. Scott Hyman in the Psy.D. Program, student trainees were initially expected to have a semester of training at the Goodman Psychological Services Center in Summer 2019 before going to the external practicum site. However, COVID-19 delayed the start of the practicum, and therefore students started their training at the external site in Fall 2020 without having this initial practicum experience in the in-house clinic. Moreover, trainings that were expected to be in person were quickly changed to online.

Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, Albizu University has achieved enrollment numbers that have exceeded those of previous years, as shown in Table 25. However, the clinics have provided psychological services to the community at lower levels compared to previous years.

Table 25. Comparative Enrollment

| Enrollment by Program by Term by Year | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | | | | Spring | | | | Summer | | |
| Program | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| DL.MS.INOR | 30 | 23 | 24 | | 28 | 29 | 18 | | 26 | 23 | 18 |
| DL.MS.TESOL | 5 | 4 | 6 | | 5 | 5 | 5 | | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| MI.BA.ELED | 11 | 10 | 6 | | 16 | 7 | 7 | | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| MI.BA.EXED | 9 | 7 | 8 | | 10 | 8 | 5 | | 9 | 7 | 7 |
| MI.BS.CRJUS | 8 | 3 | 5 | | 7 | 5 | 1 | | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| MI.BS.NDEG | 0 | 2 | 2 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| MI.BS.PSYC | 99 | 88 | 116 | | 108 | 99 | 82 | | 95 | 87 | 77 |
| MI.CERT.ESOL | 100 | 93 | 113 | | 108 | 94 | 112 | | 92 | 85 | 103 |
| MI.MS.EXED | 14 | 21 | 17 | | 16 | 15 | 23 | | 14 | 21 | 22 |
| MI.MS.INOR | 33 | 33 | 18 | | 36 | 32 | 25 | | 32 | 31 | 23 |
| MI.MS.MFTH | 58 | 44 | 46 | | 59 | 58 | 52 | | 54 | 48 | 44 |
| MI.MS.MHCO | 167 | 156 | 179 | | 172 | 157 | 160 | | 164 | 158 | 152 |
| MI.MS.NDEG | 5 | 7 | 8 | | 9 | 7 | 7 | | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| MI.MS.SCHL | 18 | 16 | 20 | | 14 | 16 | 23 | | 9 | 16 | 19 |
| MI.PHD.HS | 45 | 50 | 46 | | 54 | 51 | 48 | | 48 | 51 | 43 |
| MI.PRE.SLPT | 12 | 12 | 18 | | 9 | 9 | 4 | | 11 | 20 | 22 |
| MI.PSYD | 159 | 129 | 148 | | 185 | 147 | 121 | | 177 | 141 | 125 |
| SJ.MS.SLPT | 96 | 114 | 151 | | 78 | 116 | 138 | | 78 | 102 | 114 |
| MI.CERT.ATSM | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MI.PRE.PSYD | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 869 | 813 | 931 | | 915 | 856 | 832 | | 838 | 809 | 786 |
| Change Year over Year | | (56) | 118 | | | (59) | (24) | | | (29) | (23) |

Note: Enrollment totals do not include students on Leave of Absence (LOA).

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Albizu University has maintained operational integrity and transparency during its rapid response to the pandemic. Operational modifications appear on the official website, where the community can find information and updates on the management of COVID-19. For example, the website includes a calendar with the president's most important communications and updates. It also provides a report on the utilization of the CARES Act emergency financial aid funds.

The following paragraphs identify actions that have preserved the ethics, integrity, and transparency of the administration and its reopening plan, the library's 'fair use' adjustment to online environments, continuous impartial practices of the human resources department, and updates to the Albizu webpage and essential documents, such as campus catalogs.

The Administration Reopening Plan responds to the COVID-19 pandemic and follows federal and state regulations. Albizu University has created reopening protocols to be implemented gradually to preserve its constituents' health and safety. These documents are kept in the human resources and administration departments, with copies posted on bulletin boards and other visible areas.

Reopening protocols include the following:

1. Employer Self-Certification
2. Work Plan Preparation for Reopening
3. Risk Control Plan for Return to Work
4. Plan to Resume Clinical Services
5. Standard Procedure for Taking Temperature
6. Basic Protective Measures
7. Preliminary Guide on the Criteria that Every Employer must Consider on the Return of an Employee with COVID-19, Suspect or Confirmed (Department of Health)
8. Return to Work Guide (OSHA, Occupational Safety and Health Administration)

Albizu libraries have made adjustments and communicated modifications to the community about online learning; particularly, the pandemic required modifications in intellectual property and copyright law parameters. First, literature rightsholders have allowed greater open access to their intellectual property for the sake of good citizenship. Instead of "locking it down," publishers have made online information more accessible. Second, although copyright law justly protects authors' and creators' rights, its boundaries can be unduly restrictive. While faculty teaching online desire more generous access to course materials, they are not always fully aware of their fair use. To inform faculty and students on intellectual property and copyright law parameters, librarians have prepared written materials and videos and have participated in academic committees. Albizu University respects intellectual property rights, except as outlined by the boundaries, exceptions, and fair use described in the Albizu Library Copyright Use Policy.

The human resources department has intervened to ameliorate the impact of the pandemic on Albizu students and employees. They have provided self-care and wellness activities to help manage students, faculty, and staff's emotional distress. During the pandemic, Albizu's trustees, employees, faculty, and staff participated in a conflict-of-interest workshop, made appropriate disclosures, and became certified, as required by the Albizu Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

To keep everyone well-informed, a new official webpage, launched June 26, 2020, displays information on academic programs and services. The webpage includes updated versions of curricular sequences, faculty profiles, academic roles, etc. It describes the *Honorlock Online Proctoring* to help students understand this testing system, acquired to facilitate online testing and maintain academic honesty during the pandemic. The website also includes an updated San Juan campus catalog, revised on August 11, 2020, and valid until July 2021. This catalog revision incorporates policy amendments, including the Institutional Time Limit Policy and the Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress. Useful for Spring 2021, the updated Miami campus catalog, effective Spring 2021, will soon be posted on the website. This catalog is always up-to-date because it includes "Disclosure Notices" with the most current updates, appended after the catalog's last page.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Since the State of Emergency issued on March 13, 2020, all Albizu academic programs transitioned their courses to a virtual modality of synchronous and asynchronous activities, with the synchronous sessions being the most often used. This conversion has been guided by program directors, deans, and online learning experts, with the aim to maintain teaching at the highest level of online instruction.

*Academic and Support Services to Students*

The week prior to adopting a remote operations approach, the Blackboard Administrator provided live training to faculty for converting courses that were not previously offered online at the Miami Campus. He also created virtual tutorials and added them to the Blackboard dashboard for quick access. All courses were placed in our existing distance learning platform, Blackboard, for uninterrupted online delivery across all campuses and programs. Faculty with more experience in the online medium have been mentoring faculty who had less experience. In terms of technology, we have been using Blackboard for many years, offer some degrees fully online, and several courses in other programs, but placing all the courses offered in this format in a matter of days was an enormous challenge and undertaking. This significant operational change required the allocation of Informational Technology resources in terms of new software and technical support for both faculty and students over a short period of time.

The new infrastructure has continued to evolve over time, taking into account student and faculty satisfaction surveys. Additional tutorials and infographics have been added to the Faculty and Students Resources section. The university provided a series of distance learning teaching training modules to the faculty over several months through a provider. This effort was supported by the federal CARES Act funds awarded to the institution. Albizu University received an allocation of $ 1,453,598 to cover expenses related to disruptions of campus operations due to the coronavirus crisis. The institution earmarked $726,799, to disburse Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students of the Miami and San Juan Campuses and the Mayaguez Center for eligible expenses such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.

Practicums and internship seminars required additional technological support. While professors used the Collaborate tool in Blackboard weekly to conduct live supervision, Zoom accounts were added to facilitate clinical training and case presentation meetings. The faculty also utilized the Microsoft Teams platform. Simulation programs were included in some academic units. It should be noted that a good number of practicum sites have switched to the provision of counseling and speech-language pathology services via Telehealth until further notice. Other sites have continued to tend to clients in person and have added extensive safety measures. Some sites did not accept new students for placement during the Summer session but lifted restrictions for the Fall session. Some sites are still not permitting students to enter their facilities. In Puerto Rico, the sites required students to submit COVID-19 test results during Fall 2020. The Practicum Coordinators and Program Directors monitor the students' progress and status of sites continuously.

All student support service units, such as Registrar, Financial Aid, Finance, Admissions, Library, and

Student Affairs, also switched to online operations. Webinars on topics of interest, student Club activities, Student Council elections, sponsored presentations, and the annual research symposium were offered virtually. The Commencement Ceremony in the Fall session required extensive modifications. The Student Affairs Office partnered with two companies to place the ceremony on streaming mode. Students also had the option of participating in a socially distanced drive-by on campus to take professional pictures in their regalia.

*San Juan Campus and Mayaguez University Center*

At the San Juan campus, multiple adjustments ensured an uninterrupted student learning experience. Flexibility measures were incorporated in the classroom, with alternative evaluation methods, exam substitutions, and remedial plans. Courses with laboratories that require special instruction, such as psychological testing and other clinical demonstrations, have been offered in a physical classroom, following strict social distancing measures and wearing personal protective equipment at all times. Face-to-face labs were offered during the daytime when students did not have other online academic activities immediately before or after them.

Faculty training, prominent guest speakers, and uninterrupted research maintained fresh and innovative academic offerings. Faculty and staff completed training on remote instruction. To maintain a vivid virtual academic experience, several academic programs invited special guest professors. Some of these guest faculty were well-known authors of assigned class readings or experts on topics covered in class. In the research area, members of the Independent Review Board (I.R.B.) were trained to revise research protocols with social distancing safeguards in the context of COVID-19. Students engaged in research studies also modified participant recruitment strategies and research protocols, adding health and safety measures.

Albizu academic programs have modified some of their offerings. For example, although the undergraduate program canceled cultural travel (a program requirement), the faculty quickly devised a substitute course in cross-cultural training. While different in approach, the course offered a viable alternative that met student expectations and allowed them to acquire the necessary intercultural skills. The undergraduate program also changed its clinical practicum plan, adding a new online offering (COVID-19 Practicum Plan).

Measures of social distance have required that master's and doctoral clinical programs (i.e., Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology, and School Psychology) engage their students in virtual clinical experiences. For example, students completed a series of telepsychology workshops, with modules containing formative and summative evaluations that assessed skill acquisition. Appropriate technology was purchased, such as Telepsychology Zoom licenses (HIPAA compliant), and clinical supervisors received training in Telesupervision. Students had access to a Sharepoint site with Telepsychology resources. This multi-modal training ensured that all practicum students developed the necessary Telehealth learning skills.

Similarly, doctoral programs in Clinical Psychology (Ph.D and Psy.D.) have trained their students virtually, with the Multi Station Observed Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) model. This model includes complex clinical scenarios that improve students' self-awareness, clinical, and interpersonal

skills. Virtual application of the Multi-Station Training Program (MSTP) provides support, integrating standardized patients' activities and Electronic Health Records (HER) simulations. Exposing students to these clinical activities allowed them to develop Health Informatic Technologies and patient care and documentation skills. Using this model, students completed between two to four weeks of supervised clinical experience that also meet APA supervision standards.

Before the pandemic, Albizu University already had an electronic Student Learning Assessment Plan in Blackboard, the platform used to collect student learning data. However, due to the pandemic, some courses required modification of their assessment metrics. For example, to adapt to the challenges that some students faced during the lockdown, they were evaluated with a case conceptualization and rubric, instead of test items, and transferred to Smartsheet.

*Miami Campus*

Similar modifications to those described for the San Juan campus and the Mayaguez university center were adopted for the Miami campus. On March 13, 2020, the Miami campus transitioned to online learning when the educational technology manager offered immediate training and 24/7 support to faculty and students, especially those with minimal online teaching/learning experience. Faculty and students expressed satisfaction with this training and overall online education. A group of external experts offered eight additional training workshops to faculty (June to October 2020). Also, under Title V grant funding, some campus faculty became Quality Matters certified.

Besides the president's message, the chancellors have kept the community well-informed, with periodic messages and weekly leadership meetings on relevant matters. Of central importance are student engagement and the eventual reopening of the Miami campus. The chancellors send frequent communications to students, informing them of pertinent information and updates; these and other student support initiatives appear under Standard IV of this report. The campus reopening plan has been staged gradually, with the first phase being purely informational. Starting October 26, 2020, the second phase slowly brought in staff and administrators that provide student services. Students must make an appointment to come to campus and alert the appropriate personnel of their arrival. Upon arrival, students scan their temperature and proceed to their destination once the front desk personnel advises them. Students usually have various reasons for coming to campus, such as picking up library materials or clarifying specific matters, maintaining social distance, and wearing protective gear. When the campus reopens, the first academic offerings will be hybrid courses that require hands-on training, such as psychological assessment, research, and statistics. However, due to a national and global spike in COVID-19 cases, the second phase has been delayed; operations will continue remotely until it is safe to return to campus.

The academic community has been diligent in maintaining student and faculty engagement. The community holds virtual bi-weekly meetings to solve and advance academic and policy issues, and it frequently meets with faculty and students to keep them updated. Although enrollment overall has not been affected, some students have dropped out due to job loss. In particular, the pandemic has affected international students who have been caught in a limbo between two countries, some reporting a significant economic loss of their overseas businesses. In response, the international student advisor holds virtual weekly meetings with these students to build a bond with the school and peers. Also, they receive

official updates and resources on their status and any related restrictions. An international student "hub" has been created in Blackboard.

In Miami, the Albizu clinic, the Goodman Psychological Services, mirrors the San Juan campus in implementing clinical practice precautions; clinical supervisors and students have received Telehealth training to provide psychological services to the community. Students in outside practicums have been assigned only to sites that strictly follow social distancing and personal mask mandates.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Student Service departments have the responsibility to plan, direct, and evaluate student services. During the current emergency period, we have used any possible means to optimize student services. Albizu University has provided flexible and appropriate measures that best fit each student's situation. Some students experienced internet connection challenges, and others did not have Internet services or computers at home.  As an alternate means of communication, students received assistance over the phone and, on some occasions, even used the phone to attend classes. In those situations, the university provided students with hotspots and laptops to continue their studies. Before the COVID-19 emergency, students had expressed the desire to receive personal, face-to-face counseling.  Providing students with counseling services was one of the most significant challenges of the student services department. Although there were obstacles presented by the state-mandated lockdown, we rose to the challenge and provided virtual counseling sessions to students, as well as through emails and phone calls.

The following adjustments ensured continuity of services to our students:

Before lockdown, academic programs ensured that students and faculty had access to the Internet and necessary equipment (computers, tablets). The I.T. department provided routers, computers, etc., to students and faculty who did not have such access.
All students in the Speech and Language Therapy concentration received training on managing Teletherapy platforms and online processes.
Before registration and enrollment, the faculty offered and continues to provide mentorship and academic advisement.
An Ellucian application, Self-Service, has been beneficial to students and faculty. This application allows students to assess their progress, register, and make payments, with or without financial aid.  The Finance Department also has provided additional flexibility, allowing payment plans according to the students' particular needs.
A virtual space has been created in Blackboard at each campus, where students find information, such as forms, videos, policies, academic processes, etc., to help them navigate the Albizu system. At the Miami campus, the Office of Student Affairs improved tutoring quality, added Academic Coaching, created a Student Success Portal for Current Students, hired an Academic Counselor, and sponsored the Student Research Symposium. The office consistently collaborates with the Student Council and continues to support the Alumni Network.

Library resources, tutoring, and mentorship switched to online services. The library:

Purchased additional electronic resources, such as databases and electronic journals

Created a Library course accessible in the Blackboard platform
Constructed a virtual room in Collaborate to create a space where students can meet for group work or study (as an alternative to in-person study rooms)
Conducted extra workshops and provided virtual library services for the academic community
Provided 24/7 uninterrupted virtual library services

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) became one of the university's greatest allies in providing flexible financial aid options. Due to the lockdown, federal work-study students could not perform regular duties, yet the USDE authorized federal funds to pay them. Under the FSEOG program, the USDE authorized emergency aid funds to graduate students, who comprise the vast majority of Albizu students. In the 2020-21 academic year, the R2T4 waiver allowed the non-return of withdrawals and permitted disbursement of remaining funds that would have been otherwise returned to the USDE. The R2T4 waiver also allowed the cancellation of student loans. Coupled with the declared emergency, this waiver proved to be of great benefit to our students and provided them opportunities for re-enrollment in the future.

Our remote operations have called for a shift from Title IV personal validation processes to online student verification and authentication. Albizu purchased DocuSign licenses and applied secure electronic signatures on financial aid documents to comply with this change. Students received documents, completed and signed them electronically, and returned them through the university's email system.

Due to the pandemic, the admissions office experienced a temporary suspension of access to the following documents: official transcripts, results of college admission exams (P.A.A. – Prueba de Admisión Universitaria) known as the College Board or S.A.T. (Scholastic Assessment Test), results of graduate admission exams EXADEP (Postgraduate Studies Admission Exam) or G.R.E. (Graduate Record Examinations), two (2) letters of recommendation, and, for the San Juan campus, Original Health Certificate and Hepatitis-B Vaccination Test (over 21 years old). Nonetheless, we have continued to request official electronic transcripts from previous institutions, and, for the San Juan campus, certificates of Good Conduct/Criminal Record Transcripts, and Department of Health Vaccination Certificate/PVAC-3. At the moment of admission, the latter is only required for applicants 21 years of age or younger.

The Self-Service application from Ellucian has a robust section on new student orientation that includes a session for parents; this application has benefited students, particularly first-year students. The Office of Student Affairs at the Miami campus also created an Onboarding Experience for New Students to help facilitate adjustment to the university.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, recruitment and enrollment strategies became remote but continued strong. Promotional efforts were mainly carried out through social media, Google, television, and radio advertisements. Virtual information sessions facilitated engagement with prospective students. Paperless files ensured document accessibility to admissions' staff, program directors, and faculty advisors. All admission interviews were carried out virtually through Zoom. Digital enrollment forms allowed new students to complete, sign, and return electronic documents via DocuSign.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Albizu University has implemented a coordinated response to the new realities of the Coronavirus pandemic related to Albizu's education's effectiveness. To support improving pedagogy and curriculum, various webinars and distance learning sessions were developed to help faculty deliver online instruction. Courses on BlackBoard, B.B. Collaborate, and Zoom are available 24/7 to assist faculty with the 'new' technology.  Additionally, technical support is available to help faculty with hardware/software issues.

All courses are being delivered in a distance learning format at both campuses. Face-to-face courses are offered in a hybrid format with synchronous (via BlackBoard Collaborate) and asynchronous (via BlackBoard) participation.  Various online programs (e.g., MS TESOL, MS I/O) continue with fully online learning, as established.  To ensure continued student engagement in the online learning experience, faculty were instructed to build weekly graded activities for each course.  Faculty have been asked to record each synchronous session delivered in BlackBoard Collaborate so that students can view (in case they missed it) or review the lectures for exam preparation and other activities.  Additionally, 'hot spots' were provided to students with no internet access to facilitate connection with their courses, virtual student activities, and other support services.

Academic advising has continued uninterruptedly through online platforms or over the phone (BlackBoard Collaborate, telephone, Zoom, etc.).  Students of both campuses continue to receive the academic guidance and support they require to establish curricular goals, inform students of program innovations and activities, register for courses, and other academic endeavors.

Various webinars and training sessions were created to familiarize and assist students in the practice of distance learning.  These courses also covered technical information about BlackBoard, Collaborate, needed hardware/software, etc., and they are available 24 hours, seven days a week (24/7) to facilitate timely assistance for our students.  To help students that needed the computer hardware, laptop computers or funds were made available to them to obtain the necessary equipment, thus facilitating student participation in distance learning.

Students engaged in learning at internal and external practicum sites have continued their learning using TeleHealth and similar distance therapy/counseling platforms.  New practicum sites were identified, and agreements were established with agencies that could accommodate our students in a safe learning environment while acquiring hands-on experience.  Our doctoral students continued (and completed) the required internship at clinical sites that offered the services online via telehealth.

For comprehensive examinations and testing, selected programs have implemented the HonorLock proctoring system to ensure the integrity of the testing experience.  All faculty and students received training on the use of HonorLock, and these training materials are available on-demand (24/7) for all faculty.  For dissertation defenses and doctoral colloquia, either BlackBoard Collaborate or Zoom platforms are used to carry out the activity with full participation (e.g., PowerPoint slides and document sharing).

Various student surveys have been conducted to assess the learning needs of students.  Surveys have identified students' preferences for online (versus face-to-face & hybrid) classes, perceptions of safety

and health issues, concerns about a safe return to campus, etc. These findings were disseminated to students and faculty, and appropriate changes and adaptations were implemented in response to these needs.

The Student Learning Assessment (S.L.A.) process has been performed using the Smartsheet Microsoft Platform for all data entry of S.L.A. results. All teachers of the courses selected in all programs for the S.L.A. have been trained on the virtual platform's use, and since the outbreak of COVID-19 continuous virtual meetings have been held to address concerns about the process. As mentioned above, all courses have been transferred to the hybrid format using the Blackboard and Collaborate Platforms; thus, all S.L.A. measures are taken for all selected courses directly in the virtual sessions. Also, all assessment methods have been modified and provided in a virtual mode. All course rubrics also have been transferred to Smartsheet's Microsoft Platform, where the S.L.A. measures are taken for the periodic and annual S.L.A. reports.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

To overcome the COVID-19 challenge and achieve continuous functioning without significant disruptions, Albizu University implemented the following modifications to day-to-day campus operations. First, all academic, service, and administrative units, including but not limited to the Finance, Financial Aid, Admissions and Enrollment and Registrar teams, received administration approval to work remotely. On-site class offerings transitioned to the online modality.

Each academic and support department engaged in virtual meetings or weekly phone calls to ensure departmental tasks' timely achievement. These weekly meetings provided new insights on the remote work learning curve, and they were complemented by periodic updates from the Albizu president and chancellors about ongoing and future events. Initially, academic and service teams worked remotely five days a week, Monday through Friday. Initially, staff members worked on-site once a week, keeping social distance and using face masks. Starting October 26th, they alternated being on-site Monday through Thursday, each employee being on-site three times a week. Friday work remained remote for all staff. This schedule has been subject to fluctuation, based on the number of COVID-19 cases in the area, as Albizu's priority is to keep employees healthy and safe. Also, employees had the option to transfer their Albizu phone calls to their phones. Some employees consented to this transition, and those who did not were required to check their phone inbox periodically. These measures resulted in a smooth transition from the on-site to the remote work environment without impacting the university's fiscal viability and sustainability.

Each operational unit implemented specific measures to assure continuous services. Following are the flexibility measures and actions taken by each operational unit to address the facilities' temporary closure challenges.

The university provided the finance staff with the necessary tools and equipment to work successfully from home. Laptops, jump drives, computer cameras and mouses, printers, and office supplies were purchased for each team member to ensure a seamless transition. Deadlines, weekly and monthly tasks, financial reports, and other data were not altered by remote work. These covered financial reporting to campus directors, chancellor, upper-level management and board of directors, grant reporting, student

loan disbursements, fund drawdowns, vendor payments, cash and check deposits, as well as account reconciliations. Despite COVID-19 adjustments, the staff completed the fiscal year 2020-21 budget planning and approval process. This allowed the university to start the new fiscal year on July 1st, 2020, with a pre-determined and planned financial guide. Additionally, the annual audit was completed remotely, requiring close interaction with the auditing firm at any time and when required.  No significant issues surfaced when providing or exchanging communication, supporting data, and scheduling meetings through Teams or Zoom.

*Contingency Planning and Continuity of Services of the San Juan Campus*

As part of the remote Contingency Plan, the following activities were coordinated with the Technology Office to allow the efficient operation of service units:

Created one virtual office for each unit using the Blackboard platform. The staff has been using this virtual office during business hours to assist students and prospects.
Obtained special "internet phones"
Implemented *OneDrive* through the cloud. This allows staff access to their files.
Implemented Microsoft Teams and Zoom applications for video conferencing with staff, candidate interviews, and to assist students and prospects
Provided remote access to the Ellucian database to manage students' files and information remotely
Provided laptops and desktops to administrative personnel who did not have computers at home
Facilitated virtual recruitment activities, such as open houses and orientations for prospective students
Celebrated the Virtual FAFSA Day to encourage and guide new and active students in completing their financial aid application
Temporarily eliminated the incomplete grades' removal fee for clinical practice
Temporarily eliminated clinical practice tuition fees for the 2020 Summer session
Partially reimbursed global student fees paid for the 2020 Summer session

*Contingency Planning and Continuity of Services of the Miami Campus*

To maintain daily communication, the enrollment staff created a shared group chat in Zoom. This chat allowed weekly staff meetings aimed at keeping track of and achieving campus enrollment goals.   These measures have resulted in a smooth transition from on-site to remote, back to on-site and remote, depending on the number of COVID-19 cases, without impacting the university enrollment goals.

To support recruitment, virtual contact with prospective students maintained engagement. Paperless files and electronic forms seamlessly provided file review accessibility to admissions' staff and faculty advisors, and they allowed new students to sign admission and enrollment forms.

University-wide planning occurs at short-, medium-, and long-range levels.  The COVID-19 pandemic mostly impacted short- and medium-range planning processes, affecting the university planning and assessment annual cycle and the Strategic Plan. The planning and yearly cycle assessment are conducted at the short-range planning level. According to the 2020-2021 Budget Calendar, Albizu individual units should complete operational plans by April 2020, along with their budget requests. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit precisely in Spring 2020, directors and administrators could not elaborate on their next

year's operational plans.  Instead, the 2020-2021 operational plans were delayed until OctoberNovember 2020.

The Strategic Plan occurs at the medium-range planning level.  There was no pandemic when the Strategic Plan was adopted; hence, we did not have specific plans for this external threat. When COVID19 was declared a national emergency, some of our planned strategies had not yet been fully executed. Without affecting institutional operations, we were rushed to carry them out before their target date, especially those related to distance education. This external condition prompted establishing a new Board of Trustees' task force to evaluate strategic goals under the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the task force analyses, new goals and strategies were proposed, and some were modified.

Despite these challenges, assessing institutional effectiveness activities has continued through the year, with continuous evaluation of student satisfaction, in the transition from face-to-face to remote instruction.

Standard VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The administration made a concerted effort to implement various information systems tools to ensure an effective transition at every business level. The university added the use of technology platforms, such as Zoom, Collaborate, Go-to-Meetings, and Microsoft Teams, to hold meetings.

The H.R. Office adapted A.D.P. protocols for non-exempt staff to be executed remotely. Staff uploaded weekly logs of their activities to Smartsheets that were monitored and approved by their directors. All directors submitted weekly departmental reports to the deans, who kept chancellors and the president duly informed. This staggered approach allowed for an immediate needs assessment to ensure support to both employees and students. H.R. trained staff and faculty on projected phases of reopening and new safety protocols in line with CDC and OSHA guidelines and recommendations, as well as dispositions by local authorities. Concurrently, students were kept informed via president and chancellor's office notifications, townhall meetings, communications from the dean of student affairs and dean of academic affairs, and the academic program directors.

At the time that the Miami campus switched to remote operations, several service grant projects were underway.

HRSA Graduate Psychology Education (G.P.E.)-PsyD Program
HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET)-Master's in Psychology Programs
Title V-Undergraduate Psychology Program
Title V PPOHA-Academic and Service Units
SAMHSA Mental Health First Aid

While the renovation of the student support areas under the Title V project for the Undergraduate Psychology was completed on-site following pandemic safety protocols, most activities for the grant projects were placed on online delivery mode. Training programs were adjusted to be implemented via

synchronous and asynchronous distance mode platforms and tools. Administrative meetings, both at the campus level and with assigned federal Project Officers, have been conducted virtually.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the various grant project deliverables were accomplished, and required reports were filed on time. Adjustments included the acquisition of Zoom licenses and protocols for serving students through peer mentoring, tutoring, and academic coaching. Student access to technology and Wi-Fi is an issue that we had to consider moving services to remote status. Grant teams collaborated with I.T. and the chancellor's office to ensure that students in need had Wi-Fi and laptops provided by the institution to ensure the continuity of services.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, governance and leadership at Albizu have responded effectively and continued to provide oversight and strategic guidance to the institution, as evidenced in the details provided for Standards I – VI above.