



UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL DE BAYAMÓN

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Presidencia

April 16, 2013

Dr. Elizabeth H. Sibolski
President
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Dr. Sibolski:

In accordance with the Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, we accept the Draft Report submitted by the Evaluating Team which visited BCU on March 17 to 20, 2013.

The University community wishes to express its gratitude for the unique experience of sharing its institutional accomplishments and challenges with the distinguished and supportive colleagues of the Visiting Team.

Concerning the Draft Report, we find it straightforward, thorough, clear and easy to understand. It confirms our own perception of the Institution. However, it is necessary to clarify in Standard 12, General Education, page 18, "each of the three remedial courses carry three credits, counter to MSCHE fundamental elements." Remedial courses have a value equivalent to 45 hours (3 credit hours). These courses are not part of graduation requirements. Incoming freshmen who obtain a score of 450 or less on the Spanish, English, or Math portion of the College Board Entrance Exam are required to take the GEP placement test. Students scoring less than 74% on a placement test are required to enroll in remedial courses (level 100 courses). During the orientation process, students are informed that remedial courses are not part of the graduation requirements.

We are submitting an action plan which includes the suggestions and recommendations made by the Visiting Team.

Once again, we thank the members of the Visiting Team for their continuous support to our Institution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lillian Negrón-Colón".

Lillian Negrón-Colón, Ph. D.
President

c: Tito Guerrero, III
MSCHE - Vice President

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Overview of the Institution

Bayamon Central University (BCU) was founded in 1961 by the Dominican Order, as an extension of the former Catholic University of Puerto Rico. In 1970 BCU became an independent and autonomous institution. In December 1971, BCU received for the first time its full accreditation as an independent, private non-for-profit university.

BCU offers academic courses and degrees leading to a certificate/diploma, associate, bachelor and master in the areas of liberal arts, sciences, health professions, education, and business.

On June 1, 2008 Bayamon Central University (BCU) submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) its Periodic Review Report. On November 20, 2008 the Commission accepted the Periodic Review Report and reaffirmed BCU's accreditation.

Chapter 2: Mission, Goals and Integrity (Standards 1 and 6)

This chapter examines the institution's success in achieving its mission, goals and values as well as the level of adherence to its Christian-humanistic ethical standards and institutional stated policies.

Following the spirit of Saint Thomas Aquinas and inspired in the multi-secular charisma of the Order of Preachers, Bayamon Central University has the mission of promoting the integral development of its students by means of an education of academic excellence that will form professionals and leaders with high social commitment, capable of constructing a cultural, scientific-technological, and business world, based on the evangelical values of Christian Humanism.

BCU evidences its adherence and commitment to development, realization and dissemination of the mission, goals and values with the idea of contributing to intellectual, personal and professional development of its students. The mission, goals and values of BCU are safeguarded by the Council of Founders that governs BCU. The institution's mission, goals and values constitute a reference for the effective development of services and academic offerings. To comply with the mission, goals and institutional values, BCU establishes protocols, procedures and institutional policies in accordance with ethical and religious principles that characterize BCU as a Dominican and Catholic institution that promotes a Christian-Humanistic formation.

Chapter 3: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal, Institutional Resources (Standards 2 and 3)

This chapter includes the use of BCU's Institutional Strategic Plan 2007-2012 for planning activities, supporting the development of external fundraising, and subsequent evaluation of the success of these strategies. The evaluation of the strategic plan evidences significant progress in curriculum revision, development of new academic offerings and acquisition of technology to support these processes.

Strategic planning produces better allocation of resources, improvement in the physical plant, and budget administration. The strategic plan is the result of the participation of members of the academic community in decision-making.

Chapter 4: Leadership and Governance Administration (Standards 4 and 5)

BCU has a well-defined system of governance that provides appropriate opportunities for administration, faculty and student contributions. The governing body reflects all constituents and public interest and is appropriate in size to fulfill its responsibilities. Shared governance is especially enhanced by the presence of the faculty in the University Senate and Academic Council. BCU By-Laws outlines the selection process of the governing body as well as its duties and responsibilities.

The President of BCU as a chief executive officer is appointed by the Board of Trustees and ratified by the Council of Founders. The President's primary responsibility is the administration of the institution.

Chapter 5: Student Admission, Retention and Support Services (Standards 8 and 9)

BCU aspires for each student to successfully complete his/her college degree with an integral formation. To fulfill its mission and vision as an institution of higher education, it provides support services for students enrolled in the certificate, undergraduate and graduate program, as well as services for students at risk. Among the services offered are the following: enrollment management, guidance and counseling (academic, psychological and personal), spiritual counseling, tutoring, recreation and sports, first aid, and learning and research resources (library).

BCU has an admission policy which outlines the requirements and criteria for admission to academic programs. This policy, published in BCU catalog, ensures uniformity of procedures.

Chapter 6: Faculty (Standard 10)

Bayamon Central University's faculty is highly qualified to plan, develop, teach and monitor academic programs, conduct research, revise curriculum and develop related programs. The Institution promotes the faculty's professional development to meet the curricular needs of the institution. Professional development, recruitment and evaluation of faculty contribute to the achievement of BCU's mission.

To draft this section of the self-study, the committee analyzed faculty profile, results from two questionnaires administered to the faculty, interviewed program directors and members of the administration, and revised existing documents such as, Faculty Handbook and Faculty Evaluation Handbook.

Chapter 7: Educational Offerings (Standard 11)

BCU has aligned the curriculum to the mission, vision, goals and student profile. The revision is aligned to the strategic plan, the action plans of the academic units, the content of the academic offerings, and faculty support services.

BCU has developed institutional assessment instruments to evaluate the degree to which the institution meets the needs of students and employers. The institution works towards the attainment of this goal by making the necessary curricular adjustments.

BCU has a highly qualified team of committed professionals aware of the challenges in higher educational in Puerto Rico. The faculty is up to date in new educational tendencies to guarantee an education of excellence. The university takes pride in its alumni who are committed to solidarity demonstrating respect for human dignity, diversity, and social justice within the community they serve.

Chapter 8: General Education and Related Education Activities (Standards 12 and 13)

This chapter integrates standard 12 (General Education) and standard 13 (Related Educational Activities). Since 2008, BCU has promoted the design of a General Education Program (GEP) that responds to the needs of students and society. The university encourages its implementation to promote the development of intellectual abilities, the mastery of oral and written communication skills, Christian values, work ethics, and technological competence. The goals and objectives of the GEP are aligned and consistent with institutional mission and philosophy.

It is through institutional policies, rules and regulations that the GEP guarantees compliance with quality and contact hours of courses in order to stimulate intellectual, emotional and social progress. The GEP promotes the transition and application of skills, knowledge and attitudes to the academic major. Title V Project set up an assessment plan compiling information from both the student learning process and the curriculum revision process to improve and update the curriculum. These changes have been disseminated to all sectors of the university community through government bodies and/or faculty activities.

BCU establishes policies and procedures to identify and provide support to students with academic deficiencies. The university provides a variety of services to help these students achieve their academic goals.

The goals and objectives of the Certificate Program (CP) are consistent with institutional mission and philosophy. The program meets the needs and interests of various professional and business groups that require ongoing training. It establishes a work plan for the development, approval, review and ongoing evaluation of course offerings.

BCU incorporates distance learning for the development of some courses of the GEP, core and major areas of academic offerings. Distance learning is in keeping with the guidelines outlined in the institutional mission and philosophy. Distance learning offerings meet the standards of the institution and regulatory agencies as to quality of education and academic rigor.

Chapter 9: Institutional Assessment and Assessment of Student Learning (Standards 7 and 14)

This chapter examines BCU's institutional and student learning assessment. It discusses the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP), its implementation process, student learning assessment and outcomes. BCU implemented institutional assessment procedures to guarantee students acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for professional success.

The university faces the challenge of improving assessment practices. While considerable progress has been made over recent years to promote a culture of assessment, specifically with respect to the teaching-learning process, assessment activities need to be more systematic and consistent. Progress is being made in administrative assessment through the recently established Institutional Assessment Office.

Chapter 10: Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations represent the building blocks that will provide the foundation for Bayamon Central University's next decade of growth. These recommendations are part of BCU Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and will be implemented in response to the Self Study.



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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**Certification Statement:
Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and
Federal Title IV Requirements
Effective October 19, 2012**

Bayamon Central University
(Name of Institution)

is seeking (*Check one*): ___ Initial Accreditation
 ___ Reaffirmation of Accreditation through Self Study
 ___ Reaffirmation of Accreditation through Periodic Review


An institution seeking **initial accreditation** or **reaffirmation of accreditation** must affirm that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including the following relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008:

- Distance education and correspondence education (student identity verification)
- Transfer of credit
- Assignment of credit hours
- Title IV cohort default rate

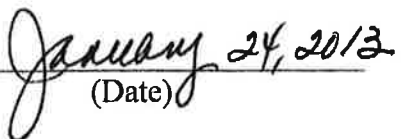
This signed certification statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution's self-study or periodic review report.

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established Requirements of Affiliation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation as detailed on this certification statement. If it is not possible to certify compliance with all requirements specified herein, the institution must attach specific details in a separate memorandum.

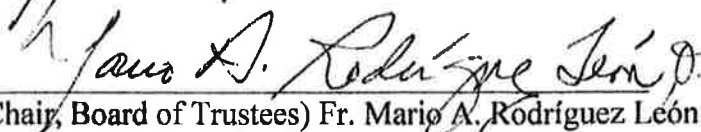
___ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (*Check if applicable*)



(Chief Executive Officer) Dr. Lillian Negrón-Colón



(Date)



(Chair, Board of Trustees) Fr. Mario A. Rodríguez León

(Date)