

EVANGELICAL SEMINARY OF PUERTO RICO
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THE ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS
THE COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION
2019 SELF-STUDY REPORT
SITE VISIT: FEBRUARY 2020



ATS SELF-STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico

The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (hereinafter Seminary) is a non-profit, private, ecumenical and graduate studies institution located in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Seminary offers graduate studies programs in theology, religion and pastoral ministry. It was established September 11, 1919 with the purpose of offering theological education, develop pastoral leadership and promote growth in the Christian faith from a protestant perspective. Currently, the Seminary is celebrating its 100th Anniversary, joined by its community, alumni and theological leaders from the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Institution is sponsored and supported by the following [denominations](#) and their respective partners in the United States: Baptists Churches of Puerto Rico, the American Baptist Churches in the USA, the Disciples of Christ Church of Puerto Rico, the Christian Church Disciples of Christ in USA, the United Methodist Church of Puerto Rico, the United Methodist Church in the USA, the Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico, the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico, the United Church of Christ and the Caribbean Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is also sponsored by other denominations in the Pentecostal, Catholic and independent churches that send their prospective candidates to receive formal theological education at the Seminary.

Currently the Seminary offers three degrees: [Master of Divinity](#) (MDiv), [Master of Arts in Religion](#) (MAR) and [Doctor of Ministry](#) (DMin). Also, the Seminary offers continuing education courses. In the current academic year, the Seminary has 164 students enrolled in all degree programs. Our students come from a variety of religious denominations, including independents and from all regions of Puerto Rico and Saint Croix (US Virgin Islands). The Seminary has a faculty of 5 full time professors and 13 part-time professors.

Mission

The mission of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico is to contribute to the integral formation of pastoral and lay leaders to serve in Christian ministries and participate in the mission of God's people in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, the United States of America, the Americas and in the world in an ecumenical, inter religious and social context.

The Seminary upholds the values and purpose of its mission as the guiding principles for educational and administrative organization. For this reason, the Institution continuously works in making its mission widely known by means of both religious as well as secular media. The Seminary yearns to present a public image that is both relevant and consonant with the social and ecclesiastical realities within Puerto Rico. With a clear focus on the church's role within immediate context and in the world, the Seminary endeavors to promote academic, theological and pastoral excellence. It is our goal to continue with the Seminary's tradition of excellence in order to adequately provide to the current educational and formative needs of the pastoral and lay leadership of the Church while affirming the importance of a transformative theological education.

Goals of Self-Study

The accreditation, planning and assessment processes are essential to the Seminary and crucial for the growth, pertinence and development of our Institution. This triad – accreditation,

planning and assessment - allows us to achieve our institutional mission and to identify strengths, threats, challenges and opportunities. Our institutional goals focus on promoting academic, theological and pastoral excellence in order to adequately respond to the educational and spiritual needs of the lay and clergy leadership of our sponsor denominations. These goals emphasize the importance of competent and transformative theological education. We also aim to address the needs of seminarians, local churches, denominations and the community at large as we all face the challenges the 21st century pose to our educational and ecclesial vocations. Also, we aim to assist in the development of Latino/Hispanic clergy in collaboration with our partners in the United States.

Our Institution has been affiliated to the ATS since 1982, and it is an accredited member. The ESPR is an Inter/Multidenominational academic theological institution. Our last comprehensive visit took place in 2008. Due to the devastation produced by hurricanes in 2017, the ATS granted an extension of the evaluation site visit to February 17-20, 2020. .

The self-study process allowed the Seminary to look deeply and investigate carefully how the institutional mission is achieved. This process promotes the evaluation of the following: student service office's effectiveness, curricular offering, teaching quality, availability of research resources, IT infrastructure and service capabilities, and financial stability. The Self-Study followed significant objectives aligned with the Strategic Plan 2017-2022:

- To assure a standard of excellence in our learning and research support services, curriculum offerings and services to students.
- To demonstrate the institutional practices that guarantee the quality of the academic programs, the library and the learning and research support services that allow the achievement of the mission and vision.
- To identify all opportunity areas and the academic and administrative procedures that need more attention to achieve the mission and vision.
- To use the results of the Self-Study to guarantee the endurance of the Seminary as the leading institution in theological education on the Island.
- To promote assessment as a transversal vector in the Seminary academic and institutional vocation.
- To communicate to the students, the faculty, the staff and the churches the quality of the academic programs and the effectiveness of the learning and research support services.

The Self Study Process enabled the Seminary to reflect on its strengths and challenges and think about new initiatives for its second century. The process was inclusive and encouraged many sectors to participate in its formulation. In order to produce this Self Study Report the Seminary designated a Steering Committee and Working Groups made by faculty, board members, staff, students, alumni and community. The groups worked diligently to produce an evaluation of our performance and recommendations for improvements. The Steering Committee is composed by the following:

- Dr. Juan R. Mejías, Acting President, Full Time Faculty & S.S. Co-Chair
- Dr. Palmira N. Ríos, Acting Dean of Academic and Student Affairs & S.S. Co-Chair
- Dr. Guillermo Ramírez, Full Time Faculty

- Dr. Ediberto López, Full Time Faculty
- Dr. Agustina Luvis, Full Time Faculty
- Mrs. Keina Troncoso, Director, Registrar
- Rev. Raúl Santiago, Director of Finance
- Mrs. Myrna E. Pérez, Director of Administration

Findings Summary

- The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico has clearly defined mission, values and goals that are the product of a wide and collaborative process.
- The Evangelical Seminary is an ecumenical theological institution of higher education that complies with local and federal legal and ethical regulations.
- The Seminary meets the Requirements of Affiliation and the Standards for Accreditation of the MSCHE and ATS as part of its quotidian operations
- The ESPR provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and consistency in all the offered programs at graduate level. The academic programs are clearly and distinctly described in official publications of the Institution, such as the institutional catalog, the brochures located in dissemination spaces of each office and on the ESPR website. Potential students can grasp and comply with requirements of the program degrees and know the expected time to complete them.
- Student participation in chapel services, book presentations, co-curricular activities, etc. contribute to the integral character of the academic experience.
- Significant improvement in the systematization of the data collection evidenced by the appraisal of student learning and the institutional assessment compared to the last self-study.
- The main challenge faced by the Seminary is cashflow. The cashflow limitations are directly affecting the ability to expand its programs and to fully develop strategic plans.
- The ESPR complies with the standard by presenting a functional governance structure as expected from an accredited institution. The governance structure is well defined in its regulations, manuals, policies and official documents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ATS SELF-STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
Table of Contents.....	iv
GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS.....	1
Standard 1: Purpose, Planning and Evaluation.....	1
1.1 Purpose.....	1
Mission, Values and Goals.....	1
Inclusiveness in the Process of Adoption of Mission	3
1.2 Planning and Evaluation.....	4
Educational Effectiveness Declaration.....	4
Assessment Culture.....	5
Assessment, Admission Analysis and Admission.....	5
Master of Divinity (MDIV).....	6
Master of Religion Arts (MAR).....	8
Doctor in Ministry.....	9
Use of student learning outcomes for curricular changes.....	10
Assessment and Faculty Coaching.....	10
Assessment and Alumni.....	11
Continuing education and assessment.....	12
Service areas assessment.....	12
Standard 2: Institutional Integrity	15
Introduction.....	15
Compliance with all policies, regulations and federal and state reporting requirements.....	15
Honesty and veracity of the ESPR in public relations announcements, recruitment and admission materials and practices as well as internal communications.....	15
Academic freedom, Intellectual Freedom, Freedom of Speech and	
Respect for Intellectual Property Rights.....	16
ESPR's Grievance Policies.....	17
Policies to avoid conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest....	17
Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion,	
discipline and termination of employees.....	18

Promotion of the ESPR for affordability and accessibility.....	19
Compliance with the Affiliation Requirements of the Commission.....	19
Recurrent assessment of ethics and integrity in the ESPR as evidenced by institutional policies, processes, practices and the ways in which they are implemented.....	19
Standard 3: The Theological Curriculum: Learning, Teaching and Research.....	20
Introduction.....	20
3.1 Goals of the Theological Curriculum.....	20
Master of Divinity.....	20
Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.).....	22
Doctor of Ministry.....	22
3.2 Learning, Teaching and Research.....	23
3.3 Characteristics of Theological Scholarship.....	25
Standard 4: Library and Information Resources.....	27
Introduction.....	27
4.1 Library Collections.....	27
4.2 Contribution to Learning, Teaching and Research.....	28
4.3 Partnership in Curricular Development.....	28
4.4 Administration and Leadership.....	28
4.5 Resources.....	29
Assessment.....	29
Standard 5: Faculty.....	30
5.1 Faculty qualifications, responsibilities, development, and employment.....	30
5.2 Faculty Role in Teaching and Student Learning.....	32
5.4 Faculty Role in Theological Research.....	33
Standard 6: Student Recruitment, Admission, Services and Placement.....	34
Introduction.....	34
6.1 Recruitment.....	34
6.2 Admissions and Academic Programs Information.....	34
6.3 Student services.....	35
Registration.....	35

Lodging.....	36
Cafeteria.....	36
Security.....	36
Access to Functionally Diverse People.....	37
Complaints and Processing.....	37
Academic Counseling, Student Counseling and Chaplaincy.....	37
Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities.....	37
Student Evaluation of Services and/or Support Offices.....	38
Retention.....	38
6.4 Student Borrowing.....	39
6.5 Placement.....	39
 Standard 7: Authority and Governance.....	 40
7.1 Authority.....	40
7.2 Governance.....	40
7.3 The roles of the governing board, administration, faculty, and students in governance processes.....	41
Governing Board.....	41
President's Office.....	42
Academic Dean.....	43
Faculty.....	43
Student Council.....	44
Non-academic divisions.....	44
Continuing Education.....	44
Evaluation of governance, leadership and administration.....	45
Communication through all dependencies.....	46
Manuals, policies and other documents approval.....	46
Information technologies (IT).....	47
 Standard 8: Institutional Resources.....	 48
Introduction.....	48
8.1 Personal.....	48
8.2 Financial Resources.....	48
Historical Financial Trends.....	50

Budget Projections 2019-2022.....	50
8.3 Physical Resources.....	51
Physical Facilities Trends.....	51
The Hurricanes Irma and Maria 2017.....	51
Technological Trends.....	52
8.4 Institutional Information Technology Resources.....	53
Information Technology (IT).....	53
8.5 Institutional Environment.....	54
8.6 Cooperative Use of Resources.....	56
8.7 Clusters.....	56
8.8 Instructional Technology Resources.....	56
FINDINGS.....	57
EDUCATIONAL STANDARD.....	62
ES. 1. Degree Programs and Nomenclature.....	62
ES. 2. Campus-Based Education.....	65
ES. 3. Extension Education.....	66
ES. 4. Distance Education.....	66
ES. 5. Faculty-directed individual instruction.....	66
ES. 6. Assessment of student learning outcomes.....	66
ES. 7. Academic guidelines: admission, transfer of credits, shared credit in degree programs, and advanced standing.....	67
ES. 8. Nondegree instructional programs.....	67
DEGREE PROGRAM STANDARDS.....	68
Standard A: Master of Divinity.....	68
Standard D: Master of Arts in Religion.....	75
Standard E: Doctor of Ministry.....	77
List of Appendices.....	81

STANDARD I

PURPOSE, PLANNING AND EVALUATION

1.1 Purpose

The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico is a non-profit, private, ecumenical and graduate studies institution located in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Seminary offers graduate studies programs in theology, religion and pastoral ministry. It was established September 11, 1919 with the purpose of offering theological education, develop pastoral leadership and promote growth in the Christian faith from a protestant perspective. Its purpose is to create an academic environment of theological reflection, camaraderie and spiritual growth for the men and women who serve within diverse ministry contexts.

The Institution is sponsored and supported by six historical [denominations](#) and their respective partners in the United States. Currently the Seminary offers three degrees: a [Master of Divinity](#) (MDiv) that confers the opportunity of theological education to men and women whose vocational goal is to serve in the ordained ministry ([Appendix I](#)); a [Master of Arts in Religion](#) (MAR) for men and women interested in analyzing the religious experience from an interdisciplinary perspective and who are interested in serving in a variety of educational institutions ([Appendix II](#)); a [Doctor of Ministry](#) (DMin) degree, that challenges clergy to be more intentional and faithful in their leadership within congregations and other institutions ([Appendix III](#)). In addition, we offer continuing education courses designed to address the immediate needs of alumni and local lay leaders. The Seminary has contributed to the development and growth of protestant churches on the island, working to create leaders with an elevated sense of ecclesiastical responsibility and fidelity to God. Our ministry strives for theological and pastoral academic excellence.

In the current academic year, the Seminary has 164 students enrolled in all degree programs. The makeup of the student body is 103 (62.8%) males and 61 (37.1.2%) females. Moreover, our students come from a variety of religious denominations, including independents and from all regions of Puerto Rico and Saint Croix (US Virgin Islands). The MDiv is our largest program, enrolling 79.2% of our students. Currently we do not have students formally enrolled in the doctoral program since we are in the process of evaluation and working on assisting doctoral students in the completion of their requirements for graduation. ([See document](#)). Last semester we graduated forty-eight (48) students, eight of them from the doctoral program. The Seminary has a faculty of 5 full time professors, including the director of the library who is also member of the faculty, and the Acting Dean of Academic and Students Affairs, an Adjunct Professor responsible for the administration of the MAR program and 13 part-time professors. ([Appendix V](#)).

Like all institutions of higher education in Puerto Rico, the Seminary was affected by the devastation left by the passing of two hurricanes in 2017. But thanks to the commitment and dedication of its staff, students and supporting religious communities on the Island and abroad, we were able to resume and complete our academic calendar and reconstruct our physical facilities. Currently, the Seminary is celebrating its 100th Anniversary, joined by its community, alumni and theological leaders from the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mission, Values and Goals

On March 30th, 2019, after a broad process of self assessment, the Board of Directors adopted a revised version of the mission of the Seminary as recommended by the Self Study Group

and the Faculty in a unanimous decision. The [statement of mission](#), values and goals constitutes an updated and valid representation of the collective vision of the purpose and role of the institution in a changing society that faces increasing national and global challenges (**Appendix VI**).

The mission of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico is **to contribute to the integral formation of pastoral and lay leaders to serve in Christian ministries and participate in the mission of God's people in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, the United States of America, the Americas and in the world in an ecumenical, inter religious and social context.**

Our goals are the following:

- To forge pastoral and lay leaders involved in the transformation of society through ministries that are innovative and relevant to their congregations and communities.
- To guide the student community in its development as well as in its spiritual, personal, social, academic and professional growth and identify and respond to the needs for continuing education of our alumni and supporting churches.
- To encourage the quality, the contextuality, the globalization, the agility and the innovation of our programs, from a critical perspective and praxis. To achieve these goals we must work to maintain an organization, programs, physical facilities and systems that enable us to respond with agility to a dynamic, changing and competitive world, rich in information, challenges and opportunities, as well as to bear witness that affirm the realm of Christ and the kingdom of God.

In the pursuit of our mission and goals our steps will be guided by the following values:

- With the community: wisdom, credibility, sensitivity, Christian compromise, administrative excellence, respect to life and nature, encourage inclusion, passion for justice and peace.
- With students and the churches: Academic and ministerial leadership, professionalism, pertinence, dedication, spirit of service and bearer of good testimony.
- With the personnel and collaborators: Respect, integrity, fellowship, motivation, participation, professionalism, transparency, dialogue, comprehension, understanding and loyalty.
- With all: Prophetic compromise, solidarity, service vocation, pastoral care, respect to the dignity, quality of faith and spirit, love and hope, promotion of ecumenical and inter religious dialogue.

We aspire to become the representation of excellence in the response to the educational and formative needs of the pastoral and lay leadership of the Church while affirming the significance of a transformative theological education.

The mission, values and goals are clearly described and communicated through:

- Faculty orientations celebrated twice a year.
- Revision of our curricular offerings to ensure it addresses both theoretical and practical aspects of Christian ministry.
- Required orientation for all new students during which the mission, goals and values of the institution are explained.

- As a justification of the academic programs and its relevance to the ministry of the church.
- Co-curricular activities to support and enhance the mission efforts of the formal curriculum.
- Religious and community engagement.
- The active participation of the Seminary staff and faculty in congregations and their presence in denominational assemblies, book presentations, conferences and symposiums, as well as in the social media.

Once the mission, goals and values were approved, the Seminary proceeded with a dissemination process to ensure the community understood the meaning of those responsibilities and currently we are holding meeting with students, staff and faculty to analyze how we can implement fully those values and goals. In addition, the [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#) ([Appendix VII & Appendix VIII](#)) and [Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes and the Effectiveness of Institutional Services](#) ([Appendix IX](#)) are aligned with the mission, objectives and values.

The Seminary upholds the values and goals of its mission as the guiding principles for educational and administrative organization, as well as for its social commitments. For this reason, the institution works incessantly to make its mission known throughout various venues of religious and secular communications. The seminary yearns to project a public image that is relevant and consonant with the social and ecclesiastical realities of Puerto Rican culture, including its transnational nature. With a clear focus on the church's ministry in its surrounding contexts and in the world, the seminary endeavors to promote academic, theological and pastoral excellence.

Inclusiveness in the Process of Adoption of Mission

The adoption of the revised mission was the product of collaborative process that analyzed the changing needs of our churches and society, the transnational nature of Puerto Rican society as it expands throughout the United States, and the potential for broad alliances with seminaries in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. In the context of elaborating proposals to raise funds for the recovery after hurricanes Irma and María, the Seminary produced a SWOT analysis that guided the analysis of the Self Study Report. The SWOT analysis identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Seminary:

- Strengths: Centennial organization; interdenominational and ecumenical seminary; multiple accreditations; excellent faculty, diverse and socially compromised; leading theological library of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean; international networks; prime location; student and alumni commitment.
- Weaknesses: Overextended faculty and staff; faculty is unable to take research leaves or sabbaticals; faculty reaching retiring age; diminishing financial sources; diminishing enrollment; antiquated data base; majority of students enrolled as part time or less; cash flow problems
- Opportunities: Diversify composition of the Board; foster relations with Puerto Rican and Latino diaspora in the US; digitalize the library for international use; build collaborations with similar academic institutions; create continuing education and distance learning programs; revise academic offerings and requirements; support research projects

- Threats: Dated regulations and governance; precarious political and fiscal landscape of Puerto Rico related to austerity measures; declining demographics and aging population of the Island; inadequate infrastructure; declining interest in pursuing theological education by youth; high joblessness.

1.2 Planning and Evaluation

For the ESPR, assessment of student learning outcomes and the assessment of the effectiveness of institutional services are key pieces to guarantee quality educational processes that allow achieving the mission, vision, goal and institutional values. The following definition is articulated in the Assessment Plan:

«The ESPR understands that the Evaluation of Learning is the main evaluation process to measure institutional excellence. The process is designed and established to gather enough evidence and feedback to identify where students are in their learning development, what they should do next and what is the best way to achieve the expected learning outcomes. In practice, this means obtaining clear evidence on how to increase individual achievement, understanding between Faculty and students about what needs to be improved, and an agreement on the necessary steps to promote strong learning and academic achievement.» ([Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes and the Effectiveness of Institutional Services](#)) ([Appendix IX](#)).

Educational effectiveness declaration

Through its [web page](#), the ESPR makes the statement regarding its educational effectiveness and assessment processes.

«One of the most relevant academic areas for compliance with the guidelines of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan is the assessment of student learning and institutional assessment. Beginning in 2008, as reviewed, the ESPR designed an Appraisal Plan that systematically and continuously collects the necessary information to assess whether the students' academic development is in accordance with the competencies described in the graduate's profile and aligned to the goals of each program, to the institutional mission and vision and to the ministerial quality standards of the sponsoring denominations.»

At the institutional level, the Board of Directors and (then) President Dr. Doris García-Rivera established the priority of the assessment processes to guarantee the fulfillment of the mission, the improvement of the services and guaranteeing the educational quality. The [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#) ([Appendix VII](#)) clearly establishes that administrative and teaching efforts must be aligned with the purpose of:

«Upgrading the assessment system to allow for a closer look to the Institution's effectiveness, academic programs rigor, evidence student learning and fostering communication, analysis and assertive decision-making.» (Goal 4, SP 2017-2022).

«Nurture and assessment culture allows for the systematic and continuous collection of necessary information to explore whether the students' academic development is aligned with the described competencies in the graduate profile as well as aligned with each

program's goals, institutional mission and vision and ministerial quality standards of the sponsoring denominations» (Strategy 4.1, SP 2017-2022).

Assessment culture

Based on the received recommendations on the past reaccreditation process regarding the need to more effectively demonstrate the activities related to the institutional assessment (Standard 7) and the evaluation of the students' learning outcomes, the Board of Directors approved the establishment of the Office of Institutional Assessment. This office is currently coordinated by Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz, professor of practical theology. The coordinator, together with the Assessment Committee with members of regular Faculty, are responsible for establishing the logistics to increase the development of an assessment culture in the Institution. Both agencies are under the supervision of the Academic Dean's Office. ([Organizational Chart](#)) ([Appendix XLV](#)).

Assessment, admission analysis and admission

One of the academic areas with greater relevance for compliance with the guidelines of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan is the assessment of student learning. The Assessment Plan allows the systematic and continuous collection of the necessary information to monitor if the students' academic development is in accordance with the competencies described in the graduate profile and aligned with the goals of each program, the mission, the vision and institutional values and ministerial quality standards of the sponsoring denominations. The following tables and graphs show the behavior of the enrollment in the last eight years. In them, the following classifications are identified: *Fall enrollment*, *12 Month enrollment unduplicated headcounts*, *Full-time and part time enrollment* and *Full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE)* for 2010-2017. ([Appendix IV](#)).

Chart 1: Fall enrollment, 12 Month enrollment unduplicated headcounts & Total fulltime equivalent (FTE) 2010-2017.

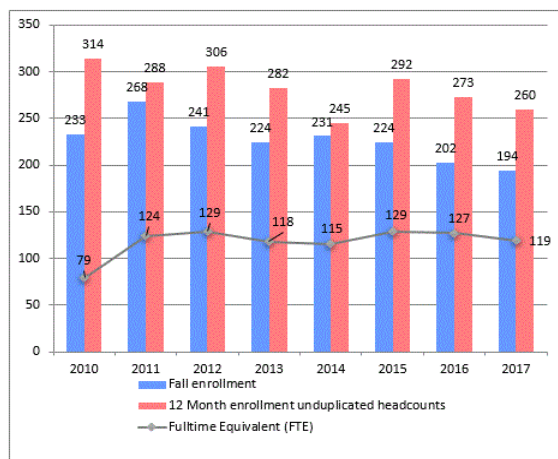


Chart 2: Full-time and part time enrollment and Full-time equivalent enrollment, 2010-2017.

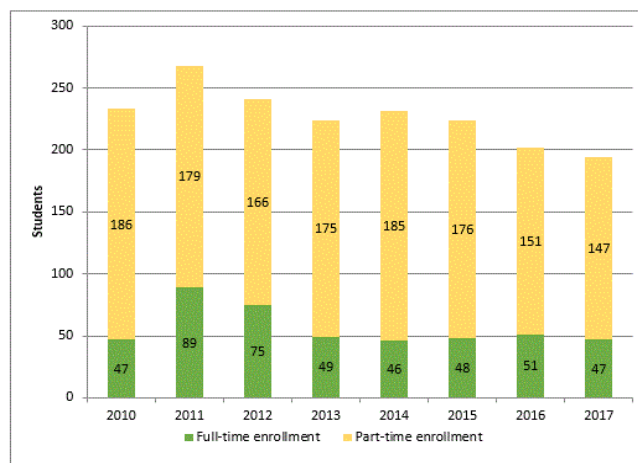


Chart 3: Annual enrollment change (%), Fall 2010-2017.

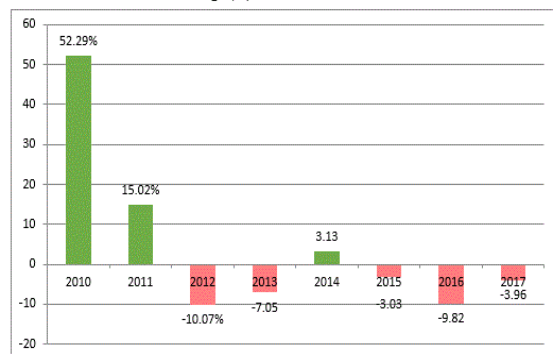
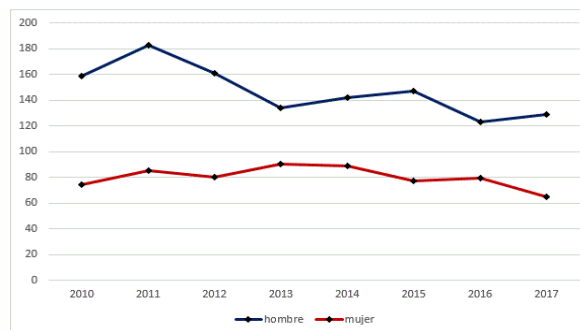


Chart 4: Student Profile 2010-2017 by gender and classification as full-time or part-time student



Master of Divinity (M.DIV.)

The [Master of Divinity](#) is the main academic program. Its objective is to contribute to the formation and development of academic and ministerial leadership of men and women to serve and participate in the mission of the people of God in Puerto Rico, in the Americas and globally. The curriculum currently consists of 83 credits distributed in three programmatic areas: Biblical Studies, Theology and History and Church Ministry Studies (Practical Theology). These in turn represent the competencies that describe a graduate of the program. Aligned with the mission of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, it is expected that a graduate of the Master of Divinity program will be able to ([Appendix I](#)):

- Develop a general, critical and comprehensive understanding of the problems and challenges that the world presents to the Church of today in its plurality, both globally as well as in Puerto Rico and the Americas.
- Value and critically discern plurality both in its ecumenical and interreligious character.
- Develop an understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural context of Christianity in Puerto Rico.
- Know the different methodologies and approaches to reading the Bible, both the Old and the New Testament.
- Develop a critical understanding of the interpretation of the Faith within the context of the history of Christianity and Christian thought.

Other program expectations are available at [webpage](#).

Assessment venues for this program are ([Appendix IX](#)):

- *Student learning outcomes assessment in the courses* – Faculty members describe in their syllabi their evaluation criteria including book reviews, bibliographical research, partial tests, short tests, reading analysis, case discussion, laboratories, fieldwork experiences, monographs and argumentative, exegetical or theological essays and their respective rubrics, among others.
- *Pre and Post Test* - Upon entering the semester of August 2019, each student will complete a test to determine the knowledge and skills they have at the beginning of the study plan. This test is aligned to the student's profile and to the objectives and competencies of the MDIV program. The same test will be administered when the student completes 40 credits and at the end of their studies. The results obtained will facilitate decision making about the fulfillment of the mission and values of the Institution and the goals and objectives of the program.
- *Colloquiums of pastoral experiences* - Students of the Master's in Divinity Program should participate in three colloquiums aimed at reflecting on vocation and pastoral practice. Each colloquium fosters the integration of acquired knowledge and skills throughout the curriculum and the diverse dynamics and experiences in their local church in order to define healthy, balanced and constructive pastoral leadership patterns and behaviors. Each colloquium has its own assessment criteria including reflexive essays, journals, analysis of readings or books, oral reports, among others. The colloquia are: Colloquium I: *Pastor and his/her leadership*, Colloquium II: *The Pastor in his/her missionary work* & Colloquium III: *The Pastor in his/her evangelical work*.

- Integration monograph** - This is the research work that every student must present during their last semester of study. It consists of a research project in which the student will have the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and mindsets acquired throughout the program through the writing and articulation of a monograph. The main purpose is for the student to demonstrate his/her ability to integrate the areas of competencies of the program (Biblical Studies, Theology and History Studies and Church Ministry Studies), bibliographic research skills and critical analysis of a situation or dilemma of interest in ecclesial or community life. The process requires an oral presentation before a Faculty Committee, who will evaluate the student's academic performance. The evaluation of the monograph focuses on the narrative articulation, the acquisition of knowledge, critical reflection and discussion of the researched subject. For this purpose, two evaluation instruments were designed: the [rubric to evaluate the integrative monograph](#) and the rubric to evaluate the oral defense. Both rubrics are aligned with the objectives of the program and the competencies of the graduate profile. (**Appendix XXIII**). The following tables show the result of the execution of the students in the integration monograph in 2018 (n = 21) compared to the skills of the Master of Divinity program (Table 1), the average and percentage by skills in the presentation and content in the written part (Table 2) and skills in oral defense (Table 3). (**Appendix XLVI** [Results of Integrative Monograph 2018](#)).

Table 1: Average and percentage summary per competencies on the integrative monograph 2018 (N=21)

Competency	MEP (Minimal Execution Point)	Average (\bar{x}) (Scale: máx. 4 min. 1)	Percentage (%)
Formulates a reasonable and coherent theological argument resulting from a reflection process about Christian tradition and Church ministry	2.8 / 70%	3.0	75.0
Manages critical methodology and hermeneutics for Scripture, historical document and theological document analysis		2.9	72.6
Identifies key characteristics of ministry contexts and how these affect pastoral work		3.2	79.8
Can articulate a clear stand of his/her ministerial role taking into consideration the different levels of pastoral action: personal congregational, national, global and ecologic.		2.9	71.4
Promotes principles of informed pastoral work on justice, peace, value for diversity and solidarity with threatened nature and stripped humanity.		3.1	77.4
Shows ability for verbal and written communication according to the professional duties that will carry out.		3.2	79.8
Total		3.1	76.0

Table 2: Average and percentage summary per skills on written content and oral presentation on the integrative monograph 2018 (N=21)

Skills	MEP (Minimal Execution Point)	Average (\bar{x}) (Scale: máx. 10 min. 1)	Percentage (%)
Presentation			
Bibliography	8.0/ 80.0%	8.86	88.6
Spelling quality		8.57	85.7
Written expression quality		8.64	86.4
Total Presentation		8.69	86.9
Contents			
Argument presentation and organization	7.5/ 75.0%	8.50	85.0
Exegesis		8.40	84.0
Hermeneutics		8.38	83.8
Theology		8.00	80.0
Church History		8.10	81.0
Pastoral theology and practical areas		8.48	84.8
Competency integration		8.50	85.0
Total Contents		8.34	83.4
Total	7.5/ 75%	8.44	84.4

Table 3: Average and percentage summary per skills on the oral defense of integrative monograph 2018 (n=21)

Skills	Minimal Execution Point (MEP)	Average (\bar{x}) (Scale: máx. 10 min. 1)	Percentage (%)
Information management	8.0/ 80.0%	8.74	87.4
Ability to present arguments and responses		8.79	87.9
Ability to incorporate material to his/her ministerial vocation		9.21	92.1
Total		8.91	89.1

- *Congregational interview* – The [instrument](#) was developed to evaluate the performance of students in pastoral competence areas that are not easily observable in the classroom context but reflect the learning acquired in the ESPR. ([Appendix XLVII](#)). Each year, the Academic Dean selects a random sample of congregations where our students exercise pastoral leadership, both as actual students and as recent graduates. The interview is directed to confessional leaders. The interview with denominational sponsoring leaders allows the ESPR to receive external information about student achievement in areas of learning measured by direct observation of practical skills and behavior.

Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.)

The goal of the [Master of Arts in Religion](#) program is for graduates to develop the competencies that allow them to research the religious phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective and as a fundamental aspect of Puerto Rican society, to continue advanced studies in the field of religion and theology, in order to train for a better professional work in private or government agencies, teaching religion in educational institutions and training for lay professional service in churches or private denominations. The curriculum currently consists of 54 credits distributed in four program areas: Interdisciplinary Studies, Judeo-Christian Tradition, World Religions and elective courses. In keeping with the mission of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, the graduate of the Master of Arts in Religion is expected ([Expectations of MAR achievement](#)) ([Appendix II](#)):

- Investigate the religious phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Understand the religious phenomenon in its various manifestations from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Understand the Judeo-Christian tradition and doctrine.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of various world religions.
- Integrate the understanding of religious phenomenon to the analysis of their personal and professional situation, including the examination of the essential values of life in their various religious expressions.

Assessment venues for this program are ([Appendix IX](#)):

- *Evaluation of the student learning outcomes assessment in the courses* – Faculty members state in their syllabi their evaluation criteria that include book reviews, critical analysis of readings or research articles, oral reports, reflections, bibliographic research, partial tests, case discussions, monographs and argumentative essays and their respective rubrics, among others.
- *Comprehensive tests* – As part of the requirements of the degree, the student must complete tests where he/she will demonstrate the knowledge acquired in each of the competency areas described in the graduate profile.
- *Performance assessment rubrics* – Faculty members reviewed the rubrics to assess the performance of each student by competence areas. This action will allow gathering evidence of skills developed as described in the graduate profile.

- **Monographic Research Project** – As part of the graduation requirements, each student must present a critical research project on an aspect of religious phenomenon. The work must be interdisciplinary in nature. It is expected that the student will demonstrate the theoretical, methodological and analytical skills acquired in the courses that make up the MAR program. (See [Appendix XXIV Instrument of the Monographic Research Project](#)). The student will develop the research project under the tutelage of a professor of religion. It must be approved by the Faculty following the rubrics designed for such purpose. The following tables show the [result of the students' performance in the Integration Essay](#) in 2015 (n = 7) compared to the competencies of the Master of Arts in Religion program, the average and percentage of skills in the presentation and content in the written part (Table 2) and oral defense skills (Table 3). ([Appendix XLVIII](#)).

Figura: Resumen de la ejecución del estudiante por competencias en el Ensayo de Integración 2015.

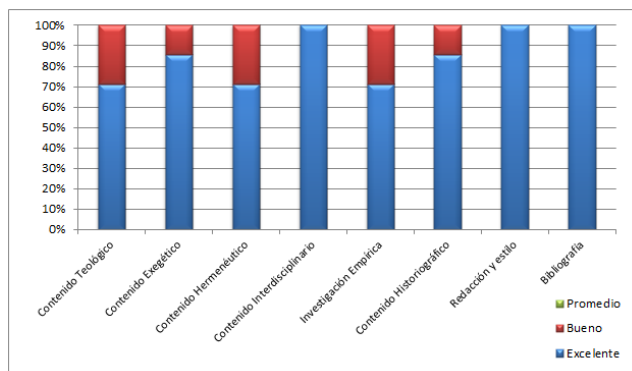


Table 4: Performance of student summary per competence on Integrative Monograph 2015 (n=07)

Competency	Average (\bar{x}) (Scale: máx. 10 mín. 6)	Percentage (%)
Theological content	9.0	90.0
Exegetical Content	8.3	82.5
Hermeneutical Content	8.8	87.5
Interdisciplinary content	8.8	87.5
Empirical research	8.5	85.0
Historiographic content	9.3	92.5
Writing and stylistics	9.5	95.0
Bibliography	9.5	95.0
Total	8.9	89.38

Doctor in Ministry

The [Doctor in Ministry](#) program is the highest professional degree offered at the ESPR. The purpose is to provide opportunities for advanced studies aimed at acquiring the ministerial competencies for pastoral care of the family. The program is currently composed of eight courses. In keeping with the mission of the ESPR, the graduate of the Doctorate in Ministry program is expected to ([Appendix III](#)):

- Develop a basic understanding of him/herself as an integral part of his/her nuclear and extended family.
- Develop a basic understanding of the social structures of the family in its multiple expressions from a bio-psycho-social and spiritual perspective.
- Analyze the conflicts of modern Hispanic family life.
- Acquire competencies in pastoral care in general and, particularly, family pastoral care.
- Acquire basic skills of conflict management.
- Cultivate and develop spiritual values according to biblical and historical traditions.
- Affirm a pastoral, vocational and professional identity to serve the church in its care with families.

Assessment venues for this program are ([Appendix IX](#)):

- *Evaluation of the student learning outcomes assessment in the courses.*

- *Drafting of Research Proposal*
- *Presentation and Defense of a Thesis* – This is the main graduation requirement of the program. The student has the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the competencies acquired through the design of a research proposal, conduct research and defend his/her findings before an expert panel. ([Thesis Manual DMIN](#)). ([Appendix XLIX](#)).

Use of student learning outcomes for curricular changes

The application of the assessment results enlightens administrative and academic decisions in the usage of resources and to guarantee the quality of the services offered to the ESPR community and the Faculty in the decision making to improve the teaching-learning process. In addition, the Faculty uses the results of the appraisal of student learning to review existing courses, modify instructional objectives, reorganizing or expanding the content, integrating new readings, adding evaluation criteria or simply designing new courses. The collection, tabulation and analysis of the data that evidences the students' learning support the following actions:

- Review of the MAR Study Plan - A curriculum revision proposal of the Master of Arts in Religion is currently under consideration by the Board of Directors. As a result of the evaluation, the study plan was reorganized with the purpose of defining the identity of the program as one focused on research of religious phenomena in general instead of focusing on a single religious tradition. The changes allow the phenomenon of religion to be studied with greater depth and academic and research rigor. This rearrangement results in a reduction of the number of credits in the curriculum from 54 to 42. In addition, instead of completing four comprehensive exams, in the new curriculum the student will have to complete two. The first will be focused on examining the student's competences in the area of interdisciplinary studies and the other on knowledge of World Religions ([Appendix LXVIII](#)).
- Review of the syllabary of core courses – A template for designing all syllabi was designed. These should include the various policies or regulations that affect and govern the educational experience.
- Inclusion of the best evaluation techniques in the evaluation criteria of the courses, such as: rubrics, execution tests, and monographs, among others.
- Review or design of instruments for assessing the student's learning outcome.
- Additions to the offer of courses or workshops in the form of continuing education.
- Scheduling of co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as symposiums, book presentations, chapel services, and academic meetings, among others.

Assessment and faculty coaching

Coaching to Faculty for the incorporation of techniques and strategies for the collection of information of the student's learning results needs to be strengthened. Although it has been carried out sporadically, it is necessary to design a training program for the entire faculty with the purpose of creating an effective appraisal culture. ([Appendix L](#)).

Assessment and Alumni

The [*Study of Information of Graduates 2012-2017*](#) was meant for the gathering of information about the ministerial, professional and academic activities of students graduated between the years 2010 to 2017. This sampling allows the gathering of data about the effectiveness of the curricular offerings of the ESPR knowing the job placement of the student once graduated from the ESPR. It is estimated that between 2012 and 2017 about 205 students graduated, according to archives. Of these, 60 students answered the survey, which represents 30% of the graduates for that period. The following table shows the denominations to which the graduates belong (n = 60). The table shows that 28.33% of the graduates come from religious institutions beyond the sponsoring churches (Disciples of Christ, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, United Evangelical and Lutheran). There is evidence of a growth in the number of students coming from other religions or non-affiliated experiences. ([*Study of Graduates 2012-2017*](#)). ([Appendix LI](#)).

Figura 5: Distribución de las respuestas de los egresados y egresadas en la pregunta 5: Denominación a la que perteneces.

<i>Denominación</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico	8	13.33
Iglesia Católica Romana	1	1.67
Iglesia Cristiana (Discípulos de Cristo)	12	20.00
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de América Sínodo del Caribe	5	8.33
Iglesia Evangélica Unida de Puerto Rico	6	10.00
Iglesia Evangélica Wesleyana de Puerto Rico	1	1.67
Iglesia Metodista Unida de Puerto Rico	10	16.67
Sínodo Presbiteriano Boriquén	2	3.33
Iglesia Pentecostal (MI, MB, AD, etc.)	5	8.33
Asamblea Apostólica	5	8.33
Iglesia Episcopal	1	1.67
Iglesia Independiente	2	3.33
No asisto a una iglesia	2	3.33
Total	60	99.99%

Figure 6 shows that 78% of the graduates of the ESPR are working on jobs related to the degree obtained. Figure 7 shows the work or ministry position that these graduates have in relation to the academic degree obtained.

Figura 6: Distribución de las respuestas de los egresados y egresadas en la pregunta 6: ¿Ocupas alguna posición o ejerces un ministerio relacionado a los estudios realizados en el Seminario?

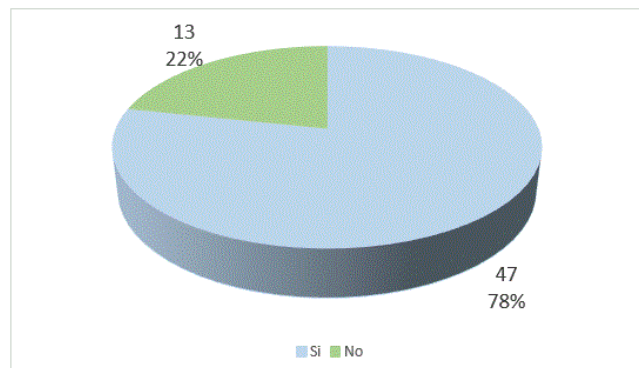
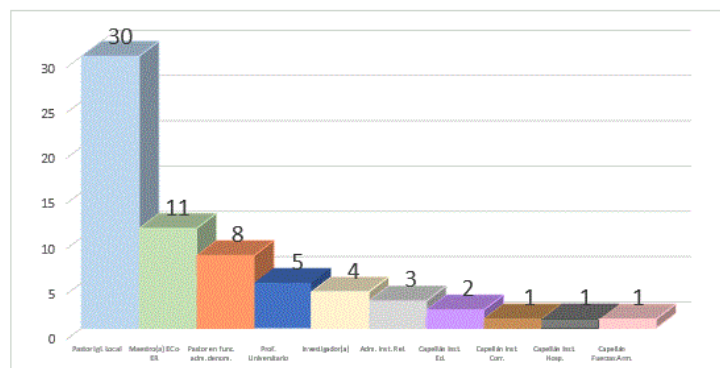


Figura 7: Distribución de las respuestas de los egresados y egresadas en la pregunta 7: Indica la posición o el ministerio que ejerces relacionados al grado obtenido en el Seminario.



Continuing education and assessment

The [Office of Continuing Education](#) offers short courses, professional certificates or specialized workshops. The office is currently under the supervision of the President's office. It is directed by Dr. Marysol Díaz. The contracted Faculty members are specialists in the courses they offer. Curriculum revision is currently underway with the aim of starting to offer new professional certificates. Each course is evaluated by the participants. The data is used to review the content and the educational and assessment experiences of each course. In addition, the results of the evaluations are used to improve the course offer.

Service areas assessment

The service areas and administration offices are evaluated with some regularity. The data obtained is used to establish an administrative culture centered on the service. The following table shows the alignment between the [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#) ([Appendix VII](#)) and the [Assessment Plan](#) ([Appendix IX](#)).

Area 4; Institutional Goal 4: Update assessment system that allows auscultation of institutional effectiveness, the rigor of academic programs, evidence of student learning and encourage communication, reflection and assertive decision-making. (Strategic Plan 2017-2022)			
Area	Evaluator	Frequency	Instrument
Course and/or syllabi revision (Appendix IV)	Faculty	At the end of each course	Faculty evaluation of courses instrument
Effectiveness of the Academic Programs (Appendix LXIX)	Student candidates for graduation	When finishing study plan	Survey for students and alumni of the MAR program Survey for students and alumni of the MDiv

Teaching, research and service (Appendix LII & Appendix LIII) (Appendix LXX)	Students	At the end of each course	Student course evaluation instrument (MDIV & MAR) Student course evaluation instrument DMIN
	Faculty (Peers)	Every time it is required for promotion in rank or renewal of contract.	Classroom visiting instrument
	Academic dean		Survey about service satisfaction
Graduate profile (Appendix XLVII)	Interviews with leaders of the sponsoring churches	Annually	Denominational leader Interview Instrument
Juan de Valdés Library (Appendix LV)	Students and community		Instrument for the evaluation of Library services, resources and facilities
Academic Services Offices (Dean's Office, Admissions, Registrar) (Appendix LXXI)	Students		Instrument for assessment of services offered by the Registrar's Office
Administrative Offices (Presidency, Administration, Finances, Financial Aid) (Appendix XXVIII)	Students		Satisfaction Questionnaire of received services from the staff of President's Office, Administration, Academic Dean and Library
Student and Community Services Areas (Pastoral Counseling, Chaplaincy, Student Counseling, Cafeteria)	Students and community		Assessment of orientation activity for new students Service Satisfaction Survey

(Appendix LXXII & Appendix XXVIII)			
Board of Directors Meetings	Members of Board of Directors	End of meetings	Instrument for Assessment of Board of Directors Meetings
Special or continuing education activities (Appendix LXXIII)	Participants	At the end of each activity	Assessment of Continuing Education Workshop
Alumni (Appendix LI)	Institutional Assessment Office	Bi annual	Information of Graduates Instrument

In March 2019, a [Questionnaire of Satisfaction of Support Services for students](#) was administered to obtain data on how students evaluated service offices. Some of the results show that most of the students positively evaluate most of the support services.

Figura 1: Resultados de la evaluación de los estudiantes de los servicios ofrecidos por las Oficinas de Consejería Pastoral y Consejería Estudiantil.

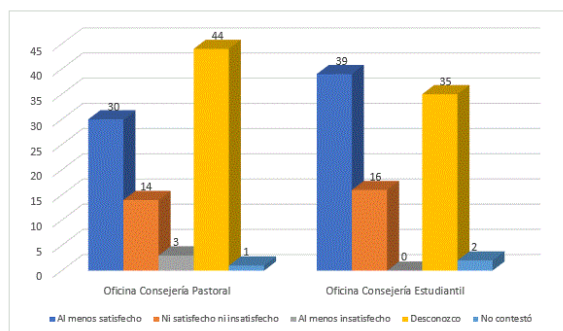


Figura 4: Resultados de la evaluación de los estudiantes de los servicios ofrecidos por el Decanato Académico.

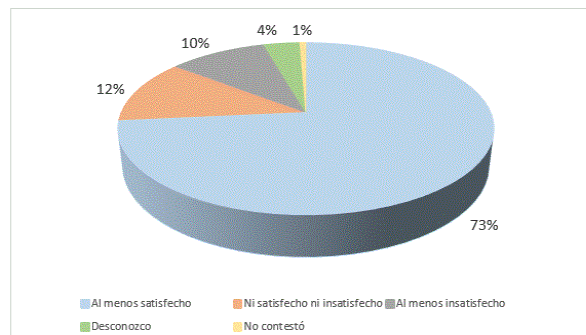
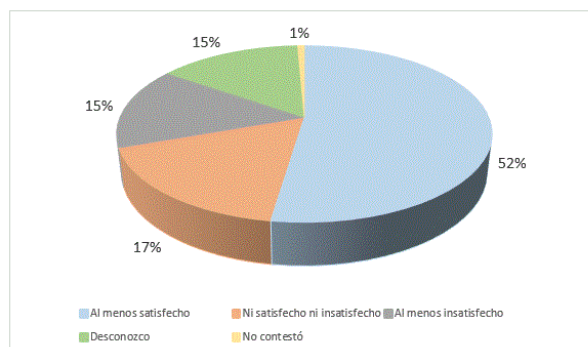


Figura 3: Resultados de la evaluación de los estudiantes de los servicios ofrecidos por la Sala de Tecnología, Ayuda Económica, Cafetería, Comunicaciones, Seguridad, Internet y WiFi y hospedajes).



[Survey results](#) show the ignorance of the student body of some of the services, especially Pastoral Counseling and Student Counseling. (Appendix XLII) To this end, a plan will be designed for the disclosure of student services to be implemented as of June 2019.

STANDARD 2

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Introduction

The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico understands that ethics and integrity are fundamental elements of higher education and that its activities, whether internal, external or international, must be guided by ethical and moral principles. We are truly committed to Christian values as well as to the fundamental principles and mandates of the Constitutions of Puerto Rico and the United States of America. The Constitution of Puerto Rico (1952) recognizes the fundamental human rights of all peoples and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, origin, class and religion, and defends the principles of freedom of speech and religious freedoms. As stated in our mission, we are an ecumenical and inter religious institution committed to respect all people and foster inclusion and passion for justice and peace. In order to achieve those mandates, the Seminary has developed and implanted a series of rules, norms and procedures to protect those freedoms, provides processes for grievances and encourages their reviews to respond to social, legal and regulatory changes.

Compliance with all policies, regulations and federal and state reporting requirements

As a school accredited by the ATS, the Seminary is committed to act according to the ethical and moral values expected of theological schools. Furthermore, since we are accredited and licensed by several local and national educational institutions, we must comply fully with multiple laws and regulations. In general, the ESPR strives to comply fully with all local and federal policies, regulations and reporting requirements. The Office of the President, the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs and the Office of the Administrator are responsible for the compliance reports, including submitting the Institution's financial statements, audited by an external CPA ([AR2015](#), [AR2016](#), [AR2017](#), [AR2018](#), [AR2019](#)), and complying with operational process standards. ([Appendix XVI](#), [Appendix XVII](#), [Appendix XVII](#)), [Appendix XIX](#) & [Appendix XX](#)). The same applies to complying with the requirements of the Puerto Rico Board of Education, which imposes specific security and anti-discrimination requirements to our Master of Arts program.

In recent years, the ESPR has had several problems with federal student loans related to delivering late reports to the administrative agencies or failing to comply with some requirements. The Seminary reached an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education and is considered in compliance with its regulations. Furthermore, the Seminary is taking steps to ensure these issues are not repeated and that the institution complies with all federal regulations and for the welfare of our academic programs. Our compliance with federal requirements was verified by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) as part of our Self Study process of reaffirmation of our accreditation (Nov. 2019).

Honesty and veracity of the ESPR in public relations announcements, recruitment and admission materials and practices as well as internal communications

Social networks and information via the Internet are essential in the information that the ESPR publishes internally and externally. In general, the published information is in accordance with the administrative and programmatic reality of the Seminary. The information that the ESPR makes available via social networks and bulletin boards is reliable and truthful. The ESPR has

brochures with important information on admission processes, available academic programs and their requirements, financial aid, etc. Likewise, the [Staff Manual](#) addresses the issue of recruitment practices (Staff Manual, Article V). ([Appendix XIII](#)) As part of the Centennial celebrations, the Seminary launched a promotion campaign that educate the general public and potential students on the programs and the opportunities of pursuing a graduate study in the institutions. Public relations information are distributed in various activities, particularly during the general meetings of our denominations.

Another important communication is the report provided to the leaders of the denominations regarding the progress of their sponsored members. Once a year, the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, in collaboration with the Registrar and Financial Aid Officer, produces a progress report that is discussed individually with the leaders of the Seminary's denominations. The report allowed us to explore ways to increase the number of credits enrolled by their students, thus accelerating the time to completion. In addition to addressing the academic progress of their sponsored students, last year the report added information on the gender composition of each sponsored group in order to encourage the recruitment of and financial support for more women, thus increasing the number of women in the clergy and laity leadership.

The Evangelical Seminary is very committed to treat its students, faculty, staff, alumni and the general public in an ethical and moral way consistent with the values proclaimed in its mission statement. The policies and processes are revised regularly to ensure they are consistent with our changing context and to ensure the inclusion of all peoples. In order to fulfill this obligation, the ESPR hired a specialized human resources management firm to ensure an equitable treatment of our staff. The Dean of Academic and Students Affairs meets regularly with the Student Council to address students concerns and the faculty meets monthly to address academic, professional and ethical matters.

As a Puerto Rican academic institution, the ESPR promotes the awareness and celebration of our diversity and the promotion of inclusion. Our student body, faculty, staff and leadership are examples of the diversity of our people. The Seminary holds regular sessions on emerging issues of diversity and inclusion such as women in society and theological institutions, such as the week-long workshop on violence against women held in 2019. In addition, we implemented policies and practices to respect the rights of the HLGBTQ community, of peoples with disabilities, the elderly and immigrants, to name some. In the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and María in 2017, the Seminar adjusted its schedule and programs to meet the needs of the vulnerable members of our community. At the present time we are pursuing collaborations with our diaspora and other Latinos in the United States.

The commitment to inclusion is also evident in our promotion of the participation of women in our programs and leadership. The Dean of Academic and Students Affairs regularly reports to the denominations on the progress in the recruitment and retention of women in the Seminary as part of our commitment to increase the number of women in the clergy. The administration and board include women in leadership positions. Our Centennial Celebration has included important sessions on the issue of women in theological communities.

Academic freedom, Intellectual Freedom, Freedom of Speech and Respect for Intellectual Property Rights

[The Faculty Manual](#) (Chapter IV, 1st Article) recognizes the principles of the academic freedom and all aspects related to intellectual freedom as well as freedom of speech; within the

classroom as well as in all cultural and educational actions of the ESPR. ([Appendix XI](#)) Said document understands the freedom of conscience of all Faculty members aligned to the freedom of speech of all ESPR students and community members. Although the Working Group 2 believes the Christian faith parameters are and hard to delineate within an ecumenical organization, we understand that the Board of Education of Puerto Rico has added an additional definition for the MAR program related to discrimination against any person based on the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of Puerto Rico. This implies that all matters of freedom are ruled by the jurisprudence related to freedom of speech in our regulations. The principles of freedom of speech as well as academic and intellectual freedoms are extended to students, as recognized in the [Manual of Students](#) of the Seminary ([Appendix XII](#)) and [Catalog](#). ([Appendix XXII](#)).

Regarding intellectual property rights, the Library Manual states the responsibilities that both the Library Staff and all visitors using books from Library have; according to the Intellectual Property Law of USA and all regulations of the matter as established by Puerto Rican legislative bodies. The library staff provides orientations and guidance in the field of intellectual rights and monitors the challenges posed by electronic access to literature.

ESPR's Grievance Policies

Both the Faculty and [Staff Manual](#) include rights and duties related as to how complaints between employees, students and faculty members will be handled. Issues such as grades, plagiarism, sexual harassment, domestic violence, accessibility for people with handicaps, right of intimacy rights, and labor regulations of complaints are included in these Manuals. ([Appendix XIII](#)). Faculty and Staff Manuals state offense gradations and gradual processes to handle work complaints, depending on the severity of the matter. The [Library Manual](#) states policies for complaints for borrowed and/or destroyed books, as well as other issues regarding lending of Library books. ([Appendix XIV](#)). The Library has mechanisms to collect complaints from its users in person and by electronic means.

There are several options to address student, faculty and staff complaints. All students are required to participate in an extensive initial orientation during which they are provided with information on their rights and how can they request services, including reasonable accommodations. At the orientation they are provided with the documentation. Likewise, the faculty has a hierarchical structure to present requests and file grievances. The faculty holds monthly meetings where issues are addressed. Recently, new opportunities for orientation have been opened such as Academic Orientation, in which faculty members provide students a one-to-one progress review and an academic planning session. When new policies are adopted, faculty, students and staff are given orientations and receive written material for their individual use.

Policies to avoid conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest

The [Regulations of the Board of Directors](#) in section I, article D clearly establish the policy to avoid conflict of interests in the Board of Directors. ([Appendix XV](#)). Specifically, these regulations seek to prevent its members with voice and vote from having proprietary interests in the ESPR that may affect the objectivity that should prevail in all decision-making processes of the ESPR. Therefore, no member of the Board of Directors may have any kind of salary or compensation for activities related to the ESPR.

In terms of the election processes for representatives from the Faculty, the student body and the Alumni Association, the Regulations of the Board of Directors establish that these bodies will have an ex-officio representative in the Board of Directors ([Regulations of the Board of Directors](#), Article 1.4). At the present time all representatives of the faculty, alumni and student on the Board are duly elected by their constituents. Notwithstanding, sectors of the Seminary's community believes that those representatives should have full rights in the Board of Directors, provided that he/she is not an employee of the Seminary.

Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and termination of employees

[The Staff Manual](#) (Article 5—15) as well as the [Faculty Manual](#) (Article 3—11) tackle these issues. We have noticed that although the manuals address human resources management issues in all areas, oftentimes they are not followed. ([Appendix XIII & Appendix XI](#)). Particularly there is a lack of regular evaluation of the performance of employees. Moreover, in the case of faculty there is no functional process to promote, raise salaries and/or grant sabbaticals, academic release time for research. Although faculty members are evaluated according to the Faculty Manual, which includes details regarding faculty evaluation, the evaluations made by students and the recently established monthly report of activities of Faculty members are yet to be integrated to a process of evaluation for advancement purposes. These actions are justified by the precarious financial situation of the Seminary; however, the issue should be addressed as a retention, recruitment and justice issue.

Another issue raised in the review process of the Self Study is the presidential selection process. The Board of Directors' Manual establishes a process (Regulation Art. XI). ([Appendix XV](#)). However, the process carried out in 2014 was pointed out as deficient by the Alumni Association. The Alumni Association claimed the selection process suffered from: (1) Lack of participation of all sectors affected by the election; (2) Failure to publicly present the projects brought by the different candidates to the presidency; (3) Lack of denominational balance in the Presidential Committee which seemed to constitute appearance of impropriety. Since the Seminary will start another process for the appointment of a new president, it was suggested that the Board of Directors address the issues raised by the Alumni Association.

Regarding internal proceedings, the Seminary suffered a case of domestic violence that may have violated the regulations of the Seminary and highlighted the need to update the norms according what are considered best practices and implement a training program for all employees. The Seminary received a grant to hire a human resources expert to review the regulations, implement an evaluation process and provide regular training to administrators and staff. Also, it is important to point out, as a result of the labor matter, several Faculty members organized a one-week long symposium to tackle issues such as gender violence, as well as the processes available to address this severe problem in Puerto Rico. We believe that there should be routine trainings addressing these issues for the Staff, Faculty and even students.

As results of Self-Study process, the institutions received a subsidy from one of our supporting denominations to hire a human resources specialist and legal counsel to assist in the revision and implementation of administrative and academic policies, process and practices. See 8.1 Personal, p.48.

Promotion of the ESPR for affordability and accessibility

Like most institutions of higher education in Puerto Rico, the Seminary is experiencing financial difficulties. As a tuition driven institution, a drop-in recruitment and a low credit enrollment have a negative impact on the finances of the organization. Most of our students are bivocational and come from all parts of the island, thus limiting the course loads they can sustain. Cognizant of this problem, the Board has not approved increases in the costs of credits and fees. To address the issue of affordability at the ESPR, students of the sponsoring denominations of the Master of Divinity receive some type of scholarships from their local and denominational churches. Some students of the chaplaincy of the US Armed Forces also receive scholarships from the Department of Defense to obtain their degrees. However, independent students must study without denominational scholarships and often rely of student loans. The Seminary has a [Financial Aid Officer](#) responsible for assisting student with their scholarship and loan applications. The Officer also is responsible for managing the compliance processes, especially with the U.S. Department of Education.

Another issue identified by the Working Group is the lack of an effective recruitment advertisement of our programs in the country. Recently the faculty organized an Open House, using social media for advertisement and with the support of our denominations. Ninety-seven potential students attended. Also, the Seminary is promoting the enrollment in selective courses of alumni and community members. The response to these recent initiatives suggests the benefits of a promoting information on the Seminary and potential of recruiting students interested in theological topics but not bound to the priesthood.

Compliance with the Affiliation Requirements of the Commission

The ESPR strives, on a daily basis, to comply with all the affiliation requirements of the Commission. The Steering Committee reviewed each of the nine requirements of the Commission and it concluded that the Seminary is in compliance with each requirement. Notwithstanding, there are areas that should be improved, particularly the need to strengthen our financial resources in order to meet our long-term goals as expected of higher education institutions. Other issues that the Self Study forced the institution to address are governance relations, the need to ensure the review process is a constant one and that all members of the Seminary community have a thorough understanding of their roles and obligations. The Working Group believes these are mostly a matter of following the institutional regulations and to amend the areas in which there is vagueness or need to clarify roles, obligations, administrative and academic matters.

Recurrent assessment of ethics and integrity in the ESPR as evidenced by institutional policies, processes, practices and the ways in which they are implemented

ESPR regulations are created to facilitate the functionality and coexistence of our academic community. In recent years, a series of policies have been revised, such as the Staff Manual, with its multiple protocols addressing several procedural needs. In Faculty, Administration, [Executive Committee and Board of Directors](#) meetings, the pressing problems of the ESPR are brought to the table and decisions are made, generally agreed upon. In the course of the past year, the Seminary has put in motion existing policies, amended others and adopted new ones. ([Appendix XXI](#)).

STANDARD 3

THE THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM: LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Introduction

The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (ESPR) is a graduate institution of theological studies. Throughout the Institution's history, its main purpose has been to meet the needs of founding denominations through an integrated program of theological education that follows academic and professional standards of modern seminaries.

The ESPR provides students with learning experiences characterized by the academic rigor and coherence in all graduate programs offered. These are: [Master of Divinity](#) ([Appendix I](#)), [Master of Arts in Religion](#) ([Appendix II](#)) and [Doctorate of Ministry](#) (currently on internal moratorium) ([Appendix III](#)). The ESPR meets the regulatory and accreditation processes that guarantee the steadiness on graduate education. Is licensed by the Board of Education of Puerto Rico ([Appendix A](#)) and is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada ([Appendix B](#)) and by Middle States Commission on Higher Education ([Appendix C](#)). The ESPR is currently in the process of reaffirmation of its accreditation by MSCHE, for which it has submitted a Self-Study and completed a Site Visit. These dual revision processes benefit the ESPR since they strengthen academic rigor, ensure a continuous assessment and stimulate constant progress of the Institution.

The ESPR is currently sponsored and supported by the following denominations: Baptists Churches of Puerto Rico, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Puerto Rico, Methodist Church of Puerto Rico, Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico, United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico, Caribbean Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is also sponsored by other Pentecostal and Catholic denominations and independent churches that send their prospective candidates to receive formal theological education at the Seminary. Therefore, the ESPR is responsible of offering students from these denominations' history, ecclesiastic politics, and worship courses in their respective traditions together with other academic experiences that will allow them to practice the pastoral work they are called to do in their respective congregations.

3.1 Goals of the Theological Curriculum

The ESPR has three academic programs, all of them aligned with the mission, goals and values of the institution. Theological education in the ESPR is widely ecumenical. We serve the previously mentioned denominations that send their students; whether they are pastoral candidates or laypeople, to receive theological education. Faculty members come from the sponsoring denominations, other Christian denominations and independents. The Institution is very intentional in promoting the development of an ecumenical mindset in Church leadership, while preparing each student to serve in their denomination and in their communities. The ESPR is open to other ecclesiastical Christian groups that want to join in all theological education efforts, whether it is in partnership with equal participation or with special arrangements.

Master of Divinity (M.Div.)

The [Master of Divinity](#) (M.Div.) is the main theological program designed to educate men and women in the pastoral leadership. It is also targeted to people who work in other ministerial

duties within their communities. The M.Div. program considers, in line with the [ESPR's mission](#), several achievement expectations that support consistency, relevance and rigor of the program ([Catalog](#), pp. 43-44). ([Appendix XXII](#)). We foster the learning experience through a general, critical and integral comprehension of the challenges the Church faces both globally as well as locally in Puerto Rico and the Americas. Students learn to value and distinguish religious plurality within Christianity and other world religions.

We also expect from M.Div. students to develop a deep understanding of the cultural, political, social and economic context of Christianity in Puerto Rico; develop a general knowledge of the different approaches and methodologies for reading the Bible; develop a critical vital understanding of interpreting faith within the historical context of Christianity and Christian thought; students should also acquire a thorough biblical, theological, historical and pastoral culture; as well as develop the necessary tools for a critical and thorough research in relation to their Christian faith and their pastoral practice.

Tools acquired through the MDiv program will nurture necessary qualities such as devotedness to human rights, respect and awareness for our brothers and sisters, as well as human wisdom and spirituality; resulting in an effective service to God and the community. Throughout the M.Div. program students also develop the necessary skills for pastoral work such as preaching, worship, Christian education, church administration, pastoral care, chaplaincy and community service. These skills will help the student understand the importance of new Christian ministry models that promote teamwork in order to foster new talent within the church and the community as well as provide continuous training to those currently serving within the church. This will encourage the desire and willingness for the betterment of the pastoral work.

The [M.Div. program is an 83-credit degree program](#). These must be passed with a minimum of 2.50 GPA and must be completed in a maximum of nine (9) years. Courses are offered each semester in an evening schedule. These courses are divided in the following categories: Biblical studies, meant for the student to grasp the complexities of the critical study of Biblical texts of the Old and New Testament; History and Theology Studies, meant for the student to understand, nurture and support the biblical and philosophical basis with a systematic and critical theology consideration; Interdisciplinary Studies, meant to broaden the religious experience by providing an academic and curricular emphasis in different fields of the human conduct and the religion phenomenon; World Religions, meant for the student to critically analyze other religious traditions that have, at the same time, contributed to culture and interreligious dialogue; Ministry Studies, meant to develop Christian ministry skills; Denominational Principles, meant for students to be able to integrate theology and practice within their denomination; and Colloquium, with an integrating interest to be established in its content such as personality, vocation, leadership, and ecclesial perspective.

On the second semester of the last year, as part of Colloquy IV, students have to submit a monograph in which they each articulate their theological and biblical standing and its impact on their Christian ministry. On September 2011, Faculty members modified the purpose, objectives and requisites of this course in order for them to be fit a more academic and systematic profile of each student that can be displayed through a research paper. These changes respond to the weaknesses in the students' learning processes identified and provide the Institution with a more [comprehensive assessment tool](#). ([Appendix XXIII](#)). The purpose is for each student to demonstrate a satisfactory level of integration of theological studies with his/her overall capacities between his/her personality, vocation and faith.

Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.)

The ESPR started the Master of Arts in Religion Program in August 1980. It was meant to serve those people interested in acquiring a deeper understanding of their faith as well as becoming better servants within their Christian communities, yet not interested in a pastoral ministry. This program has also appealed to those interested in teaching religion in educational institutions, in pursuing advanced studies in theology and religion as well as researching the religious phenomenon in Puerto Rico.

The [M.A.R. is a 54-credit degree program](#) and students completing this program should do so with a minimum GPA of 2.50. The purpose of this program is to foster scholarly analysis of the religious phenomenon in general and, particularly of Christianity. It is characterized by a multidimensional phenomenological approach from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective; meant to trigger critical, historical and systematic analysis of worldviews, value systems, religious institutions and Christian and non-Christian faith communities.

The M.A.R. program caters for three basic needs when pursuing religious studies within the Puerto Rican society and the contemporary world. First, the importance of studying and understanding the religious phenomenon in culture and society. Then, this program caters to the globalization of higher education by studying religion in its global dimension and as important standpoint in the quest for world peace and justice for all. This awareness is vital in order to enable bridge building and promotion of intercultural dialogue, learning and cooperation that lead towards a more ecumenical and global human community. Lastly, as a religion phenomenon research and teaching center, the ESPR, contributes significantly to the Superior Education Forum of Puerto Rico by allowing access to its academic, curricular and library resources to the open public for a multidisciplinary approach to religion.

Students in their last year of the M.A.R. program must submit a research paper or thesis under the supervision of a Faculty member. The research paper should evidence an interdisciplinary approach to the chosen topic and requires that [student's evidence substantial knowledge](#) of the religion phenomenon from a Christian as well as interreligious perspective. Students in the M.A.R. program also must complete four comprehensive exams in order for them to validate their proficiency of key subjects under the M.A.R. program. (**Appendix XXIV**). These are closed book tests and are meant to address four different subject areas selected by the student. Each test is meant to be completed in a 2-hour time period and are planned to be taken during 1 or 2 days of the same week. Tests are prepared and assessed by Faculty members who teach the course to be evaluated.

Students that complete the M.A.R. at the ESPR will be able to understand the religious phenomenon in its many expressions from a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and comparative perspective; systematize a broad knowledge of the Judeo-Christian tradition together with a basic knowledge of other world religions; as well and integrating the understanding of the religious phenomenon to the analysis of the personal and professional situation, including the assessment of key values of like in its varied religious expressions.

Doctor of Ministry

The ESPR also offers a [Doctor of Ministry](#) degree. The main purpose of the D.Min. program is to strengthen and deepen the work of ministers committed to develop and offer a pastoral care that is aligned to Jesus and that caters to the challenges we all face on the 21st century. Our program is mainly oriented towards family pastoral care. This program allows the opportunity to study,

critically reflect and assess advanced studies in several theology disciplines and ministerial skills. In order to enter the program, candidates have to have an M.Div. or its equivalent and three (3) years of pastoral work experience or its equivalent. The program requisites are an M.Div. degree or its equivalent and 3 years of pastoral practice, after the M.Div. degree, or its equivalent. After completing the D.Min. program, each student should have acquired several competencies, including an understanding of social structures and challenges of a family in their multiple expressions, acquired the basic skills in pastoral care in general and particularly with families, conflict management, grow in sensitivity and understanding to serve in social ministries, and acquired a critical understanding of the biblical and traditional considerations about family life. This program is 6 semesters or units; each of 8 sessions of 8 hours each. Each semester discusses a main topic, divided into 8 sub-topics.

The students' learning experiences are designed, taught and evaluated by regular or contracted teachers. The teaching and learning process in recent years has been transformed from a direct communication model to a more audiovisual education with the use of advanced organizers, such as digital projectors. These allow students to listen and read fundamental aspects of a topic in a more active and integrated way. The use of these and other technology equipment also complement the pedagogical abilities of Faculty by allowing them to vary their teaching-learning styles. Some teachers have incorporated (in a limited way) the use of the Internet to facilitate access to the course and research material.

3.2. Learning, Teaching and Research

The theological curriculum of the ESPR includes multiple forms of teaching, learning and research in order to provide our students with the competencies and experiences to reflect and act according to his/her faith and the expectations of the churches and society at large. Each course adopts a teaching-learning strategy suitable to its specific goals and objectives. It includes classroom experiences as well as outside interactions. The classroom encourages students to reflect individually and collectively issues raised by the professor or the group, may bring outside experts or community leaders to learn from their experiences, and are open to students who are not pursuing a degree but interested in the topic of the course. Oftentimes alumni enroll in courses to update their competencies, experience that enriches the learning process of our students and gives them role models to follow. The Self Study process has provided additional evidence to our community that a diversity of teaching-learning methods and activities are achieving our formative goals.

The learning process emphasizes critical thinking and approaches, comparative perspectives and contextual analysis. This decision was put to the test after the hurricanes of 2017 when the faculty faced the challenge of teaching in the midst of chaos and destruction, much of it faced by our students and churches. The response was to continue with revised and contextual courses that encouraged conversations, analysis and research of the challenges faced by Puerto Rican society. Context also emerged as a central aspect of our academic and theological activity during and in the aftermath of the protests of the Summer of 2019 that ended in the resignation of the elected governor in a non-violent manner. Other examples of curricular activities are those around climate change and sustainability issues like the student-led Eco-Theological Project. This collective has organized several events at the Seminary and developed recommendations to make our institution an ecologically responsible one arguing theological justifications.

The ESPR offers a variety of co-curricular activities during the academic year aimed at students, the congregations and the general public. These activities are planned as ways to incite dialogue and discussion of issues of social interest such as social justice, human rights, economy, violence and gender violence. Some of those activities include the following (**Appendix XXVI**): Book presentations, Open discussions, Discussion panels, Chapel services, Experts and/or Visiting professors' conferences, Discussion forum about Puerto Rican issues & Exchange programs with other seminaries and/or universities in USA, Europe and Latin America.

In some courses, the learning experience also includes field visits that serve in contextualizing the theoretical issues discussed in class. This is, for example, in World Religion courses as well as Pentecostalism. Similarly, leading theologians from Latin America, the Caribbean, the Hispanic community in the United States and Europe have offered lectures in our classrooms on core and critical issues that contribute to the theological work continuum.

The faculty, in collaboration with the Student Council and the Dean of Academic and Students Affairs, is delegating to students the organization of activities like the Chapel services thus providing a practical experience in designing a service from selection of texts to the music and preaching. This allows us to move our students from participants of the service to the actors of the monthly Chapel services.

As part of the learning opportunities provided by external entities are Spiritual Formation Academy and the "Clinical Pastoral Education" (CPE) educational model. The Spiritual Formation Academy (SFA) is an experience the Seminary has worked with the Upper Room for the past 13 years. It covers theological and practical perspectives around the selected topic of the Academy. The SFA seeks to provide a place for committed individuals - clergy and laity - to feel God as part of an intentional Christian community. The Academy was designed to nurture both the knowledge of spirituality and the context to feel the love of God. An important part of the experience is silence. Many of us feel uncomfortable with silence, and our culture does everything possible to avoid it. This Academy is a program of the Upper Room of the Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. It last 6 days; starting on Sunday afternoon and concluding Friday at noon. It is designed to be monastic and ecumenical. It requires that all participants remain throughout the duration of the event. The ESPR is currently reviewing this alliance.

The SEPR has had the opportunity to offer CPE- "Clinical Pastoral Education" to our students. CPE is a professional level education for an interdenominational ministry. It is specialized training through formal reflection that provides participants with knowledge, skills and competencies in pastoral/ spiritual care. CPE is an education model that integrates theory and practice. It is an innovative model capable of combining the principles and theological intuitions with the contribution of behavioral sciences. CPE is a process for theological education which is centered on the caretaker and which provides an environment where the participant learns from the experience. CPE is an action-reflection educational model that helps the person to be more effective in his spiritual care under the supervision of a certified supervisor. It provides a practical experience where the learning process is shared within a peer group that offers feedback and reflection opportunity. Cultural and theological heritage is central and will be used as part of the learning process. It also emphasizes the importance of pastoral relationships throughout the life of each pastoral figure. The Seminary is reviewing this program according to the recently adopted mission.

All academic programs are clearly and precisely described in the official publications of the institution, such as the institutional catalog, brochures located in dissemination spaces of each office and on the [ESPR's website](#), so that potential students can understand all requirements for

our degrees and programs, and in order to grasp the expected time to complete them. Potential students receive valuable information from the moment the student contacts the Institution for initial orientation and in person at the time of the rigorous interview with one of our regular Faculty members.

Research is required component of our curriculum. Both master programs and the doctoral degree have research requirements that include the elaboration of a research topic, application of different kinds of methodologies and data collection skills, public oral presentations and writing of a monograph or dissertation. Oftentimes, students incorporate outside faculty as part of their monograph or thesis committees thus enriching our faculty pool.

Our faculty engages in research activities, individually or as part of teams. Their research is disseminated through various forms from publications, presentations in conferences and seminars and by participating in media programs as expert commentators. Their participation in programs of major radio stations expand the range of persons using a theological perspective to analyze economic, social and political affairs. One important research outlet is the academic journal managed by our faculty, *Ecos del Seminario*, a publication that was among the first to focus on the social dimensions of natural disasters from a theological perspective. (Appendix LXXIV). That special edition is used by scholars in several disciplines in Puerto Rico.

3.3 Characteristics of theological scholarship

The scholarly activities of the Seminary are characterized by its collaborative nature. They foster the collaboration among faculty members and oftentimes brings into our fold scholars from other institutions, local as well as international. The efforts also bring together faculty, students and the library, creating a space where all learn from each other. For example, the library staff shares their knowledge and projects with both faculty and students. The initiatives to strengthen the technological competencies of the community includes faculty—regular and adjunct—students, staff, the Dean and the President, and we all attend the same training sessions together.

Our collaborations extend beyond the Seminary and theological schools. Both the faculty and students participate actively in social and community initiatives, oftentimes bringing to our space groups not associated with religious activities. There are multiple examples of how the ESPR reaches out to the external community. The most important has been our participation in the recovery in the aftermath of the hurricanes, by developing theologically-based analysis of the crisis and providing emotional support to the victims, including many of our students and their families. The Seminary has been very active and vocal in the movements against domestic and gender violence. The institution issued a public statement against domestic violence and conducted a week-long series of talks and seminars on the topic that brought together a very diverse group of people. Our facilities are used by social and community groups to celebrate meetings to address the fiscal crisis and the consequences of austerity measures on the Island. Many organizations now recognize the Seminary as a place to gather, reflect and support in difficult times.

The ESPR has been able to meet its mission and goals while expanding to the outside community because, among other reasons, it is committed to principles of freedom of speech and inquiry. Being an ecumenical institution helps to develop an open approach to different perspectives and to work with diverse peoples. On section Standard 2, we elaborate on the legal and ethical basis of our activities.

Another related basis for our work is our commitment to diversity. The Seminary promotes diversity in all dimensions of our staff—faculty, administration and leadership—and students. We

are very committed to increasing the number of women studying in the Seminary and thus increasing the number of women in the clergy. We prohibit racial and ethnic discrimination, and sexual orientation/identity will not prevent students from being part of our community. The Seminary, in accordance with our mission, integrates into our academic curriculum many forms of global education and engagement. Courses and research project regularly address global issues, foster a comparative perspective and promote the appreciation of the diversity of God's creation. Our faculty participates in several international initiatives, some of which includes the participation of students. The celebration of our Centennial was an example of our global engagement by the participation of colleagues from Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica and the United States.

The academic activities of the ESPR are guided by our religious principles of equality, inclusion, respect and solidarity. Our mission statement includes a clear statement of our values (see Std. 1 section) . The ethical expectations are regularly revised and shared with our students, faculty and staff. The Seminary has developed guidelines for research, teaching and how to manage various situations which are consistent with our mission, goals and values, as well as with the legal and constitutional mandates of Puerto Rico and the United States.

STANDARD 4

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Introduction

The [Juan de Valdés Library](#) is the ESPR's center for access to information on theology and religion in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. It contributes to the mission of the ESPR by providing information resources, services, study spaces and promoting competencies that support learning, teaching and researching for, and in collaboration with, the community. In addition, it has the mission of preserving the documentary heritage of the Protestant Church in Puerto Rico and making it available to all. These services also are available to foreign scholars who come to the Seminary to conduct specialized research.

The Library is an institutional member of the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and ArchiRed (Archives Network of Puerto Rico). Its document wealth includes a collection of over 81,500 volumes of books, as well as magazines, monographs, theses, vertical archives and other resources that support theological research. It is the custodian to collections of distinguished academics and ministers. It integrates a [Historical Archive of Protestantism in Puerto Rico](#) with valuable documents from the Puerto Rican protestant churches. Through the digitization agreement with Princeton Theological Seminary since October 2018 it is expected to give public access to public domain resources.

4.1 Library Collections

The Library's collection includes over 81,500 volumes of books, as well as journals, monographs, theses, vertical files and other resources that support theological research in the subjects of Christianity as well as other religious traditions pointing out the importance of diversity, inclusiveness and interreligious dialogue between the various religious communities. It is also the custodian to collections of distinguished academics and ministers. It integrates a [Historical Archive of Protestantism in Puerto Rico](#) with valuable documents from the Puerto Rican Protestant Church, as well as a Puerto Rican collection and old books collection. Through the digitization agreement with Princeton Theological Seminary since October 2018 it is expected to give public access to public domain resources.

The Library provides access 24/7 to its collections through its online catalog (juandevaldes.com) which was updated to a cloud-based system enabling students to renew, reserve books and create bibliographical lists. The location of archival collections is facilitated through guides and lists. The library maintains subscriptions to specialized electronic resources such as ATLA Religion Database with Serials (<http://search.ebscohost.com>) and Digitalia Hispánica (<https://www.digitaliapublishing.com>). Open access resources are available through its blog Juan de Valdés Virtual Library (<https://bjvsepr.wordpress.com>).

The Library makes its services known and extends its communication with the academic and administrative community through Facebook and email bjv@se-pr.edu. The library ensures access to other resources through the service of interlibrary loan with local libraries and other theological institutions abroad.

4.2 Contribution to Learning, Teaching and Research

The Library is aligned with the goals of each program, the mission and institutional vision, and the ministerial quality standards of the sponsoring denominations. We understand that our students' learning experiences are consistent with the expectations of higher education.

The Library staff offers several workshops per semester and individual orientations to encourage and coach students in digital and information skills. The Library Director offers a one credit course on research techniques (TLLR-6601) where students learn and develop research skills, understand the importance of academic honesty and learn how to cite appropriately, among other learning objectives.

Our professional librarian recently incorporated Digital Humanities into the field of theology with the main purpose to prepare the community to incorporate technologies into their research practices and into the classroom; for decision making, research and/or to establish trends to define the route to follow.

Faculty members have received training in these processes since January 2005 (ATS-MSA Self-Study 2008) when the Institution began receiving workshops emphasizing on assessment as a pedagogical tool to obtain the expected academic results. Faculty members integrate assessment to their course rubrics. In this way, students benefit from the learning processes provided by the appraisal technique and, at the same time, the Institution ensures that student's performance is of high quality. This also allows the Faculty to keep students informed about what their expectations are regarding students' learning achievements. These aspects of learning are considered through a clear and defined design of the curriculum so that students can meet degree requirements to be conferred with skills that allow effectiveness in learning.

4.3 Partnership in Curricular Development

The Library is a critical component of our academic and research activities as well as our future academic collaborations. The library maintains close collaboration with the faculty whom make their recommendations on the appropriate and updated bibliography on the subjects they teach. It also fosters that the faculty be oriented on new digital skills and technologies to apply to their classroom and research practices.

The Library and its staff will be part of our collaboration with the Inter American University. It will serve as a place of study for those undergraduate students, it will support the training of our faculty in distance learning, and the library director will become the first faculty to offer the undergraduate courses of this initiative.

4.4 Administration and Leadership

The Library staff includes a professional librarian and the Library Director. The Director holds an academic position and it is a member of the Faculty. Therefore, he/she participates as a full member of the faculty in all decision-making sessions. The organization of the Historical Archive is directed by a highly qualified volunteer, Dr. Helen Santiago, historian who also holds a Certificate of Administration of Documents and Archives. She works under supervision of the Library Director. In the evening and Saturday schedule (during school period), the Library has student assistants as support staff. Likewise, the library provides the opportunity for students to

collaborate as volunteers in various library projects. The ESPR promotes and supports professional development opportunities for librarians.

4.5 Resources

The Juan de Valdés Library has a separate portion of the budget and it receives donations for the acquisition of books and other educational materials.

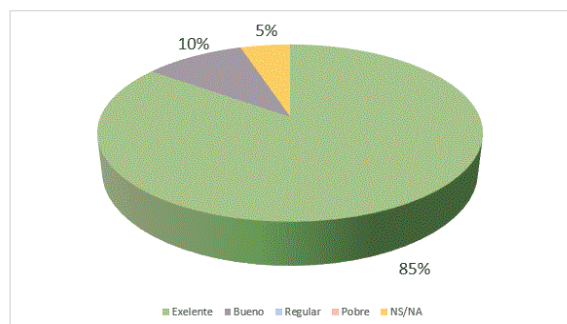
Regarding its facilities, the library has four (4) floors, all with WIFI infrastructure throughout the building; 25 cubicles for individualized study and a group reading room for 6 people. Each floor, where collections are located has climate control systems such as dehumidifiers and data loggers. In addition, its main room accommodates 42 people and a so-called Educational Technology Center, with 8 computers for the academic and administrative community. It also facilitates the loan of laptops (5) to the academic community. We hope to have, at the student's disposal, a study and research room available in the main hall so that this service is accessible to people with functional diversity.

The Library fosters and upholds collaborative relationships through a consortium between professional librarians in theological institutions (COCEIBIT) with the interest that the agreement can be formalized between the institutions represented. The Library is an institutional member of the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and ArchiRed (Archives Network of Puerto Rico).

Assessment

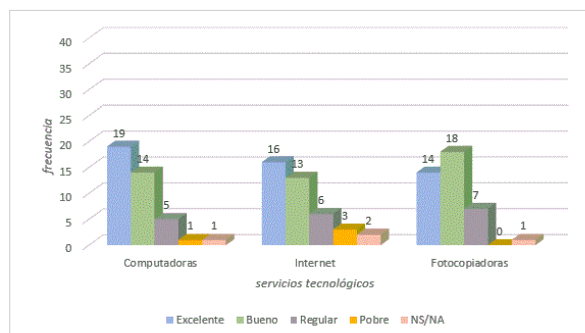
Students annually participate in assessing library services. Figure 1 shows that in 2015-2016, 85% of students surveyed rated library services as excellent while 10% rated them as good. In total, 95% of the students gave a positive evaluation. There were no negative comments. For the last three years, an economic investment has been made in the improvement of the Library's technological infrastructure. Despite advances and technological investment, this is still work in progress. Figure 4 shows that students still identify technological services as an area to improve.

Figura 1: Resultados de la evaluación de los estudiantes de los servicios que ofrece la Biblioteca (pregunta 1).



El 85% de los estudiantes evaluaron los servicios que ofrecen la Biblioteca Juan de Valdés como excelentes mientras que un 10% como buenos. Se evidencia que el 95% otorga una evaluación positiva a los ofrecimientos bibliotecarios.

Figura 4: Resultados de la evaluación de los estudiantes de los servicios tecnológicos como equipos de computadoras e impresoras, acceso a internet y servicios de fotocopadoras.



STANDARD 5 FACULTY

5.1 Faculty Qualifications, Responsibilities, Development and Employment

The [faculty of the ESPR](#) constitutes a central component of our activities ([Appendix V](#)). Their professionalism and commitment to our Christian values make them a major asset of our institution. The faculty serves the Seminary, their denominations and, consistent with our ecumenical practices, all churches in Puerto Rico. Therefore, they constitute an important component of the Seminary, as well as of the religious community of our Island. Furthermore, they are the defenders of our principles and values, and have assumed the responsibility of protecting the diverse and inclusive values and practices of the Seminary, as an example to all.

The faculty of the Seminary has earned the highest academic degrees of their field. All members of our Regular Faculty have earned a doctoral degree. Those degrees are from different theological and academic institutions. The Adjunct Faculty has a high proportion of doctoral graduates, several of them products of the DMin of the ESPR.

Regular Faculty

Faculty	Rank	Final Degree	Field of Specialization	University	Denomination
Ediberto López Rodríguez	Professor *	PhD	New Testament and Greek	Drew University, 1991	Methodist Church of PR
Agustina Luvis Núñez	Associate Professor *	PhD	Theology and History, Pentecostal Theology	Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2009	Defenders of the Faith (Pentecostal)
Guillermo Ramírez Muñoz	Professor *	PhD	Old Testament and Hebrew	Emory University, 1993	Baptist Churches of PR
Juan R. Mejías Ortiz	Associate Professor *	EdD	Practical Theology	InterAmerican University of PR, 2007	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (CCDC)
Milka T. Vigo Verestin	Instructor	MS	Research Methods	Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2003.	CCDC
Juan F. Caraballo Resto	Affiliated Professor	PhD	Islam, Anthropology of Religions	Aberdeem Universidad 2011.	

*= Tenured

Adjunct Faculty

Faculty	Rank	Final Degree	Field of Specialization	University	Denomination
Eugenio Torres	Adjunct Professor	DMin	Family Pastoral Care	ESPR	CCDC
Gamaliel Ortiz	Adjunct Professor	MDiv	Colloquies	ESPR	CCDC

Víctor Graulau	Adjunct Professor	DMin	Family Pastoral Care	ESPR	CCDC
Gerardo Cintrón	Adjunct Professor	DMin	Family Pastoral Care, Chaplain	ESPR	CCDC
Maritza Resto	Adjunct Professor	DMin	Family Pastoral Care	McCormick Theological Seminary	CCDC
Luis A. Alicea	Adjunct Professor	MDiv	History	ESPR	Baptist Churches
José R. Morales	Adjunct Professor	MDiv	Preaching	ESPR	CCDC
Marviliz Ávila	Adjunct Professor	PhD	Clinical Psychology	Universidad de PR	CCDC
Luis Hernández	Adjunct Professor	MDiv		ESPR	Methodist Church
Mineria Santiago	Adjunct Professor	MDiv	Denomination	ESPR	Methodist Church
Adolfo Santana	Adjunct Professor	MDiv		ESPR	PC (USA)
Hernando Hernández	Adjunct Professor	MDiv	Denomination	ESPR	United Evangelical Church
Julissa Ossorio	Adjunct Professor	PhD	Music	Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, U.K.	CCDC
Luis Rivera Pagán	Emeritus Professor	PhD	Theology	Yale University	Baptist Churches
Ivelisse Valentín	Adjunct Professor	PhD	Clinical Pastoral Care	Drew University, Theological School	Church of the Nazareth
Alexander Fontánez	Adjunct Professor	PhD	History	Universidad de Puerto Rico	CCDC
Eduardo I. García	Adjunct Professor	MDiv		ESPR	Methodist Church

Our faculty is very diverse in terms of academic, denominations, race, gender and gender identity. Therefore, we can affirm confidently that the ESPR has an excellent faculty with the academic, professional and ministerial credentials to teach at a theological institution of higher education. Moreover, our Adjunct Faculty also meets those expectations. They are characterized also by its diversity and by embracing it. In addition, we celebrate the addition of Dr. Luis Rivera Pagan as Emeritus Professor, a recommendation approved by the Board of Directors. Dr. Rivera is a retired faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary and a leading theologian with a wealth of publications; and he will be joining our teaching nucleus next semester.

5.2 Faculty Role in Teaching and Student Learning

The faculty of the ESPR plays a key role in the decision-making process of the institution. Regular faculty meets monthly to address academic and institutional issues. In addition to their academic and research responsibilities, they participate in many institutional bodies, including having a representative at the meetings of the Board of Directors. This semester the Dean of Academic and Students Affairs held several joint meetings of Regular and Adjunct Faculty, a decision that met with the support of both groups. The President, Dr. Juan R. Mejías, has adopted a policy of transparency, accountability and participation, thus faculty oversight roles and responsibilities are stronger than ever. Faculty are members of all academic committees and play a determining role in areas such as recruitment, assessment, graduation, awards, scholarships, institutional policies and external relations.

The Seminary upholds its commitment to faculty rights in areas such as academic freedom, evaluation, support their continuing development and respect the merit system. The current administration revised the calendar and processes for the evaluation of faculty and for granting tenure, promotions and sabbaticals.

Calendar for faculty tenure, promotions and annual evaluations

Full time Faculty	Academic Year								
	2019-20	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	January	August	January	August	January	August	January	August	January
Dr. Ediberto López (Professor)	AE		AE		AE		AE		AE
Dra. Agustina Luvis Núñez (Associate Professor, 2017)	AE		AE		AE		AE	AS3	AE
Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz (Associate Professor, 2016)	AE		AE		AE	AS3 P	AE		AE
Dr. Guillermo Ramírez Muñoz (Professor)	AE		AE		AE		AE		AE

AE = Annual Evaluation

AS3 = Evaluation for promotion to Professor

Calendar for Evaluations for Sabbaticals

Full Time Faculty	Academic Year							
	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	August	January	August	January	August	January	August	January
Dr. Ediberto López Rodríguez (SC, January 2009)		S						

Dra. Agustina Luvis Núñez (SC, August 2015)			S					
Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz					S			
Dr. Guillermo Ramírez Muñoz (SC, August 2009)	S							

SC = Last sabbatical approved

S = Next sabbatical

Although salaries are lower than comparable in the United States and other universities in Puerto Rico, our faculty enjoys suitable working conditions, support services, and support for traveling and participation in national and international activities. The course load is nine (9) credits per semester for Regular Faculty. At the present time, many are participating in educational technology training sessions to enable their participation in upcoming collaborative projects that require those skills. These training sessions also includes adjunct faculty.

The freedom recognized in their research activities are extensive to the classroom, where faculty is at liberty to discuss subjects in which they are competent and encourage critical approaches to theological studies. They are the main actors in the development, implementation, evaluation and revision of our curriculum, and all proposals submitted to the Board of Directors must have their input. Some examples of faculty engagement are their participation in the formulation of the agreement between the ESPR and the Inter American University to develop joint initiatives, including the teaching of the courses of their newly approved minor concentrations in bible and theology at the undergraduate level, their international engagement and the implementation of educational summer trips abroad.

5.4 Faculty Role in Theological Research

The ESPR encourages the research and publications of our faculty. Our faculty participates in major conferences, submits manuscripts for publications, and are active members of the international theological community. Some of their publications are:

- Dr. Ediberto López Rodríguez: *Cómo se formó la Biblia* and *Introducción al Griego*
- Dr. Guillermo Ramírez Muñoz: *Introducción al Antiguo Testamento* and *De Genesis a Deuteronomio*
- Dr. Agustina Luvis Núñez: *Creada a su imagen. Una pastoral integral para la mujer.*
- Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz: *Aviva el Don que hay en ti* (Ed. By Dr. Samuel Pagan).

In addition, the theological journal of the Seminary, *Ecos del Seminario*, provides an incentive to publish contextual studies. See <http://www.se-pr.edu/enterate> (Appendix LXXIV). Although the current fiscal conditions of the Seminary does not allows us to grant greater financial support for research and traveling abroad, our global partners are stepping and supporting the participation of our faculty in various academic and international events.

STANDARD 6

STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION, SERVICES AND PLACEMENT

Introduction

Students are the centerpiece of our work and their academic, professional, theological and social formation is the main goal of our curriculum and programs. Therefore, our churches, our faculty and staff work diligently in their recruitment, admission, retention, orientation, and other support services. Ultimately, the quality of these services will support them throughout their studies at the Seminary, which will produce the clergy and lay leaders that our congregations need and expect from us. In order to satisfy this goal, the ESPR established the Office of Institutional Assessment under the Office of the Dean of Academic and Students Affairs. <http://www.se-pr.edu/avaluo-y-acreditaciones>. This unit conducts regular surveys to support our decision-making process. The information hereby shared was generated by this unit. In addition, the Self Study working group conducted a survey of students to assess the effectiveness of the ESPR to provide students with the necessary support and resources to achieve the vision and mission of the Institution. Admission requirements, recruitment procedures, institutional indicators of performance, retention, placement and levels of student satisfaction with such support were evaluated.

In summary, the questions can be grouped into one: How the ESPR is helping students to stay in that vision and mission of contributing with the integral formation of the pastoral and lay leadership to serve in the Christian ministries and participate in the mission of people of God in PR, the Caribbean, United States of America, The Americas and the world? In order to collect the information the Working Group divided among its members the specific questions, identified the departments that could provide the information and visited the concerning areas, interviewed, reviewed policies, manuals and other documents, and analyzed student satisfaction surveys (**Appendix XXVIII** - [Student Satisfaction Survey](#)).

6.1 Recruitment

Student recruitment for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) is mostly through the sponsoring denominations endorsed candidates, as this Master is a requirement, among others, for the ordained ministry. The same happens with the student recruitment for the Doctorate in Ministry Program (D.Min.). On the other hand, the recruitment for the Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) takes place in several ways, which also includes M.Div. and D.Min. People can also visit our facilities to start their recruitment process, as well as starting the process through the website, media or social networks (Facebook), at the annual conventions of sponsoring denominations, in activities of the Alumni Association, in co-curricular activities, in visits of Faculty members to other churches to preach; to give workshops and conferences (practically once a week), and the celebration of Open House and the Day of the ESPR that many churches celebrate annually.

6.2 Admissions and Academic Programs Information

There are several strategies to capture the attention of students and general public about academic offers. Visits are received at the Department of Academic Affairs. The [geographical location of the ESPR](#) at the University District, just in front of the University of Puerto Rico, allows students interested in continuing graduate studies at our Institution, to visit our facilities frequently, stay, use our Library, and consult our Faculty.

The Institution's mission and vision are visible so that all visitors and members of the ESPR community can constantly read them. Faculty and staff work align with what is stated in our [mission, values and goals](#) (Appendix VI). These are also presented on the [Institution's website](#), promotional brochures, [catalog](#) (Appendix XXII) and other official documents.

When an interested person comes to our institution, whether is personally, via email, by phone or through the web or social media, he/she receives a file with all the necessary information to make an informed decision. Once admitted, said person has an interview with a regular Faculty where said person is also guided and informed about the history of our Institution, its mission and vision, academic programs, facilities, services and about his/her aspirations and academic expectations. In addition, the Faculty member also evaluates the potential of the student for graduate studies and their previous discernment in relation to this stage (See - [On Admissions](#))

Every admitted person participates in an Orientation Day where all the ESPR dependencies participate in guiding, and informing about student life, norms, policies, programs and to promote growth as a community. In addition to publications and dissemination of standards and policies, the course syllabi serve as a means of information on standards and policies, on accessibility to the faculty, evaluations, and deadlines. Academic performance and student learning are monitored through the appraisal plan of learning.

It is important to highlight that our [students' profile](#) reveals a bi-vocational nature (Appendix XXIX). When students arrive to our classrooms, they already have work experience of many years in different professions; the majority not related to theological studies. Therefore, the contribution that the student offers to the academic and student life is a multidisciplinary one. (Appendix IV- [See Report](#)).

6.3 Student services

Our institution provides student services aligned to the Institution's vision and mission and that will allow them to achieve their goals. This support is channeled through the services provided by the admission offices, financial aid, registration, administration, library, academic and student counseling, chaplaincy counseling; co-curricular and extracurricular activities, lodging, student trips, interlibrary services, parking, and cafeteria.

From their interest to study in our Institution until they graduate and are working on their vocations, our students receive guidance and monitoring to ensure their performance; as well as to comply with all the state and federal regulations that protect and regulate the Institution. The schedule of the Office of Academic Affairs was adjusted for a better service to our student population.

Registration

[Registrar's office](#) is responsible for guarding all academic records. The policy that deals with this matter was revised on December 2017. It establishes that the files are saved using the SASLE electronic program and as part of the 2016-2018 Institutional Development Plan it was suggested for them to digitalized. Files are kept in a vault guarded by the Registry Office. This [policy is accessible at webpage](#).

The policy of validation and substitution of credits was revised in August 2016 and it explains the documents needed if a student is interested in validating a course offered by an

institution accredited by the Council of Higher Education and by the Department of Education of the USA. In addition, it clarifies the minimum grade (B), the validity of the courses (5 years or less), the maximum to be approved (15 credits) and when the transfer can be requested (first year of admission). ([Appendix XXX - Validation and Credit Substitution Policy](#)).

The admission policy for international students states that it must be requested 120 days in advance. In addition, it lists the required documents. These are similar to those residing students, but also requests: health certificate, current passport, letter requesting admission, validation of degrees and evidence of economic coverage. The document explaining this process has no date of last revision. ([Appendix XXXI - International Students Admission Policy](#)).

In compliance with the Family Education Right and Privacy ACT ([FERPA](#)), all types of statistics demonstrating academic quality, retention, graduation, "placement rates", global numbers, etc., are considered public information. Student academic and demographic information is considered private and confidential information. This private and confidential information of a student can only be accessed by those who dispose of the FERPA law, 34CFR99. Law 186 of September 1, 2006, establishes that the Social Security number can only be used for internal reference use and with prior authorization of the student for processes where it is essential (e.g. Scholarships etc.). The privacy and confidentiality policies are updated as stipulated by the state and federal laws that govern our Institution and become effective immediately upon approval and revision. ([Appendix XXXII & Appendix LXVII - FERPA Policy](#)).

Students with functional diversity are protected by all federal and state laws. We can provide access to these students as we have an elevator, physical facilities and accessible parking. This access also includes reasonable accommodation, following the rules and policies that regulate our Institution. ([Appendix XXXIII - Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#))

Lodging

The SEPR has some [lodging facilities](#) for students who request it. ([Appendix XXXIV](#)). They are currently occupied by university students, staff and their families. We acknowledge the need for improvement of the facilities.

Cafeteria

After Hurricane Maria, we had a period of adjustment for the cafeteria operation and we managed to keep this service to benefit the entire ESPR community. We are currently, evaluating several proposals for its operation and the improvement of services.

Security

The ESPR is located in a city with a high crime rate. However, access control has prevented the development of criminal incidents in recent years. Recently, the Seminary hired security services with a guard during the week. The ESPR has written, reviewed and updated policies on face-to-face harassment and on "[Cyberbullying Policy](#)", ([Appendix XXXV](#)) [Sexual Assault Policy](#), ([Appendix XXXVI & Appendix XXXVIII](#)) and protocols in case of

gender violence ([Appendix XXXVII](#)). We have also approved a [Regulations on the Use and Abuse of Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco](#) ([Appendix XXXIX](#)).

Access to functionally diverse people

The ESPR is focused on being a welcoming place to all people without discrimination. For that purpose, we worked on having access to facilities for people with functional diversity. The doors that give access to the Library and its spaces have been enlarged. There is a book search policy by staff for people who are not able to access upper floors. In case of damage to the main building elevator, a room has been separated where students can take the courses through the Zoom, Facetime and other platforms. There is also a Reasonable [Accommodation Policy](#) ([Appendix XXXIII](#)).

Complaints and Processing

The Office of Academic & Student Affairs provides time, space and personnel for students to express their concerns and complaints regarding the service offered. There is a written and updated policy and procedure for the handling of these. The process starts, when the student files a claim or complaint and ends with the case determination. For specific details see the Student Manual and the Institutional Catalog, which provides information on the steps to follow ([Investigation Procedure](#)) ([Appendix XLI](#)).

Academic Counseling, Student Counseling and Chaplaincy

The Office of Academic & Student Affairs has an academic advising program in which the interim dean and the regular Faculty members participate. There is a Faculty member, from Monday through Thursday, responsible for this task; with a schedule announced at the beginning of each semester. This Program helps identify academic, pastoral, professional and personal goals of students and assists in the development of an action plan to achieve them. In addition, it also assesses academic progress and compliance with academic expectations. Alternatives are proposed, which may include participation in special programs, take courses or workshops to strengthen skills and competencies, as well as travel and project opportunities.

The ESPR provides an Office of Student and Psychological Counseling, which focuses on offering alternatives and suggestions for effective time management, organizational skills and problem solving, so students can perform effectively in their family, social, ministerial and work groups. This service is provided after a referral from the Den's office to Student Counsel. In addition to these services, students can also benefit from Chaplaincy services.

Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities

The ESPR understands that the teaching-learning process must be offered in a comprehensive way; complementing the classroom experience with other activities to which students must attend. These are book presentations and workshops on relevant issues. As an example, we celebrated a weeklong workshop on the topic of Gender Violence, which is a pressing issue within our communities and in the churches. These workshops were offered by

experts on the matter. Chapel services are held monthly, and the entire ESPR community is expected to participate. We also plan activities for special days, such as the ESPR Open House. All the Institution's community is invited. Our house of studies has been honored with theologians, such as Dr. Cornel West; who made a presentation to our community when he was invited to PR. Together with the Alumni Association, we celebrated the inauguration of a Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. The Juan de Valdés Library regularly holds workshops, conferences and activities to facilitate research work, not only for students, but also Faculty and community members' research. The Eco-Theology group made up of students, alumni, faculty and community members plans yearly activities related to our responsibility in the care of the environment. The Spiritual Formation Academy, in conjunction with the Upper Room of the United Methodist Church, allows for a space outside our Institution, for which students have educational, spiritual, counseling, artistic, and entertainment experiences for 6 days. From 2014 to 2017, our Institution had a Choir, which provided a space for growth, sense of community and projection for the Institution and its students. The administration is analyzing how to reactivate the Chorus. Our students also participate in the Spiritual Retreat of Emmaus Walk of the Methodist Church of PR. ([Appendix XXVI](#)).

Student evaluation of services and/or support offices

A survey was conducted among students in the January-May 2019, semester in order to grasp the feeling of the student population of the Institution, in relation to levels of [satisfaction with the services offered](#). 92 students participated in it. Services were evaluated by office: Admissions, Counseling, Finance, Registrar, Economic Assistance, Deanship, Chaplaincy, Library, Cafeteria. In addition, general aspects such as communications, security, and access to Internet were evaluated. Academic aspects such as counseling and the academic offer; teaching and faculty quality were also surveyed as well as the physical facilities. In general terms, the survey revealed a 61.1% of students are pleased with the services offered; 52.4% of students are pleased with general aspects; 73.5% of students are pleased with academic aspects, a 53.1% of students are pleased with respect to the physical facilities. An 80.4% of students would recommend the Institution to other people interested and would comment that their general experience has been satisfactory. ([Appendix XLII](#)).

Through this survey, we learned that an 18.9 % of students are unaware of services available for students.

Retention

Some initiatives that have had a positive impact on retention are orientation activities for new students, interest groups such as the eco-theology group, retreats for spiritual development such as the Spiritual Formation Academy. Workshops, book presentations, lectures on relevant topics relevant to our student's realities and contexts have also had a positive impact on retention. The survey to monitor student satisfaction is an instrument that, in addition to providing valuable information to the Institution, also stimulates students' self-esteem and sense of belonging. See [Student Retention Rates](#) ([Appendix XLIII](#)) and [Recruitment and Retention Plan 2012-2017](#) ([Appendix XLIV](#)).

6.4 Student borrowing

The Office that handles students' applications for financial aid is led by a professional in the field. The services offered to students by this office include denominational scholarships and student loans. One of the achievements of this office has been to lower the debt of student loans by means of an orientation campaign on the effective and prudent use of this alternative for the financing of studies. (See [Scholarships and Available Financial Aid](#)) (Appendix XL).

6.5 Placement

The overwhelming majority of our graduates are working in their field of study at the ESPR. According to the survey of alumni from the period 2010-2017 revealed that 78% of those that responded were working in a field related to their graduate studies in the Seminary. Of those working within their field of graduate studies, 81% were pastors. For the full report see the [enclosed link](#). (Appendix LI)

STANDARD 7

AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

7.1 Authority

The ESPR is a centennial higher education institution devoted to the formation and development of ecclesial and pastoral leadership of diverse religious organizations in Puerto Rico, Hispanic communities in the United States and Latin America. The following narrative shows how the structures that define governance, institutional leadership and administrative efforts are focused on fulfilling the mission, vision and values of the Institution and how they benefit the student body, faculty, administrative staff and the community in general. The ESPR is an interdenominational educational institution [supported by six Protestant denominations](#). These are divided into the five founding denominations that merge in 1919 to form the ESPR and a sponsoring denomination that joined the educational project later. This distinction affects the composition of the Board of Directors. The founding denominations are: The Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Puerto Rico, Methodist Church of Puerto Rico, the Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico and the United Evangelical Church in Puerto Rico. The Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod of the Caribbean joined the Board of Directors as a sponsoring church.

The Board of Directors is the highest governing and legislative body of the ESPR. The Board has the responsibility to maintaining the mission, objectives, values, viability and integrity of the institution; the achievement of institutional policies or regulations; the selection the President; and the provision of physical and fiscal resources and personnel.

7.2 Governance

The Board of Directors is chaired by the Rev. Edward Rivera Santiago, General Pastor of the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico. In August 2014, Dr. Doris García Rivera was appointed as the first woman President of ESPR. She served as President until the 2018-2019 academic year ended. On June 16, 2019 the Board of Directors appointed Dr. Juan R. Mejias Ortiz as interim president for a three years term. Dr. Mejias will have the responsibilities to improve the finances, economical resources, reorganize the institutional administration, foster a curriculum review and preparing the route for the selection process of the new president.

On an extraordinary meeting held on August 3st, 2019, the Board of Director approved a structural reorganization. The new organizational structures divide the Administrator responsibilities into three functional areas: Finance, General Services and Human Resources, and creates a new Information and Technology System Director. In addition, the new organizational structure renames the Academic Dean to the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. The new governance structure of the ESPR includes [Board of Directors](#), [President's Office](#), Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, [Finances](#), [General Services](#), [Faculty](#) and [Student Council](#). ([Institutional Organization Chart](#)) ([Appendix XLV](#)). These bodies are subject to the rules and guidelines described in the regulations, manuals and institutional policies approved by the Board of Directors. This, in accordance with laws and bylaws established internally, as well as local and federal regulations, as they apply, and the recommendations and ordinances of the agencies that endorse or license the Institution. The structure, duties and prerogatives are described below.

7.3 The roles of the governing board, administration, faculty, and students in governance processes

Governing Board

The [Board of Directors](#) is the highest governing body and legislative body of the ESPR. It is composed of 23 members with decisional capacity and four members with the right to speak, but without a vote. ([Appendix XXI](#)). Regulations of the Board of Directors establish that the administrative body will be composed of one member from each of the sponsoring denominations (6 members); usually the executive, general pastor or bishop of the founding churches. The Board also includes two members of the founding churches (10 members), one member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod of the Caribbean and six at-large directors elected by the Board. To these, representatives of the institutional dependencies are added. They can contribute in the discussions of issues but cannot vote. These are the Alumni representative, the student representative, Faculty member and the ESPR president. ([Board of Director's Manual](#)) ([Appendix XV](#)). The six at-large directors and the Alumni representative will be elected for a six years term. Both the faculty and students' bodies may choose their representative annually. Given the interest to avoid conflict of interest in members of the Board of Directors, the Regulations of this body established the following:

«No director member may engage in relationships or conducts that constitutes a conflict of interest. Neither will it sustain employment or other relationship that will bring financial benefit from the ESPR. When a director becomes an employee of the Institution, he/she should immediately cease to act as director, providing that a director may teach an ad-honorem course. Likewise, when a director enrolls in the ESPR to pursue a degree, he/she will immediately cease his/her duties as director. The members of the Board will not have an ownership interest of any kind due to their membership, nor will they have acquired rights, whether of contractual nature or of any other nature» (Manual, section I article D).

In section II, article B, duties and responsibilities of this legislative body are specified, among which are:

- Draw up the educational, administrative, financial and development policy of the Institution and ensure compliance. Name necessary committees to ensure its operation.
- Approve fiscal and financial policies of the ESPR including, but without being limited to, the acquisition, preservation and administration of funds, collection activities, investment policy and the annual budget upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee.
- Approve study programs as well as admission and graduation conditions.
- Institute norms on rights and duties of Faculty, administrative officials and non-teaching staff. Likewise, on appointments, contract renewals, promotions, dismissals, withdrawals, salaries, licenses, vacations, sabbaticals and other personnel matters.

The Board of Directors meets semiannually. When it is in recess, it is represented by its Executive Committee. This body is composed of seven members of the Board of Directors, guaranteeing the representation of at least three of the sponsoring denominations. The ESPR's president is an ex officio member, with voice, but without vote. These members are elected annually. Duties and responsibilities of this Committee are broken down in the Regulations of the Board of Directors, section VI, article A. The Board of Directors has the authority to appoint work committees such as Finance and Property, Nominations and Regulations and Institutional Assessment and Faculty Dialogue. Functions and duties of these committees are included in the

aforementioned Regulation. The Board of Directors is the responsible body for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the approval of budgets. ([Correlation between Board of Directors' Plan and Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#)) ([Appendix LX](#)).

President's Office

The president is the principal academic and administrative executive of the ESPR. Its selection, appointment and evaluation are appointed to the Board of Directors. Between 2014 and 2019, Dr. Doris García Rivera held the presidency of the Institution. Regulations of the Board of Directors estate that a candidate to preside over the Institution must be an active member of one of the sponsoring denominations and have written support for his/her denomination leaders (section XI, article A.2). President García belongs to the Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico. The appointment of the president is indefinite and subject to evaluations carried out by the Board of Directors. Currently, there is no evidence of official evaluations of the ministerial work of President Dr. García Rivera by the Board of Directors. The duties, prerogatives and functions of the president are detailed in section XI, article B of the Regulations of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors appointed Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz as interim president, an active member of the Christian Church (Disciple of Christ).

Dean of Academic & Student Affairs

The Deanery is the organism in charge of academic affairs of the ESPR. The bylaws of the Board of Directors establish that the Academic Dean will be the principal executive of the area. His/her appointment comes from the president and is ratified by the Board of Directors. Currently, the position is occupied on an interim basis by Dr. Palmira Ríos-González. The Dean must be a Faculty member with administrative functions. The duties, prerogatives and functions of the Academic Dean are described in section XII article B. He/she will preside over meetings of the Academic Council and Faculty at the request of the President. Regulations establish that in the absence of the President, he/she will assume the institutional leadership on an interim basis.

Academic divisions

The Deanery is composed of five academic areas. These are the [Registrar's Office](#), [Library Juan De Valdés](#), [Faculty](#), [Institutional Assessment Office](#), [Student Financial Aid](#) and [Students Council](#). ([Appendix LXI](#)). The Dean is the direct supervisor of each of the officers who manage these dependencies. Dr. Juan Caraballo Resto and Dr. Agustina Luvis Núñez, faculty members, serve as coordinators of the academic programs of Master of Arts in Religion and Doctorate in Ministry, respectively. The Office of Institutional Evaluation is coordinated by Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz, Faculty member with administrative discharge. Library Juan de Valdés is staffed by its director and two full-time librarians. At the time, Prof. Milka T. Vigo Verestin serves as the Library's director. In addition, it is also staffed by part-time librarians. Library employees are represented by its director in the bodies it belongs to. The Library director has a voice and vote in the monthly meetings of the regular and adjunct faculty. The Registrar's Office is directed by Mrs. Keina Troncoso Fernández and is responsible for the custody and updating of students' files; guaranteeing confidentiality of the information they hold. This office is also responsible, together with the Deanery, for monitoring compliance with policies related to academic matters such as: [Validation and Credit Substitution Policy](#) ([Appendix XXX](#)), [Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy](#) ([Appendix LXII](#)), [Policy for the Safe Maintenance of Student Information and Records](#)

([Appendix LXIII](#)) [Policy of Attendance to Classes, Incomplete Procedures and Grade changes](#) ([Appendix LXV](#)), among others. (See, [Policies and Documents](#)).

Faculty

The Faculty is composed of President, Academic Dean, Library Director and all those professors who have an academic load. The Faculty is currently composed of regular faculty (full-time professors), affiliated faculty (part-time faculty with some administrative function) and adjunct faculty (all other faculty that do not belong to the first two classifications). ([Faculty Manual](#)). ([Appendix XI](#)). In the meetings and decision making processes held within this body, the regular Faculty will have voice and vote in the decision making; the other faculty members will have a voice, but no vote. Faculty meetings are convened by the President or the Academic Dean at the request of the first. When the Faculty wishes to convene a non-scheduled meeting, they have to make a written request to the President's Office. The duties, prerogatives and functions of the Faculty are described in section XIV article B of the Regulations of the Board of Directors. The administrative regulations that govern the recruitment and development of the Faculty are established in the Faculty Manual. In addition to the Academic Dean and the Library Director, the regular faculty and affiliate is currently composed by Dr. Guillermo Ramírez, Dr. Ediberto López, Bible and biblical languages, Dr. Agustina Luvis Núñez, systematic theology professor, Dr. Juan R. Mejías Ortiz, practical theology professor and Dr. Juan Caraballo, anthropology of religion professor. The adjunct faculty varies according to the academic offer in each semester, yet it is usually composed of 10 to 12 professors. In general, the Faculty meets semiannually by call of the President or Academic Dean on behalf of the first. The regular and affiliated faculty meets monthly. This body currently has four work committees. These are: Curricular revision Committee, Academic Committee, Document Committee & Institutional Review Board (IRB) ([Appointment letter](#)) ([Appendix LXVI](#)).

There are times where the Institution's President or Academic Dean, have appointed special *ad-hoc* committees, such as Centennial Committee, Library Development Committee, Scholarship and Graduation Awards Committee, and Open House, among others.

Regular and affiliated Faculty participate in decision-making processes in different ways; including the academic programs review, recommendations on selecting new faculty members (Faculty Manual, article 5.1.2) , evaluation of peers for rank promotion ([Manual of the Faculty](#), article 9.3.4, preamble article 10) and attending Board of Directors meetings with voice. For the last two teaching appointments, the regular faculty actively participated in the decision-making process.

Faculty Professional Development

The [Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022](#), establishes the need to:

«Design and implement an annual program for training of administrative staff and Faculty in the incorporation of technology to the work and classroom areas, the institutional assessment and student learning, and any other topic related to the various areas of expertise and service.» (goal 6, objective 6.1). ([Appendix VII](#)).

In compliance with institutional goals, the [2018](#) & 2019 Budgets (Budget 5116, Faculty Development Workshops; 5124 Professional Exp. Faculty; 5125, Workshops for Office Personal) ([Appendix XXV](#)) allocated funds for activities related to the training of administrative staff and

faculty. Additionally, on occasions the semiannual meetings have included the discussion of topics or workshops for professional improvement of the faculty.

Student Council

The ESPR understands that serving students is the main goal of the Institution. The [Student Council](#) is the body that guarantees the representation and participation of the student body in the institutional committees. This Council is composed of 5 to 7 students chosen annually by active students in the academic semester in which they are selected. Students, like the faculty, are represented on all committees. The ESPR seeks to ensure equitable representation in all committees; sometimes the irregular attendance of students at meetings makes it difficult to guarantee this participation. The positions within this body are: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and members. Last year's leadership and student representation was assumed by the 2019 Centennial Class Committee, led by the student Mrs. Clara Santiago. Currently, the students selected their new leadership. On 2019, the student Mrs. Yanira Torrellas was elected as president of Students Council. The Student Council is working with the Academic Dean. (Appendix LXI).

Non-academic divisions

The institutional organization chart identifies two non-academic divisions: Administration Office and Institutional Development. Due to economic constraints, at this time the tasks corresponding to the Office of Institutional Development have been assumed by the President's Office. This has been a weakness in public relations processes, identification of external resources for fund raising, which has caused a weakness in the Institutions finances. In spite of this, the President's Office, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors have been able to consolidate and create collaborative agreements with other educational institutions and collection of funds. For example, officers from Princeton Theological Seminary have collaborated with President's Office on matters related to institutional development. It is urgent to improve the processes for promotion and recruitment.

The Finances Office is under the supervision of its Director Rev. Raul Santiago Rivera. This office is currently being served by two employees. The Office of General Services is in charge of the Property Conservation, Lodgings, Insurances, Security and Cafeteria. Mrs. Myrna E. Pérez López is currently serving as the director of this office. This office is currently being served by four employees.

Professional Development of Non-Teaching Staff

Both the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (goal 6, objective 6.1) as well as the Budgets 2018 & 2019 (Budget 5125, Workshops for Office Staff) focus on the implementation and execution of a coaching programs for the administrative staff and Faculty. The coaching for conservation staff is being carried out through collaborative agreements with other institutions such as Princeton Theology Seminary, American Baptist Churches, and Board of Global Ministries of the Methodist Church.

Continuing Education

The [continuing education program](#) is coordinated by the Rev. Marysol Díaz Feliciano. In 2018, the institutional organization chart was modified so that the program was placed under the

supervision of the President's Office, instead of the Dean's Office. Workshops and courses are currently offered to train lay and pastoral leaders in missionary work, eco-spirituality, among others. However, this office needs financial resources to enable a greater presence in media that guarantee proper advertising and dissemination of services.

Evaluation of governance, leadership and administration

At the ESPR, assessment is essential for the improvement of curricular offerings, establishment of a service culture and the use of the best educational practices. The Institution carries out continuous evaluation of leadership effectiveness, efficacy and quality as well as of government structures, which includes all the offices, academic and administrative units. The following table summarizes the integration between the [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#) ([Appendix VII](#)) the [Assessment Plan](#) ([Appendix IX](#)) and Governance, Leadership and Administration.

Area 4; Institutional Goal 4: Upgrade the assessment system to allow auscultation of institutional effectiveness, academic programs rigor, evidence of student learning and encourage feedback, reflection and assertive decision making. (Strategic Plan 2017-2022)		
Area	Assessor	Frequency
Teaching, research and service (Appendix I, Faculty Manual)	Students	At the end of course
	Peers	When required for rank promotion and/or contract renewal.
	Academic Dean	
Juan de Valdés Library	Students and community	Annually
Academic Services Offices (Deanery, Admissions, Registrar's Office,	Students	
Administration Offices (Presidency, Administration, Bursar's Office, Financial Aid)	Students	
Student and Community Services (Pastoral Counseling, Chaplaincy, Student Counseling, Cafeteria)	Students and community	
Board of Directors Meetings	Board of Directors Members	At the end of each meeting
Continuing education and special activities	Participants	At the end of the activity

Governance, leadership and administration are focused on achieving the mission, vision, objectives and institutional values, including (1) needs and claims of the sponsoring churches, the community and Puerto Rico, (2) students, faculty and employee's needs, (3) compliance with standards and requirements of agencies that license and certify the ESPR and its academic programs. Service Areas: Presidency, and Administration were evaluated by the students in March 2019. The results were published in the [Service Satisfaction Survey study of the Student Support Offices](#). (Appendix XLII).

Communication through all dependencies

Improving the communication channel for the promotion of services, general information and decision making is one of the challenges that must be addressed. Efforts to promote information to the ESPR community are achieved thanks to the initiative of various offices. These efforts intend to disseminate information through media such as the electronic page, Facebook, emails, as well as the use of bulletin boards. However, there is no clear, systematic or direct communication network towards the student and the community. Despite this, attempts have been made to disseminate the information. The [Satisfaction Survey of Student Support Services 2019](#) results reveal that a good number of students are unaware of certain programs, service areas and financial aid.

Information on Board of Directors decisions is disclosed directly to Faculty members through their representative and President's Office reports at monthly meetings. It is not clear whether alumni and student representatives disclose the information to their respective bodies. While a plan for effective institutional communication is being developed, there are four current channels for the dissemination of information:

- Digital resources such as the ESPR's webpage www.se-pr.edu, particularly the *News* section, [Facebook page](#) and/or WhatsApp.
- The use of bulletin boards located at the classroom area and Library entrance.
- Person-to-person communication, particularly through employees of the various service areas and representatives of the sponsoring churches, faculty, students and alumni.
- President's Office bulletins and communications

Manuals, policies and other documents approval

To guarantee the achievement of the institutional mission, manuals, policies and other documents are established to address needs and claims of students, Faculty members, employees and members of the community in general. Policies and documents are designed to address complaints, incidents, situations that affect educational processes, administrative procedures and human and/or property security. The various service areas participate in the drafting of policies depending on their expertise. These have to be endorsed by the supervisor of the area and approved by the President. The final approval of a policy rests with the Board of Directors, or the Executive Committee, depending on the case. However, there is no evidence of a clear and coherent process for the drafting of policies or a single format for presentation. Institutional policies and documents are circulated to students mainly on Orientation Day. There they all receive a digital copy of all policies and documents. Attending this Orientation Day is part of the graduation requirements. In

addition, the document is also available through the Institution's webpage <https://se-pr.edu/politicas-normas-y-procedimientos>.

Information technologies (IT)

Information technology is a fundamental area for the achievement of the mission, vision and institutional objectives. IT services are essential to guarantee the institutional success of daily operations, administrative procedures and development of significant educational and research experiences. Students, Faculty and Staff surveys have identified the technological, information and connectivity infrastructure as an area to be strengthened. In response to this need, the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan establishes the urgency of renewing these services:

« Optimize the technological infrastructure, information technology and connectivity that support teaching and learning processes, research, assessment and community service.»
(Goal 7, SP 2017-2022)

At the same time, the [Institutional Development Plan 2016-2018](#) establishes the operation guidelines for the improvement of technology equipment and connectivity. For President Dr. Doris García, addressing this issue was a priority, and she appointed Mr. Jesús Rodríguez Cortés as the person in charge of addressing all optimization processes and providing technical support for the continuity of operations. (**Appendix LVI**). As a result of all efforts in the last three years, it has been possible to:

General

- Expand the wireless network reach to include all ESPR facilities under the same SSID.
- Optimize the Library information systems by integrating the Library connectivity with the main building of the ESPR with fiber optics, increasing access to the database and online bibliographic resources.
- The construction of a virtual room with wireless connection and equipment to broadcast live classes as a way of supporting teaching-learning processes and research is currently underway.
- Optimize connectivity by establishing a traffic plan that includes strength of security.

Library

- Installation of communications equipment and structured wiring.
- Acquisition of computer equipment, including updating of operating systems and applications. Purchase laptops for student use.
- Migration database from the Mandarin Catalog to cloud services.

Administration, faculty offices and classrooms (Second floor)

- Structural wiring and optic fiber installation to achieve better connectivity. Relocation of telephone lines.
- Updating the finance system by obtaining license to the *Sage 50 Premium Accounting* program.
- Migration of the email server to provide institutional email service to students, Faculty and administrative staff.

STANDARD 8

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Introduction

ESPR's primary mission is to contribute in the theological formation of ordained and lay pastoral leaders to serve in diverse Christian ministries and to participate in the mission of the people of God in Puerto Rico, and around the world. The budgeted and financial resources available are focused and directed toward the fulfillment of the institutional objectives and to achieve the primary mission of the Seminary, theological formation. The social crisis, financial concerns and uncertainties that Puerto Rico endured in recent years had a direct impact in the financial resources of the Seminary. Nevertheless, the annual budgets and allocations have been prepared to respond to those needs, challenges and opportunities in order to continue fulfilling our mission and goals.

The institutional objectives presented on both the [Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#) ([Appendix VII](#)), [Institutional Development Plan 2019-2022](#) ([Appendix LVI](#)) [Institutional Development Plan 2016-2018](#) ([Appendix LVII](#)) are focused in implementing the lessons learned and to develop new opportunities for a brighter future.

8.1. Personnel

The restructuring of the [organization chart](#) of ESPR approved on August 2019 by the Board of Directors included the creation of an Office of Human Resources under the direct supervision of the President ([Appendix XLV](#)). The firm [Human Capital](#) was contracted to provide these services. An on-site coordinator is available twice a week who conducts the following responsibilities:

- Development and administration of human resources policies and procedures in addition of revising the [current Employee Handbook \(2016\)](#). ([Appendix XIII](#)) A new [Employee Handbook](#) (2020) is under review with an expected approval and implementation date of January 2020.
- Train directorates, managers and supervisors in the administration and implementation of the human resources policies and procedures. Design and administration of the salary structure and the evaluation of the performance of our workforce. Support in the search and recruitment processes.
- Advice on wages and per hours rates to comply with applicable regulations, public laws and policies.
- Counseling and support on issues of employee relations. Advising on employee disciplinary process. Advice the administration on employee benefits program. Advice and support management on work-related safety and security issues.

8.2 Financial Resources

Goals and expectations were based on the [Institutional Development Plan 2019-2022](#). ([Appendix LVI](#)). We have continued to develop strategies for economic sustainability. [The](#)

[Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#) was approved by the Board of Directors. The Institutional Development Plan 2019-2022 presents the following priority areas and the goals:

1. *Academic Programs – Human infrastructure* (administrative support and teaching staff), Strategic Goals 1, 2, 5 and 6:

- Establishment of collaborative alliances to develop and extent additional academic programs.
- ESPR faculty and teaching staff are being trained in the use and applications of the Blackboard Teaching Platform by staff of the Inter-American University. A collaborative alliance has been signed between both institutions.
- A new certification program in Ecclesiastic Administration is being developed. The certification program will target church administrators, treasurers; and lay and ordained clergy. Courses will begin in the Spring of 2020.

Estimated cost	\$ 115,325	Potential Income	\$ 181,190
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2. *Physical infrastructure* – Physical infrastructure renovation and maximize its use for teaching-learning processes, research, assessment and community service. Strategic Goals 1,2,5 and 8.

- A grant from [UMCOR](#) (United Methodist Committee on Relief) in support of the refurbishing of residential housing was received.
- A national recovery grant from [PDA](#) (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) of the [Presbyterian Church USA](#) (PCUSA) to provide management support to the reconstruction projects was received.
- These two grants, next to the commitments of volunteers already scheduled, will rehabilitate damaged residential units by the Hurricane Maria. The project will begin in January 2020 and the first units will be available for rent by the summer 2020.

Estimated cost	\$ 497,040	Potential income	\$ 728,920
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3. *Technological infrastructure, informatics and connectivity* – Maximize the usage of technological infrastructure and connectivity in support of the teaching and learning processes, research, assessment and community service. Strategic Goals 1,2,5,6, 7.

- New monitor, display and presentation system is to be installed on each one of the 5 classrooms. A sponsor campaign is being developed to encourage each sponsoring denomination to raise the necessary funds to upgrade each classroom.
- Upgrade to the phone and voicemail system.
- Upgrade to the T-1 and T-3 internet access lines.

Estimated cost	\$ 60,147	Potential income	\$ 0
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4. *Compliance with high quality standards and institutional internalization* – Acquire necessary professional licenses and accreditations to guarantee effective teaching-learning processes, research, evaluation and community service. Strategic Goals 3 and 4.

- A newly constructed “Smart Room” was inaugurated in August 2019. The room was fitted with the latest video conferencing technology that includes five 70-inch monitors, video cameras, controls on touch screen tables, ZOOM conferencing software, and high internet connection.
- Software licenses were purchased.
- Accreditations are being fulfilled.

Estimated cost	\$ 61,325	Potential Income	\$ 0
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The Strategic Plan 2017-2022 draws information from the national context and input from dialogues in faculty meetings, executive committee, administrative teams and Board of Directors. The financial situation has been shared with the faculty, students, academic and administrative support staff, supporting denominations and stockholders.

Historical Financial Trends

The ESPR is an organization defined by the regulations approved by of [Board of Directors](#). The Board of Directors has the final decisional power over the Seminary’s processes and actions. Administrative decisions follow recommendations of the Executive Committee (EC), the representative body of the Board, through their monthly meetings. The President of the Seminary presents progress reports of objectives detailed in the approved Strategic Plan 2012-2017 and 2017-2022 respectively and reports the financial statements and administrative actions taken toward complying with the institutional strategic plan. Decisions of the EC and the delegated issues are executed according to the priorities set by the EC. Weekly, biweekly or monthly meetings are held with individual directorates for strategies planning, execution and assessment.

Financial planning is discussed in coordination with the management team and EC, integrating the context trends and emphasizing the areas of concern. The financial statements are audited annually by an external auditor who provides recommendations to the Board and administration of actions to be followed as necessary. ([Appendix XVI](#), [Appendix XVII](#), [Appendix XVIII](#), [Appendix XIX](#) & [Appendix XX](#)).

See the following appendixes for more financial data.

- **Statements of Financial Position** ([Appendix LXXV](#))
- **Revenues Budgetary Assignments 2015-2019** ([Appendix LXXVI](#))
- **Expenses Budgetary Assignments 2015-2019** ([Appendix LXXVII](#))

Budget Projections 2019-2022

Academic programs. Human infrastructure (Administrative and Teaching staff) - Goal 1: Founding of collaborative alliances for the creation and extension of academic programs.

The strategic alliances developed during the national crisis of the hurricane Irma and Maria provided the Seminary with new collaboration opportunities to diversifying income and support. One of those opportunities initiated a collaboration agreement to develop and establish a bachelor’s degree in Theology and Pastoral Work in conjunction with the Interamerican University of Puerto

Rico. This collaboration agreement projected income is of \$ 8,415 dollars per 3 credit/course (with a minimum of 15 students) during the first year. The following consecutive years projected income is \$25,245 dollars.

8.3. Physical Resources

Physical Facilities Trends

The Seminary is in a 4 acres lot across from the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus and less than a mile from the main financial center in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Our installations convey the predecessor's interest in establishing a central location to provide theological education where the traditional evangelical Christian denominations may converge and learn. The Seminary main building is a two-story building located closed to the campus main entrance. The Juan de Valdes library is located adjacent to the main building. Within the campus you will find seven (7) rental residences and student dormitory. The campus has its own private parking lot with over 50 car spaces.

A join collaborative grant agreement with the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance of the Presbyterian Church USA (PDA) and United Methodist Committee on Relief of the Global Ministries (UMCOR) are providing financial support (\$50,000 initial grant) to develop the rental residencies and student dormitory. PDA has committed a \$120,000 grant for two years (\$60,000 a year) in support of the Project Manager compensation and expenses. UMCOR has committed a \$100,000 grant to provide materials and supplies to further develop the properties. This physical facilities improvement grants will provide the Seminary with new opportunities for rental income.

The Hurricanes Irma and Maria – 2017

The Seminary facilities were heavily damaged during the hurricanes Irma (September 6, 2017) and Maria (September 20-21, 2017). The electric grid, technological and informatics infrastructure were impacted and out of service for several months. The Seminary and the surrounding areas were without commercial electric power for over four months. Classes were held at the Inter-American University Metro Campus during the aftermath of the hurricanes. This was possible thanks to a partnership agreement between both higher education institutions.

- *Property Insurances* - Claims for property damage and unearned income were filed with by the insurance company. The proposal settlement for damage to property and unearned income totaled the amount, net to deductible, of \$ 219,012.
- *FEMA* - A three-year claim was filed with FEMA under the A, B and E categories. They were evaluated by FEMA adjusters. A final settlement for the category A and B was received in the amount of \$ 45,000. The final settlement for the category E claim was received for the total amount of \$99,263 on December 2019.
- *Ecumenical Table of Disasters and Mitigation* - Several meetings were held during 2018 with representatives of the Collaborating Churches in PR and USA. On April 2019, we participated in the DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP BI-ANNUAL MEETING, which was held at the Seminary. The group agreed to assist the Seminary in seeking for new income sources and volunteer groups for restoring and mitigating services, as well as establishing new projects for the Seminary. The work team approved an

income program for restoration and scholarships funds. This program is to be completed in two years 2019-2020. Two important parts of this project are:

- The creation of a \$40K fully funded scholarship fund program at the discretion of the president.
- A fully sponsored Project Manager position (sponsored by [PCUSA](#)) who will be responsible for formulating a structural master plan for the ESPR. This plan will include the following areas:
 - Energy reduction plan for the optimization of resources, reducing use of electricity:
 - a. Tracking of sunlight in the outdoor area (in progress)
 - b. Total change to LED (in progress)
 - c. Acquiring and installing solar panels in all buildings of the Institution.
 - Restoration of impacted areas by Hurricane María through the work plan carried out by the Project Manager.
 - a. Academic/administrative facilities and equipment, including roof waterproofing and exterior painting.
 - b. Library facilities, including floor repair and reserve room.
 - c. Residential lodging/rental facilities including roof waterproofing, purchase and installation of PVC cabinets, electricity and plumbing repairs, and exterior painting. Some of these repairs have been completed.

Physical infrastructure – Goal 2: Complete renovation of physical infrastructure and maximize its use for teaching-learning processes, research, appraisal and community service.

A new up today technological room has been constructed in the second story of the main building. The “Smart Room”, as it has been nicknamed, have sitting for twelve students. The technology installed expand such capacity to over 20 additional participants connected via the internet. Each remote participant will have the same access to the presentations and information shared during class via a live video feed.

The “Smart Room” was initiated thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Presbyterian Church USA. The final construction cost was \$45,000. The room is available to be rented for meetings, video conferences or video communications. Due to our connectivity nature, some of our Board of Director’s members reside in the US mainland. Future scheduled meetings may be held in the facility to reduce board administrative, travel and operational cost.

Technological Trends

Both the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and the Institutional Development Plan 2019-2022 (in progress), detailed the reality to renew technological services to benefit all educational efforts. At the same time, it includes guidelines for the implementation and improvement of technology equipment and connectivity:

«To optimize the technological infrastructure, IT and connectivity that supports teaching and learning processes, research, assessment and community services. » (Goal 7, SP 2017-2022).

Technological infrastructure, informatics and connectivity. Maximize the usage of technological infrastructure, informatics and connectivity that support the teaching and learning processes, research, assessment and community service.

The Seminary webpage <https://www.se-pr.edu> highlights the improvements and modernization of the digital process and information. Our goal is to establish and implement an online education program. Most of our students travel over two hours to attend class. The technology installed in the “Smart Room” will provide those students the ability to attend class remotely therefore reducing cost and travel time. In addition, online courses will be an additional incentive for new students to register and attend. Maximizing the use of the Smart Room in an intentional goal for the years 2020-2022. The potential rental income and the reduction on administrative cost will offset the investment.

Currently the Seminary is transitioning from the traditional cable source internet connectivity to E-rate optical fiber connection. This transition is being subsidized with funds from LSTA, a Federal Government subsidy for non-profit organizations to receive high speed optical fiber internet connectivity. The Seminary cost will be 10% of the development costs of the band needed for online education. At the same time it will reduce the internet utility cost by 60%. This initiative also supports the continued development of the Library Technology Center, purchasing equipment and assistance for the library catalog.

8.4 Institutional information technology resources

Information Technology (IT)

Overseeing the optimization processes and technical support to ensure continuity of operations is a major commitment. As a result of all efforts made in the past three years, we have achieved:

General

- Expand the reach of wireless network to include all ESPR facilities under the same SSID.
- Optimize the library information systems by integrating the connectivity between the library and the main building with optical fiber, increased database access and online bibliographic resources.
- Construction of "Smart Room" with wireless connection and technological equipment to broadcast live classes, conferences and meetings to support the teaching-learning processes as well as research.
- Optimize connectivity by establishing and implementing an internet traffic plan including the strengthening of security.

Library

- Installation of communications hardware and structural wiring.
- The Seminary owns laptops for the academic support of underprivileged students. They are located at the library and are available for the exclusive use of academic and research needs of students who apply for the technological equipment loan program.
- Purchase of new computers, operating systems and programs. Purchase laptops for student use.
- Migration database of the Mandarin Catalog for cloud services

Administration, Faculty offices and classrooms (Second floor)

- Structural wiring and optic fiber installation in order to achieve better connectivity. Telephone lines were relocated.
- Updating the accounting system by acquiring the license of Sage 50 Premium Accounting.
- Migration of server emails to provide institutional email service for students, faculty and administrative staff.
- Audio system installed in classrooms (1A, 1B) used as an auditorium.

Web page (www.se-pr.edu) additional improvements provide

- Additional available information on academic programs to students
- A payment portal or gateway to increase service level to students
- An organized user interface to have easy access to student's relevant information
- Access to institutional data as required by internal and external stakeholders.

Short, medium- and long-term recommendations and planning

- Evaluate Internet provider and voice services, so that a more suitable service can be found and meet the need in information systems.
- Continue with the improvement of technological infrastructure, informatics and internal connectivity. This includes replacing the telephone services.
- Purchase of updated Office licenses for library computers.
- Establish a formal IT department in the organizational structure of the ESPR, to offer operational support and generates adapted solutions to needs of the Institution.

8.5. Institutional Environment***Human Resources Trends***

The Seminary has faced financial deficits and difficulties over the past 10 years. Such financial situation has limited the ability to hire specialized personnel in technology, fund development, finance and Federal Education programs. This limitation forced the Seminary to centralize several functions and duties on one directorate position, the Administrator. During the Board of Director meeting held on August 31st, 2019, a new organizational structure was approved. This new organizational structure separates the functions performed by the Administrator into three separate areas: Finance, General Services and Human Resources. By doing so, the duties, responsibilities and supervisory roles are separated and enables administrators to focus on specific responsibilities.

A new Finance Director position was created to oversee the finance, accounting and budget process. This position has the responsibility to oversee the cash flow, project income and control expenses. All financial functions and responsibilities were transferred into this new position. The position is being financial supported by four years grant from [Global Ministries](#). Global Ministries is a joint ministerial venture of the Disciples Church of Christ and the United Church of Christ. A grant in the amount \$260,000 (\$65,000 a year) has been committed to provide the salary, retirement benefits and administrative and employment cost.

A new General Services Director position was approved. This position has the responsibility to oversee the maintenance of the physical property. In addition, all rental, and service contract will be oversee by the General Services Director. The director will also be responsible for maintaining sanitary licenses, permits, insurance policies and general facilities. This position will continue being funded as part of the Seminary budget.

The Human Resources duties has been outsourced. A private company was hired to supervise the human resources duties and responsibilities of the Seminary. The professional contract provides for a representative to be present at the Seminary twice a week. The professional service contract for this position is being funded by four years grant from Global Ministries as well. A grant in the amount \$60,000 (\$15,000 a year) has been committed to provide the operating cost of the Human Resources professional contract.

Ongoing Efforts

During this auto evaluation process, we have been confronted with the reality that the Seminary depends financially of the support of the sponsor denominations. The main source of recurrent income comes from the denominations national and global ministries offices in conjunction with the support of the local churches. The endowment returns are limited to less than 20% of the budget. There is not a well establish fund raising program. The lack of reserves present the Seminary is constantly confronted with a cashflow limitation. The Seminary has 100 years of experience, of graduates, of impacting the community and Puerto Rico. That is a great strength and source of new resources. Therefore, several steps and conversations have taken place to establish a most needed fundraising program:

- The access to Network for Good which host all fundraising through Facebook, was recovered. The information in the profile, the Non-Profits Organization (NPO) status and IRS 501(c)(3) status were confirmed. These certifications ensure that contributions are tax deductible to the contributor. [See the link.](#)
- A profile was opened at GuideStar. GuideStar provides fundraising services to NPO and a link that may be placed in our website for direct contributions. This is the organization used by Global Ministries to receive direct contributions. Adding this link to the SEPR website and promoting the direct contribution could add an additional \$20K to \$25K to the unrestricted budget. See the links: guidestar.org, [Global Ministries 1](#) & [Global Ministries 2](#).
- Conversations have been initiated and a formal request is in the works to add the SEPR to the Christmas Joy Offering of the PCUSA. The PCUSA holds four annual special offerings in the seasons of Lent (March-April), Pentecost (May-June), Global Witness and Peacemaking (October) and Christmas (December). As part of the Presbyterian PACT (for being an endorsed seminary of the PCUSA), we receive an annual contribution of \$25K. The Christmas Joy Offering has two main purposes which are to assist retired church workers who fall in financial needs and to support the education and leadership development of minorities. Confirmation was received in December 2019 that the Seminary was recommended to the awarding committee to be included as an offering recipient. [See Link.](#)

8.6. Cooperative Use of Resources

During the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the Seminary received the support and encouragement from a diverse group of organizations, seminaries, institutions and religious organizations. Personnel from Princeton Theological Seminary visited the campus on several occasions to assist in the recovery efforts taking place. Volunteers from Princeton cleaned, repaired and restored the damaged Dr. James McAllister Chapel, taking special care and consideration to the historical dome that provides sunlight over the pulpit.

The Inter-American University provided direct support to our students and faculty right after the hurricanes. Classes were offered in the facilities of the Metro Campus of the Inter-American University, thus enabling us to complete that semester. Their assistance and support provided a safe locations and an inspiring educational environment for our Centennial Graduating Class to complete their graduation requirements.

Volunteers and skilled workers were essential in getting the campus up and ready to receive our students and faculty on January 2018. Volunteer groups from the Presbyterian Church USA, United Methodist Church, American Baptist, Disciples of Christ Church, United Church of Christ, Iglesia Evangélica Unida, Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Sínodo del Caribe, ex-alumni, and local congregations provided the most needed assistance to engage the Seminary on the road to recovery.

Without the direct support of the above-mentioned organizations and the silent support of those that provided their contribution anonymously, the Seminary would have not recovered. Today, our gratitude to them.

8.7 Clusters

Academic programs. Human infrastructure (Administrative and Teaching staff) - Goal 1: Founding of collaborative alliances for the creation and extension of academic programs.

The strategic alliances developed during the national crisis of the hurricane Irma and Maria provided the Seminary with new collaboration opportunities to diversifying income and support. One of those opportunities initiated a collaboration agreement to develop and establish a bachelor's degree in Theology and Pastoral Work in conjunction with the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico. This collaboration agreement projected income is of \$ 8,415 dollars per 3 credit courses (with a minimum of 15 students) during the first year. The following consecutive years projected income is \$25,245 dollars.

8.8. Instructional Technology Resources

The “Smart Room”, finished in 2019, have sitting for twelve students. The technology installed expand such capacity to over 20 additional participants connected via the internet. Each remote participant will have the same access to the presentations and information shared during class via a live video feed. The instructor will have access to all participants, either present in the classroom or virtually via 5 different monitors installed thru the classroom. A license from ZOOM has been purchased that allow simultaneous interaction between the onsite classroom and the virtual spaces.

FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES

The Self Study process identified the following challenges and opportunities to be use as guide for future development of the institution.

STANDARD 1: PURPOSE, PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Findings

1. Achievements and Strengths

- The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico has clearly defined mission, values and goals that are the product of a wide and collaborative process.
- The community recognizes it has in the mission an instrument for decision making and evaluation of the performance of the institution.
- Significant improvement in the systematization of the data collection evidenced by the appraisal of student learning and the institutional assessment compared to the last self-study.
- Design and update of the Assessment Plan.
- Writing and publication of studies related to student performance, evaluations of academic programs, satisfaction of service surveys provided by administrative and support offices, assessment of library services, surveys to graduates, etc.

2. Challenges

- Fiscal and political crisis of the Island as a serious threat to the stability of higher education institutions. Changing demographics, particularly the declining population, that reduces the recruitment of students.
- Faculty succession plan to fulfill the academic and theological commitments.
- To accurately demonstrate the use of assessment in decision making for the improvement of academic programs and support services.
- Guarantee the uniformity and systematization of the institutional valuation in order to comply with the Institutional Evaluation cycle and design a faculty training calendar on the best techniques and strategies for student learning assessment.

STANDARD 2: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Findings

1. Achievements and Strengths

- The Evangelical Seminary is an ecumenical theological institution of higher education that complies with local and federal legal and ethical regulations.
- The Evangelical Seminary has in place many rules to regulate the ethics and integrity of its academic and administrative processes.
- The Seminary is in compliance with local and federal regulations.

2. Challenges

- Although matters related to the Christian faith parameters are redefined as a matter of freedom of conscience, it still requires more ecumenical dialogue.
- Need to address the issues of evaluations, promotions, sabbaticals and other rights for Staff and Faculty, notwithstanding the fiscal constraints currently faced by the Seminary.
- Implement a training program for members of the Seminary community on key obligations related to local and federal regulations including Title IX compliance and continue the education programs on domestic violence to the religious community, among others.

STANDARD 3: THE THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Findings

1. Achievements and Strengths

- The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (ESPR) is a superior theological education institution that complies with the regulatory and accreditation processes that guarantee consistency in higher education. It is licensed to operate by the Puerto Rico Board of Education (CEPR). It is duly accredited by the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada and by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
- The ESPR provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and consistency in all the offered programs at graduate level.
- The academic programs are clearly and distinctly described in official publications of the Institution, such as the institutional catalog, the brochures located in dissemination spaces of each office and on the ESPR website. Potential students can grasp and comply with requirements of the program degrees and know the expected time to complete them.
- Teaching-learning is based on the mission, objectives, values and policies of the Institution. The students' learning experiences are designed, delivered and assessed by regular or hired professors duly qualified for the work they do by taking opportunities, resources and support for professional growth and innovation.
- Carries out and promotes extracurricular activities each semester, such as book presentations and conferences. Likewise, we promote activities of other institutions that are related to the topics and interests of the Institution's academic community. The ESPR has promoted, the opportunity for students to be exposed to learning experiences in various areas in and outside the country, through proposals and invitations from other institutions.

2. Challenges

- The ESPR has the opportunity to develop teaching-learning through research and/or external providers where critical and independent thinking is designed and promoted.

- For the achievement and effectiveness of student learning and development, the ESPR acknowledges the importance of research processes, independent critical thinking and assessment. The students' learning experiences are consistent with the expectations of higher education.

STANDARD 4: LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Findings

1. Achievements and Strengths

- As an important resource and support for the teaching-learning process, the ESPR has the Juan de Valdés Library (LJV) of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (ESPR) as the most important center for access to specialized information on theology and religion in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. The library contributes to the mission of the ESPR by providing information resources, services, study spaces and promoting competencies that support learning, teaching and research for, and in collaboration with, the ESPR community. In addition, it has the mission of preserving document heritage of the Protestant Church in Puerto Rico and making it available to all.

2. Challenges

Raise necessary funding to support technological innovations of Library services and resources.

STANDARD 5: FACULTY

Findings

1. Achievements and Strengths

- The faculty members have the necessary competencies for their responsibilities. They have earned the highest academic degrees of their field.
- Faculty are members of all academic committees and play a determining role in areas such as recruitment, assessment, graduation, awards, scholarships, institutional policies and external relations.
- The Seminary upholds its commitment to faculty rights in areas such as academic freedom, evaluation, support their continuing development and respect the merit system.
- Faculty evinces incorporating a variety of techniques to evidence student's assessment.

2. Challenges

- To find grants to foster the participation of the faculty in scholarly research or other activities that will increase their scholarly achievement or their capacity for service to the institution.
- Identify economic resources to promote the publications of the research work of the faculty.
- Succession Plan to replace retiring faculty.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION, SERVICES AND PLACEMENT**Findings****1. Achievements and Strengths**

- Work of Library staff on mentoring and offering workshops to help students with their research and work has been very effective.
- Student participation in chapel services, book presentations, co-curricular activities, etc. contribute to the integral character of the academic experience.
- There is a great emphasis on teamwork throughout the classes in order to promote collaborative work and affirm them within the community.
- Activities of motivation, healthy lifestyle, eco-theology group, personal development, student trips (Cuba, Tanzania) have improved relationships in the student community.
- Strengthening technology, better WIFI band in classrooms and campus and the new Smart Room.

2. Challenges

- Greater efforts are required to achieve greater retention.
- It is urgent to strengthen support systems and virtual communication for students.
- Update Recruitment and Retention Plan 2012-2017.
- Even when support services are provided, greater collaboration is required between the different service offices and an improved communication between the units that offer it.

STANDARD 7: AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE**Findings****1. Achievements and Strengths**

- The ESPR complies with the standard by presenting a functional governance structure as expected from an accredited institution. The governance structure is well defined in its regulations, manuals, policies and official documents.
- Regulations and governing documents encourage participation of all sectors in decision making within governing bodies such as the Board of Directors, Faculty, the Student Council, etc.
- ESPR has manuals that comply with federal and local regulations and laws to guide and evaluate Faculty and Administrative Staff.

2. Challenges

- Although participation of the Board of Directors, the President and others in fund raising efforts has been evident, these not been very effective; except for donations received after Hurricanes Irma and María.

- Improve communication and dissemination of decisions taken by the governing bodies through conventional and digital means.
- Design an effective campaign and recruitment plan of new students.

STANDARD 8: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Findings

- The Seminary must develop and implement an effective and efficient fund-raising strategy. Fund raising is the key to reducing the cashflow limitation and support future sustainability. The Seminary must investigate getting its own graduates and ex-alumni involve in the fund-raising efforts. For 100 years this institution has been part of the Puerto Rico Christian way of life. Those who have fist hand experience with the Seminary are the best promotes and therefore fund-raisers.

Challenges

- The main challenge faced by the Seminary is cashflow. The cashflow limitations is directly affecting the ability to expand it programs and to fully develop strategic plans.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS (ES)

ES.1. DEGREE PROGRAMS AND NOMENCLATURE

The ESPR is sponsored and supported by six historical denominations and their respective partners in the United States. Currently the Seminary offers three degrees: a Master of Divinity (MDiv) that confers the opportunity of theological education to men and women whose vocational goal is to serve in the ordained ministry; a Master of Arts in Religion (MAR) for men and women interested in analyzing the religious experience from an interdisciplinary perspective and who are interested in serving in a variety of educational institutions; a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree, that challenges clergy to be more intentional and faithful in their leadership within congregations and other institutions. All academic programs are clearly and distinctly described in official publications of the Institution, such as the institutional catalog, the brochures located in dissemination spaces of each office and on the ESPR website. Potential students can grasp and comply with requirements of the program degrees and know the expected time to complete them. In addition, we offer continuing education courses designed to address the immediate needs of alumni and local lay leaders. The Seminary has contributed to the development and growth of protestant churches on the island, working to create leaders with an elevated sense of ecclesiastical responsibility and fidelity to God. Our ministry strives for theological and pastoral academic excellence.

The nomenclature of Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Religion and Doctor of Ministry are standard and follow the ATS recommended language for all Board-approved degree programs. At the present time the MAR program is in the process of review to reduce the number of credits. The proposal was approved by the Faculty and by the Board of Directors and awaits the approval of the Council of Education of Puerto Rico. In the case of the D.Min, it is under review and it is not accepting new applicants. Its director, Dr. Agustina Luvis, is focusing on assisting doctoral candidates to complete their requirements of graduation.

In the current academic year, the Seminary has 164 students enrolled in all degree programs. The makeup of the student body is 103 (62.8%) males and 61 (37.1.2%) females. Moreover, our students come from a variety of religious denominations, including independents and from all regions of Puerto Rico and Saint Croix (US Virgin Islands). The MDiv is our largest program, enrolling 79.2% (130) of our students. On the first semester of 2019-2020, MAR had an enrollment of 13 students. Last semester we graduated forty-eight (48) students, eight of them from the doctoral program. The Seminary has a faculty of 5 full time professors, including the director of the library who is also member of the faculty, and the Acting Dean of Academic and Students Affairs, an Adjunct Professor responsible for the administration of the MAR program and 13 part-time professors.

The [Master of Divinity](#) (M. Div.) is the main theological program designed to educate men and women in the pastoral leadership. It is also targeted to people who work in other ministerial duties within their communities. The Master of Divinity has aimed to provide an innovative curriculum that nurtures training and professional development in academic and ministry endeavors so that all its graduates are holistically prepared to serve in God's mission in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, the United States, the Americas and the rest of the world. In accordance with the Seminary's mission, our three main academic programs are focused on researching, comprehending and analyzing the religious and pastoral phenomenon in Puerto Rico and the world from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Theological education in the ESPR is widely ecumenical. We serve the previously mentioned denominations that send their students; whether they are pastoral candidates or laypeople, to receive theological education. Faculty members come from the sponsoring denominations, other Christian denominations and independents. The Institution is very intentional in promoting the development of an ecumenical mindset in Church leadership, while preparing each student to serve in their denomination. The ESPR is open to other ecclesiastical Christian groups that want to join in all theological education efforts, whether it is in partnership with equal participation or with special arrangements.

We also expect from M.Div. students to develop a deep understanding of the cultural, political, social and economic context of Christianity in Puerto Rico; develop a general knowledge of the different approaches and methodologies for reading the Bible; develop a critical vital understanding of interpreting faith within the historical context of Christianity and Christian thought; students should also acquire a thorough biblical, theological, historical and pastoral culture; as well as develop the necessary tools for a critical and thorough research in relation to their Christian faith and their pastoral practice.

Tools acquired through the MDiv program will nurture necessary qualities such as devotedness to human rights, respect and awareness for our brothers and sisters, as well as human wisdom and spirituality; resulting in an effective service to God and the community. Throughout the M.Div. program students also develop the necessary skills for pastoral work such as preaching, worship, Christian education, church administration, pastoral care, chaplaincy and community service. These skills will help the student understand the importance of new Christian ministry models that promote teamwork in order to foster new talent within the church and the community as well as provide continuous training to those currently serving within the church. This will encourage the desire and willingness for the betterment of the pastoral work.

The [M.Div. program is an 83-credit degree program](#). These must be passed with a minimum of 2.50 GPA and must be completed in a maximum of nine (9) years. Courses are offered each semester in an evening schedule. These courses are divided in the following categories: Biblical studies, meant for the student to grasp the complexities of the critical study of Biblical texts of the Old and New Testament; History and Theology Studies, meant for the student to understand, nurture and support the biblical and philosophical basis with a systematic and critical theology consideration; Interdisciplinary Studies, meant to broaden the religious experience by providing an academic and curricular emphasis in different fields of the human conduct and the religion phenomenon; World Religions, meant for the student to critically analyze other religious traditions that have, at the same time, contributed to culture and interreligious dialogue; Ministry Studies, meant to develop Christian ministry skills; Denominational Principles, meant for students to be able to integrate theology and practice within their denomination; and Colloquium, with an integrating interest to be established in its content such as personality, vocation, leadership, and ecclesial perspective.

On the second semester of the last year, as part of Colloquy IV, students have to submit a monograph in which they each articulate their theological and biblical standing and its impact on their Christian ministry. On September 2011, Faculty members modified the purpose, objectives and requisites of this course in order for them to be fit a more academic and systematic profile of each student that can be displayed through a research paper. These changes reveal weaknesses in the students' learning processes and provide the Institution with a more [comprehensive assessment tool](#). The purpose is for each student to demonstrate a satisfactory level of integration of theological studies with his/her overall capacities between his/her personality, vocation and faith.

The ESPR started the [Master of Arts in Religion](#) (M.A.R.) Program in August 1980. It was meant to serve those people interested in acquiring a deeper understanding of their faith as well as becoming better servants within their Christian communities, yet not interested in a pastoral ministry. This program has also appealed to those interested in teaching religion in educational institutions, in pursuing advanced studies in theology and religion as well as researching the religious phenomenon in Puerto Rico.

The M.A.R. program is a 54-credit degree program and students completing this program should do so with a minimum GPA of 2.50. The purpose of this program is to foster scholarly analysis of the religious phenomenon in general and, particularly of Christianity. It is characterized by a multidimensional phenomenological approach from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective; meant to trigger critical, historical and systematic analysis of worldviews, value systems, religious institutions and Christian and non-Christian faith communities.

The M.A.R. program caters for three basic needs when pursuing religious studies within the Puerto Rican society and the contemporary world. First, the importance of studying and understanding the religious phenomenon in culture and society. Then, this program caters to the globalization of higher education by studying religion in its global dimension and as important standpoint in the quest for world peace and justice for all. This awareness is vital in order to enable bridge building and promotion of intercultural dialogue, learning and cooperation that leads towards a more ecumenical and global human community. Lastly, as a religion phenomenon research and teaching center, the ESPR, contributes significantly to the Superior Education Forum of Puerto Rico by allowing access to its academic, curricular and library resources to the open public for a multidisciplinary approach to religion. Since 2016, Dr. Juan Caraballo Resto, who is a professor of anthropology of religion, serves as coordinator of M.A.R. program. This program is mostly offered by adjunct faculty, which varies according to the academic offer in each semester, yet it is usually composed of 10 to 12 professors.

The ESPR also offers a [Doctor of Ministry](#) degree. The main purpose of the D.Min. program is to strengthen and deepen the work of ministers committed to develop and offer a pastoral care that is aligned to Jesus and that caters to the challenges we all face on the 21st century. Our program is mainly oriented towards family pastoral care. This program allows the opportunity to study, critically reflect and assess advanced studies in several theology disciplines and ministerial skills. In order to enter the program, candidates must have M.Div. or its equivalent and three (3) years of pastoral work experience or its equivalent. The program requisites are an M.Div. degree or its equivalent and 3 years of pastoral practice, after the M.Div. degree, or its equivalent. After completing the D.Min. program, each student should have:

- Developed a basic understanding of him or herself as an integral part of his/her nuclear and extended family.
- Developed a basic understanding of social structures of a family in their multiple expressions.
- Developed a basic understanding of family from a biopsychosocial and spiritual perspective.
- Developed an understanding of the conflicts of modern family life, particularly in Puerto Rico.
- Acquired the basic skills in pastoral care in general and particularly with families.
- Acquired basic skills of conflict management.

- Nurtured and developed spiritual values according to biblical and historical traditions.
- Grown in sensitivity and understanding to serve in social ministry.
- Affirmed a pastoral, vocational and professional identity, to serve the church through its care to families.
- Acquired a better understanding of the role, importance and responsibility of families in their ecological context.
- Acquired a critical understanding of the biblical and traditional considerations about family life.

This program is 6 semesters or units; each of 8 sessions of 8 hours each. Each semester discusses a main topic, divided into 8 sub-topics.

The students' learning experiences are designed, taught and evaluated by regular or contracted teachers. The teaching and learning process in recent years has been transformed from a direct communication model to a more audiovisual education with the use of advanced organizers, such as digital projectors. These allow students to listen and read fundamental aspects of a topic in a more active and integrated way. The use of these and other technology equipment also complement the pedagogical abilities of Faculty by allowing them to vary their teaching-learning styles. Some teachers have incorporated (in a limited way) the use of the Internet to facilitate access to the course and research material

In accordance with the Seminary's mission, our three main academic programs are focused on researching, comprehending and analyzing the religious and pastoral phenomenon in Puerto Rico and the world from an interdisciplinary perspective. This has pushed the Seminary towards a curricular revision that prepares students to serve their communities according to the new social and religious realities in which they serve. All three programs have distinctive yet related goals, learning outcomes and educational assessment. As we prepare for the Spring Semester of 2020, the faculty—both regular and adjunct—is revising the syllabus to align them to the mission and values of the ESPR and to revise their learning assessment instruments and rubrics.

The faculty of the ESPR maintains regular and substantive interaction with the student through various modes in addition to in-person teaching. An important faculty-student interaction is the Academic Advisement Program, adopted this year. Faculty meets with students to evaluate their progress and to reflect on their ministerial, professional and personal goals. Our faculty also coordinates with the students the monthly chapel services and provides support to students' projects and activities.

ES. 2. CAMPUS-BASED EDUCATION

The ESPR is located in the Rio Piedras section of the capital city of Puerto Rico, right across Puerto Rico's leading public university. See <http://se-pr.edu/campus>. It is a stand-alone institution and all facilities are in a single campus. As described in Section 8, the campus includes classrooms, faculty and administrative offices, the library, cafeteria, student housing and office spaces used by faith-based initiatives.

The academic program is designed to have the classes in this single location, except when a particular course includes visits to off campus locations. The only exception to this rule took place after the damage suffered by our infrastructure by hurricanes Irma and María in the Fall of 2017. The Seminary relocated its academic activities to facilities in the Inter American University

for the remaining of that semester but was able to resume regular activities in our campus on the following semester.

The main building has the classrooms and faculty and administrative offices, thus facilitating a close interaction between students, faculty and staff. The classrooms have moveable tables and chairs, access to outlets for laptops, as well as projectors and whiteboards. Wireless is available in the building. Electronic facilities are also located in the library for use by the students and to enable students with special need to participate in their courses from this first floor facility. This semester the Seminary inaugurated the “Smart Room”, a room equipped with technological equipments and programs that enable some students to join regular in person courses. It is our expectation to start offering on line courses as soon as we can comply with all regulations.

Very few of our students live on campus since the majority live spread out through the island, close to their congregations. Our student housing regularly accommodates visitors, including exchange students.

ES. 3. EXTENSION EDUCATION: NOT APPLICABLE

ES. 4. DISTANCE EDUCATION: NOT APPLICABLE

ES. 5. FACULTY-DIRECTED INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

Although the academic program of the ESPR is primarily in-person and on-campus, it recognizes the need for independent and faculty-directed courses to create opportunities for student development or to accommodate students that are relocated temporarily abroad. For example, this year we have student appointed to minister a church in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands who has benefited from this method of teaching-learning. The policies for Independent Studies and Faculty-Directed Instruction are available on page 39 of the Catalogue available <http://www.se-pr.edu/catalogo>

ES. 6. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The evaluation of student learning effectiveness is one of our most important responsibilities. In response to recommendations of previous accreditations, the ESPR created the Office of Institutional Assessment, headed by Dr. Juan Mejias. In collaboration with the faculty, the Office produced assessment plans, conducted the evaluations of student learning, developed rubrics, conducted workshops to train faculty, and conducted multiple studies that have guided our decision-making processes. This division is housed within the Office of the Dean of Academic and Students Affairs. The products of this research have guided the curricular revisions adopted by the ESPR. Dr. Mejias occupies now the position of Acting President of the ESPR and we are in process of filling that position.

As previously mentioned, in preparation for the Spring 2020 semester, the faculty is in a process of aligning their courses with the newly adopted mission of the ESPR, revising the assessment process and evaluating the rubrics that will be used in those courses.

The reports, statements, rubrics and other documents produced by this unit are published in <http://www.se-pr.edu/avaluo-y-acreditaciones> (See Standard 1, Part 1.2 Planning and Evaluation).

ES.7. ACADEMIC GUIDELINES: ADMISSION, TRANSFER CREDIT, SHARED CREDIT IN DEGREE PROGRAMS, AND ADVANCED STANDING

The admissions policies and processes of the ESPR are oriented to recruit students suitable for our mission and capable of completing successfully the programs in which they are admitted. Many of our students, primarily those enrolled in MDiv, are required by their denominations to complete the degree in order to be appointed to a ministry position and thus are supported financially by their churches. In order to meet these multiple goals, our admissions process allows us to select the best students that will advance our mission and goals, and that will provide our congregations and denominations with men and women who possess the competencies and values to build the Kingdom of our Lord.

The admissions process requires several steps and documentation. The student is required to submit an on-line application, an autobiographical essay, a transcript of credits, two (2) letters of recommendation, a letter of endorsement of his/her denomination (if applicable), the results of the EXADP test, and international students must present the results of the TOELF test. Once the student completes this part of the application process, he/she is interviewed by a regular faculty member. If the student is admitted, he/she is required to attend an initial orientation of the requirements of the program and the policies of the Seminary. The orientation for new students also includes information on financial assistance, denomination scholarships and federal aid, as well as other support services available and the students' rights recognized by our institution.

The Seminary has adopted –and revises regularly—policies on transfer credits, shared credits in degree programs, conditional admissions, admissions of students without a bachelor's degree, student admitted under the ATS-AETH recognition policy and readmissions. All these policies are available in our web page <http://www.se-pr.edu/proceso-de-solicitud-de-admision>

ES. 8. NONDEGREE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Consistent with our mission and goals of serving our sponsoring denominations and offering continuing education programs, we offer non-degree courses and certificate, that is self-sustaining. In most cases, the courses are offered by a faculty member, including our regular faculty. The Continuing Education Program is under the supervision of the President, but the decision to recognize a course or a set of courses for credits for the master's degree falls upon the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. Currently the only program is the Certificate in Transcultural Missions (CEMI). The certificate is promoted and endorsed by Baptist Churches. Since for the past two years this program has required subsidies from the Seminary and it is now under review.

DEGREE PROGRAM STANDARDS

STANDARD A: MASTER OF DIVINITY PROGRAM

A1. Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

Purpose of the degree

The [Master of Divinity](#) (MDiv.) is the main theological program designed to educate men and women in the pastoral leadership. It is also targeted to people who work in other ministerial duties within their communities. In order to achieve this, the Seminary seeks to forge pastoral leaders involved in the transformation of society through ministries that are innovative and relevant to their congregations and communities.

Outcomes

The primary goal of the MDiv Program is to contribute to the formation and development of academic and ministerial leadership of men and women to serve and participate in the mission of the people of God in Puerto Rico, in the Americas and globally. The MDiv Program forges pastoral and lay leaders involved in the transformation of society through ministries that are innovative and relevant to their congregations and communities. Aligned with the mission of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, it is expected that a graduate of the Master of Divinity program will be able to:

- Develop a general, critical and comprehensive understanding of the problems and challenges that the world presents to the Church of today in its plurality, both globally as well as in Puerto Rico and the Americas.
- Value and critically discern plurality both in its ecumenical and interreligious character.
- Develop an understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural context of Christianity in Puerto Rico.
- Know the different methodologies and approaches to reading the Bible, both the Old and the New Testament.
- Develop a critical understanding of the interpretation of the Faith within the context of the history of Christianity and Christian thought.
- Develop the necessary tools for a critical and thorough research in relation to their Christian faith and their pastoral practice
- Acquire a thorough biblical, theological, historical and pastoral culture
- Nurture necessary qualities such as devotedness to human rights, respect and awareness for our brothers and sisters, as well as human wisdom and spirituality
- Develop the necessary skills for pastoral work such as preaching, worship, Christian education, church administration, pastoral care, chaplaincy and community service.
- Understand the importance of new Christian ministry models that promote teamwork in order to foster new talent within the church and the community as well as provide

continuous training to those currently serving within the church. This will encourage the desire and willingness for the betterment of the pastoral work.

A.2. Program Content

The curriculum for the MDiv Program currently consists of 83 credits distributed in three programmatic areas: Biblical Studies, Theology and History and Church Ministry Studies (Practical Theology). These in turn represent the competencies that describe a graduate of the program. Students of the Master's in Divinity Program have to participate in three colloquiums aimed at reflecting on vocation and pastoral practice. Each colloquium fosters the integration of acquired knowledge and skills throughout the curriculum and the diverse dynamics and experiences in their local church in order to define healthy, balanced and constructive pastoral leadership patterns and behaviors. Each colloquium has its own assessment criteria including reflexive essays, journals, analysis of readings or books, oral reports, among others. The colloquia are: Colloquium I: Pastor and his/her leadership; Colloquium II: The Pastor in his/her missionary work; and Colloquium III: The Pastor in his/her evangelical work. On the last year of the MDiv Program, the student enrolls in Colloquium IV in which he/she integrates the work of the previous one into the *Theological Integration Monograph*. This is a research work that consists of a faculty-guided research project in which each student demonstrates the knowledge, skills and mindsets acquired throughout the program through the writing and articulation of a monograph. The main purpose is for the student to demonstrate his/her ability to integrate the areas of competencies of the MDiv Program (Biblical Studies, Theology and History Studies and Church Ministry Studies), bibliographic research skills and critical analysis of a situation or dilemma of interest in ecclesial or community life. The process requires a written monograph and an oral presentation before a Faculty Committee, who will evaluate the student's academic performance.

The ESPR offers a variety of co-curricular activities during the academic year aimed at both students and the general public. These activities are planned as ways to incite dialogue and discussion of issues of social interest such as social justice, human rights, economy, violence and gender violence. Some Faculty members, as part of their classes, coordinate with experts in key issues that will be addressed throughout the course, to visit their classes for an open discussion of said matter. The rest of the academic community is also invited to these classes. It is recommended that students of the programs participate in:

- Book presentations
- Open discussions
- Discussion panels
- Chapel services
- Experts and/or Visiting professors' conferences
- Discussion forum about Puerto Rican issues
- Exchange programs with other seminaries and/or universities in USA, Europe and Latin America.

In some courses, the learning experience also includes field visits that serve in contextualizing the theoretical issues discussed in class. This is, for example, in World Religion courses as well as Pentecostalism. Similarly, leading theologians from Latin America, the

Caribbean, the Hispanic community in the United States and Europe have offered lectures in our classrooms on core and critical issues that contribute to the theological work continuum.

Educational Assessment

In addition to the Theological Integration Monograph, the MDiv program uses other assessment instruments. For the student learning assessment of the monograph, the program uses two evaluation instruments: the [rubric to evaluate the integrative monograph](#) and the rubric to evaluate the oral defense. Both rubrics are aligned with the objectives of the program and the competencies of the graduate profile. The rubrics and the analysis of their results can be accessed on <http://www.se-pr.edu/avaluo-y-acreditaciones>). Another educational assessment instrument is the Congregational Interview. This is an [instrument](#) developed to evaluate the performance of students in pastoral competence areas that are not easily observable in the classroom context but reflect the learning acquired in the ESPR. Each year, the Academic Dean selects a random sample of congregations where our students exercise pastoral leadership, both as actual students and as recent graduates. The interview is directed to confessional leaders. The interview with denominational sponsoring leaders allows the ESPR to receive external information about student achievement in areas of learning measured by direct observation of practical skills and behavior.

As part of the learning opportunities provided by external entities are Spiritual Formation Academy and the "Clinical Pastoral Education" (CPE) educational model. The Spiritual Formation Academy (SFA) is an experience the Seminary has worked with the Upper Room for the past 13 years. It covers theological and practical perspectives around the selected topic of the Academy. The SFA seeks to provide a place for committed individuals - clergy and laity - to feel God as part of an intentional Christian community. The Academy was designed to nurture both the knowledge of spirituality and the context to feel the love of God. An important part of the experience is silence. Many of us feel uncomfortable with silence, and our culture does everything possible to avoid it.

A.3. Educational Resources and Learning Strategies

We foster the learning experience through a general, critical and integral comprehension of the challenges the Church faces both globally as well as locally in Puerto Rico and the Americas. Students learn to value and distinguish religious plurality within Christianity and other world religions.

Teaching-learning is based on the mission, objectives, values and policies of the Institution. The students' learning experiences are designed, delivered and assessed by regular or hired professors duly qualified for the work they do by taking opportunities, resources and support for professional growth and innovation.

Theological education in the ESPR is widely ecumenical. We serve the previously mentioned denominations that send their students; whether they are pastoral candidates or laypeople, to receive theological education. Faculty members come from the sponsoring denominations, other Christian denominations and independents. The Institution is very intentional in promoting the development of an ecumenical mindset in Church leadership, while preparing each student to serve in their denomination. The ESPR is open to other ecclesiastical Christian groups that want to join in all theological education efforts, whether it is in partnership with equal participation or with special arrangements.

We also expect from M.Div. students to develop a deep understanding of the cultural, political, social and economic context of Christianity in Puerto Rico; develop a general knowledge of the different approaches and methodologies for reading the Bible; develop a critical vital understanding of interpreting faith within the historical context of Christianity and Christian thought; students should also acquire a thorough biblical, theological, historical and pastoral culture; as well as develop the necessary tools for a critical and thorough research in relation to their Christian faith and their pastoral practice.

Tools acquired through the MDiv program will nurture necessary qualities such as devotedness to human rights, respect and awareness for our brothers and sisters, as well as human wisdom and spirituality; resulting in an effective service to God and the community. Throughout the M.Div. program students also develop the necessary skills for pastoral work such as preaching, worship, Christian education, church administration, pastoral care, chaplaincy and community service. These skills will help the student understand the importance of new Christian ministry models that promote teamwork in order to foster new talent within the church and the community as well as provide continuous training to those currently serving within the church. This will encourage the desire and willingness for the betterment of the pastoral work.

The students' learning experiences are designed, taught and evaluated by regular or contracted teachers. The teaching and learning process in recent years has been transformed from a direct communication model to a more audiovisual education with the use of advanced organizers, such as digital projectors. These allow students to listen and read fundamental aspects of a topic in a more active and integrated way. The use of these and other technology equipment also complement the pedagogical abilities of Faculty by allowing them to vary their teaching-learning styles. Some teachers have incorporated (in a limited way) the use of the Internet to facilitate access to the course and research material.

Duration

The duration of the M.Div. Program and its 83 credits program is organized to be fulfilled by a fulltime student in a three years course of study. Nevertheless, most of our students register with the Seminary on a part time basis. Students have a maximum of nine (9) years to finish the degree. Courses are offered each semester in an evening schedule. These courses are divided in the following categories: Biblical studies, meant for the student to grasp the complexities of the critical study of Biblical texts of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament; History and Theology Studies, meant for the student to understand, nurture and support the biblical and philosophical basis with a systematic and critical theology consideration; Interdisciplinary Studies, meant to broaden the religious experience by providing an academic and curricular emphasis in different fields of the human conduct and the religion phenomenon; World Religions, meant for the student to critically analyze other religious traditions that have, at the same time, contributed to culture and interreligious dialogue; Ministry Studies, meant to develop Christian ministry skills; Denominational Principles, meant for students to be able to integrate theology and practice within their denomination; and Colloquium, with an integrating interest to be established in its content such as personality, vocation, leadership, and ecclesial perspective.

Distinctive resources needed***Faculty***

The Seminary has a faculty of 5 full time professors and 13 part-time professors. The regular faculty covers the main aspects of the curriculum of the MDiv Program. Two members are Ph. D's in Biblical Studies, one member is a Ph. D. in Theology, one member is an ED.D., and the other member is a Ph. D. in Anthropology. The part-time professors cover most of the elective courses of the Seminary and several requirements for the degrees. Various faculty members have administrative positions and tasks as well as classroom responsibilities.

[The Seminary Faculty](#) is committed to contribute in teaching and academic advising aspects. This body represents the Institution in various academic jurisdictions, communities and churches. Each member is qualified for the positions they occupy and the work they are doing. Currently, our "faculty / student ratio" is 8: 1. The "average class size" is 15. Our percentage of full-time faculty with a completed doctoral degree is 100% (except the Library Director) and the participatory percentage of adjunct professors is 76%.

The ESPR supports the continuing education of Faculty and their participation in educational events to enrich their teaching and assessment strategies. There is a [Budget \(FY2018\)](#) item for Faculty growth, although with certain restrictions due to the financial situation. However, Faculty excellence is also determined by the academic quality of their books, essays and articles published, lectures given and other academic events they attend. Proof of this is the regular attendance of Faculty members to the annual conferences of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and Society of New Testament Studies. Some Faculty members have also attended and collaborated with other forums such as the Latin American Biblical Interpretation Magazine (RIBLA), Association of Hispanic Theological Education (AETH), Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), as well as professional associations in their respective disciplines.

The ESPR Faculty members are also recommended and invited to participate in annual conventions, academic dialogue forums, conferences, as well as preachers in churches. Additionally, Faculty members have contributed with curricular material for Sunday school programs in various denominations, local press articles and various denominational publications.

Technology Infrastructure

A second system of community resources is the recent development of technology infrastructure. Our institution is investing in its technological, informatics and connectivity infrastructure in order to support teaching and learning practices as well as research, assessment and community service. This investment will allow:

- Streamline all Registrar's Office services. Academic and administrative efforts will be consolidated in order to update the admission process, academic program dissemination, enrollment, management of student's records, student services, alumni services, and data collection for agency reports.
- Distance learning development in various modes: blended-learning, online, and live broadcast. We have already started with faculty training sessions for online course design. Virtual education will allow us to serve students in other geographic areas, which will increase our enrollment, and will therefore strengthen our institutional finances.
- We have been also able to renovate the electronic information room in the Library, while we continue to increase access to online databases and bibliographic resources.

Additionally, we acquired laptops to help students with financial difficulty comply with their academic work.

Faculty and student participation in international forums

One of the goals in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 is to promote participation of our students and our faculty in international forums. Last year, Dr. Guillermo Ramírez Muñoz, our Old Testament and Hebrew expert, together with a group of students, participated in an academic internship at the Theological Seminary of Matanzas, Cuba to discuss decolonial theology as seen by theological schools from Mexico, Cuba and Puerto Rico. Another group of students was able to attend *The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) 2018* in Arusha, Tanzania. In August 2018, Dr. Ediberto López was invited to the meeting of the Society of New Testaments Studies in Athens, Greece. Dr. Agustina Luvis and Dr. Juan Mejías were participating in ATS Roundtable Seminary for Midcareer Faculty 2019 in California, USA.

Student support services

Our institution provides student services aligned with the institution's mission and goals and that will allow them to achieve their goals. This support is channeled through the services provided by the admission offices, financial aid, registration, administration, library, academic and student counseling, chaplaincy counseling; co-curricular and extracurricular activities, lodging, student trips, interlibrary services, parking, and cafeteria. From the moment that they express an interest in studying in our Institution until they graduate and while they are working on their vocations, our students receive guidance and monitoring to ensure their performance; as well as to comply with all the state and federal regulations that protect and regulate the Institution. The schedule of the Office of Academic Affairs was adjusted for a better service to our students.

Access to functionally diverse people

The ESPR is focused on being a welcoming place to all people without discrimination. For that purpose, we worked on providing access to facilities for people with functional diversity. The doors that give access to the Library and its spaces have been enlarged. There is a book search policy by staff for people who are not able to access upper floors. In case of damage to the main building elevator, a room has been separated where students can take the courses through the Zoom, Facetime and other platforms. There is also a Reasonable [Accommodation Policy](#). The relevance of this policy was evident during the trying times after the hurricanes when our facilities could not rely on electricity for elevators and several students did not have access to the upper floors.

A.4. Admissions

There are several strategies to capture the attention of students and general public about our academic offer. Visits are received at the Department of Academic and Students Affairs. The [geographical location of the ESPR](#) within the University District, just in front of the University of Puerto Rico, allows students interested in continuing graduate studies at our Institution, to visit our facilities frequently, stay, use our Library, and consult our Faculty. The Institution's mission and vision are visible so that all visitors and members of the ESPR community can constantly read them. Faculty and staff work align with what is stated in our [mission, values and goals](#). These are also presented on the [Institution's website](#), promotional brochures, [catalog](#) and other official documents of the Institution.

When an interested person comes to our institution, whether is personally, via email, by phone or through the web or social media, he/she receives a file with all the necessary information to make an informed decision. Once admitted, said person has an interview with a regular Faculty where said person is also guided and informed about the history of our Institution, its mission and vision, academic programs, facilities, services and about his/her aspirations and academic expectations. In addition, the Faculty member also evaluates the potential of the student for graduate studies and their previous discernment in relation to this stage (See <http://www.se-pr.edu/admission>)

Every admitted person participates in an Orientation Day where all the ESPR units participate in guiding, and informing about student life, norms, policies, programs and to promote growth as a community. In addition to publications and dissemination of standards and policies, the course syllabi serve as a means of information on standards and policies, on accessibility to the faculty, evaluations, and deadlines. Academic performance and student learning are monitored through the appraisal plan of learning.

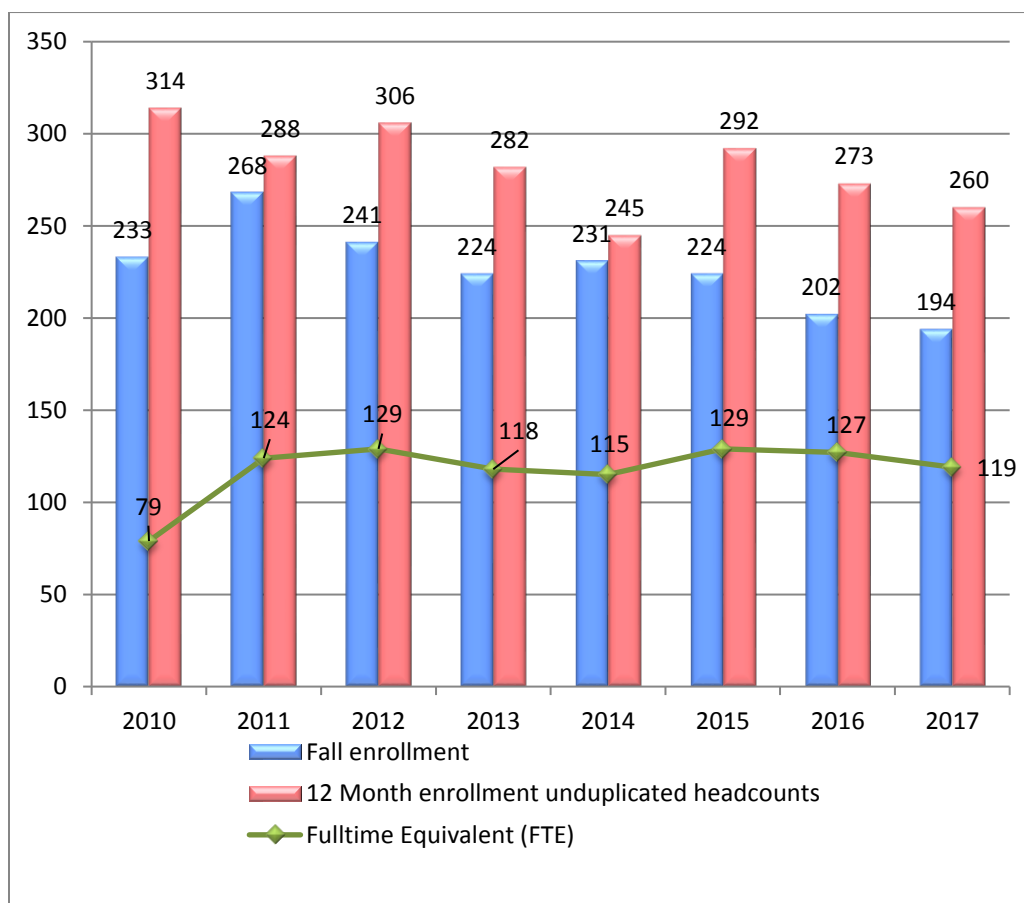
The Seminary has brochures with important information on admission processes, available academic programs and their requirements, financial aid, etc. Likewise, the [Staff Manual](#) addresses the issue of recruitment practices (Staff Manual, Article V). As part of the Centennial celebrations, the Seminary launched a promotion campaign to inform the general public and potential students on the programs and the opportunities of pursuing a graduate study in the institutions. Public relations information are distributed in various activities, particularly during the general meetings of our denominations.

Last year the Seminary informed the Sponsoring Denominations on the gender composition of each sponsored group in order to encourage the recruitment of and financial support for more women, thus increasing the number of women in the clergy and laity leadership. The following tables and graphs show the behavior of the enrollment in the last eight years. In them, the following classifications are identified: *Fall enrollment, 12 Month enrollment unduplicated headcounts, Full-time and part time enrollment and Full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE)* for 2010-2017.

Table 1: Fall enrollment, 12 Month enrollment unduplicated headcounts, Total fulltime equivalent (FTE) 2010-2017.

	Year							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Fall enrollment	233	268	241	224	231	224	202	194
12 Month enrollment unduplicated headcounts	314	288	306	282	245	292	273	260
Total Fulltime Equivalent (FTE)	79	124	129	118	115	129	127	119

Chart 1: Fall enrollment, 12 Month enrollment unduplicated headcounts & Total fulltime equivalent (FTE) 2010-2017.



The admission policy for international students states that it must be requested 120 days in advance. In addition, it lists the required documents. These are similar to those residing students, but also requests: health certificate, current passport, letter requesting admission, validation of degrees and evidence of economic coverage. The document explaining this process has no date of last revision.

STANDARD D: MASTER OF ARTS

D.1. Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

The goal of the Master of Arts in Religion program is for graduates to develop the competencies that allow them to research the religious phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective and as a fundamental aspect of Puerto Rican society, to continue advanced studies in the field of religion and theology, in order to train for a better professional work in private or government agencies, teaching religion in educational institutions and training for lay professional service in churches or private denominations. The curriculum currently consists of 54 credits distributed in four program areas: Interdisciplinary Studies, Judeo-Christian Tradition, World Religions and elective courses.

Students that complete the M.A.R. at the ESPR will be able to understand the religious phenomenon in its many expressions from a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and comparative

perspective; systematize a broad knowledge of the Judeo-Christian tradition together with a basic knowledge of other world religions; as well and integrating the understanding of the religious phenomenon to the analysis of the personal and professional situation, including the assessment of key values of like in its varied religious expressions.

Outcomes

In keeping with the mission of the ESPR, the graduate of the Master of Arts in Religion is expected to acquire the following competencies and learning experiences:

- Investigate the religious phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Understand the religious phenomenon in its various manifestations from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Understand the Judeo-Christian tradition and doctrine.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of various world religions.
- Integrate the understanding of religious phenomenon to the analysis of their personal and professional situation, including the examination of the essential values of life in their various religious expressions.

Assessment

The MAR programs uses several methods of evaluation of student learning. They are the following:

- *Evaluation of the student learning outcomes assessment in the courses* – Faculty members state in their syllabi their evaluation criteria that include book reviews, critical analysis of readings or research articles, oral reports, reflections, bibliographic research, partial tests, case discussions, monographs and argumentative essays and their respective rubrics, among others.
- *Comprehensive tests* – As part of the requirements of the degree, the student must complete tests where he/she will demonstrate the knowledge acquired in each of the competency areas described in the graduate profile. These are closed book tests and are meant to address four different subject areas selected by the student. Each test is meant to be completed in a 2-hour time period and are planned to be taken during 1 or 2 days of the same week. Tests are prepared and assessed by Faculty members who teach the course to be evaluated.
- *Performance assessment rubrics* – Faculty members reviewed the rubrics to assess the performance of each student by competence areas. This action will allow gathering evidence of skills developed as described in the graduate profile.
- *Monographic Research Project* – As part of the graduation requirements, each student must present a critical research project on an aspect of religious phenomenon. The work must be interdisciplinary in nature. It is expected that the student will demonstrate the theoretical, methodological and analytical skills acquired in the courses that make up the MAR program. The student will develop the research project under the tutelage of a professor of religion. It must be approved by the Faculty following the rubrics designed for such purpose.

Although the ESPR believes the Christian faith parameters are hard to delineate within an ecumenical organization, we understand that the Board of Education of Puerto Rico has added an additional definition for the MAR program related to discrimination against any person based on the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of Puerto Rico. This implies that all matters of freedom are ruled by the jurisprudence related to freedom of speech in our regulations. The principles of freedom of speech as well as academic and intellectual freedoms are extended to students, as recognized in the [Manual of Students](#) of the Seminary and [Catalog](#).

D.2. Program Content

A curriculum revision proposal of the MAR program recently was approved by the Board of Directors. As a result of the evaluations, the study plan was reorganized with the purpose of defining the identity of the program as one focused on research of religious phenomena in general instead of focusing on a single religious tradition. The changes allow the phenomenon of religion to be studied with greater depth and academic and research rigor. This rearrangement includes a reduction of the number of credits in the curriculum from 54 to 39. In addition, four new core courses were designed for this curriculum and the conclusive course to the M.A.R. program was redesigned in its entirety. Also, instead of completing four comprehensive exams, in the new curriculum the student will have to complete two. The first will focus on examining the student's competences in the area of interdisciplinary studies and the other on knowledge of World Religions. The ESPR is now awaiting final authorization from the Council of Education of Puerto Rico in order to undertake the implementation of the new curriculum.

Under the current requirements, it shall take a Full-Time student about two (2) years to complete the program. However, once the new curriculum is in effect, this expectation shall be more in line with the actual time to completion of our students. It too will shorten the time to completion of the majority of our students, which are primarily Part Time students taking three (3) to six (6) courses per semester.

D.3. Educational Resources and Learning Strategies

The MAR program has a Coordinator, who is an Affiliate member of the Regular Faculty. The program relies primarily on adjunct faculty in order to recruit the diversity of academic resources needed to sustain this special program. Notwithstanding, the Adjunct Faculty of MAR meets the high academic standards of a graduate program, the majority has a doctorate or in the process of completing it, and all participate in Faculty Orientation and other activities of the Seminary. Their participation in the accreditation process prompted their greater integration into faculty affairs and most have expressed an interest in a greater participation in the affairs of the Seminary.

The program relies on the administrative, technological and library services of the ESPR. We expect to experience an expansion of this program once the new curriculum is in effect, which will require more resources, particularly faculty and a full time coordinator. For more information on MAR, its offerings, proposed timeline for completion and admissions requirements see <http://www.se-pr.edu/maestria-en-artes-de-religion>

STANDARD E. DOCTOR OF MINISTRY (DMIN)

E.1. Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is the highest degree granted by the ESPR. It specializes in pastoral family care with emphasis on family issues and needs in a Latino/Hispanic context. The objectives of the program are to strengthen and deepen the understanding of the work of ministers and lay persons in family care consistent with Christian values and responsive to changing social needs. The program provides opportunities to study, reflect, analyze, critical thinking and practicum in the field of pastoral care with families.

On 2018 the faculty approved an internal moratorium of the DMin because since 2012 the program failed to recruit the minimum number of students required to create new cohorts. In addition, the program suffered from low graduation rates for a long period. In a consensual decision the faculty agreed to revise the program and to adopt a deliberate effort to move the groups on to completion of the requirements. While this process is implemented, the faculty agreed to stop admitting new students until it has completed the revision process, which contemplates engaging into partnerships with regional or U.S.-based seminaries. The deliberate efforts with doctoral students are yielding positive results and last year the SEPR graduates eight (8) students, and more are expected to complete next May 2020.

Outcomes

The specific objectives of the DMin are the following: (see <http://se-pr.edu/doctorado-en-ministerio>).

- Develop an understanding of oneself as part of a family unit, nuclear or extended
- Develop an understanding of the social structures of the family in its multiple forms
- Understand the family from a spiritual and biosocial perspective
- Comprehension of family conflicts of the modern family, with special emphasis on Puerto Rican families
- Acquire the competencies required for effective pastoral care in general, with emphasis on families
- Acquire competencies to manage conflict
- Cultivate spiritual values according with biblical and historical traditions
- Grow in sensibility and understanding to serve in social ministries
- Affirm a pastoral, vocational and professional identity to serve the church with the care of families
- Understand the role and responsibilities of families in their ecological context
- Acquire advanced research and measurement skills
- Engage with existing projects with families

E.2. Program Content and Educational Assessment

The program is composed by six (6) semesters of eight (8) sessions. Each semester focuses on a central theme which in turn is subdivided into eight (8) sub-topics. The first portion of the

program includes sessions focusing on research methodology and the fifth session requires a Practicum. The remaining sessions are dedicated to the doctoral research, including development and defense of the proposal, gathering and analyzing the information and data, writing, public defense of dissertation and final submission of thesis.

The MDiv program uses rubrics for presentations and assessment, as well as for evaluating the program learning effectiveness and in meeting its goals. The director, Dr. Agustina Luvis, has developed a system to monitor the compliance of each goal by each course. This very thorough system of monitoring alerted the faculty and the Dean of the problems facing the program and was the basis for the decision to halt the admission of new students until it can guarantee the expected progress of doctoral programs.

Duration

The program was expected to be completed in three (3) years by Full Time students. The monitoring of the program revealed that this goal was not met and that for several years the program did not graduate any students.

E.3. Educational resources and learning strategies

The doctoral program has a group of very dedicated and well-trained faculty with expertise on the fields related to pastoral family care. Doctoral committees are composed by experts with academic and professional skills to supervise a graduate research project. The contributing faculty includes the following:

Professor	Field of Expertise
Dr. Richard Camino, MD	Psychiatry, specialist with adolescents and children
Dr. Alejandro Lafontaine	Psychology and pastor
Dr. Ediberto López	Bible Studies, sexuality in biblical traditions
Dr. Gloria Mock	Human sexuality
Dr. Rubén Vélez	Education and Clinical Psychology
Dr. Marviliz Avila	Psychology. Methodology, Domestic violence
Dr. Hector Ortiz	Psychology, Bishop and Pastor
Dr. Marina Rivera	Neurosciences
Dr. Guillermo Ramírez	Family life and the Bible, Theology of Conflict
Dr. Maritza Resto	Ministries
Dr. Marysol Díaz	Ministries
Dr. Agustina Luvis	Coordinator of Program, Systematic Theology, Feminist Theology
Dr. Vilma Rodríguez	Psychology, Family losses and Pastoral Care
Dr. Jesús Rodríguez	Pastoral Theology, Addictions
Rev. Benjamín Santana	Family conflict
Dr. Eliseo Pérez	Systematic theology, Spirituality and social action

Dr. José R. Rodríguez	Psychology, Epidemiologist, Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
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E.4. Admission

The admission requirements of the DMin are the following:

- A Master of Divinity or its equivalency
- Three years of pastoral practice after completing the master degree
- Transcript of credits
- Three letters of recommendation
- Interview with a member of the Faculty or Director.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Certification of PR Council of Education
Appendix B: ATS Member Status
Appendix C: MSCHE Statement of Accreditation Status
Appendix I: MDIV Program Goals & Expectations
Appendix II: MAR Program Goals & Expectations
Appendix III: DMIN Program Goals & Expectations
Appendix IV: Student Enrollment Trends 2012-2017
Appendix V: Member of the Faculty
Appendix VI: ESPR Mission, Goals, Values
Appendix VII: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan
Appendix VIII: 2012-2017 Strategic Plan
Appendix IX: Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes and the Effectiveness of Institutional Services
Appendix X: ESPR MSCHE's Self-Study 2017-2019 Design and Documentation Roadmap
Appendix XI: Faculty Manual
Appendix XII: Manual of Students
Appendix XIII: Staff Manual
Appendix XIV: Library Manual
Appendix XV: Regulations of the Board of Directors
Appendix XVI: Audited Report 2015
Appendix XVII: Audited Report 2016
Appendix XVIII: Audited Report 2017
Appendix XIX: Audited Report 2018
Appendix XX: Audited Report 2019
Appendix XXI: Members of Board of Directors & Executive Committee 2019
Appendix XXII: General Catalog
Appendix XXIII: MDIV Integrative Monograph Instrument
Appendix XXIV: MAR Integrative Monograph Instrument
Appendix XXV: Budget FY2018
Appendix XXVI: Curricular and Co-curricular Activities for Student Learning
Appendix XXVII: ESPR Periodic Review Report 2014
Appendix XXVIII: Student Satisfaction Survey Instrument
Appendix XXIX: Student Profile 2018
Appendix XXX: Validation and Credit Substitution Policy
Appendix XXXI: International Students Admission Policy
Appendix XXXII: Privacy and confidentiality policies
Appendix XXXIII: Reasonable Accommodation Policy
Appendix XXXIV: Lodging Facilities Form
Appendix XXXV: Cyberbullying Policy
Appendix XXXVI: Sexual Assault Policy
Appendix XXXVII: Domestic Violence Protocol 2019
Appendix XXXVIII: VAWA Policy
Appendix XXXIX: Regulations on the Use and abuse of drugs, alcohol and Tobacco
Appendix XL: Scholarships and Available Financial Aid Brochure
Appendix XLI: Investigation Procedure

Appendix XLII: Student Evaluation of Services and Support Offices Results
Appendix XLIII: Retention Rates
Appendix XLIV: Recruitment and Development Plan 2012-2017
Appendix XLV ESPR Organizational Chart
Appendix XLVI: Results of Integrative Monograph MDIV 2018
Appendix XLVII: Congregational interview Instrument
Appendix XLVIII: Results of Integrative Monograph MAR
Appendix XLIX: DMIN Manual of Thesis
Appendix L: Assessment Workshop for faculty
Appendix LI: Study of Information of Graduates 2012-2017
Appendix LII: MAR & MDIV Courses Evaluation Form
Appendix LIII: DMIN Courses Evaluation Form
Appendix LIV: Faculty Courses Evaluation Form
Appendix LV: Library Services and Resources Evaluation Form
Appendix LVI: ESPR Institutional Development Plan 2019-2022
Appendix LVII: ESPR Institutional Development Plan 2016-2018
Appendix LVIII: ESPR Budget FY2015
Appendix LIX: ESPR Budget FY2016 & FY2017
Appendix LX: Correlation between Board of Directors' Plan and Strategic Plan 2017-2022
Appendix LXI: Student Council
Appendix LXII: Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy
Appendix LXIII: Policy for the Safe Maintenance of Student Information and Records
Appendix LXIV: Policy of Attendance to Classes
Appendix LXV: Incomplete Procedures and Grade Changes
Appendix LXVI: Faculty Committees
Appendix LXVII: FERPA Act 2019
Appendix LXVIII: MAR Curriculum Review Proposal Plan
Appendix LXIX: Survey for Students and Alumni of the MAR Program
Appendix LXX: Classroom Visiting Instrument
Appendix LXXI: Instrument for Assessment of Services offered by the Registrar's Office
Appendix LXXII: Assessment of Orientation Activity for New Students
Appendix LXXIII: Assessment of Continuing Education Workshop
Appendix LXXIV: Ecos del Seminario
Appendix LXXV: Statements of Financial Position
Appendix LXXVI: Revenues Budgetary Assignments 2015-2019
Appendix LXXVII: Expenses Budgetary Assignments 2015-2019