

Assessment Plan

(March 31, 2006)

A. The Institutional mission of the Mayagüez Campus of the University of Puerto Rico is the following:

B. The Mission of the unit, which is consistent with the Institutional Mission is the following:

The mission of the Department of Marine Sciences is to promote a greater understanding of the marine environment within the core disciplines of biological, chemical, geological and physical oceanography, and related areas. The specific goals of the department are to increase knowledge in the marine sciences, educate graduate students in the marine sciences, and serve the community. Original research by both faculty and students is the central focus of the department's program, and emphasizes the complementary and mutualistic relationship among these goals. The Department offers Master of Marine Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in marine sciences encompassing both the full breadth of these disciplines and the specialization needed to develop specific technical and analytical skills within a larger scientific context. The program seeks to produce graduates with a strong background in marine sciences able to critically analyze problems and offer solutions through the application of scientific knowledge and research. Students are prepared for careers in teaching, research, industry, as well as resource and environmental management.

The administrative body and all academic and service areas of the Department of Marine Sciences are committed to provide the necessary support to meet or exceed the terms of the departmental mission.

C. This mission is known, understood, revised and accepted by the members of this Unit. The last revision was completed in September 2004.

D. The official responsibilities and duties of our unit are the following:

In General:

1. Support, maintain and promote academic activities in the disciplines of the Marine Sciences within the scope of the disciplines represented.
2. Provide the student with a healthy intellectual and physical environment conducive to their highest professional development in the Marine Sciences.

3. Act as a facilitator to the accomplishment of the academic and service goals of the constituency.
4. Promote the adherence of the values and principles guiding the institution by respecting and following current regulations in an open and highly ethical work environment.

By specific area:

1. The Direction of the Department
 - a. Support through good academic management the mission of the Institution and the unit.
 - b. Oversee the overall functioning and development of the unit procuring the changes that will support the mission.
2. Office Administration Personnel
 - a. Provide the necessary administrative support to fulfill the mission of the unit.
 - b. Provide the administrative support that allows us to serve the community within Institutional regulations.
3. Academic Mentors and Researchers
 - a. Provide the intellectual support and knowledge base that will allow the Department of Marine Sciences to develop professional marine scientists that would meet or excel the goals of our mission.
4. Marine, Diving and Maintenance Sections
 - a. Provide students, professors and the community we serve with the adequate physical environment in which to conduct scientific and learning activities.
 - b. Maintain the marine research tools, vessels and boats in optimum conditions to allow the safe and effective development of the scientific and learning activities of the faculty, students and visitors.

E. Our constituency, those to whom we provide our services, are primarily:

1. DMS Graduate Students
2. DMS Faculty
3. DMS non-teaching personnel
4. UPRM Graduate Students interested in Marine Sciences
5. Other UPRM Science and Engineering Faculty
6. Academic Management of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
7. DMS Academic Management
8. General Community (schools, universities)
9. Interchange students
10. Researchers from local and national agencies
11. Local government agencies

F. The main services offered by this unit to its constituency are:

1. Student Services

- a) Generate, receive and manage graduate student official documentation from and to the Office of Graduate Studies and to the Registrar Office.
- b) Attend and resolve issues related to student assistantships and fellowships.
- c) Generate and manage documentation concerning student travel and other student activities.
- d) Provide information (orientation) and assure that the academic processes are conducted according to current departmental and graduate school regulations.
- e) Schedule course offers responding to university regulations and student needs.
- f) Maintain an updated record on student development and progress.
- g) Assist the students as needed with University processes (registration, etc.).
- h) Provide adequate access to facilities and equipment to conduct research.

2. Faculty Services

Initiates and processes documentation for authorization or approval of diverse academic activities of the faculty (travel, release time, leaves of absence, work programs).

- a) Provide administrative support to research grant holding faculty with the grant managing/granting centers (R&D Center, RCSE and Sea Grant).
- b) Provide assistance to scheduling research/teaching activities requiring utilization of marine facilities and/or departmental personnel and installations.
- c) Maintains and archives relevant information pertaining to official faculty activities.
- d) Assist the faculty as needed with University processes concerning promotion & tenure processes.
- e) Provide necessary materials and equipment to promote excellence in teaching and graduate training.

3. Non-Teaching Personnel

- a) Maintains and archives relevant information pertaining to official employee activities.
- b) Assist the personnel as needed with University processes concerning promotion & tenure processes.
- c) Provides the necessary documentation for compliance with human resources processes and regulations.
- d) Facilitate opportunities for continued education

4. Community Services

- a) Maintain an educational outreach program to provide general access to the installations and activities of the unit.

- b) Coordinate the use of the marine research facilities by local and foreign schools and Universities for educational purposes.
 - c) Coordinate the use of marine facilities for research, educational and environmental monitoring purposes by local and federal agencies.
5. General
- a) Management of the departmental budget, including establishment of well based priorities and generation and follow up of the paperwork concerning use of available funds.
 - b) Handles and makes decisions on requests to use departmental marine installations for research and educational purposes.
 - c) Coordinate maintenance and use of the research and general installations at Isla Magueyes.
 - d) Informs its constituency of upcoming institutional/departmental functions, meetings or changes in regulations.
 - e) Ensure all constituents are offered the opportunity to evaluate the overall unit activities according to the established assessment and evaluation procedures. Provides information on the results of these evaluations.
 - f) Manages paperwork of the established assessment programs.
 - g) Provides regular and diverse reports, as requested, to the University authorities.
 - h) Provide, as requested, comments and/or consultation services to government agencies dealing with issues concerning the marine realm.
 - i) Provide orientation to visitors and constituent about the department's programs and services.
 - j) Maintain a safe fleet of vessels to conduct teaching and research activities.
 - k) Maintain a safe and clean physical environment for the activities of our constituency.

G. To measure and assess the level of satisfaction, efficiency and effectiveness this unit in its functions and the provision of services, the following mechanisms have been established: (See Appendixes DMS-A to E)

- 1. Appendix A. Research Student Satisfaction Survey
- 2. Appendix B. Faculty Satisfaction Survey
- 3. Appendix C. Academic Management Assessment
- 4. Appendix D. Visitors Satisfaction Survey
- 5. Appendix E. Personnel Satisfaction Survey
- 6. Appendix F. Quick Assessment for Administrative Survey

H. To continuously improve the services, processes and functions of this unit, results obtained through assessment are used for budgetary and

operational decision process. Among the specific actions taken as a result of identifying deficiencies and weakness are the following:

Renovate the R/V Sultana to improve its performance and increase its pool of research users

Renovate the R/V Pezmar to improve its performance and increase its pool of research users.

Purchase a new generator to serve Magueyes Island.

Adjust course scheduling to program course with intensive field work

Reduce the number of DMS courses "by agreement" to facilitates scheduling of Teaching Assistantships in other departments.

Repair and renew several boats of the small outboard engine fleet.

Initiate a revision of the academic regulations.

Initiate a revision of the curricular offer

Create and distribute DMS brochures and posters.

Produce documents describing departmental processes.

Reactivate a Dive board to assure dive safety in all departmental activities.

Eliminate hard copy messages by emails with PDF attachments.

Bring continuous learning activities to Magueyes for the personnel of the marine and maintenance sections.

I. From the assessments and evaluations conducted in the Unit, the following strength have been identified:

1. Unique location of marine laboratories with unique opportunities to conduct teaching and research in marine sciences.
2. Competitive faculty that bring significant externally funded research projects.
3. Overall good visibility and image through peer review publications.
4. Interest from the part of the students to be an integral component of the departmental processes.
5. Creation of formal centers of research interests within the unit.
6. Possession of valuable museum collections that may be available for the scientific community.
7. Diversity of areas of expertise among its members.
8. Competent administrative personnel.
9. Good knowledge of UPRM administrative processes.
10. Motivated faculty focused in research and student mentoring.
- 11.

J. From the assessments and evaluations conducted in the Unit, the following weaknesses have been identified:

1. Infrastructure

Some of the buildings are old and need major repairs or should be replaced.

The infrastructure was developed based on immediate needs, without of a master planning plan involving a vision for the future.

Some structures are vulnerable to severe hurricane damage.

Communication network does not have the desired capacity.
Internet service at Magueyes Island is not fully reliable.
Bathroom and sanitary facilities generally do not meet user satisfaction
The parking area at Magueyes Island is not safe.
The parking area at Isla Magueyes is not properly guarded.

Marine Section

The section does not have a section director or port captain to supervise and conduct and direct day to day operations.
The research vessels fleet needs to be further updated to conduct research with specialized equipment.
Lack of a mid-to large size oceanographic vessel.
Need to upgrade the level professional of the personnel (seaman licenses, etc)
The section is understaffed.

Maintenance Section

Need more janitors to comply with rules regarding sq. ft./janitor.
Need weekend guardians to watch over the installations.

Small boat Section

K. To maintain the strengths and to correct the weaknesses, the following actions will be taken.

Maintain Strengths

Provide more opportunities to the administrative personnel to attend continuous education and improvement activities

L. As evidence of our continuous assessment process, our unit maintains in its files the following documentation:

Department Academic Management	Office Administrators	Assessment Official and DMS Assessment Committee
Minutes of departmental meetings	Reports	All assessment forms and tabulation of summaries
Minutes of DMS Committee Meetings	Evaluations	Consultation about computer facilities
Summaries of the results of the assessments	Documents originating at the DMS	Results of Visitors Assessment of Service and Facilities
Annual results of the Module to assess academic management performance	Documents related to the Maintenance, Marine and Diving Sections	
Mail	Documents related to use of Isla Magueyes and boat facilities by visitors	
Progress reports		

M. The information contained in this document has been discussed and shared with the personnel of this unit. The process was completed in 31/03/2006

N. The next revision of all the items and issues herein included is scheduled for 31/03/2007



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Director