



FIRST DRAFT

# Self Study Report

Submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education



October 6, 2022



October 6, 2022

Mrs. Melissa G. Hardin, PhD  
Vice President, Institutional Field Relations  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
3624 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Dear Dr. Hardin:

Greetings. Antillean Adventist University has completed the Self-Study Draft 2022 to be submitted to the chair of the visiting evaluation team. We are expecting an appraisal of readiness meeting with the chair in November and a site visit by the evaluation team in March 2023.

We have benefitted from the self-study process and expect an evaluation visit that is helpful and stimulates improvement. The Institution reaffirms its commitment to meet the Commission's standards of excellence.

Yours truly,

Myrna Colón, PhD  
President

Enclosure



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Myrna Colón, PhD  
*President*

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## Acronyms

Acronym	Name/Title
AAU	Antillean Adventist University
CCNE	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
DED	Distance Education Departmet



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## **Self-Study Report Antillean Adventist University**

### **Executive Summary**

Antillean Adventist University (AAU) is a liberal arts, non-profit, privately owned institution supported by the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the Puerto Rican Union of Seventh-day Adventist, its parent organization. Located near the heart of the city of Mayaguez, AAU serves approximately 843 students from Puerto Rico, the USA mainland, Central and South America, among other nations. The student population is about 90% Hispanics.

Our institution has been accredited by Middle States since 1978 being our last evaluation in 2013. The current self-study report includes data from 2013 to 2022 and will be evaluated in 2023. As a requirement for our affirmation as an accredited institution, a self-study process was initiated in 2014 by a campus community with a sense of accountability and commitment to provide optimal service and quality education. What follows are major findings of the self-study process.

### **Standard 1: Mission and Goals**

Antillean Adventist University's mission statement has not undergone any changes during the past 10 years. It has been reviewed yearly but the university believes the mission, as stated, defines its purpose and guiding principles. AAU strength is in its mission as stated in surveys, questionnaires, and interviews.

There are seven institutional goals that are aligned with the institution's mission statement and strategic plan. Goal #4 was incorporated in 2022 to address specifically student learning experiences and support from different sources.

*Recommendation.* Continue to strengthen and systematize the dissemination of its mission, goals, and core values.

### **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

Antillean Adventist University has a Christian foundation therefore moral and ethical principles are highly valued and emphasized. Integrity is one of the institution's core values. Both ethics and integrity permeate its policies, procedures, promotions, and publications. The Institution complies with federal and state government regulations, regional and professional accreditations, as well as denominational requirements.

*Recommendation.* Engage in a systematic process to update the institution's policies and procedures to ensure accuracy and relevancy.

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### **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

Antillean Adventist University's mission states that it "promotes the holistic formation of competent professional committed to serving God and humanity". Therefore, the institution provides learning experiences that develop students' knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to serve others. The institution regularly evaluates its academic programs and faculty to ensure excellence and to comply with its mission and goals. Faculty have the required credentials, experience, and commitment to the institution's mission. Faculty are provided monthly professional growth training and experiences to ensure students a quality education, particularly in using technology for the teaching-learning process. Students are evaluated using varied assessment methods to gather data of student achievement. The institution's strategic plan aligns mission, goals, objectives, and assessments to achieve institutional effectiveness.

*Recommendations:* Review academic programs to reduce completion time. Evaluate market trends to provide offerings based on needs. Evaluate the online learning experiences, as well as, the use of technology in different programs.

### **Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience**

Antillean Adventist University regularly collects data on student satisfaction to be able to meet students' academic needs. The following offices support students' experiences at Antillean: Admissions, Registrar, Counseling, Student Affairs, Student Welfare, among others. There are various programs, organizations, activities, and resources that also support students' experiences, such as: Trio Programs, student associations and clubs, sports, spiritual, and community service activities, chaplaincy, and the learning and technology resource center. The Institution promotes its mission as a value-added component of its program offerings. A retention officer follows-up on students' academic progress and provides resources to meet their needs until they have completed their academic program. Currently, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs supervises admissions, recruitment, Trio programs, sports activities, retention, student associations, among others, to ensure an integrated approach of different departments to support students' experiences.

*Recommendations.* Create an integrated student support services structure with an assessment of services. Offer career opportunities orientation.

### **Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

Antillean has an effectiveness assessment system for programs and student learning; serving as a guide for the institution's planning and decision making. This system ensures that human, financial, and physical resources are used effectively to meet the organization's goals and sustain development. AAU has a Guide for Institutional Effectiveness 2017-2022 organized in four sections: Section I - Institutional Effectiveness; Section II – Strategic Planning; Section III - Institutional Effectiveness; Section IV -Guide for the Effectiveness of Academic Program. Every academic department has an Assessment Coordinator, responsible for coordinating meetings with faculty to discuss finding and develop action plans. There is a budget allocating funds for services such as, faculty development, technology infrastructure, and tutoring services.

*Recommendations.* Maintain the resources needed for faculty to be involved in the assessment process. Develop mechanism to further support, collect, organize, and disseminate

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research and assessment results. Promote faculty involvement in research based on assessment data.

## **Standard VI - Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

Antillean Adventist University's strategic plan integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. Antillean's assessment system provides data that contributes to an updated and relevant planning for academic and institutional improvement.

The Institution has been financially stable for the past five years. It has been able to comply with the strategic plan despite the economic crisis in our country. It has maintained an accounting transaction registration system that complies with all the standards of the regulatory institutions; this is evidenced by external audits (all unqualified opinions), demonstrating its commitment to integrity in financial management.

During the past years, Antillean has been able to improve its infrastructure and services to meet students' and personnel needs. The acquisition of the latest technology for the teaching-learning process and services contribute to institutional satisfaction and achievement. New buildings have been built or remodeled, such as the simulation hospital, fitness center, guest house, and classrooms, among other structural improvements.

*Recommendation.* Create new programs to meet the needs of the current population and thus increase revenues for the university. Also, design an aggressive recruitment plan that includes international students. Create a plan to tap on external resources for institutional improvement.

## **Standard VII – Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

Antillean Adventist University has a clearly defined and transparent governance structure with a constitution, bylaws, and regulations that defines roles and responsibilities at each level. A majority of Board of Trustees do not have any employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body is transparent and clearly discloses required information to accrediting agencies, federal and state government. The Board of Trustees receives training in regards to their responsibilities, difference between governance and administration, and the accreditation process. AAU's Board has sub-committees with specific responsibilities. These sub-committees are the following: Academic, Planning and Development, Student Services, Finances, Religious Affairs, and Audit. The Board of Trustees at large discuss recommendations of the sub-committees and cast their vote of approval.

*Recommendations:* Review and revise an evaluation system for institutional management and governance effectiveness. Design a professional growth plan for departmental administrators and vice-presidents.

## **Self Study Process**

Doctora, creo que debemos incluir un explicación de cómo se llevó a cabo el proceso. Además, incluir los miembros del Comité Timón y los grupos de trabajo.

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## Introduction

### Institutional Overview

Antillean Adventist University (AAU), is a non-profit privately owned institution supported by the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the Puerto Rican Union of Seventh-day Adventists. Further accredited by the Board of Post-Secondary Institutions of Puerto Rico previously known as the Puerto Rico Council of Education. In 1978, MSCHE, granted initial accreditation and the last reaffirmation in 2013 complied with all 14 Characteristics of Excellence. In addition, AAU is accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association.

The Institution's roots are traced back to the first Adventist educational institution in Aibonito, Puerto Rico in 1920. College level degrees, in a Liberal Arts framework, for young people seeking an Adventist education, were first offered in Cuba. Due to the political situation in that island in 1961, the "Colegio de las Antillas" was relocated to the facilities of the "Colegio Adventista Puertorriqueño" in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico with the purpose of serving the needs of the Antillean region (PR, Cuba, and Dominican Republic). Initially only baccalaureate degrees in Theology and Education were offered. A year later (1962), as a result of the fusion of these two schools, and the addition of new areas of study, the new institution received the name of Antillean College. In 1989, the Puerto Rico Council for Higher Education approved the current name: "Antillean Adventist University", referred to as AAU throughout this document.

Located near the heart of the city of Mayagüez, AAU serves approximately 845 students of which 96% are Hispanic from Puerto Rico, the Mainland, the Caribbean, and South and Central America, representing 19 nationalities and more than 10 different religious groups. The student population also includes approximately 40% of students who are first generation and a high percent of low income. During the fall 2020 semester 91% of students received federal aid. Nearly 30% of students are 25 years or older. These characteristics of the student population at AAU are an engine that leads us to increasingly promote diversity and inclusiveness, both in the services offered and within the students.

AAU is committed to provide high quality innovative education that integrates methods adapted to new educational trends. The institution is focused on providing highly qualified and competent human resources and efficiency in support services. Therefore, the institution offers activities of professional development to faculty members, in relation to integration of technology in the face-to-face and distance learning modality, teaching strategies, new trends in education, among others topics related to their functions and responsibilities. Faculty Professional Development Plan cycle runs on a biannual basis. A professional portfolio is completed by faculty with all the evidence of the compliance of the Faculty Professional Development Plan and the 360 evaluation schedule. The evaluation of the faculty portfolios for the period 2016-2019 was 94% of compliance.

Students' evaluate faculty every semester to assess the quality of the teaching-learning process. The results are shared with faculty and program administrators to identify areas of improvement. Overall results are discussed in the annual faculty evaluation.

The institution participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement Survey to assess our student experience in our institution since 2018. Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first, is the amount of time and effort students put into their

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students and other educationally purposeful activities. The second, is how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate student participation in activities that matter to student learning. The institution uses the National Survey of Student Engagement as a resource to collect data of undergraduate students in their first and final years to assess their levels of engagement and other information related to their learning experience at our institution and compare it with other institutions.

In 2019, the institution was evaluated by the Adventist Association Accreditation for the years 2014-2019. The results of the evaluation were a reinstatement of the accreditation status with some recommendations. Two mayor recommendations were related to the teaching-learning process are the following:

1. To prepare and implement a systematic research program for teachers and students.

To comply with this recommendation a Research Plan 2019-2022 was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees to include the development of research projects that contribute to the mission and vision of the Institution and also integrate research methodology in the curricula. In the academic year 2020-2021 a total of eight faculty members took part in the plan by taking a course in a collaboration with Universidad Adventista de Colombia to train them in the integration of research as a teaching strategy.

2. To develop and implement a pedagogy model.

To comply with this recommendation, the institution should develop a pedagogy model that states the teaching strategies that framework the institutional teaching and learning process. The pedagogy model will be focused on the active and experiential learning strategies that the institution envisions aligned to its mission and vision. The institutional pedagogy model will set the framework for a cohesive and comprehensive effort to provide to all students an active learning environment.

The institution has been working toward improving the teaching-learning experience by increasing the use of educational technology and distance/hybrid offering. In 2018, AAU developed a Distance Education Department (DED) that helped the institution to increase the amount of courses offered online/hybrid modality providing more flexibility and accessibility to the academic programs. Also the DED increased professional development to faculty and non-faculty in relation to the integration of technology in teaching face-to-face and online. During this pandemic COVID 19, DED, Vice-president for Academic Affairs, Vice-president for Finance and the Vice-president for Students Affairs increased their services, protocols and procedures to facilitate emergency remote teaching for all the academic programs providing the necessary infrastructure. The following student support services are being offered virtually: library, admission, financial aid, registrar, students finance, among others. All these services are offered virtually and also face-to-face by appointment following all the safety protocols.

New technology was purchased to convert some teaching spaces to virtual classrooms using the federal funds of Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economy Security Act (2020). In this fiscal year 2020-21, the Institution received a second federal grant Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (2021) that is being used to increase online teaching and learning technology and offer virtual student support services.

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In order to increase and improve active and experiential learning in our health related programs the institution participated in a Title V competition. A grant was approved in 2015, for the years 2015-2020. A proposal was submitted to the United States Department of Education Title V for the project titled *Expanding and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs*. The project was designed to:

- Revise Nursing and Respiratory Care curriculum for inclusion of high-definition simulation technology,
- Expand access of Health Sciences Programs (HSP) via conversion to online/hybrid delivery,
- Enhance infrastructure to support instruction via creation of a state-of-the-art Simulation Lab,
- Improve foundational skills in Math and English proficiency by developing a Math Resource Center, an English for HSP course and acquire instructional resources,
- Engage in Respiratory Care curriculum and program evaluation to complete Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) accreditation.

The AAU's Title V Part A grant: "*Expanding Capacity and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs*" was committed to fulfilling the goals of the Title V legislation with the purpose of expanding opportunities for and improving the academic attainment of Hispanic students. In accordance with the project initiatives, one of the major emphasis of our Title V project was the renovation of an existing building to house the new healthcare simulation laboratory and Math Resource Center. The AAU has successfully completed the project in September 2020, despite the external factors that have affected higher education in Puerto Rico.

At the core of the AAU philosophy is the goal to provide a high quality Christian education within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. It does not discriminate based on race, sex, nationality, creed or social position. Although the AAU has a significant number of Adventist students, the majority, 65%, belong to different religious affiliations and creeds. The institution opens its doors and welcomes them, challenging them to develop the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of their character.

Although various data related to spiritual development activities are collected, in 2019 information was collected with specific aspects about the impact that the spiritual program, as such, has on employees and students. The survey of graduating students, for example, showed that 70% of them perceived that their professors taught them how Christian faith and ethics relate to their field of study and 68% understood that the AAU had prepared them well to have a personal relationship with God. On the other hand, the findings showed that 60% of students and staff had been integrated into some spiritual development activity outside of classrooms; 49% acknowledged that the AAU spiritual program had played an important role in their spiritual development and 58% said they had grown spiritually at AAU. The institution has proposed to increase these results in the coming years.

The results of this assessment have made it possible to identify aspects that should be strengthened in order to influence a greater number of students, as well as to draw up action plans to improve this important aspect of the institutional mission. Some of the actions that has been taken during the last two years are: Develop a more uniform strategy for the effective integration of Christian faith and values across courses and programs, integrating some strategies aimed at increasing the number of students who are impacted by the spiritual



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program and integrating new co-curricular activities for commuter students, who represent the largest student population.

AAU also emphasizes the integration of community service as one of its priorities. For this reason, the vice-presidencies carry out various community service projects annually. In these community services projects staff, faculty, and students worked together to promote an altruistic culture and civic commitment. During the years 2015-2019, 35 social activities have been carried out such as meal distribution, building a roof of a house, maintenance and repair of Sabana Grande's Adventist Academy, providing worship activities in an elderly home, offering orientations about employment opportunities, cleaning community yards, cleaning beaches, and delivering hygiene items to people in need, among others. Also, after the disaster caused by Hurricane María, the institution supported the community by offering water and meals to those in need, health assistance was provided, and emotional support was given in shelters, among others community services.

During the past four years, around eight new collaborative agreements have been established between entities and academic programs to guarantee students an effective development of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions according to their study fields. These collaborative agreements facilitate active learning in real scenarios.

On the other hand, the graduate profile is based on educational principles that are essential to achieve comprehensive human development, including service. Therefore, each student performed at least 10 hours of community service individually or in group projects as part of the HUSO 100-Service Philosophy course. This initiative prepares students to identify human needs and help promote better life quality. However, students in different health programs, carry out around 120 hours of community service during the semester by performing activities like conducting health clinics, providing assistance in vaccination centers, educating communities about health promotion and prevention of diseases, among other health related activities. For this reason, AAU is prioritizing community service activities within the curriculum in order to help develop our student's leadership, charisma, humanity, skills, and values to prepare them to become competent professionals that are able to use their acquired knowledge and skills to be able to accomplish our institution's mission to serve God and humanity.

AAU programs and curriculum are recognized by the Veteran's Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services of the United States of America. The University is also a member of the Association of Colleges and Universities of Puerto Rico, and the American Council on Education.

Currently, the Institution offers baccalaureate degrees in 28 concentrations, and six associate degrees. It offers a Master's Degree (MA) in Education (with concentrations in Administration & Supervision, Curriculum & Instruction, and Teaching Elementary & Secondary Schools with a specialization in English as a Second Language, Biology, History, School Health, and Spanish) approved by the Board of Post-Secondary Institutions of PR, and accredited by MSCHE. It also offers the Master's Degree in Nursing with three specializations Critical Care, Care for Elderly People, and Anesthesia.

On the other hand, the Institution has several professional programs that have obtained their accreditation from other regulatory agencies. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Also, the Bachelor of Science in Cardiopulmonary program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for

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Respiratory Care (CoARC) being the only accredited program in the Island ([find-an-accredited-program](#)), and the Baccalaureate Program in Pastoral Theology is accredited by the General Conference Adventist Accreditation Association (AAA).

Furthermore, to offer its programs and services, the AAU has a faculty consisting of 36 full-time and 65 part-time professors, in addition to 117 full-time and 37 part-time employees. General enrollment is distributed between two schools and three departments as follows: Department of Business Sciences with 61 students, Department of Science and Technology with 157 students, School of Education, Humanities and Psychology with 180 students, Department of Religion with 39 students and School of Sciences of Health with 308 students.

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## **Standard I: Mission and Goals**

*The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.*

RA7: The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education.

RA10: Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

This Chapter addressed the followings institutional priorities (IP):

C. Increase the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff.

### **Analysis of Key Issues**

Antillean Adventist University is a Christian institution. At the core of its philosophy is the goal to provide a quality Christian education within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. We believe in the revelation of God through His Word and His Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Bible establishes that the human being is the supreme creation of God and that he/she depends on the Creator for his/her development and the full realization of his/her capacities. Because of this position, every person should be treated with equality, without distinction of age, gender, race, nationality, creed, or social-economic position. Founded on the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the University offers education as a holistic process which covers all the facets of human character: spiritual, mental, physical, and social. Students are challenged to develop to their utmost all the dimensions of their character. This will prepare the individual to serve God and humanity.

### **Mission, Vision and Values**

**Mission.** Antillean Adventist University promotes the holistic formation of competent professionals, committed to serving God and humanity

**Vision.** Antillean Adventist University will be recognized for spirituality, excellence, and service.

**Values.** The following are the institution's core values.

- Love: Loving God and others as God loves them.
- Integrity: Being honest and truthful; consistent in what one says and does.
- Responsibility: Making conscious decisions and assume their consequences.
- Justice: Being committed to equity, charity and fair treatment.
- Diversity: Respecting and being sensitive to the socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural differences between people.
- Empathy: Being able to put yourself in the place of the other person.

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- Empowerment: Developing confidence in individual abilities and potential.
  - Compassion: Responding to the suffering and needs of others.

### **Major Themes of the Mission Reflected in Antillean Goals**

The mission of Antillean Adventist University harmonizes and responds to institutional purposes, its historical trajectory, its religious affiliation, its educational philosophy, and the context and needs of higher education in Puerto Rico. The key components that emerge from the mission are the following:

**Service to God.** This component seeks to integrate the teaching of faith and Adventist Christian values in learning in an intentional and effective way. The institution developed the Master Plan for Spiritual Development 2017-2022, which describes a variety of strategies and activities that contribute to the spiritual development of employees and students. Goal 1 of the EP addresses this issue. More information on the development of this component is provided in the next section of this report, as well as in Standard V report.

**Holistic Training.** Adventist Christian education takes into account, in addition to the intellectual aspect of the individual, the spiritual, moral, physical and social aspect, as established in the institutional educational philosophy. Goals 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 are related to this aspect and information on compliance with this component is provided in the Standard III report.

**Professional Competence.** This aspect emphasizes the educational quality and institutional effectiveness that guide the success of students and is included in Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5. The reports of standards III, V and VI explain how the institution develops active and experiential learning of students, as part of one of the priorities.

**Service to humanity.** Our goal is to develop a caring disposition among students and staff that contributes to a better quality of life for our community, for the church, and for the world. Goal 7 addresses this aspect. Details on the integration of this component into the curriculum are integrated into the Standards II, III, and VII reports.

### **Development of Co-curricular Activities Aimed at Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Diverse Populations of Students and Staff**

One of the priorities established by the institution for this period is to increase the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff. As part of this priority, the university develops and implements programs and activities aimed at meeting the needs of both the student population and its staff. The purpose is that everyone be spiritually enriched and experience a closer relationship with God.

In relation to this priority, the Strategic Plan (SP) establishes in Goal 1 the interest of "providing an environment in which each student and employee has the opportunity to live and share Adventist Christian principles and values." In order to achieve this goal, the strategic plan details the objectives that guide towards its achievement, while the Department of Religious Affairs (DRA), as the Office responsible for defining the course for the fulfillment of the strategic objectives, as stated in the Master Plan for Spiritual Development (MPSD), with the actions, programs, and activities that foster the spiritual growth of students, faculty, and staff (MPSD).

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The MPSD of Antillean Adventist University is aligned with the mission of the institution and with the Adventist educational philosophy, which, in turn, are based on the transmission of the knowledge of God as the source of all wisdom.

The programs implemented by the Religious Affairs Office include service to the different communities on the university campus, while allowing their participation and integration in spiritual programs and ministries. For example, the Antillean Adventist University Church serves the English and Spanish-speaking population with programs in both languages. There are various ministries in which students and employees can participate, as well as, multiple opportunities to develop the talents and leadership skills of students, such as services in the chapel and in the residences. On the other hand, the PMDE contains specific actions and activities directed at non-Adventist students, external students, and first-year students, among other groups.

During the COVID-19 pandemic some of these activities were limited due to the remote teaching period, however, the DRA carried out several activities that were adjusted to the needs of the period. The strategy for spiritual development was restructured to offer more spiritual support, according to the need of the moment. A lot of spiritual and emotional help was offered individually and in groups and more virtual activities were developed, with the purpose of maintaining contact and spiritual support for students and employees. For example, during the 2020-2021 school year, spiritual emphasis weeks and services were offered virtually, offering help to students with special needs caused by the pandemic, as well as spiritual and personal support for students who remained on campus. The spiritual activities carried out virtually allowed the integration of students who were inside and outside of Puerto Rico.

For the year 2021-2022, with the return to face-to-face activities the development of the MPSD continued in a greater capacity. The weeks of spiritual emphasis, “SAVED” and “I am”, were celebrated in the Fall 2021 and SP 2022 semesters in person, in which employees, students, and the community in general were brought together. During these weeks the students in their boarding rooms received a visit from the speaker, listening to his needs and concerns. As of this week, many students are left with memorable memories and spiritual experiences for a lifetime. The Department of Institutional Effectiveness each year conducts surveys to evaluate the programs of the weeks of spiritual emphasis.

At the beginning of each semester, different activities are carried out with the purpose of strengthening the spiritual life of students and employees. One of them is the week of prayer for non-teaching staff and for the faculty, in which both new and active employees receive spiritual encouragement in preparation for semester work. Weeks of Prayers for residential students and for the university community, at large, are programmed for each semester.

### **Goals Clearly Aligned with the Mission Statement**

The goals of the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan were developed based on the key components of the mission statement; of the vision, with its components of spirituality, excellence and service, and of the strategic initiatives of spiritual development, student success, academic quality, administrative effectiveness and social commitment and collaborative relationships. In this way, the fundamental aspects that make up the mission and vision are articulated in the planning process. The strategic goals are:

Goal 1 Provide an environment in which every student and employee has the

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opportunity to live and share Adventist Christian principles and values.

- Goal 2 Attract and retain students from different socio-economic levels, cultures and nations.
- Goal 3 Develop the educational offer in various modalities that responds to quality standards, market demands, and student needs, framed in a culture of accountability, evidence, and teaching scholarship.
- Goal 4 Provide students with learning experiences that develop knowledge, skills and dispositions, which are evidenced by defined learning outcomes, with the support of the institution's staff, programs and services, to be competent professionals who serve humanity.
- Goal 5 Promote research and its application in the work of the academic community.
- Goal 6 Apply generally accepted best management practices for each unit.
- Goal 7 Develop strategies that provide opportunities for participation and integration in the community, through community and missionary service.

These goals encompass the holistic development of the student in order to be a competent profesional equipped for service. This formation is aligned with the Institution's mission and vision. (*Strategic Plan 2017-2023*.)

### **Achievement of Each Aspect of the Mission**

The University's mission is achieved with the participation of all the vice-presidencies and all the units. To follow up on compliance, the institution has established in the Institutional Effectiveness Guide 2017-2022 the annual achievement reports, as well as the schedule for their delivery to the presidency and the Department of Institutional Effectiveness. Each academic and non-academic unit prepares a report of the achievements obtained in relation to the annual plan. Similarly, the vice-presidencies prepare a report that includes the achievements of the vice-presidencies. In both reports, the achievements are presented in line with the goals and objectives of the institution as described in the strategic plan (*Institutional Effectiveness Guide*).

The Department of Institutional Effectiveness prepares an overall achievement report that is also organized according to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. This report is presented for approval at the Institution's Administrative Council and processed to the Board of Trustees for its final approval. The report is eventually presented to the Institution's staff and faculty. The overall achievement report shows how the institution is fulfilling its mission and also integrates statistical data related to key indicators. This report is also a tool used to identify the aspects that need to be strengthened, so that some findings become recommendations to improve the planning and assessment process. The vice presidents, deans, and directors are responsible for incorporating the results and findings of the assessments into the plans for the new year in the annual planning. The general achievement report for each year, in addition to being shared with the entire staff, is made available on the website of the Department of Institutional Effectiveness.



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Antillean is intentional in addressing its mission and goals by requiring departments to review procedures so as to be aligned with the institution's mission and goals. A diagnostic of Antillean organizational health was conducted in April of 2022 by EG Consulting Group. The study demonstrated that AAU's strength is in its mission. Personnel stated that the institution adheres to its philosophy and achieves its mission of the holistic development of students' mental, spiritual, and physical dimensions. They also expressed that the institution fosters and promotes the spiritual dimension of its personnel providing spiritual reflective time. The study revealed that Christian values, such as, empathy and caring for each other, were values practiced by both personnel and students. Faculty and staff also stated that the institution promotes its mission and demonstrates respect for diversity (1.4.1-EG Consulting Group Report).

The Office of Institutional Research conducts periodic surveys to personnel and students to detect perceptions about meeting mission and goals. These surveys consistently show that the institution is meeting its mission and goals. For example, the survey for graduating students, which is conducted each year, demonstrated the following results in the spring of 2022 in aspects related to the holistic formation component of the mission: 96% of the graduating students expressed that the university had prepared them enough or a lot to adopt a balanced lifestyle that includes time for intellectual, social, spiritual, and physical development; in relation to spiritual development, 93% indicated that the institution had helped them a lot or enough to develop a relationship with God; another 94% responded that they had been helped a lot or enough to grow in their spiritual life; and 98% understood that they were very or sufficiently prepared to apply Christian values in their career. Similarly, when this group of students were asked to assign a level to the quality of teaching at the institution, 92% selected the levels “good” and “excellent” (1.4.1-Graduate Survey Results).

On the other hand, the Spiritual Life Survey that is conducted on an annual basis and administered to students, faculty, and staff, in the 2021 FA semester reflected that 79% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the activities carried out at the university reflect the beliefs and values of the institution and are oriented towards the fulfillment of the mission; another 81% agreed or strongly agreed that the study programs integrate principles and values that make up the institutional mission (1.4.2- Spiritual Life Survey Results FA 21).

The mission of Antillean Adventist University as the main foundation of the strategic planning process has been reviewed, updated and approved by the different institutional bodies over the years. The current declaration was developed by the Strategic Planning Committee (CPE) during 2011, to form part of the strategic plan for the 2012-2017 cycle. In 2017, the CPE, the Executive Committee of the President (CEP) and the University Administrative Council (CAU), reviewed the mission statement, as part of the new planning cycle 2017-2022, and considered it relevant to the purposes of the university, so that it was approved again, without any changes, by the Board of Trustees in 2017 and 2022.

There is periodic assessment of the institution's mission and goals. In September 2020, the vision descriptions were reviewed and amended and in December 2021 some goals were amended and new goals were added to them. On May 13, 2022 the Strategic Planning Committee met to review the Institution's mission, vision, and goals. On this occasion, core values were discussed, as well as, a reaffirmation of its mission and vision. As stated previously an academic goal was added dealing with student learning outcomes. The goal reads as follows:

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“Facilitate student learning experiences that develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions, evidenced in specific learning outcomes with the support of the institution’s personnel, programs, and services to be competent professionals serving humanity.” Core values were discussed and voted. The June 10, 2022 Strategic Planning Committee meeting further discussed the definitions of these values. These were reviewed and voted on in the President's Cabinet meeting and the institution's Administrative Council. Finally, the Board of Trustees approved on the June 29, 2022 the institutional mission, vision and core values. The core values have been published and discussed in faculty assembly, faculty, and personnel meetings, as well as, student council. This is a process to ensure that mission, goals, and core values are well known for all to our community (*Minutes Board of Trustees 2017 and 2021*).

## **Development, Review and Update of the Mission and Goals**

The Institution's mission and goals are initially developed in the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) with representation of all sectors of the university community. Recommendations from the SPC are discussed in the University’s Administrative Council with representation of directors of departments, deans of schools, vice presidents, faculty, staff, and students. The Board of Trustees ultimately analyzes the mission and goals and takes a vote. The mission is published and presented frequently in meetings (Operating Handbook, Strategic Planning Committee, and the CAU).

In order to communicate the mission and make it known to all members of the university community, the mission statement and goals are placed in all official documents, along with the other components of the institutional identity, such as the vision, values, and educational philosophy. Some of these official documents are: The Catalog, Faculty Manual, Employee Handbook, General Student Regulations, Operating Handbook, and the Strategic Plan. The mission statement can also be found on the university's website.

The mission, vision, and goals of the Institution are presented when conducting meetings or providing services to the external context, such as private and public schools, community centers, and churches. Internally, mission, vision, and goals are presented in the President's Cabinet, Faculty Assembly, Administrative Council, Faculty and staff meetings, student activities, publications, and social media.

The achievement of the mission is obtained with the support of the units and the vice presidencies, by putting their operational and annual plans into action. Each unit works on its annual plan in alignment with the operational plan of its vice presidency, which in turn is aligned with the strategic plan. In this way, the objectives of the operating plans and annual plans are articulated with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. All the initiatives, projects and activities worked on in the units and in the vice-presidencies aim at achieving the goals of the strategic plan, whose foundation is the mission. In this way, the entire university community is part of the achievements of PE. Institutional Effectiveness Guide, Annual Plan Templates, some as an example).

Each year during the period for producing the annual plans and achievement reports, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness contacts the directors of departments and the vice presidents to offer guidance in the preparation of their reports and plans. The Institutional Effectiveness Guide, which is available in electronic format for all departments and appears on

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the university's website, also contains detailed information on the entire planning cycle and the roles of the units in it.

The Department of Institutional Effectiveness verifies each year that, in the achievement reports of the vice-presidencies and units, the achievements are related to the fulfillment of the goals and strategic objectives. These reports must reflect how the goals have been achieved through the strategies and activities implemented by the vice-presidencies and their units.

### **Alignment of the Mission with the Strategic plan and the Process used for its Development**

UAA's strategic plan serves as a guide to advance the institution in fulfilling its mission of offering an excellent education for all its students. The educational foundations of spirituality, excellence and service, derived from the mission and vision, provide the framework within which the goals and objectives of the strategic plan are developed, also serving as a basis for decision-making and continuous improvement.

During the last five years, the institution has been guided by the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan. Both the development of the plan and its updating are worked on by the Strategic Planning Committee and the subcommittees, with the responsibility of reviewing the previous strategic plan, carrying out an analysis of the internal and external context of the institution, describing the weaknesses and opportunities, strengths and threats and examine the extent to which the plan serves the accomplishment of the mission.

The subcommittees, with representatives from all the units, were in charge of collecting the necessary information from the university community useful to define the goals and objectives, while the institutional research office carried out multiple surveys to collect information from students, faculty and staff, to SWOT analysis. The committee then spent time analyzing and synthesizing all the information into a draft plan that was presented to the President's Executive Committee. The University Administrative Council with representatives from upper and middle management, as well as faculty, staff, and students, also played a leading role in reviewing and approving the draft strategic plan. The Board of Trustees gave final and official approval to the strategic plan in 2017 (Minutes Board of Trustees).

The PE 2017-2023 is based on the mission and vision: Spirituality, Excellence and service, followed by five strategic initiatives that originate the seven goals of the plan and its 45 objectives. Figure 1.1 shows the components of the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan.

**Figure 1.1**



**Strategic Plan Components 2017-2023**

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The initiatives of the Strategic Plan are as follows:

**Spiritual Development.** Effective integration of faith and values in learning, both within the Adventist academic community, and in the external community.

student success. Recruitment, retention, enrollment management, and support of a diverse student body through service systems, facilities, and technology through the completion of their program of study.

**Academic Quality.** Learning environment that develops in students the necessary skills for a professional performance of excellence, with multicultural perspectives, based on a high-quality educational offer supported by research, creative work, the assessment of learning and the effectiveness of the programs.

**Administrative Effectiveness.** Emphasis on efficient administrative processes including planning and assessment of institutional effectiveness, human resource management, and sustainable development, supported by financial stability.

**Social Commitment and Collaborative Relationships.** Analysis, projection and response to changing social needs.

Information on how the university, in fulfilling its mission, supports the development of academic research and the advances that have been made in this area is included in the Standard V report.

### **The Mission Guides, the Decision-Making and Governing Process**

The General Education Component, embedded in each program at the undergraduate level, is strong evidence that decision-making processes at Antillean are mission-driven. The curricular design reflects being rigorous, and useful for students to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions required according to the institutional mission, of a "holistic formation that prepares competent professionals, committed to the service of God and humanity".

The curricular design for general education is the responsibility of each departments to which the courses belong and the faculty concerned. The competencies required are reflected in the institutional profile of the graduate, defining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that each student must develop through their student experience. The current general education component was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2015.

The General Education Committee, among other functions, plans and directs the general education program, develops a framework for assessing student learning outcomes/objectives in general education courses, reviews formal and informal assessment strategies used in general education courses and provides a summary of results to the Unit Assessment Committee and faculty for their review and recommendations for changes and improvements in the program. According to the needs of changes or improvements of the program, the necessary resources are assigned for an operation in accordance with the fulfillment of the mission.

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Other tools that function as evidence that the mission guides the decision-making processes are the plans of the vice-presidencies and the annual plans of the units, which show how the decisions made are in harmony with the mission and strategic planning. It is in the units where the strategic goals and objectives are implemented guided by the annual plans. The Department of Institutional Effectiveness prepares the templates for the annual plans of all the units, which include the strategic goals and objectives. In this way, the strategies and activities included in the annual plans and then carried out are framed and aligned with the mission. (Example of annual plans of the units).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter shows that AAU has a mission statement that clearly defines its purpose and intent to provide higher education at the undergraduate level, primarily to the rural community of the west of Puerto Rico. Also, describes how the institution advances its mission through strategic goals to ensure that they are relevant and achievable. Based on the self-assessment of Standard I the Institution has identified the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement:

### **Strengths**

- Antillean Adventist University has a mission and vision that guide the institution's operations, as well as a defined and organized process for its effective fulfillment. The institution has developed a strategic planning and improvement process that clearly articulates the mission and vision with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.
- The university has a clear process that allows all units to report their achievements annually, in relation to the fulfillment of the mission.
- In order to integrate the entire university community in the planning and decision-making processes, Antillean includes representatives of the faculty, support staff, and students in the main committees.

### **Challenges**

- Socioeconomic changes on the island may be redefining the profile of students we serve.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Antillean continues to work to strengthen and systematize the communication and dissemination processes of the mission statement, especially among the student population.

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## **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

*Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions in all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.*

- RA 5: The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) laws and regulations.
- RA 8: The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
- RA 11: The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.
- RA 12: The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.
- RA 14: The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

This Chapter addressed the following institutional priorities (IP):

- D. Emphasize the integration of community services experiences.

### **Analysis of Key Issues**

Antillean Adventist University has a Christian foundation; therefore, its ethical principles and values are highly emphasized. They permeate all policies and are integrated into all levels and areas of the institution. Through the establishment of different policies and procedures, the



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university defines its ethics and integrity, guaranteeing, at the same time, that all its operations and interactions are framed within the ethical, moral, and Christian values that characterize it.

The recruitment materials, the information published on the institutional website, the employee and faculty manuals, the institutional catalog, the policies, and guidelines of the units consistently show that the UAA fosters respect and ethical conduct among the diversity of its members, students, faculty, and staff. The institution also demonstrates its commitment to ethics and integrity through its statements on academic freedom, intellectual property rights, academic honesty, fair and impartial human resource practices, conflict of interest, and information for students regarding funding sources, among others.

### **AAU's Consistency in Following Through its Stated Policies in Communicating with Students, Faculty and Staff.**

All the policies or procedures are communicated to the university community. There are different means used for such communication, among them: (a) Faculty Handbook 2020 which contains "the rules, rights and duties of the teaching personnel"(pp. ii, iii); (b) Employee Handbook 2021, which contains "references about essential issues of working conditions" (p. 7); (c) the electronic mail (facultad@uaa.edu, employees@uaa.edu, alluaa@uaa.edu) to send general messages pertaining to faculty, staff, and students; (d) monthly faculty meetings; (e) circular letters; and (f) general meetings with the Administration. There are also Executives Committees within each vice presidency, and meetings within each school or department. Each concern or complaint that emerges in these meetings or at the personal level is channeled up to the different levels of command and to the presidency, if needed. In some instances, they might be presented to the Board of Trustees. Decisions or guidelines established by the Board of Trustees are communicated to the university community by the President, either in writing, or in town hall meetings.

Regarding students, there are several means which are effective in communicating with them. These are: (a) Student Handbook 2022, which describes the services offered, social rules, religious norms, behavior norms, and general conduct rules. It also includes penalties that could be applied when these are violated. The purpose of the Student Handbook is to communicate the principles, norms, and rules that operate in the Institution. They will help, therefore, to protect the students' rights and duties during their stay at AAU; (b) Dorm Handbook 2022 establishes the general rules for those living at any of the residence halls on campus; (c) The general assembly is another opportunity to offer information and guidance to the students. Each Tuesday, a class period is devoted to this assembly, and the last Tuesday of the month is separated for the academic departments (Student Handbook, 2014, p. 18).

Antillean Adventist University is committed to continuous monitoring and correct application of established institutional policies, rules, and procedures. The academic and non-academic units, the vice-presidencies, and the presidency are the originators of all policies, and they are published at the Institution's website available to students and staff. The Catalog 2019-2022, for example, one of the most widely used documents, overseen by the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs, works as a tool that communicates broad and important information for students and employees alike. The Catalog is published on the Web page. The catalog is reviewed every three years, by the academic units that propose the updates or amendments to the Academic Executive Committee that approves changes. Then the changes are processed for approval to the President's Executive Committee, the University Administrative Council and finally to the Board of Trustees. The minutes of the Academic Executive Committee are evidence of the consistency

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of the institution in following the norms established in the catalog (Minutes of the Board of Trustees).

The admissions policy, on the other hand, fosters access and inclusiveness to educational services by an increasingly diverse student population, thus not discriminating because of religious affiliation, race, age, gender, physical handicap, or nationality (Catalog 2019-2022). Due to the application of this policy, the institution has a diverse student population.

The university is committed to providing students and employees with a safe environment, characterized by respectful treatment and free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation, whether in person or through electronic means, thus promoting the comprehensive development of the entire university community. A lot of the daily communication, especially between professors and students takes place through the student/faculty portals (E-cams and Moodle) which provide the means for sharing academic work, tests, and grades, among others. This type of communication is regulated by the Policy on Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying and Cyberbullying, 2017), which establishes in the General Student Regulations, 2022, that it is the responsibility of each member of the university to ensure that no situation of harassment occurs during activities. In addition, the General Student Regulations 2022 establish standards for moral conduct. The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for handling cases of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, for which he has a Disciplinary Committee in which cases are heard. This committee sends the vice president a report with the decision made regarding the case, and the vice president communicates the decision to the concerned parties.

With the purpose of motivating the practice of the rules of respect, integrity, and honesty among employees, the Department of Human Resources, in the Employee Handbook, 2022, establishes a policy to avoid the practice of sexual harassment at work, in any of its forms, since it violates the dignity of the human being and it constitutes a clear discrimination against its victim, whether male or female. The handbook defines sexual harassment as “the unwelcome imposition of sexual requirements in the context of an employee relationship that affects employment opportunities, the employment itself, its terms and conditions, or the company's work environment”.

### **Adherence to Principles of Academic Freedom**

The Declaration of Academic Freedom is included in the AAU *Faculty Handbook*, 2020, p. 46. This principle reflects a belief in freedom as an essential right in a democratic society, but with special focus in the academic community. It is a guarantee that both professors and students will be able to perform their functions of learning, research, and teaching with a minimum of restrictions. In this case, professors have the freedom to teach a class that has been assigned to them, understanding that they always must be respectful to their students and the institution they represent. It also relates to the atmosphere of openness to the necessary research in an academic community if learning is honest and incisive. In this case, “academic freedom is defined as the right of a responsible and self-disciplined scholar to inquire, teach, and publish within his area of academic specialty. In the proper exercise of that right, the Administration assumes the task of protecting the faculty from situations that hinder the search for knowledge and its adequate and proper dissemination”.

Academic freedom at AAU is not limited to faculty's is not limited to scholarly work; there is autonomy to assign grades within the limits of objectivity, justice, and ethical responsibility.

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They have due freedom to select teaching materials and present their classes in accordance with the requirements of the course and the syllabus, under the aforementioned ethical standards.

Also, on pages 95-97, there is a declaration of academic freedom which establishes that Adventist institutions are based on that principle as an essential part to accomplish their objectives. This principle is linked to the belief that practicing freedom in an academic environment will benefit the Adventist Church. Academic freedom, properly implemented, places AAU's scholars in charge of being self-disciplined and responsible Christian professors with maturity to conduct research, teach, and publish within the area of their academic expertise. Furthermore, this charge seeks to emphasize that professors are responsible to look for truth and guide their students in their intellectual and spiritual needs. It means that academic freedom is not only a privilege, but also a responsibility. Thus, knowing that, Adventist scholars will be respectful in giving their opinion but also with the opinion of others; and clarify when they are giving a personal point of view that is not supported by the institution in which they teach.

Adventist scholars are expected to be free in their research and teaching; but they have to conduct those areas based on Christian ethics, considering public decency and avoiding controversial topics that do not belong to their area of expertise. This does not mean that professors are unprotected and disqualified when they come up with new ideas that seem to confront what is taught in Adventist academic institutions, but that they will have the opportunity to explain their findings to their peers, considering that when the truth is examined, it will shine in a better way. As a result, Adventist professors will look for truth to spread it, and in this journey, they will also look for advice, be ready to express and write the point of views accepted by AAU, and reject those positions which are contrary to Adventist teachings.

In the case of students, the institution makes a provision in the General Student Regulations, 2022, establishing that “all AAU students have the right to respectful public expression and discussion. The AAU gives the student the opportunity to express their opinions in the appropriate forum, without fear of reprisals.” Through their participation in different associations, organizations, and clubs, as well as in administrative committees and bodies, students are provided with a space for their expression and to bring up their issues of concern or interest.

### **Curricular Improvement Based on the Needs of all the Constituencies**

Curriculum development is part of the AAU's commitment to offer programs, courses, and activities that prepare students to be competent and relevant in the place where they have to exercise their professional practice. At AAU, the process of change is continuous and applies to both programs and courses; whether it is a new modality, a new concentration or a new program, the departments are the origin of these. In general, the proposed changes seek to meet the needs of students or the market, provide greater accessibility and opportunities, or improve the quality of the student experience. However, other changes respond to faculty development improve the teaching learning process which leads to curriculum improvement.

Each department and school have a departmental committee that is responsible for reviewing and proposing changes to the curriculum, according to internal requirements and the expectations of external constituents. Recommendations from this committee go to the Executive Committee of Academic Affairs for approval and then to the President's Executive Committee, University Administrative Council, and on to the Board of Trustees, where final

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approval is given, as required. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible to update the catalog and monitoring the policies compliance.

Figure 2.1

*Curricular Revision Process*



Over the past five years, departments, and schools have initiated new courses, programs, concentrations, and modalities for a variety of reasons, including providing opportunities for a diverse population, as well as to address particular student needs.

The institution has been working toward improving the teaching and learning experience by increasing the use of educational technology and distance/hybrid offering. In 2018, AAU created the Distance Education Department (DE) that helped the institution increase the number of courses offered in the online/hybrid modality, providing more flexibility and accessibility to the academic programs. Also, the DE Department increased professional development opportunities to faculty and staff in relation to the integration of technology in teaching face-to-face and online. During this pandemic, COVID-19, DE Department, Vice-presidency for Academic Affairs, Vice-presidency for Finance, and the Vice-presidency for Students Affairs increased the services, protocols, and procedures to facilitate emergency remote teaching for all the academic programs providing the necessary infrastructure. The following student support services are being offered virtually: library, admission, financial aid, registrar, student finance, among others. All these services are offered virtually and also face-to-face by appointment, following all the safety protocols.

New technology was purchased to convert some face-to-face spaces to virtual classrooms using the federal funds of The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economy Security Act (2020). In this fiscal year 2020-21, the Institution received a second federal grant Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (2021) that is being used to increase online teaching and learning technology and to offer virtual student support services.

To increase and improve active and experiential learning in our health- related programs, the institution participated in a Title V competition. A Title V grant was approved by the Department of Education in 2015, for the academic years 2015-2020. This grant was geared towards Expanding Capacity and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs.

The project was designed to:

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- Revise Nursing and Respiratory Care curriculum for inclusion of high-definition simulation technology,
  - Expand access of Health Sciences Programs (HSP) via conversion to online/hybrid delivery,
  - Enhance infrastructure to support instruction via the creation of a state-of-the-art Simulation Lab,
  - Improve foundational skills in Math and English proficiency by developing a Math Resource Center, an English for HSP course and acquire instructional resources,
  - Engage in Respiratory Care curriculum and program evaluation to complete Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) accreditation.

AAU's Title V Part A grant: "*Expanding Capacity and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs*" was committed to fulfilling the goals of the Title V legislation with the purpose of expanding opportunities for and improving the academic attainment of Hispanic students. In accordance with the project initiatives, one of the major emphases of our Title V project was the renovation of an existing building to house the new healthcare simulation laboratory and Math Resource Center. AAU successfully completed the project in September 2020, despite the external factors that have affected higher education in Puerto Rico.

### **Policy and Procedures that AAU Uses to Address Student and Staff Grievances**

The University has specific procedures for the presentation of complaints by faculty, support staff, and students, which guarantee the investigation of the facts and a fair and impartial decision-making process on any complaint.

Complaint policies and procedures for students, faculty, and staff are published in detail in the 2019-2022 Undergraduate Catalog, p. 80, Graduate Catalog 2021-2023, p.29, Student Handbook 2022, p. 23 and Employee Handbook 2021, p.41, and on the institution's website. Through official procedures, the institution seeks to ensure that each complaint or grievance is handled appropriately, avoiding any type of discrimination.

Complaint policies and procedures for students, faculty, and staff are published in detail in the 2019-2022 Undergraduate Catalog, p. 80, Graduate Catalog 2021-2023, p.29, Student Manual 2022, p. 23 and Employee Handbook 2021, p.41, and on the institution's website. Through official procedures, the institution seeks to ensure that each complaint or grievance is handled appropriately, avoiding any type of discrimination.

In relation to the procedure for student complaints, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for addressing them. There are several procedures related to the types of complaints or grievances of students, whether it is an academic complaint, in which the student considers that their academic rights have been violated or if it is a complaint against a student or a teacher. If for any reason, a student feels that they have been treated unfairly, unethically, or that they have been the victim of discrimination by any person or act of AAU, they can confidently express their complaint or problem to the Office of Student Affairs. The Student Handbook (2014) establishes that "any appeal or complaint must be submitted in writing to the

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Student Affairs Executive Committee" (p. 6). The Committee is responsible for interviewing those involved before deciding and documenting the entire process.

Regarding grievances within faculty or staff, the 2021 Employee Handbook provides a resource that allows these bodies to express complaints regarding academic policies, a concern about any aspect, or if they are not satisfied with a decision made by their supervisor. The procedure provides employees with steps to follow to resolve their complaint. AAU addresses them through the Grievance Committee, which has the task to "analyze, evaluate, and make recommendations to the President's Executive Council". AAU's response to faculty or staff grievances was reviewed by the Office of Human Resources (HR) in April 2021, to provide guidance and support to faculty and staff in matters of employment. The HR office supervises the complaint filing process, as well as due compliance with the guidelines established for employees and faculty.

### **Integration of Ethics and Integrity into Policies, Procedures and Activities as it Innovates Planning for a Technological Future**

Recently, technological development has taken giant steps that favor access to educational services by students, as well as teacher training. In its role of ensuring that ethics and integrity are the operating norm in the activities of all areas, the institution has developed procedures and policies that inform employees and students how to use the institutional technological resources framed in ethical behavior. The Technological Resources' policy that appears in the Employee Manual 2022, establishes: "These resources include data, files, equipment, programming, networks, email, "Online chat" and any other. The Institution recognizes that these technologies contribute to increasing the productivity of its employees. Therefore, it values their use, recognizing that the use of technological advances will harmonize with ethical values, Christian principles and in accordance with federal laws or regulations, and to Institutional policies".

The Institution provides, free of charge, computer services and information resources to all employees, faculty, registered students and authorized visitors. However, "the university monitors and restricts, in accordance with applicable law, the content of its information technology resources and reserves the right to prohibit or limit access when federal laws or regulations are violated."

The Technological Resources Policy (TRP) has the purpose of promoting the ethical use of information resources, providing privacy and security to all users, as well as disseminating guidelines for the appropriate use of information systems and facilities. The institution "reserves the right to inspect the use of its technological resources if there is suspicion of violations of the rules that regulate them, an emergency or a threat to the integrity and security of the computer system."

On the other hand, the TRP provides for the observance of copyright rules when it comes to information or programs that appear on the Internet. It provides guidance on ethical procedures for their use; promotes the rights of all users, prohibits abusive behavior and/or bullying, and encourages respect for the needs of other users.

The TRP establishes, on page 20, the rules for the use of information resources, as well as the possible disciplinary measures related to the violation of these rules. These are based on ethical behavior and responsible use of resources. The Department of Information Systems and Technology (ITS) is responsible for supervising compliance with this policy by students and



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employees. The provisions of this policy required by students appear in the syllabi of all AAU courses.

As part of the review of the Employee Handbook in 2021, the TRP was reviewed and updated by the Department of Information and Technology, in accordance with the development of institutional infrastructure and with the expansion of assisted teaching modalities.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Likewise, AAU considers the conflict of commitment "in situations when the employee performs in a manner contrary to the values and ethics outlined in the organization's statement of foundations and ethical conduct or when an employee performs in a manner contrary to the ethical codes of conduct established for employees in particular professions". The employment policy includes that, at the time of starting employment, the employee will sign a statement indicating their acceptance of the conditions of employment, as indicated in the organization's Employee Handbook. This acceptance will constitute the person's declaration of compliance with the regulations on conflict of interest or commitments and his or her resolve to continue to abide by them. The employer will provide its employees with a copy of the statement of ethical foundations annually. In addition, the employer will provide its employees with a copy of the regulation on conflict of interest or commitment. The employer will also inform its employees about the duty to disclose potential conflicts of interest or commitment. The answer can be found on page 101 of the 2021 Employee Handbook.

In the case of administrators, deans, directors of departments and members of the teaching staff, the policy establishes that they will annually submit "a declaration of acceptance and compliance with the regulation on conflict of interest or commitment. The delivery of the declaration, signed by the persons indicated above, will constitute their declaration of compliance with the regulations and will place the person under the obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest and commitment that could arise during the following year".

### **Commitment to Practices and Policies Related to Hiring, Evaluation, Promotion, Grievances, Discipline and Separation, and Personnel Practices that are fair, Impartial, Avoid Conflict Interest or its Appearance and Allow for Prompt and Equitable Action**

The 2021 Employee Handbook establishes that the AAU is firmly committed to providing equal employment opportunities to applicants or employees without establishing any discrimination based on age, sex, race, color, social condition, political ideas, national origin, disability qualified by law, veteran status, being a victim or perceived to be a victim of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault or any other reason or cause protected by law. However, the Institution, being one of a religious nature, affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, reserves the right to hire candidates who are members of the Adventist Church, except for positions of difficult recruitment. It is clarified that management positions will be exclusive to members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This policy extends to all personnel actions to be carried out by AAU, including recruitment, selection, promotions, evaluations, transfers, promotions, salary changes, training and development opportunities, licenses and benefits, and the imposition of disciplinary measures.

Likewise, it is the policy of the AAU to provide qualified persons with disabilities the same employment opportunities and benefits as non-disabled persons. In consideration of the

foregoing, AAU prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability, qualified for the position for which he or she applies, due to his or her physical or mental disability. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training. AAU complies with the provisions of the American Act of 1990 that protects people with physical disabilities (better known as "ADA" in English "Americans with Disabilities Act") and other applicable legislation that prohibits employment discrimination against qualified individuals disabled.

## **Participation in Missionary and Community Service Projects Related to the Fulfillment of the Mission**

The mission of AAU “promotes the holistic formation of competent professionals, committed to serving God and humanity.” To accomplish it, AAU puts a strong emphasis on community service through various means:

The first effort is made through General Education components with two courses that are offered in all academic programs: EDUC 098/099 Introduction to University Life and HUSO 100 Philosophy of Service. Every student must take both courses in their first year of study, in which the theoretical foundation and practical experience are provided for understanding human needs and how to meet them. Through contact with people, students are encouraged to develop spiritual and human sensitivity. These courses also provide them knowledge, from the beginning of their university life, to treat others with kindness and professionalism.

Secondly, the institution encourages the integration of service activities in the course curriculum. For example, the nursing program, stands out for the incorporation of the service activities in several courses of its BS courses. Eleven (11) concentration courses have service activities as a requirement. Also, there are education and religion courses that have the service component. Below is a summary of the courses with service activities component.

Table 2. 1

### *Service Activities as Course Requirements*

Nursing	Education/ Humanities	Religion
NURS 120 Fundamentals of Nursing II: a) Collection and distribution of essential personal items; b) community house cleaning.	ART 210 Arts and Crafts	RELB 101 Life and Teaching Jesus
NURS 220, 221 Medical Surgical I and II: a) House cleaning and painting; b) health clinics; c) emotional, social and spiritual help	EDUC 339 Parent and Community Rel.	RELP 291, 292 Pastoral Practice I and II
NURS 230 Physical Estimate and Primary Care: a) Health clinics; b) guidance on lifestyle.	EDUC 342 Integration of Faith,	RELP 391, 392 Int. Pastoral Practice I

Nursing	Education/ Humanities	Religion
	Values and Learning	and II
NURS 300 Spiritual Care: Emotional, social and spiritual assistance for mothers, children, adults and elderly.	HUSO 100 Philosophy of Service	RELP 491, 492 Advanced Pastoral Practice I and II
NURS 320, 321 Maternity and Pediatrics: a) Arrangement and cleaning of houses of pregnant women; b) childcare; c) home health education for parents and children; d) health clinics for mothers and children; e) educational conferences in schools.		
NURS 322 Psychiatry and Mental Health: a) Mental health counseling; b) health clinics; c) help service for homeless people and people and people with addictions.		
NURS 323 Nursing Process Applied to the Elderly Client: a) House cleaning; b) collection and distribution of essential items; c) health guidance for the elderly; d) visit to nursing homes.		
NURS 380 Seminar: a) Help to homeless; b) cleaning inside and outside houses (cleaning yards and painting); c) health clinics; d) educational talks; e) visit to nursing homes.		
NURS 421 Nursing and Community Health: a) Health fairs; b) cleaning houses and community; c) health orientation to the family and community; d) health clinics in a community (schools, groups, others); e) home visits; f) educational conferences in schools; g) biblical walks; h) workshops on natural remedies in public residential and nursing homes.		

Finally, AAU provides a variety of opportunities for students and staff to voluntarily participate in community projects and services. As established in the Operational Plans, the vice presidencies must carry out a service activity each year that involves all their employees, while the Department for Religious Affairs plans each year a series of service activities that allow students and staff to participate voluntarily. The academic units also develop service activities that integrate the students. The table shows an example of some of the service activities that were carried out recently.

Table 2.2

*Examples of Community Service Activities in Recent Years*

Area	Service Activities			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Religious Affairs</b>	Reconstruction of the roof and other interior repairs to a family home in the community.	Educational services center for the family and the community in Mayaguez.	During the semester, visits were made every month to provide chaplaincy services to the ladies of Posada Corazón in the city of Mayagüez, a place that offers support to women who are victims of abuse.  Organization of various activities that included employees and students to bring food, personal belongings and water, among others, to earthquake victims.	
<b>Academic Units</b>	Implementation of a tutoring program for students in the community and guidance for teachers.	Health clinic in Mayagüez involving students and staff.  Support to the community of Guánica and	Food delivery for Summer Program students.  Free tutorials for students from 1st to 6th grade, English, Spanish	

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Service Activities				
Area	2018	2019	2020	2021
		Yabucoa after the tremors with donations of personal belongings and food.	and mathematics.  Free College Board review for community students.	
		Workshop on the use and management of the Excel program for the employees of the Mayor's Office of Mayagüez.	Summer camps inviting students island-wide.	
Vicepresidency	Fundraising for students with financial need and supplies of items for personal use, food, medical prescriptions, clothing, footwear, nursing uniforms.	Four Fridays in a row offering sports support to Adventist academies and encouraging exercise during quarantine.	Giving Tuesday that sought to attract funds from students and staff to offer scholarships to students in need.	

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The Institution is interested in increasing the number of service activities, as a course requirement, as well as having regular community service activities carried out in all units by personnel and students. Ultimately, AAU seeks to create a culture of service and thus fulfill its mission.

## Conclusion

The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that Antillean Adventist University is successfully achieving the goals and initiatives relevant to Standard II on Ethics and Integrity. The institution publishes and adheres to policies and procedures enacted by its Board of Trustees, as well as policies and/or procedures found in other publications including, but not limited to, the Faculty Handbook, Catalogs, and Employee Handbook.

## Strengths

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- Ethics and integrity are reflected in the statements of all institutional policies and guidelines and are integrated into the daily activities of the institution at all levels.
  - It was observed that the different units follow the policies as they are established.
  - The institution is characterized as an institution that offers equal employment opportunities and its practices are not discriminatory.

## **Challenges**

- Engage in an organized and systematic process to update policies and procedures to reflect changes and to ensure accuracy about the process.

## **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Development of a procedure for updating institutional policies, which allows greater regularity in their revision.
- Design a plan for systematic participation in service activities by all units. This plan will include measurable objectives aligned with assessments thus verifying the fulfillment of the mission with greater objectivity.



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### **Standard III-Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

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

- RA8: The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
- RA9: The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.
- RA10: Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.
- RA15: The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.

#### **This Chapter addressed the followings Institutional Priorities (IP):**

- A. Strengthen student learning through active and experiential learning methodologies
- B. Restructure academic and support services
- C. Increase the impact of the spiritual program initiatives for students and staff
- D. Emphasize the integration of community service experiences

### **Analysis of Key Issues**

The AAU is committed to providing an education of excellence through its academic programs. Consistent with the institutional mission, the development of competent professionals is promoted through various learning experiences. During the past years, the Institution has improved student learning experiences by strengthening the academic offerings through the implementation of technology, the creation of new study programs, and the development of proposals. The AAU supports faculty and staff that are part of the learning environment by offering professional development activities each year in various areas such as philosophy, teaching methods, technology integration, among others. On the other hand, the Institution has been implementing these initiatives as part of the institutional goals according to the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan.

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## Navigating Academic Offerings

The UAA offers 6 associates, 26 bachelor's degrees, 12 master's degrees and 3 graduate certificates. Regarding the curriculum, associates contain a minimum of 23 general education credits, based on a minimum of 60 credits in the program. Bachelor's degrees require a minimum of 51 general education credits, based on a minimum of 120 credits. Table 3.1 show the studies programs offered at the Institution.

**Table 3.1-Programs of Studies**

Educational Offerings
Associate Degree in Religion
Associate Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting
Associate Degree in Computer Science
Associate Degree in Science in Office Administration with the option as Office Secretary
Associate Degree in Science in Office Administration with the option as Accounting Secretary
Associate Degree in Science in Respiratory Therapy
Associate Degree in Nursing
Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Pastoral Theology
Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in Elementary Education
Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration
Bachelor of Arts in Biology
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a concentration in English (K-6)
Bachelor of Arts in Special Education with an Emphasis in Learning Disabilities
Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a concentration in Religion
Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a concentration in Biology
Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a concentration in Spanish
Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a concentration in History
Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a concentration in English
Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a concentration in Mathematics
Bachelor of Arts in History
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in Social Work
Bachelor of Artes in Graphic Design
Bachelor of Science in Cardiopulmonary
Bachelor of Science with a concentration in Biology
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Management
Bachelor of Science in Office Administration with concentration in Bilingual
Bachelor of Science in Office Administration with concentration Not Bilingual
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a concentration in Physical Education (K-6)
Bachelor of Science with a concentration in Computerized Systems of Information
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a concentration in Primary Education (K-3)
Master of Arts in Education with a specialty in Administration and Supervision

Educational Offerings	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the Elementary Level	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the Secondary Level	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialty in Teaching English as a Second Language at the Elementary Level	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialty in Teaching English as a Second Language at the Secondary Level	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with specialty in Biology	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialty in Spanish	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with specialty in History	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with specialty in School Health Education and Community	
Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialty in Special Education	
Master in Medical Surgical Nursing with specialties in Critical Care and Elderly Person Care	
Master in Nursing with specialty in Anesthesia	
Post Baccalaureate Certification in Special Education	
Post Baccalaureate Certification in Bilingual Education	
Post Baccalaureate Certification in Autism	

Source: Academic Affairs Office

The economic compensation factor has made it difficult for the Masters Program in Nursing with Specialty in Anesthesia to hire doctors with the credentials needed to continue offering the program. For this reason, the Board of Trustees agreed to close the program as of October 2022. Currently, the institution is working on the closure process in compliance with the regulatory agency. The institution has already notified the program moratorium before the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Education. According to the 2017-2023 Strategic Plan, the design and delivery of the student learning experience are among its top priorities. One of the main strategic goals to strengthen the academic programs is to expand the academic offer so that it is flexible, updated, and responsive to the various modalities and quality standards in accordance with market demand and innovative educational trends. This goal is achieved by producing highly competent graduates. During the past few years, five new study programs have been created, two of which are in the distance modality and respond to market trends. The Institution is working with the creation of new study programs in various modalities according to the Study Program Development Plan 2022-2024. There are various areas in which training is provided to faculty, such as distance learning, teaching based on active learning, among others. During each faculty meeting, hours of training are provided in response to the professional development plan in order to keep the faculty updated according to the trends of higher education and their areas of specialty. Another initiative, however, is to obtain new professional accreditations for academic programs and maintain the existing ones. Recently, the nursing programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels have been reaccredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. However, the professional accreditation process for education programs is being worked on with the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Furthermore, we have 30 classrooms with digital screens, which has allowed us to increase the integration of technology in the classroom and strengthen the technological infrastructure of the institution.

AAU is committed to guaranteeing academic rigor in all its study programs. Therefore, the programs are designed to foster coherent learning experiences and promote learning synthesis.

The periodic review of academic programs, as well as the creation or modification of courses and proposals for new programs, must go through a series of constituents and approvals to guarantee compliance with the accrediting and regulatory agencies. In the Institution, the development of new study programs is initiated by each academic dependency who, after evaluating the trends in the market and the viability of the program, recommend it to the Academic Affairs Commission. This Committee evaluates it according to the Procedures Guide for the Viability of New Academic Offers. If the requirements are met, it is recommended to the Executive Committee of the President, who in turn recommends the University Administrative Council and finally, the Board of Trustees who issues the final action.

For other hand, the degree requirements are available in the Institution's Catalogs the Academic Website and advising sheets in each department. All degree requirements are presented in a similar manner. Courses are organized by academic year, and each academic year is divided by semester/trimester. Also, the student is oriented about the ways to access the Catalog, and is assigned to an academic adviser for the planning of his/her study program. This format helps the student select the courses and number of credits needed to complete the degree on time. Each semester, the institution schedules an academic advising period in which students meet with an academic adviser to discuss their academic progress prior to the enrollment process.

### **Pedagogical Development**

Antillean has a competent faculty, committed to the Adventist educational philosophy that endeavors to develop "the faculties of mind, body, and soul" as stated by White (1952) in her classic book *Education* (p. 11). The Faculty at Antillean also agrees with the following philosophical statement:

The true teacher is not satisfied with second-rate work. He is not satisfied with directing his students to a standard lower than the highest which it is possible for them to attain. He cannot be content with imparting to them only technical knowledge, with making them merely clever accountants, skillful artisans, successful tradesmen. It is his ambition to inspire them with principles of truth, obedience, honor, integrity, and purity--principles that will make them a positive force for the stability and uplifting of society. He desires them, above all else, to learn life's great lesson of unselfish service. (Ibid, p. 29)

**Faculty Profile.** Antillean is committed to providing the highest quality instruction. The number of faculty members is sufficient to serve the student population. As show in Table 3.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) student-to-faculty ratio. All faculty and instructional staff have numerous opportunities to develop their teaching skills and strategies in their departments.

***Table 3.2 Full Time Equivalent Student-to-Faculty-Ratio***

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>FTE Student-to-Faculty Ratio</b>
2018-2019	19:1
2019-2020	16:1
2020-2021	17:1
2021-2022	16:1

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Source: Registrar Office

Furthermore, faculty is characterized by its excellence in teaching. This statement is evidenced in the results of student and department chair evaluations. For example, for the 2018-2022 academic year, 90% of professors scored 92% or higher in student evaluations.

Also, Full-time faculty members are granted the following academic ranks: Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor (*Faculty Handbook 2020*, pp. 17-19). They are expected to teach, provide academic advising, conduct research, publish, engage in curriculum planning, assess students' academic performance, and be member of at least on university committee.

In Fall 22, AAU had 40 full-time professors and 62 part-time professors. The following tables show the demographic categories in which we classify our faculty.

**Table 3.3 - Type of Work Contracts for Faculty at AAU**

Academic Year	Types	
	Full Time	Part Time
2011-2019	44	82
2019-2020	42	98
2020-2021	42	98
2021-2022	40	62

Source: Institutional Research Office

**Table 3.4- AAU Full-time Faculty Classified by Gender**

Academic Year	Gender	
	Male	Female
2018-2019	21	23
2019-2020	20	22
2020-2021	21	21
2021-2022	20	20

Source: Institutional Research Office

**Table 3.5-Highest Degree Attained by Faculty at AAU**

Academic Year	Degrees		
	Bachelors	Master's	Doctorate
2018-2019	0	30	14
2019-2020	0	29	13
2020-2021	0	29	13
2021-2022	0	29	11

Source: Institutional Research Office

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Also, Table 3.5 presents other findings related to various aspects of the quality of teaching, assessment, and service.

**Table 3.5- Quality of Teaching**

Measure	2022 Graduating Students Survey	Three-Year Average Graduating Students
Student satisfaction	92%	93%
Use of technology	91%	89%
Evaluation methods	89%	89%
Individual support	87%	96%

Source: Institutional Effectiveness Office

### **Faculty Involvement in Curricular Development, Assessment, and Professional Development**

To achieve the overall objectives of the academic departments and the University, the faculty must be involved in all the processes that require their expertise and support. In the organizational structure, teachers have direct access to their program coordinators, directors, and deans. Their ideas and recommendations for curricular improvement are supported and considered. The majority of academic departments or schools have monthly meetings. During these meetings, faculty have the opportunity to collaborate with each other in matters dealing with curriculum improvement and assessment. Some actions taken at the departmental level are channeled through the Academic Affairs Executive Committee and may continue on to the University Administrative Council and the Board of Trustees.

The Institution has established a plan for faculty professional development that is comprehensive in scope (See Faculty Handbook, 2020, pp. 28-29). Therefore, with the plan, each faculty should reach, within three years, the goals required for professional development. The plan targets four areas: (1) philosophical base and religious influence, (2) effective techniques of teaching-learning, (3) a broad knowledge of his/her teaching field and (4) technology integration in the classroom. To reach these goals, faculty participates and attends professional seminars, workshops, and conventions. As a result of the implemented initiatives, the integration of technology in the classroom has increased.

The Department of Distance Education was created as part of the initiatives to offer programs in various modalities. Also, provide support to expand the integration of technology as teaching-learning tools. In addition, the offerings have been expanded through the distance and hybrid modality, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Similarly, various professional development activities were offered to the faculty and support staff to continue providing an excellent service to the university community. Given the recent pedagogical adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the faculty needs to be identified by the Director are related to



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distance education. For this reason, many workshops are being coordinated with the Distance Education Department.

The Faculty Handbook 2020 describes the evaluation process, including the roles of responsible officers and entities, faculty rights, and evaluation procedures. The University has a rigorous evaluation process for its teaching staff, which enables it to ensure both high-quality professional performance and personal growth and individual contribution. It applies to all University teaching staff, whether they are full-time or part-time. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for developing and implementing the evaluation process, and applying the criteria for promotion and permanence of the teaching staff.

Academic programs at AAU promote a holistic learning approach and encourage student participation in activities. The following programs require students to engage in a practicum and hands-on learning experience: Education, Business Administration, Nursing, Office Administration and Theology. They use as centers of practice various facilities like hospitals, schools, businesses, and offices. In this way, the students acquire real-life experiences in the workplace and also provide a direct service to the community. We include other learning opportunities offered in different installations such as laboratories and computer centers, technology systems, smart classrooms, libraries, and sports facilities. To strictly academic activities, we add others directly related to the Spiritual Life program, like youth programs, religious services, concerts, and camps.

As for continued education for professional certifications offer opportunities to professionals who need to keep updated in their profession. These programs meet the appropriate standards specify by the different organizations (health-related occupations, teaching, church-related).

### **Commitment to Provide Programs and Services for Underprepared Students**

Antillean Adventist University strives to provide programs and educational activities that consider the needs of the students, especially those who are under prepared. These programs and activities are publicly available and are widely disseminated through media such as the Catalog, flyers, and the AAU website. They are also available through the schools or academic departments. Among them, we offer:

***Courses for students with deficiencies in the areas of Spanish, math, and English.*** Students who enter AAU must have a minimum established grade in the subjects of Spanish, Math, and English. Those with deficiencies in these areas are enrolled in remedial courses that aim at increasing their knowledge and skills before they enroll in the regular courses. We use the scores obtained either in the College Entrance Examination, SAT, ACT, or placement tests developed at AAU to determine the students' level of proficiency. AAU also offers tutorship in all the basic courses and in some major courses in the academic programs through the Office of Guidance and Counseling.

***TRIO SSS programs.*** Two federal TRIO programs are in place to help those students at risk to achieve their academic objectives, one with regular focus, and the other with ESL focus. These programs are supervised by the Vice Presidency for Student Affairs. Matching the federal funds awarded, AAU provided three rooms and office space for these projects, so the students could receive adequate services according to their expectations and needs. Students

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with low achievement or with financial needs are referred to the TRIO offices for advice and support, including tutoring in specific subjects. The main objectives for the TRIO programs are to increase retention and graduation levels among students who participate in the programs, and to motivate students who come from low-income families, who are first generation in college, or with disabilities to achieve their academic goals.

Among the activities and services rendered by this program are:

- Supplemental instruction, academic counseling, seminars and workshops, study and time management skills
- Tutoring services with emphasis in mathematics, English, Spanish, health, and education
- Vocational counseling
- Individual consulting and course selection
- Financial advisory and planning
- Information about financial aid and award
- Mentoring
- Visits to universities who offer graduate studies

**Library.** The library is an excellent learning and research community that converges physical and virtual spaces, services, technology, programs, and information resources to strengthen the curriculum and support the teaching-learning process and research. It offers high-quality individualized and group services aimed at the development of information skills for the formation of graduates capable of lifelong independent learning.

***Distance Education Department.*** The Department is composed of a director and two faculty members in charge of coordinating workshops offered to faculty and students. It is also composed of a committee that includes faculty representation and the Vice-president for Academic Affairs. Some of the main duties of the department are the following:

- Coordinate workshops for faculty members and students on topics such as distance education and educational technology.
- Guide faculty members in the design of online and/or hybrid courses.
- Manage the Moodle online platform.
- Develop rubrics for the evaluation of course modules.

### ***General Education Courses***

The General Education component at AAU meets the credit hours required to achieve the knowledge that will allow the students to join the workforce as professionals of excellence, offering selfless service to humanity in general and to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also

stimulates the disposition of students to acquire and demonstrate their ability in core competencies, such as: oral and written communication in Spanish and English, scientific and quantitative reasoning, analysis and critical thinking, technological competence, and understanding of the values and ethics.

Table 3.7

### Graduate Profile

Área	Profile	Courses	Credits	Learning Outcomes
<b>Spirituality</b>				
<b>Religious and Healthy Life Style</b>	Will value the knowledge of God according to the sacred writings as Creator and Sustainer of all things and restorer of humanity.	You will select (12) credits from the following courses:		Demonstrates knowledge of biblical truths and the ministry of Christ.
		RELB 101-Life and Teachings of Jesus or RELB 102-Introduction to the Gospels	3	It examines the ways in which the human being is involved in the message of the Bible.
		RELT 201-Christian Beliefs or RELT 202-Christian Living		It examines the ethical dimensions of his personal life and circumstances.
		RELB 100-General Introduction to the Bible or RELB 103-Introduction to the Bible+ or RELB 223-Introduction to Daniel and Revelation or RELB 300-Biblical Perspective on Spiritual Care#	3	Demonstrates knowledge of healthy living principles and discusses implications for physical, mental, and spiritual health.
		RELT 317-Christian Home or RELT 412-Christian Ethics HEPE 100-Healthy Living Principles	3	
	Demonstrate understanding of Adventist Christian and ethical values, and make applications to personal contexts and issues.		3	
	Recognize the importance of a healthy lifestyle, attending to the body, mind and spirit, according to the Adventist legacy.		3	
		Sub-Total	15	
<b>Excellence</b>				
<b>Scientific Reasoning and Problem Solving</b>	Critically analyze the relationship between science and Adventist faith and how the Bible agrees or disagrees with traditional scientific theories.	BIOL 100-Introduction to Biological Sciences or BIOL 101-Faith and Sciences+	3	Demonstrates knowledge of scientific principles within the biological sciences.
		MATH 231-Statistics I	3	Makes observations, collects, analyzes, and interprets data to test hypotheses. Use quantitative methods to test hypotheses and to construct solutions to problems.

Área	Profile	Courses	Credits	Learning Outcomes
Sub-Total			6	
Humanities	Critically understand the changing modes of human expression and their systems of thought.	MUCT 101-Introduction to Music or MUFA 105-Fine Arts Appreciation	3	Interprets and critically responds to work from various cultures in the arts and humanities.
	Appreciates the aesthetic in the arts and humanities. Values cultural and intellectual diversity and the ability to function in a multicultural environment.	MUHL 104-Music Appreciation or MUPF ____ Applied Music or ART 104-Introduction to Drawing or ART 210-Arts and Crafts	0-3	Articulates an informed personal reaction to work in the arts and humanities.
		HUMA 101-Western Culture or HUSO 101-Introduction to Social Sciences	3	Examines and analyzes social institutions and processes in the context of historical periods or cultures.
		HUHI 200-PR Historical Process		Develops and communicates solution explanations for historical or social discussion topics.
Sub-Total			9	
Oral and Writing Communication	Effectively master the Spanish language and develop skills to function fluently in English as a second language.	HUSP 111-Basic Spanish I	3	Demonstrates and applies knowledge of the writing process and expression, using creativity, organization, composition, revision, editing, and presentation, when appropriate for specific tasks and audiences.
		HUSP 122-Basic Spanish II	3	
		HUCO 223-Communication and Expression	3	
		HUEN 123-ESL Academic II HUEN 215-Grammar, Composition ESL HUEN 231-Composition in English	6-12	Locate, evaluate, and synthesize material from diverse sources and multiple viewpoints.
Sub-Total			21	
Information Literacy and Technology	1. Research topics using a variety of resources.	COMP 101-Introduction to Computers and Information Systems/	3	Use various technological tools to create professional documents and make presentations.
		OFAD 234-Computer Applications		
Critical Thinking	Recognize, apply and critically evaluate reasoning.	EDUC 098-University Life or	1	
		EDUC 099-Seminar on University Life	.5	

Área	Profile	Courses	Credits	Learning Outcomes
Logical-Mathematical Thinking	Apply mathematics to analyze number relationships, solve problems, explain processes, and interpret results.	MATH 110-College Mathematics	3	Demonstrates knowledge of the basic theories and methods of mathematics
		MATH 112-Mathematics for Health Sciences		Applies mathematical skills and knowledge in their academic discipline.
Sub-Total			7	
Service				
Service	Value service to God and humanity.	HUSO 100-Philosophy Service	1	Actively participates in service activities, showing attitudes of respect, courtesy and consideration. Demonstrates knowledge about the meaning and importance of service.  Evaluate ways in which conditions in the community can be improved through service.
Collaborative Work	Collaborates with others to bring together diverse sources of skills, resources, and knowledge to achieve collaborative results	HEPE 101-116-Physical Education	1	Participates effectively in different group settings, listening, thinking critically and creatively, reflecting and responding appropriately to group relationships.  Demonstrates ability to reach group agreements, create a shared vision and join forces with a common goal.
Sustainability and Citizenship	Recognize their commitment to the responsible use of natural, financial and human resources.	BUAD 101-Management of Natural and Financial Resources	1	Proposes and evaluates solutions to environmental problems, including the main aspects of sustainability. Articulate and defend actions you would take in relation to various environmental issues.
Sub-Total			3	
TOTAL CRÉDITOS			61	

+Only for Theologians

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#Only for students of health programs

\*Does not apply to Nursing students

^Not required for students in the following programs: Biology, Cardiopulmonary and Nursing.

**Graduate Profile.** The profile of the UAA graduate is based on the educational principles that are essential to achieve comprehensive human development. This profile describes the professional with the skills that allow him to successfully deploy his abilities in the work, social and religious environment. Such attributes are found in the three focus pillars chosen by the UAA as part of its vision: spirituality, excellence and service. In Table 3.17, subsections 1 and 12, the courses of the curriculum that seek a life of witness and service are presented. Also, in sections 8, 9, 10 and 11, the courses that are common to all study programs are detailed, in which high-level thinking, analysis, decision-making, reflective thinking and innovation are emphasized. On the other hand, in sections 1, 2, 12, 13 and 14, the courses that contribute to the formation of character are presented. In addition, in each of the syllabi of the core and concentration/specialty courses, it includes a section on the integration of faith and values. This section includes the biblical concept that will be highlighted in the course as a strategy to integrate the knowledge of God in the academic curriculum. The Student Learning Assessment Plan is used by the institution to demonstrate the student's development of these skills at the end of their studies.

## Conclusion

The analysis and evidence presented in this chapter shows that AAU has academic programs of study that are rigorous, coherent, and aligned with its mission. The academic programs are offered by faculty members who are qualified and committed to student success. In addition, the institution offers support services that enhance students' academic experience.

## Strengths

- The institution's educational offerings demonstrate academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission.
- AAU provides a wide range of programs, initiatives, and services to support its academic programs and students' academic progress (including advising, psychological and counseling services, support for specific student needs, and academic support, among others).
- The strong academic qualifications of AAU faculty and the rigorous tenure and promotion process that requires the integration of teaching, scholarship, and service.

## Challenges

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

## Opportunities for Improvement



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- Evaluate all programs to address effective teaching, student learning, and student satisfaction with the online learning experience.

## **Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience**

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

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

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

[This Chapter addressed the followings Institutional Priorities \(IP\):](#)

B. Restructure academic and support services

### **Analysis of Key Issues**

AAU recruits and admits students whose interests, skills, experience, and goals are consistent with its mission and educational offerings. It also provides an environment that supports and enhances the student experience, as stated in 2017-2023 Strategic Plan. Also, the institution empowers students and improves the teaching-learning process to promote students' success in achieving their academic goals. In addition, it provides opportunities for student participation in various extracurricular and spiritual activities.

### **Providing Students with the Support Needed to Success**

The Marketing and Recruitment Office aims to market and promote academic programs, as well as recruit students to become part of our learning community, maintaining the philosophy of Adventist Education, ethics and professionalism in all activities. That is why, its efforts are focused on using different means to guide and impact prospective students, with a view to enrolling and completing an academic degree at our Institution. Antillean contacts students from public schools, private schools, homeschoolers, active in other institutions (transfers) and

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work scenarios, among others, for which various activities are carried out aimed at making the prospect aware of the university. Through orientations in public and private schools, College Day, educational and health fairs, Open Houses and Campus Tours, prospective students acquire their first information about the institution. Once a lead is obtained from a prospect, either through these activities or the interested person starts the application process, a formal interaction begins to provide them with enough information to make an informed decision when enrolling. Tools such as regular mail, follow-up calls, text messages and emails are used during the contact process.

## ***Admissions***

The Admissions Office reviews applicants' applications to ensure that the student has the requirements for be admitted to the programs of studies. In addition, those applicants who are not adequately prepared, but who can be successful with the appropriate support, are identified. The university has several resources to help these students, such as placement tests. All entering undergraduates take the Mathematics, Spanish and English placement exam to place students into the appropriate course level, including preparatory or remedial courses in Math, Spanish, and English. Conditional admission is another resource that makes it easier for students who do not have the required average to provisionally enroll in another program that requires a lower average.

During their first semester, these students are followed up with by their academic advisor and counselor, so they can raise their GPA and be accepted into the program of their choice. To impact a higher number of students, the Admissions Office has created a friendly and flexible policy where it offers students different options to enroll. Since the student is in the 12th grade of the High School, they are offered the option of being provisionally admitted and enrolling through an Early Admission (Dual enrollment). The purpose is to attract prospective students who are motivated to start their university career, so they can experience the university environment and advance their career, while completing their fourth year. The admissions policy makes provision for interested students to be allowed to apply and be accepted, even if they have not taken standardized admissions tests, such as the College Board, ACT, or SAT. These students are offered placement exams to place them in the basic subjects that require it. This updates the admissions process and also encourages students to apply earlier. This option also benefits international students who do not have the facility to take these exams in their home countries.

Home school students may be admitted by submitting evidence of having completed a study program equivalent to the Puerto Rico High School, as long as it is certified by the Puerto Rico Department of Education. In case of not being able to present it, they can present a sworn statement by the parents and/or umbrella school together with the results of standardized admission tests such as the College Board, ACT or SAT.

New students admitted to Antillean can to opt for university credit when they have obtained 3 or more points on a 5-point scale, in the Advance Placement Tests (APT). For each exam, up to 6 credits will be awarded. (Admission Policy).

During the admission process, the Vicepresidency for Student Affairs provides individual assistance to international students to manage the student visa while they are outside the United States and the necessary guidance once they are in Puerto Rico. They are provided with a guide

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with information related to university life, as well as everything related to their rights and responsibilities in accordance with immigration regulations.

The students expressed their satisfaction with the quality of service offered by the admissions office staff in the survey on the Spring 2021 orientation, admission, and registration processes. They stated that the information offered by the staff had answered all their questions (76%) and that the staff was well trained to offer assistance to students (86%). They also reported receiving quality treatment on calls and perceived willingness to help from the staff (86%).

## ***Financial Aid***

Regardless of where the student is in the admissions process, you can contact the Financial Aid Office for information on the application process for financial aid. The Financial Aid Office website is the most comprehensive source of financial information for students, with specific information for undergraduate, graduate, international, and veteran students. Each section has information on costs, payment options and aid resources for the population.

Financial aid policies and procedures are outlined in detail, as well as the importance of maintaining satisfactory academic progress. The Net Price Calculator can be used to see an early indication of the cost of a college education. The prospective student is asked to provide biographical and financial details as well as information about their high school education and placement test scores. Then they are provided with estimated information regarding Merit Aid eligibility and estimated costs for the first academic year.

The 2019-2022 university catalog contains all the information you need to know about the costs of the institution's educational services and about the scholarships, grants, and loans available, whether federal, state, or institutional. It also includes application procedures, eligibility requirements, and duties and responsibilities for students. Antillean University is committed to educating students about the federal financial aid system before they begin to receive awards. Each student must take the BUAD 101-Resource Management course in their first semester to understand the federal financial aid system. Natural and Financial. This course provides a section of instruction aimed at educating students about planning and paying for postsecondary education, providing tools to help you understand your financial responsibilities.

A large portion of the financial aid students at Antillean receive comes from the US Federal Department of Education, in the form of Pell Grants, Direct Loans, Supplemental Grants, and Work-Study funds. To determine if a student is eligible for these financial aid programs, students are strongly encouraged to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, known as the FAFSA. When a student processes a FAFSA, the student is usually contacted to let them know what additional documentation must be submitted.

### **PENDIENTE PARA SER INCLUIDO**

Becas institucionales. Cantidad de estudiantes que recibieron las becas de la UAA (Lista del decano, etc.) entre otros. Cantidades de dinero en becas y porcentaje de estudiantes que se benefició... Lista de Honor, Lista del Decano, Beca presidencial

Gráfica: Cantidad de dinero de asistencia económica por año.

Gráfica: Cantidad de estudiantes que recibieron becas y ayudas institucionales

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During Fall 2020 and Spring 2022, 78% and 81% of first-time freshmen students, respectively, stated in the survey regarding orientation, admission, and enrollment processes that they were satisfied with the orientations and the remote service offered by the Financial Aid Office. For the Spring 2021 semester, 84% of regular students were satisfied with virtual Financial Aid services, as indicated in the satisfaction survey.

### ***Orientation and Counseling Program***

The Office of Orientation and Counseling was established with the goal of offering students the help they need in utilizing their resources and opportunities. This office assists them in regard to available services and resources of an academic, social, financial, professional and personal nature. As part of the strategies of this office, an orientation program is held each semester for new students, including transfer students, veterans, and international students. This orientation is required according to the admissions policy, which states that students must participate in the orientation. The orientation sessions introduce students to our campus and give them information on advisement, financial aid, student health and well-being, safety and academic experiences. The orientation program also provides an important opportunity for students to begin making friends and become part of the Antillean Family.

The use of the Institutional Catalog is emphasized during the orientation program since it is one of the main sources of official information for all students. The Undergraduate and Graduate academic catalogs provide information on the Universities tuition and fee structure and financial aid policies. The catalogs also include comprehensive breakdowns of the cost of tuition by semester/quarter and academic year, as well as information on tuition discounts and scholarships.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this program was carried out in person, before the start of the semester. This program has been carried out both in person and via digital channels since 2020. The purpose of this activity is to ensure that the student is aware of the services offered by the institution, its academic advisers, and the use of exam tools, Moodle, and other aspects that support their integration into university life and their retention. An Integrated Services Officer will be hired as part of the August 2021 orientation process to guide a student from the moment he or she is admitted to the institution until he successfully completes his first year.

### ***Efforts During the Pandemic***

Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, free review sessions were arranged to prepare high school students who were going to take the College Board. During two Sundays in October, we conducted reviews of the academic areas of Spanish, English, and mathematics on Facebook Live and YouTube. Approximately 270 people registered, plus those who logged in without registering. It was used to promote the University at the Puerto Rico level. Many prospects called to ask for information as they watched the UAA promotional videos during review breaks.

Posts were created for school pages to complement the orientations for prospective students, whether face-to-face or virtual. They were sent to school counselors who have Facebook pages, since the counselors share it on their pages and promote the university with their students. Before the semester began, the staff from the service offices were recorded offering orientation to students. Virtual Orientation meetings were where these videos were presented. During new

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student orientations, important topics such as student life, financial aid, campus policies, student accounts, and standards of behavior were covered.

One of the most innovative initiatives is the option of allowing the prospect to make video calls with a UAA officer by appointment. The integration of video calls to the recruitment process works to create a closer link with the prospect and their families, and so that they can identify the person who is working on their case remotely. The prospect is directly guided to fill out the online application from our website, [www.uaa.edu](http://www.uaa.edu). You are given the option of making a call through WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, or a direct video call from your cell phone. (Reference: Marketing and Recruitment Achievement Report 2020-2021).

In the survey of students on their satisfaction with the services offered during COVID-19, the results reflected in the SP 2020, that 73% of students agreed that the institution had maintained good communication with them and had used various means to guide and inform about the different methods, available help and processes to follow. Likewise, 75% expressed that the communication of instructions and steps to follow for the change from face-to-face modality to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERE), reached everyone clearly and quickly.

In relation to new students, in the survey on the orientation, admission and registration processes of fall 2021, the students expressed that the information offered by the different offices was clear (84%) and that the orientation program was well organized (80%).

### **Functions and Impact of the Student Support Services and Metrics Used to Assess Impacts**

**Registrar's Office.** The Registrar's Office is responsible for ensuring privacy and protection of student records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The university took steps to protect the privacy of student records and correspondence, and all official electronic messages were sent to the student via the institutional email account. The student was asked to submit the 'Consent for Access to Educational Records' form in order to grant records access to a third party. Student records may be released only with the written consent of the student. Information Technologies System(ITS) manages network and system security to ensure all student data and information about employees, alumni and others is private and secure. The Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs is the data owner for student academic records.

Transfer applicants and current students receive comprehensive information to help facilitate the process of transferring credits to Antillean. The 2019-2022 catalog contains the policy that regulates the transfer of credits to the institution. Students can access the application for this process on the institutional website. Students who have studied in other accredited universities are able to receive academic credit in accordance with this policy. The Registrar's Office is the primary contact regarding the posting and initial evaluation of transfer credit, but final determination of course equivalency rests with individual academic departments in coordination with the official validations in the Registrar's Office.

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Students who have satisfactorily completed at least 12 semester credit hours at Antillean Adventist University may apply for Credit by Experience by submitting a portfolio and nonrefundable evaluation fee. This is for adult students ages 24 and up that would like tangible recognition through academic credit for their achievements and skills. Credit can be awarded for knowledge gained in the areas of a specific course through job training, community service, courses without credit, and/or special achievement.

Antillean Adventist University recognizes that students can independently gain skills at the university level from professional labor or study. These students, by challenging and passing an exam, may receive academic credit for this previously acquired knowledge, provided the University offers comparable courses.

Antillean is approved for students with educational benefits under the different 'GI Bill' programs. Veterans, as well as their eligible family members, are entitled to enjoy the available educational benefits. They must submit an application to the Registrar's Office. To improve the course registration, evaluation and validation processes, a company was hired in 2019 to work with the virtualization of the degree audit. A process that will improve the enrollment of students in the eCams system as well as the academic evaluation of prerequisite courses. The registration office forms should be digital to make it easier for students to register. Currently, the forms are available on the universities website so that the student can complete them and send them electronically. In the Spring 2021 Distance Services Satisfaction Survey, 75% of students responded that they were satisfied with the remote registration services.

***Student Welfare Office.*** This office strives to ensure the wellbeing of each student, helping them to resolve personal issues and encouraging them to get involved in university activities. The student support services staff developed a wide range of services and extracurricular activities to promote the retention and success of students at the university. These include education, health, and human behavior, with staff possessing the proper academic preparation and licensing to exercise their profession. Furthermore, in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we process the requests from students who require reasonable accommodation. Students who require other specialized services are referred to external resources, such as psychological and psychiatric services and vocational rehabilitation.

During 2020, the Office of Student Welfare conducted a survey to learn about the needs and interests of the student population and employees, in terms of mental health. Based on the results, a series of educational brochures were prepared and released through the media on topics such as managing panic attacks, stress management, self-control techniques, exercises to manage emotions, how to reduce anxiety due to social isolation, and others more. These workshops have continued on a recurring basis each semester.

During the same year, a collaborative agreement was reached with the Carlos Albizu University, through which the services of interns were obtained who worked with students in the areas of clinical psychology, individual psychotherapy, and others. Also, interns were hired to conduct evaluations. We utilize psychometric tests on campus and refer students for other types of testing, if necessary. The group of practitioners also offered workshops and educational and support talks to Antillean employees and students. The practitioners continued to hold workshops and talks for Antillean employees and students after the earthquakes of January 2020. To get help with continuing therapies, refer students should call the Hotline PAS. For the following semester, the interns at Carlos Albizu University have continued to offer the same services in person and online.



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During the years of the pandemic, the institution was able to efficiently meet the emotional health needs of students. A full-time licensed psychological counselor, a part-time psychologist, a social worker, an academic counselor, and a coordination of services were provided by the funds granted by the second edition of HEERF. In the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, a total of 52 students who had been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic received psychological services. There were 9 students who received services from the Social Worker. The services needed to innovate in order to continue giving attention to the students. The Virtual Office was created through the use of a video chat. Students can access the promoted link through email and social media, and services are offered on this platform during regular business hours. Several podcasts have been made with academic and mental health content, using the Podcasts. Among them: "Caring for your emotional health during final exams." And "Either you organize or you die", about Time Management and SaludableMind, all published on the social networks of the university and the office.

The Health Services Office is responsible for maintaining student health records as well as promoting healthy living behavior through various activities and guidance to the University community. The office has a full-time nursing and part-time medical services integrated in consortium with Bella Vista Hospital, which will begin in 2018. The Office of Health Services provides first aid to students in need, over-the-counter medications, educational talks, and guidance on health-related issues. It also helps with the medical plan procedures.

**Counseling.** The counseling services are aimed at promoting and contributing to the achievement of students' personal and professional goals through direct interventions in all areas: academic, personal, vocational, social, and in the achievement of greater integration and participation in the university community. As an overall goal we want to help the students to know themselves, their skills, interests and limitations, and provide experiences designed to facilitate their holistic development for their own benefit and for the benefit of the society in which they live.

The Counseling office has a Facebook page (UAA Counseling), through which guidance is offered to students who request it. The student can stay connected to the live chat to receive services and make inquiries during working hours. Similarly, the Office's Instagram page (consejeriauaa) promotes emotional support brochures made by the Student Welfare office, important announcements from other university departments, and Antillean promotions to students. In addition, direct contact with students is achieved and doubts are clarified by direct messaging during working hours.

The prevention program holds prevention fairs, celebrates Prevention Week, and has a calendar of educational talks. The counseling office provides guidance to faculty and staff about reasonable accommodation policies and assists students who require this service. Academic counseling services include guidance and orientation during the enrollment process, tutoring for students with learning needs, and monitoring of academic progress. The last four years have seen the attendance of over 200 students per year through the tutoring services, in subjects like Spanish, English, Biology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Microcomputers, Hebrew and Greek. For the Spring 2020 semester, 88% of the students expressed that the subjects offered by the program meet their needs and that the prevailing environment stimulates study and learning. When students need help exploring careers, preparing to find jobs or internships, contacting employers, or getting help preparing their resume, they can ask for help in the counseling office. In the vocational counseling, vocational interest inventory tests are administered, job fairs are

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held, and employment opportunities are sent to the emails of the alumni. More than 70% of students were satisfied with the services offered remotely by the Student Welfare Office, according to a student satisfaction survey. During the 2021-2022 academic year, 748 students benefited from some of the services offered by the Student Welfare Office.

### ***Residence Halls***

If students prefer to live on campus, Antillean University pledges to provide them with a comfortable and supportive environment. The objective of these facilities is to promote the social, moral, and intellectual development of the residents. The institution strives to create an atmosphere that stimulates academic study and good human relations, with the aim of achieving the academic objectives of the students. We have students from diverse cultures, which contributes to cultural and educational enrichment.

The residence halls at the Antillean level are much more than just a physical structure - they're a community where you learn to live in a group and respect individual differences. Group interaction should be characterized by order and mutual respect. Student life in the residences is regulated by the Student Residence Manual, which establishes the norms and rules for healthy group coexistence. Students who request to use these facilities are required to know and accept the rules, in order to maintain a welcoming and pleasant environment (Student Residence Manual).

### ***Student Associations***

The institution offers its students multiple opportunities to develop leadership and teamwork skills. The Vice Presidency for Student Affairs operates the General Student Council, with representation from the different areas that coordinate student activities. This body is one of the main bodies that ensure that all concerns and opinions of students are heard. It also serves to keep the student population informed and to make recommendations on the use of best practices related to services. There are other additional student life clubs and associations lead by students, such as Campus Ministries, which brings together the leaders of all other associations. Academic units also have clubs, such as the Business Club, and the Science Club, among others.

### ***Sports Activities***

The institution offers its students the opportunity to recreate and practice sports in its facilities. We have, among them, a gym, swimming pool and tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts. These facilities are enjoyed by both students and the community at large. Students participate in fitness activities and recreational sports, either as a team or individually. The official sporting events celebrated each year that appear in the academic calendar are the intramural games, with basketball, volleyball, softball and soccer teams; the olympics with teams formed by schools or departments and in the sports of basketball, softball, soccer, swimming, track and field, table tennis and court tennis and volleyball; and the olympics and the tournaments.

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## **Commitment of the Institution to Student Retention, Persistence, Completion, and Success Through a Coherent and Effective Support System**

Antillean is committed to student retention, for this purpose, a part-time person was hired in 2016 to serve as Retention Coordinator. In the year of 2018, this position became full time. The purpose of this office is to support students throughout their university experience. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate students adaptation to university life from their first year through early identification of their needs, coordination of support services, and continuous and intensive monitoring of their academic performance, until graduation. This commitment is essential for us to achieve our retention, persistence, and graduation goals, and ensures that each student is exposed to an environment that promotes excellence.

Among the initiatives carried out by the office, aimed at retaining first-year students, is the Summer Bridge program, which is a summer camp that allows students to become familiar with the institution and acquire life skills that support them in their college life. This program has been running since 2017 and typically includes 13-15 eligible students each summer based on financial need, disability, and need for academic support. Five years into the program, of a cohort of 13 students in 2017, six successfully graduated from the institution and five transferred to other universities. Of the 2018 cohort, 27% have graduated and 40% are still active in the institution. The Retention Office also offers workshops, spiritual, recreational and academic activities geared towards the freshman group. In the Fall 2021 New Student Orientation, Admissions, and Enrollment Survey, 87% of students said they were satisfied with their experience as a freshman.

In 2017, a procedure for monitoring absences and academic achievement was established in order to work directly with these students, identify their needs, and motivate them. It is emphasized that the faculty keep a record of students who have missed more than two classes in a row and refer them to the Retention Coordinator. The faculty also refers underperforming students to the retention office so that they receive the appropriate attention, according to their needs.

Other services of the Retention Office include mentoring. During semester SP-20, we had five mentors, and they referred 38 underachieving students for mentoring services. Since the university closed, the mentors have been working remotely in order to ensure that the students continue to receive services. They were offered on various platforms, such as Meet, Zoom, by telephone, video calls, and WhatsApp. Each student was attended weekly by appointment. Of the 38 students who were referred to the mentoring services, 25 responded positively to the appointment messages. and received the services. Beginning in Fall 2021, mentorships continue to be offered in person and virtually.

Table 4.1

### *Retention and Persistence*

<b>Description</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
<b>Retención</b>	79.74%	79.47%	81.56%

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Description	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Persistencia	83.60%	82.97%	84.93%

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Source: Retention Office

## Student Learning Experiences

**Library.** The Dennis Soto Library is a center for learning and discovery. The collections are used to meet the teaching, learning, and research needs of the faculty. The library staff help brings the collections to life in the classroom and offer instruction sessions and individual consultations to help students in the development of lifelong learning, critical thinking, and analytical skills.

The library subscribes to 26 databases through the website, providing access to over 200,000 electronic books and over 10,000 electronic magazines and newspapers. These resources are available from any computer or device with an Internet connection, and from anywhere. Most databases are subscribed to through the Adventist Virtual Library Consortium, which is part of the Inter-American Division. Other resources include a variety of open access research and links to other libraries. Academic support is also provided to help students achieve their academic goals. All of these resources can be found on our library page.

Librarians offer individual and group guidance to teachers on the use of library resources, including the use of databases, search strategies, the electronic catalog, and the different collections. They also provide support for students who have difficulty with word-processing software and our computer center's software.

The library offers a virtual reference service through a chat, which is attended in real time. This service provides students with the opportunity to ask questions about library services or the use of available resources, for example, the use of databases or data. Furthermore, the chat option allows for videoconferences to clarify any doubts from customers. However, seminars are offered to the faculty at the request of the Academic Vice Presidency and in coordination with the schools and departments. These seminars are aimed at improving the use of library resources.

On the other hand, the library emphasizes the importance of ethical use of information, encouraging students to correctly cite sources and provide bibliographic information about them.

**Learning Center and Technology Resources.** The Learning and Technology Resource Center is located on the first floor of the Dennis Soto Library. There are more than 30 computers where students can do their language and science labs. They can also use word processors to print their academic papers and carry out their searches on the Internet.

In the Spring 2020 semester, 71% of the students expressed satisfaction with the Library's resources, 76% were satisfied with the staff's accessibility to help them and clarify their doubts, and 70% were satisfied with the services offered by the staff. In SP- 2021, 74% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the Libraries virtual services.

**TRIO Programs.** The UAA submitted and was awarded two proposals for Federal projects that provide support services to students who are potential dropouts (SSS TRIO and TRIO ESL). These programs, although originated with Federal funds, have demanded of the Institution the use of internal funds to provide the facilities needed for their development. Through this TRIO Student Support Services programs, we sought to establish a project on the Antillean campus which could provide SSS participants with the necessary academic support systems, guidance, tools, and resources, so they may complete a baccalaureate degree and pursue graduate level education.

Equipped with these tools and resources, and ultimately with baccalaureate and advanced degrees, our students will be better able to navigate through difficult economic times. Two TRIO SSS programs were approved in 2010: the regular program and one with emphasis on English as a Second Language. TRIO programs are attached to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The TRIO Student Support Services program aims to: (a) Increase retention and levels of graduation among students that meet the requirements of the program, and (b) Encourage students of low income, first generation and individuals with disabilities to achieve their academic goals. Activities and services offered by the program include: Supplemental instruction, academic counseling, seminars and workshops, study and time management skills; tutoring services with emphasis in mathematics, English, Spanish, health and education; vocational counseling; individual academic advice and course selection; financial advisor and financial planning; information on financial aid and its reward; mentoring; and cultural and academic exhibition.

Table 4.2

*TRIO Activities to Support Students*

<b>Activities</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Tutorial</b>	1,227	1,752	1,591	1,061
<b>Academic advice</b>	837	660	1,070	985
<b>Mentoring and other Services</b>	179	392	500	493
<b>Number of students served</b>	280	280	280	280
<b>Extra curricular activities</b>	25	13	28	22

The program supports and enriches students academically, culturally, and socially from admission through graduation, through this federally funded TRIO program. During the Spring 2020 semester, in the service satisfaction survey, 83% of the students expressed that the program helps them overcome their academic challenges and that it fosters their professional

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development. 91% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the academic advice they had received. In 2021, 78% of respondents were satisfied with remote services.

**The metrics used to assess the impact of the support services.** Assessment is an important component of student-directed services and programs, so information is continually collected from students and staff to assess its effectiveness. Each year, after orientation activities have concluded, new students are asked to complete a survey to collect information about their satisfaction with the orientation program and with the admission and enrollment processes. Additionally, every new student completes a profile survey, which allows us to know their expectations and needs so that they can be met. Regular students also have the opportunity to evaluate the enrollment process each year. The Office of Institutional Research utilizes the Services Evaluation survey to collect information on areas such as admissions, registration, financial aid, student welfare, and the Library. During the pandemic, this survey was replaced by a survey assessing student satisfaction with the services offered during Covid-19. For the 2022-2023 academic year, the regular survey of service units will resume. The support services offered at the institution are also collected from the graduating students and graduates.

The results of these surveys are sent to the vice presidents, associate vice presidents, and department directors, for the creation of action plans and long-term planning. The Institutional Assessment Committee meets to discuss the results of the surveys and then sends a report to each member for dissemination, since the committee has representation from all levels of the institution. The surveys results have been incorporated into the previous sections.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, Antillean demonstrated that it possesses ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate student success. This analysis helped us identify the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities:

### **Strengths**

- The Institution provides opportunities for students to participate in all levels of university life, including student associations and athletic training programs.
- The Vicepresidency for Students Affairs support student success from admission to graduation in a personalized manner, considering academic needs.

### **Challenges**

- Have an integrated system to coordinate the student support services provided and facilitate the assessment of services.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Offer post-completion placement activities, such as job fairs, to help students enter the workforce.





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## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

*Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.*

- RA8: Systematic Evaluation of All Programs—The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
- RA9: Student Learning Programs—The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.
- RA10: Institutional Planning—Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

### This Chapter addressed the followings Institutional Priorities (IP):

- A. Strengthen student learning through active and experiential learning methodologies.
- C. Increase the impact of the spiritual program initiatives on students and staff.

## Analysis of Key Issues

AAU has an effectiveness assessment system that allows the institution to better understand the need for new initiatives and activities supporting the mission and vision. This system also helps to ensure that human, financial, and physical resources are used efficiently in order to achieve the organization's goals and sustain development. The system helps management in planning and decision-making processes. The Institution has a Guide for Institutional Effectiveness 2017-2022 which defines the processes and methods to be followed for the assessment of institutional effectiveness, and provides guidelines for strategic planning processes. The Guide is organized into four sections that cover the entire process: Section I – Institutional Effectiveness; Section II – Strategic Planning; Section III - Institutional Assessment and Section IV – Guide for the Effectiveness of Academic Programs.

All academic programs have clearly articulated Program Learning Outcomes, which are aligned with the institutional learning outcomes and mission. Each program's assessment plan includes a matrix that shows the alignment between the program and the institutional graduate profile. These goals are defined by department faculty, who ensure high standards of assessment validity to determine whether students are achieving institutional and program learning outcomes.

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## Program Curricular Goals

The evaluation of programs provides an opportunity to evidence and guarantee the highest quality of offer every five (5) years. Furthermore, it is necessary to plan for the future based on the achievements made and the opportunities and challenges present and projected. This evaluation also allows us to demonstrate and improve the quality of teaching, research, and service by periodically reviewing the results achieved by the program and how to address these areas, by establishing priorities for short-term action, and in the mid-term. The academic unit has a yearly operational plan. An Achievement Report is submitted annually according to the Annual Operational Plan, which is aligned with the requirements of the program evaluation. This report is being submitted to the academic dependencies, each of which is responsible for ensuring that the plans are implemented according to the designated timelines. The Guide for the Evaluation of Academic Programs presented by the UAA outlines the criteria to consider when evaluating programs. Focuses on evidence of the quality and effectiveness of the program, based on results.

**Assessment of Learning at the Institutional Level.** This assessment is administered by the Department of Institutional Effectiveness and is addressed to all students or to a sample of them. The assessment is administered to all students regularly or to a sample of them. The study focuses primarily on the aspects of the profile of the graduate of the institution, demonstrating that students, when they leave the institution, have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that were intended to be developed. The results of the assessment are used to make decisions at the institutional level relating to teaching and learning (policies and practices). They are also used to provide the institution with evidence of student learning and, therefore, ensure the achievement of the institutional mission.

During 2022, Antillean Adventist University again administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which aims to measure the time and energy students devote to their studies and other educational activities. The survey helped the institution to use the appropriate resources and to develop an effective educational practice that stimulates student learning. Like any effective educational institution, we aim to guide students toward activities that will complement their professional development. The NSSE survey covers four main areas: academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with faculty, and the campus environment. Ten indicators are used to assess these areas.

Freshman and senior students obtained the same results in the areas of academic challenge, learning with peers and experiences with faculty as they did in the comparison groups. Our students exhibited higher levels of quality of interactions and supportive environment than the comparison groups, which suggests that our close campus environment may have had a positive impact.

In 2020, the results were similar to those of the comparison groups, which were institutions from Puerto Rico, institutions with a Carnegie Class, and all those surveyed by NSSE that year. The results for the new students were significantly higher than those for the comparison groups in both the campus environment area and the supportive environment indicator. The results of our students for the year 2022 were similar to those of the comparison groups, both for the first year and for the seniors. Both groups were above all the other groups when it came to the supportive environment indicator. Also, this year, the results of the senior students were better than those of the comparison groups in the indicators of reflective and integrative learning,

higher-order learning, collaborative learning, discussion with diverse others, and student-faculty interaction (NSSE Engagement Indicators Overview 2018, 2020,2022)

**Assessment of Learning at the Program Level.** This assessment is administered regularly to all students or a sample of them, and it covers the aspects of the graduate profile. Assessment processes at this level guide decision-making in learning within a specific program. Its objective is to improve the program's curriculum, teaching methods, and required courses. The Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs, together with the schools and departments, is responsible for the coordination and supervision of learning assessment at this level. Below is an example of the summary of the 2018-2019 appraisal report.

**Table 5.1-General Report of the Assessment of Learning by Programs 2018-2019**

Department	Program	Assessed Competencies		Courses	Group Average	Students Complied (%)
		Sem 1	/ Sem 2			
<b>Bussiness</b>	Management	3	3	ECON 201, MGMT 205,326 BUAD 437	87%	96%
	Accounting	1		ACCT 491	P	100%
	Office Administration	4	4	OFAD 101,141,223 227,242,	86%	96%
<b>Education, Humanities and Psychology</b>	Education		9	EDUC 201,203, 214,309, 339, HEPE 100,103	91%	93%
	History		1	HUMA 101	86%	91%
	Psychology		3	PSYC 351,248,101,200	87%	99%
<b>Technology and Biology</b>	Biology	4	5	CHEM 121,122,100, 222, 321 BIOL 111,222,323, 335,401,431, MATH 323	77%	86%
	Technology	1	3	COM 101, 111,213, 491,492	79%	85%
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>85%</b>	<b>93%</b>

Source: Effectiveness Office

**Assessment of Learning at the Course Level.** This type of assessment has a direct effect on student learning, due to the feedback received at the time, by the teacher. It is opportune, since it allows decisions to be made currently to improve learning. It is managed by the teacher through class assignments. The school, department or program are the units in charge of coordinating the efforts of the teachers so that this assessment is fully complied with. As part of the assessment of the learning process, several decisions have been made to continue to improve the teaching-learning process in the academic programs. Each program director creates an Action Plan, which includes the findings of the assessment process in the respective

courses. The following table were examples of actions taken with the results of the student learning outcomes.

**Table 5.2**

**Competences Assessed by Programs, Findings and Actions 2019-2020**

Department	Program	Assessed Competencies	Findings/Actions
<b>Bussiness</b>	Management ECON 201, BUAD 331, GMT 205	Properly manage financial and human resources to maximize their utility.  Recognizes the importance of planning and measuring the achievement of goals and objectives.  Demonstrates responsibility in completing assigned tasks.  Recognizes the importance of teamwork and achieving goals.  Possess and apply knowledge about legal aspects in commercial law.  Interpret and develop documents and projects related to the legal field, using the knowledge acquired in the course.  Creativity, conflict management, development strategy, critical analysis.	The students were able to master economic concepts, apply them to Puerto Rico's problems and provide solutions.  Continue imparting knowledge through critical thinking and analysis of particular management situations and their implications for the student's professional life.  Improve teaching system in base courses. Integrate the use of conceptual map. External speaker.  Increase the number of concept application problems, in order to have greater mastery in the evaluation processes.
	Accounting  ACCT 226,321, 326, 332,435, 205,325,331,334,431, 451, 491	Study of the concepts and basic accounting principles and their application in the registration of commercial transactions and in the preparation of financial statements.  The following topics are emphasized: analysis and recording of business transactions, accounting	Que los estudiantes terminen el Practicum por lo menos dos semanas antes de concluir el semestre.

Department	Program	Assessed Competencies	Findings/Actions
		<p>cycle, preparation and classification of financial statements, basic elements of accounting for current assets.</p> <p>Identify financial statements, income and expenses, financial statements, cash flow statements, and the meaning of generally accepted accounting principles.</p> <p>Describe managerial accounting and difference between financial accounting. Describe management information system cost process, tangible and intangible products with income and expense system.</p> <p>Master and apply the skills of using accounting principles to achieve the goals and objectives of the company.</p> <p>Know the importance and value of human resources dedicated to maintaining accounting data in a company.</p> <p>Acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to be successfully placed in the labor market in administrative positions in public or private companies.</p> <p>Achieve adequate sensitivity to appreciate and respond to the effects of ongoing changes in areas such as individual and social</p>	

Department	Program	Assessed Competencies	Findings/Actions
		<p>behavior, and technological changes that affect organizational functioning.</p> <p>Demonstrates responsibility in completing assigned tasks. Recognizes the importance of teamwork and goal achievement</p> <p>Applies the knowledge received in the courses of the Academic Program.</p>	
	Office Administration	You will know and efficiently prepare various documents that are generated in the office by means of the computer.	<p>Although all students met the achievement indicator, it would be useful to reinforce some areas in the course content. Offer more practical exercises.</p> <p>OFAD 209 Format skills will be reinforced with guided practice in the classroom.</p>
	OFAD 101, 220 ,223, 471, 491, 141, 209, 410 OFAD 100, 122, 209, 215, 234, 239, 491	Participates in assessment processes and integrates strategies to improve performance.	Strengthen dictation skills at various speeds.
		Efficiently prepares various documents that are generated in the office through the computer.	Format skills will be reinforced with guided practice in the classroom through warm-up exercises.
		Knowledge in computer programming and create various documents that are used in the modern office according to continuous technological advances.	Although all students met the achievement indicator, it would be helpful for students to study more of the details of legal documents through summaries or reports.
		Demonstrate through practice the skills and knowledge acquired to be able to perform adequately as an administrative	<p>More practice of typing skills through the Keyboarding Pro program.</p> <p>OFAD 122 Discussion of different formats when making</p>

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Department	Program	Assessed Competencies	Findings/Actions
		assistant in a public or private company.  Learn and acquire knowledge about the rules of courtesy. Gain knowledge about the job interview. Learn what the rights of people with disabilities are and what the ADA Law is.	documents in the office through practice of application exercises to reinforce teaching.  Practice exercises to hone the ability to write directly from copy and continue to develop the skill of following both written and oral directions.  Test results were tracked to reinforce teaching. Verbal and email communication.  During the semester the student was reinforced through videoconference.  During the semester the student was reinforced through videoconference.  OFAD 122 Discussion of different formats when making documents in the office through practice of application exercises to reinforce teaching.  Practice exercises to hone the ability to write directly from copy and continue to develop the skill of following both written and oral instructions.  OFAD 215 It is recommended to reinforce the skills when coding in subsequent courses where the skills of using and managing correspondence are integrated.

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Department	Program	Assessed Competencies	Findings/Actions
			<p>Although all the students met the achievement indicator, 100% of them had a marked deficiency in writing an Introduction and a Conclusion. It is recommended that this skill be reinforced in one of the courses and also review the grammar rules, as they also had deficiencies in this area.</p> <p>This percentage of the group average of 55% is due to the fact that there is a student who has an incomplete and has not taken the exam. Although it is given a review before the exam, several of the students do not use it to study. This course should be offered in person because many students in online courses do not follow directions and are not aware of online course requirements and deadlines.</p> <p>More about this source  <a href="#">textSource text required for additional translation information</a>  <a href="#">Send feedback</a>  <a href="#">Side panels</a></p>

Source: *Effectiveness Office*

The academic departments have an Assessment Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating meetings with the faculty they represent to discuss the findings and make action plans. Based on the assessment, we have taken various actions, including making changes to the syllabus in programs such as education, theology, nursing, and others. Also, the profiles of the graduate were reviewed to align them with each of the syllabus in the nursing and education program. They ensure that the programs are aligned with the skills required for the profession by achieving this.

Programs accredited by recognized professional organizations must meet the agencies requirements. AAU has two professionally accredited programs by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE): the bachelor and master's degrees in Nursing, and the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC): bachelor degree in Respiratory Care. All programs are required to complete an annual program assessment report. Programs that have received professional accreditation usually use the template provided by the external agency. These reports reflect the AAU's commitment to strengthening learning through ongoing assessment of program and student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, with the goal of expanding the opportunities for faculty development, the institution coordinated 28 workshops over the past four years to ensure a competent and cutting-edge faculty. Table 5.3 illustrates some of the workshops offered to the faculty.

**Table. 5.3**

***Professional Development Seminars and Workshops for Faculty***

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Contact hours</b>
<b>2018 – 2019</b>	August – December 2018	Educative technology	August 6, 2018	1.5 hrs
		Curriculum Alignment	August 9, 2018	30 min
		The Excellence of Spirituality and Service	September 7, 2018	30 min
		Use of Questions		45 min
		Portfolio on Google		1 hr
		God's Vision for Student Colportage	October 5, 2018	30 min
		Exams in the ECAMS		1.5 hrs
	January – May 2019	Assessment A – Z	February 1, 2019	2 hrs
		Organizational Resilience	March 1, 2019	1 hr
<b>2019 – 2020</b>	August – December 2019	Ellen G. White and discipleship in Adventist Universities and Colleges	September 6, 2019	30 min
		Compilation Software		1 hr
		Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation	October 4, 2019	1 hr
		Trends in Adventist Education	November 1, 2019	1 hr
		Retention Practices		1 hr
	January – May 2020	Technology Integration	January 10, 2020	1.5 hr
		With Christ we reach the goal	February 7, 2020	30 min
		Playing for the team	March 6, 2020	1 hr
<b>2020 – 2021</b>	August –	Technological tools	August 10, 2020	1 hr

Academic Year	Semester	Professional Development	Date	Contact hours
	December 2020	Academic Continuity Planning	September 4, 2020	45 min
		ACE Model		30 min
		Copyright in Distance Education		1.5 hrs
	January – May 2021	Cyberbullying	October 2, 2020	1 hr
		Impact on Effective Communication in Teaching	January 18, 2021	1 hr
		How to record on Zoom		30 min
		Institutional Pedagogical Model	March 5, 2021	1 hr
		Presence in online courses – How to teach at a distance while maintaining closeness	April 9, 2021	1.5 hr
<b>2021 – 2022</b>	August – December 2021	Ideas for Integrating Faith in Instructional Plannin	March 4, 2022	1.5
	January – May 2022	Use and Management of E-books Bases	April 1, 2022	1.5

Source: Academic Affairs Office

Moreover, the Department of Distance Education coordinated several workshops in response to the technological needs presented by the faculty as part of the assessment. These initiatives strengthened the teaching-learning process through technological means in response to priority A and B.

During the years 2020-2022, twenty workshops were held for the faculty of the distance education department. The objective of these workshops was to strengthen teaching through technology. Also, prepare the faculty to face the challenge of the COVID-19, which will be beneficial for students by allowing them to continue their studies. However, these workshops respond to the professional development plans requirement to strengthen teaching through the integration of technology.

With respect to the development of academic programs and services, the AAU Strategic Plan 2017-2023 takes into consideration faculty, non-faculty personnel, support technologies, and infrastructure. A budget is assigned each year to specific services and activities. Table 5.6 above shows budget allocation for these purposes in the last three fiscal years.

**Table 5.6**

***Budget Allocated for Services and Activities***

Service/Activity	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Faculty professional development			
Technology infrastructure			
Tutoring Services			

Source: Financial Office

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The combination of changes that have been implemented in tutorial support services, faculty and support staff training as well as extracurricular activities have positively impacted student retention as show in Table 4.1.

To improve these parameters of student success, the Vice-presidency for Student Affairs have assumed an important role in the implementation of processes and procedures designed to complement the curricular efforts of each program. Based on the evaluation of exit survey reports, the Vice-presidency for Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have incorporated extracurricular initiatives specifically designed to improve student retention and graduation. Both Vice-presidencies have coordinated a series of orientations for new students that include information about academic programs, student services, and workshops on skills such as technology tools, study techniques, research skills, and library services. In response to the new pedagogical modalities that had to be implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Distance Education Department coordinated and offered workshops related to distance education and learning, such creation of presentations and infographics, and the use of Moodle.

The Institutional Student Learning Assessment Plan provides each academic program with the tools to review its assessment processes. As AAU increasingly develops an assessment culture, the revision of assessment processes is taking place at the departmental level. Actions are being taken to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment procedures as each program reviews its processes and tools and discusses its findings during faculty meetings (*Faculty Meetings Minutes*).

During the years 2018-2022, the administration of AAU has held several meetings with teachers, employees, and students to inform them about the plans of the Institution. Each of these activities may be found on the agendas and minutes of the meetings. In addition, each administrative and academic office is part of an internal electronic communication system which eases the access of information, thus, management is able to keep faculty and staff informed on institutional assessment plans.

## **Conclusion**

AAU is committment to continue providing students with a rigorous and broad education that prepares them for educational/professional success and informed and engaged academic community. This analysis helped us identify the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities:

### **Strengths**

- Establishing a well-designed structure for assessment and a plan for each academic program has been key to increasing data-driven decision-making on academic programs.
- Faculty training in assessment, teaching, and learning has influenced the development and integration of pedagogical practices that improve student learning across the curriculum.

### **Challenges**

- Maintain the resources necessary to sustain long-term faculty dedicated to working with the assessment processes and structure. This will ensure the continuity necessary for a

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successful assessment cycle and the expansion of assessment conversations at the institutional level.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Develop mechanisms to further support, collect, organize, and disseminate research and assessment results. A specific recommendation is to encourage faculty to conduct research on assessment that would provide information to further impact student learning.

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## **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

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

- RA8: Systematic Evaluation of All Programs: The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
- RA10: Institutional Planning: Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.
- RA11: Finance Resources: The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.

This Chapter addressed the followings Institutional Priorities (IP):

- A. Strengthen student learning through active and experiential learning methodologies.
- B. Restructure academic and support services.

### **Analysis of Key Issues**

This chapter shows the commitment of AAU to promote institutional improvement by establishing strategic goals and objectives derived from a comprehensive analysis that includes challenges and opportunities. One challenge of the external environment that have been accentuated in recent years are the demographic reduction of the young population.

As a strategy to address this challenge, the Institution seeks to diversify its academic offerings, particularly its distance education programs. This alignment has guaranteed the sustainability of the institution to fulfill its mission. In addition, this chapter presents the systemic assessment strategies implemented to ensure the effectiveness of the planning processes and its programs, services, and resources.

### **Allocation of Budget Distribution Aligned to the Needs and Future Projections of the Different Academic and Non-Academic Dependencies**

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It is in the University's Operational Budget where the necessary funds are identified and assigned for the operation of the different academic programs and administrative units of the Institution. It is a financial guide, prepared annually, to distribute and ensure funds will be used in the development of the operations and the different activities of the University. The Operating Budget is approved by the Board of Trustees annually and becomes the financial instrument that guides the process to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan. It is reviewed by different administrative bodies to ensure that financial decisions are aligned with the strategic plan and that projected revenues are sufficient to cover scheduled expenses. The budget process at Antillean Adventist University is subject to very thorough analysis because of the limited resources.

During the budgeting process, non-academic units are allocated a zero-based budget annually. This approach ensures that units are only allocated the resources needed to operate during the fiscal year. In instances where budget dollars are not fully expended, funds are recovered in central administration and are not retained by the unit. In the academic units, the annual budget allocations are based on an estimate, known as the base allocation, which is an estimated and predictable amount, determined through the analysis of the behavior of real income and expenses of the last fiscal year. The observation and analysis of the behavior of the income and expenses of the finished fiscal year are evaluated and compared with the academic activity in the undergraduate area and graduate programs, thus creating a financial conceptual framework of the economic environment of the institution.

In accordance with the accounting policies set forth in the AAU Accounting Procedures Manual (Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual, pp. 54-58). Annually, the directors of the administrative units, service units and academic units prepare a budget request considering the needs of their departments and the objectives established in their annual work plan. The annual work plans are prepared in a pre-established template, in which the goals and objectives of the institutional strategic plan are integrated and provides space for the units to integrate their own operational objectives. Each annual plan has an integrated assessment instrument in order to analyze and evaluate the results of the implementation of projects and initiatives in each area. This analysis provides the necessary data to make informed decisions about the actions to be included in the next planning cycle and gives us an idea of the allocation of resources necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

Requests from the different units are first evaluated by the Vice Presidents of the areas and after their approval, they are sent to the Vice President for Financial Affairs, who makes the allocation and preliminary distribution of funds. The preliminary allocation of funds is studied and analyzed in the Executive Committee of the President and once approved by the committee it is ready for subsequent presentation to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. In the Finance Committee, it is subjected to a rigorous evaluation and all the recommendations that the committee wishes to make are made, leaving the draft budget ready to be presented to the plenary session of the Board of Trustees. The final approval of the budget project, with its corresponding designation of income and allocation of resources is the absolute prerogative of the Board of Trustees. Once the operating budget is approved by the Board of Trustees, it becomes the legitimate authorization for the administrators of the institution to distribute income and authorize expenses according to the designated activity (Accounting Policies Manual, annual plan templates, website where the units submit their budget requests).



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## Effectiveness in Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal Processes, and Availability of Resources

The Institution continually adopts strategies to improve the efficiency in the use of its funds and generate savings in the operational areas to face budgetary challenges without undermining the Institution's commitment to its mission. In the management of its Fiscal resources, Antillean Adventist University has maintained a stable financial position over the past five years, along with sustained development of its physical infrastructure. The university is directly affected by the island's economic scenario, which includes recent natural disasters, government instability, and the pandemic, but despite all these, it continues to provide its students with an excellent education in a beautiful and welcoming campus.

Our university annually submits its finances to an audit process by independent auditing firms. In the past five (5) years, the university has received unqualified opinions in its financial statements, certifying that it complies with all Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. AAU keeps its accounting records on a completely transparent basis and following the highest ethical and moral standards, qualities that characterize us. Our financial planning, infrastructure planning, and resource allocation processes are aligned with our mission and strategic priorities (audited financial statements).

AAU maintained a stable income until 2020. It was in this year that the global pandemic of the Covid-19 virus began. The declaration of a pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the government to protect health, significantly affected our level of income. In fiscal year 2020, our income was \$10,590,598, the lowest of the entire five-year period. However, in fiscal year 2021, after the implementation of a cost control plan, measures to improve efficiency and the arrival of federal funds to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the institution's revenues reached \$11,256,370, an increase of 6%. In fiscal year 2022, the institution experienced the highest amount of income of the entire five-year period, \$12,941,684, an increase of 13% compared to the previous year. The recovery presented was achieved by the arrival of the grants and incentives developed and provided by the Federal Government. These federal contributions were decisive and were invested in the development of services and programs for the welfare of the students, as well as for the economic stability of the institution.

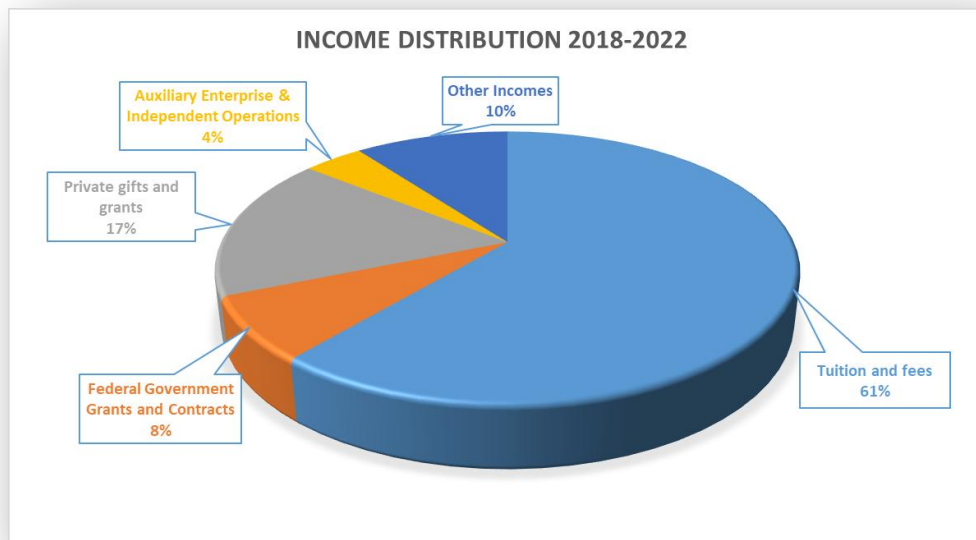
From 2018 to 2022, our finances have been solidified. The institution has maintained a constant increase in Total Assets, as well as in Total Net Assets. If we compare fiscal year 2018 with fiscal year 2022, we observe a total increase in Assets of 8% and in Net Assets of 29%. You can also see our fiscal stability in debt service, during this period the total liabilities were reduced by 56%.

The University's financial information is shared regularly at faculty and non-faculty staff meetings, University Administrative Council meetings, and Board of Trustees sessions. By doing this, the entire university community is officially informed about the institution's financial position. (Minutes of faculty, staff, CAU and Board of Trustees meetings).

**Income Categories.** Graph 6.1.5 shows the main income categories during the five-year period. The main categories are income from Tuition and Fees that average 62% of income, donations from affiliated entities such as the Puerto Rican Union of Adventist Churches (17%) as well as other private entities, grants, and incentives from the Federal Government (8 %), and other miscellaneous income from sales and auxiliary services provided by the university. The Federal Government proposals and incentives item includes non-recurring income from the Cares Act (Heerf I), CRRSAA (Heerf II), ARP (Heerf III), and proposals subsidized by the

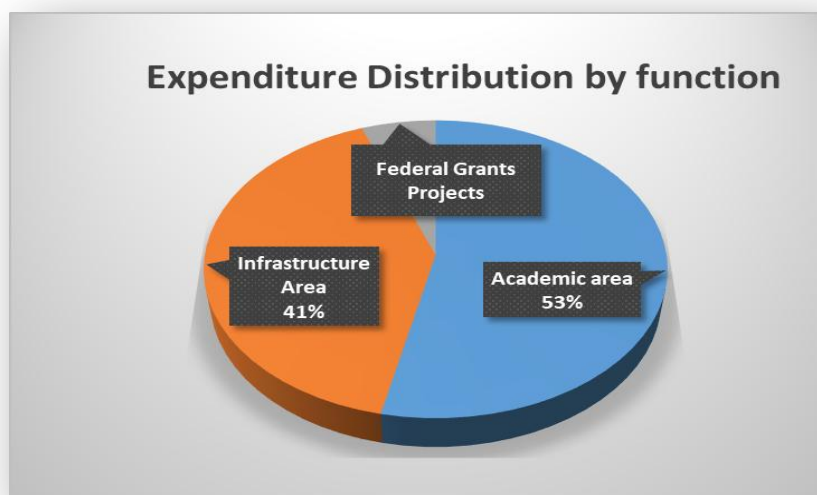
federal Department of Education, such as, Program TRIO SSS, ESL, and ESL regular, and Program SEHS.

Graph 6.1 Income Distribution for 2018 – 2022

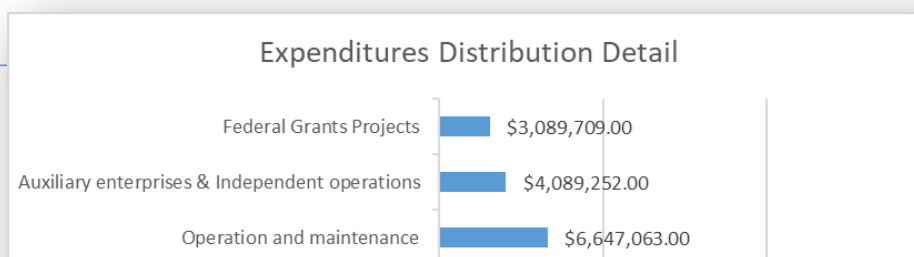


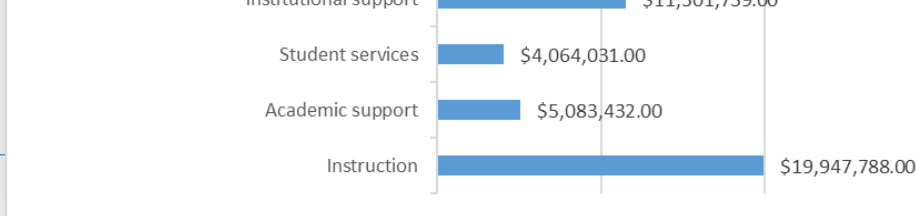
**Distribution of Expenses.** In accordance with the alignment with the institution's strategic plan, the resources received were distributed and used as follows: 53% of the income received was invested in the academic areas and direct services to the student; 41% was invested in infrastructure maintenance and development; and the remaining 6% correspond to federal projects.

Graph 6.2 Expenditure Distribution by Function



Graph 6.1.7 Expenditure Distribution Detail 2018-2022



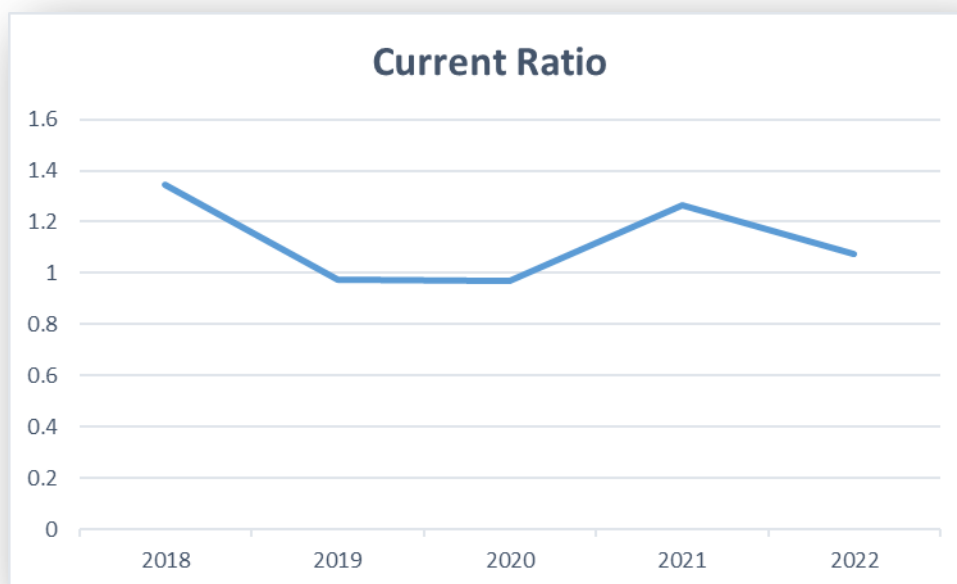


...ed excellent financial indicators during the period covered by this self-study. The financial stability of the institution is reflected in the following financial indicators. The Current Ratio that indicates the ability to convert current assets into cash to respond to current obligations has an average of 1.13 in the past five (5) years, as well as the liquidity ratio that has averaged 50% for the same period, the behavior of the indicators is shown in Graphs 6.1.8 and Graph 6.1.9. The changes in the indicators reflect the effects of the crisis created by COVID 19, and the recovery achieved with the help of the incentives granted by the Federal Government, which have been decisive for both students and the institution at large.

Graph 6.3 Liquidity Ratio 2018 – 2022

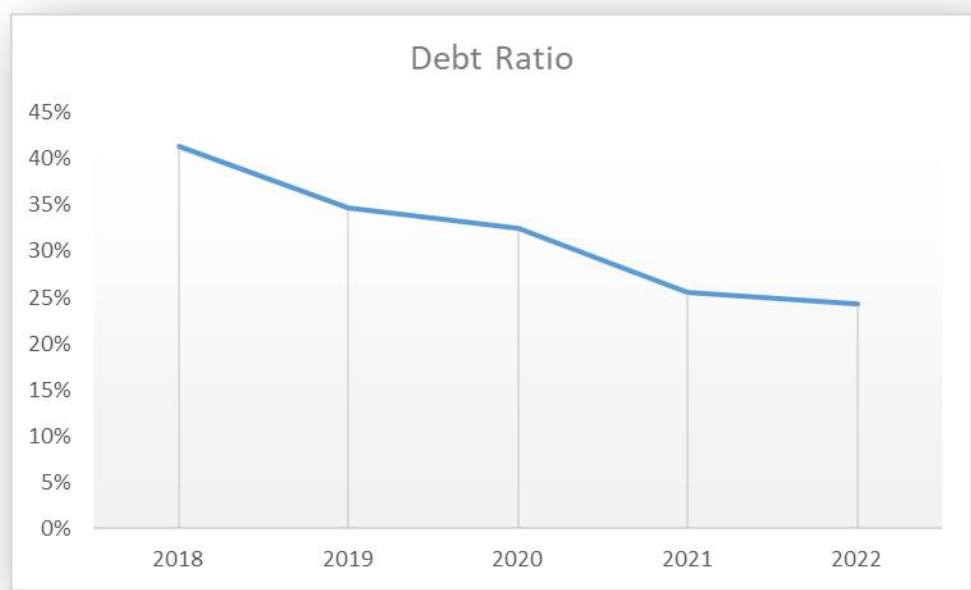


Graph 6.4 Current Ratio 2018 – 2022



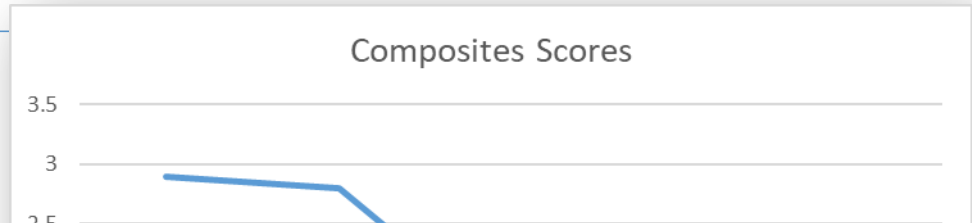
Regarding debt service, the institution has maintained an average Debt Ratio of 32% during the five-year period, this financial indicator measures the percentage of total Assets that is committed to debts. Graph 6.1.10 reflects that the Debt Ratio has decreased, from 41% in June 2018, to 24% in June 2022. The change represents a decrease of 23% in the five-year period, while demonstrating compliance with the terms of financing contracted by the University. Effective debt management allows the institution to maintain access to financing in the liability markets to attend to future development projects.

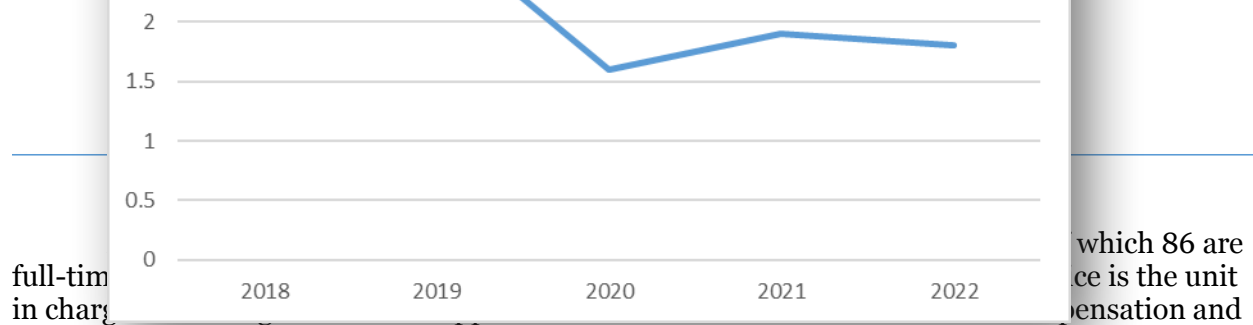
Graph 6.5 Debt Ratio 2018-2022



One of the most important indicators in our industry is the “Composite Score”. A financial indicator established by the Federal Department of Education for institutions that receive federal funds and seeks to reflect the efficiency of operations, the operating result, financial liquidity and its capitalization. The indicator has a range from -1 to 3, with the ideal number being 3. When the indicator is between 1.5 and 3.0, it indicates that the Institution meets the required financial stability expectations; from 1.0 to 1.4 the institution complies, but must be monitored by the Government and stricter guidelines are established for compliance with the standards; and, finally, from -1 to 0.9 the institution does not comply and, to continue receiving federal funds, it is required to have a letter of credit in favor of the Federal Department of Education for up to 50% of the funds received the previous year. Graph 6.1.11 shows the behavior of this indicator during the past five years. The Institution presents a "Composite Score" of 2.9 in June 2018 and 2.8 for June 2019. The index is reduced to 1.6 in 2020 (Influenced by a change in the calculations in the formula) and will recover slightly in 2021 to 1.9. In the year 2022 it is 1.8. The institution has complied with the requirements of the Federal Department of Education as a financially responsible institution.

Graph 6.6 Composite Score from 2018 to 2022





full-time in charge, which 86 are ce is the unit fringes and benefits, they are responsible for calculating payroll and are custodians of employee files. In addition, they provide training and professional development programs for the staff. During 2020, the use of a new digital platform was implemented that practically eliminated the use of paper forms and reduced the time to process them. The Kronos digital program was acquired with funds from the CARES Act program with an investment of \$52,228.

**Physical Infrastructure.** The university facilities consist of 16 buildings for classrooms, laboratories, administrative offices, a gym, a library, the simulation hospital, a cafeteria, offices of the academic departments, and the fitness center, among others. During the last five years, the institution has invested approximately \$3,855,000 in the development of its infrastructure. The investment has been aimed at improving the educational experience of students, through the renovation and construction of new and better facilities, as well as a strong investment in infrastructure and technology.

The institution has several buildings for housing which are used by employees and students. Antillean Adventist University is the university with the largest number of international students in Puerto Rico. When international students decide to come to study at our institution, they are offered welcoming facilities to stay within the campus. We also have a beautiful guesthouse which has 8 rooms and accommodates up to 24 guests, available for the enjoyment of university guests, as well as those who wish to come and meet us. The guesthouse was inaugurated in 2018 with an investment of \$230,630.

In order to increase and improve active and experiential learning in our health related programs, the institution participated in a Title V competition. A Title V grant was approved by the Department of Education in 2015, for the academic years 2015-2020. This grant was geared towards Expanding Capacity and Strengthening Health Sciences Degree Programs. The project was designed to: a) Revise Nursing and Respiratory Care curriculum for inclusion of high-definition simulation technology; b) expand access of Health Sciences Programs (HSP) via conversion to online/hybrid delivery; c) enhance infrastructure to support instruction via the creation of a state-of-the-art Simulation Lab; d) improve foundational skills in Math and English proficiency by developing a Math Resource Center, an English for HSP course, and acquire instructional resources; and e) engage in Respiratory Care curriculum and program evaluation to complete Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) accreditation.

Currently the institution has the most complete simulation hospital in the region. It has an emergency room, a delivery room, a pediatric care room, an intensive care room, and classrooms, among other amenities. These facilities were built with a total investment of \$1,259,349.00 and are currently in full use, creating a unique and innovative learning experience for our students in the Department of Health Sciences.

In the year 2019, the Fitness Center was inaugurated, a physical conditioning center that allows our students to exercise in a safe environment, with the latest in the market regarding exercise machines and weight lifting equipment. In this way, we fulfill our goal of creating professionals with holistic development of mind, body, and spirit. A total of \$268,905 was invested in this facility.

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Puerto Rico is a tropical state, exposed to storms and hurricanes. Such natural events cause significant damage and often put companies out of business for several weeks or even months. Seeking to mitigate the collateral effect of the passage of storms and hurricanes through our region, the university invested \$100,000.00 in electric generators to keep our main buildings operating. In addition to the effort to mitigate the aforementioned damage, the construction of a water well (private aqueduct) that supplies this precious liquid to the institution without interruptions, regardless of inclement weather, has begun and is in process. At present, about \$44,000.00 have been invested in the construction of the water well and an investment of \$80,000 is estimated until the project is completed.

The institutional pillar of spirituality is the most important for our university. We are an institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Puerto Rico. At present we have in progress the construction of what will be the temple of the university. An extraordinary structure dedicated to the worship of God and the preaching of the gospel. The project has an investment of \$2,989,494 and an investment of \$1,500,000 is estimated to complete it. The temple is financed through donations from our affiliates, alumni, and friends of the institution.

***Information Technology Resources.*** Information Technology Services (ITS) provides essential support for the University's operational, research, and academic goals. It performs these functions by optimizing IT resources; managing technology; promoting data security and accuracy; providing streamlined processes for business and student learning and success; managing operational and infrastructure needs; and aligning technology oversight, innovation and investment. IT's has established policies for the proper use of the technological network in order to provide the greatest possible security in the use of computerized systems. In addition, it has developed the manual of procedures for the use of laboratories and rules for the use of the Wireless system (ITS policies, standards and procedures).

Antillean Adventist University invests in technology to enhance student learning and success. Investments target physical and virtual learning spaces, as well as improving the quality of instruction, web accessibility, and faculty development. ITS supports the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs and the academic departments in the development of new technologies for classrooms.

The Institution has been working toward improving the teaching and learning experience by increasing the use of educational technology and distance/hybrid offering. In 2018, AAU created the Distance Education Department (DED) that helped the institution increase the number of courses offered in the online/hybrid modality, providing more flexibility and accessibility to the academic programs. Also, the DED increased professional development to faculty and staff in relation to the integration of technology in teaching face-to-face and online. During the pandemic, the Department of Distance Education, the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs, the Vice Presidency for Finance, and the Vice Presidency for Student Affairs came together to increase and improve services, protocols, and procedures to facilitate remote teaching in times of emergency. The effort benefited all academic programs and special attention was paid to the technological infrastructure. As a result of the aforementioned effort, the following student support services began to be offered virtually and continue to do so today: library, admissions, financial assistance, registration, student finances, among others. All these services are offered virtually and face-to-face following all the strictest security protocols.

New technology was acquired to convert face-to-face spaces into virtual classrooms. The funds came from the Coronavirus Relief and Economic Security Act (2020). In fiscal year 2020-21, the



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Institution received a second Federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund grant (2021) which was used to continue to increase technology for online teaching and to offer better virtual services to support students. From the year 2020 to the present, the university has invested \$2,363,490 in technological infrastructure, seeking to offer its students and professors innovative study alternatives without space limits.

### **Major Challenges Facing the University Related to the Location of Resources for Technology, Resources for the Physical Plant, as well as Human Resources Processes Used to Address These Challenges**

The University has a physical and technological infrastructure suited to its current needs. Through the funds of the Care Act, Heerf I, Heerf II and Heerf III programs, advanced technological equipment was acquired and 95% of our classrooms and laboratories have audiovisual equipment that enriches face-to-face learning and allows distance education in an effective way. Using these same federal funds, new classrooms (containers) were purchased and designed, which are in the process of being installed and represent an investment of over \$600,000. The investment provides nearly 4,900 additional square feet for classrooms and common learning spaces, with the required furniture, so that students and faculty have a first-rate educational experience. For the maintenance of the existing physical facilities, in each operating budget, the necessary resources are assigned for an adequate conservation of the assets and a constant search for external resources is maintained to optimize their development.

Regarding human resources, in the past, the university administration carried out a reorganization process in which the staff was reduced to temper it to the reality of current clients. At present, there are the necessary employees to operate efficiently and the AAU administration always keeps evaluating the customer service procedures and processes to identify ways through which efficiency can be promoted, in such a way, that we can provide an excellent service and keep operational costs under control.

### **Financial Planning and Budgeting Process Aligned to the Institution's Mission and Goals, Strategic Plan, and Objectives with Evidence-Based Decision Making**

The mission of the AAU promotes the holistic formation of competent professionals, committed to the service of God and humanity and will be recognized for the teaching of Adventist Christian values, the excellence of its academic program and for the emphasis on service.

In compliance with this mission and vision, when preparing the Institutional Operating Budget, the objectives established in the annual plans of the different departments are considered. The operating budget of the university shows, in its allocations of funds, the importance that the institution attaches to the fulfillment of the mission and vision, including in it, important items of money assigned to the spiritual/philosophical dimension that characterize it as an entity of the Adventist church.

An example of this and related to goal 1 of the Strategic Plan, the operational budget of the AAU provides for the existence of a Department for Religious Affairs, with a full-time chaplain who is in charge of caring for the spiritual life of the university community. Its functions include developing religious services for employees and administration, running a visitation program for students and employees, and coordinating seminars, and spiritual training programs. In



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addition to the above, financial resources are allocated in the operational budget so that two (2) times a year and in coordination with the Adventist Church located at the university, a week of Spiritual Emphasis is offered. During these weeks of spiritual emphasis, Adventist Christian values are promoted and the evangelizing mission of the institution is fulfilled, which includes that our students know God and Jesus Christ as their savior.

Regarding the scope of goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, in the budget there are allocations of funds to carry out extra-curricular activities that strengthen the spiritual, social, physical and emotional health of the students and members of our university community. These activities seek to strengthen interpersonal relationships and develop the physical, mental and spiritual faculties of the participants through sports, contact with nature, community service and healthy recreation.

One of the most important areas for the development and growth of the University are the Communications and Marketing departments, as well as the Recruitment department. These departments receive significant allocations of funds with the aim of increasing the number and diversity of students on campus. They also promote academic programs and make AAU facilities known to the local and international community, promoting the educational experience that only an institution like ours offers. The AAU has been inspiring the best version of its students and staff for 60 years. In the fulfillment of the marketing and recruitment program, economic resources are allocated so that different means of communication are used, such as the written press, radio, television, social media, and the internet, in order for people to know Antillean Adventist University, as an alternative, totally different, from the other educational institutions.

In compliance with goals 3 and 4, which include the most important aspect of the mission, that is offering academic excellence. In each operating budget, funds are designated for the hiring and retention of competent and specialized faculty for all academic programs. The Institution makes sure that each professor has a fair academic load, so that they can provide the student with an excellent education and have time to guide them in any other aspect that they need. The university has a faculty development program, which allows faculty who do not have a doctoral degree to apply for financial aid to complete it. The program has a rigorous application process in which it is analyzed that the proponent's area of specialty is of institutional need and contributes to the development of the academic program to which the professor belongs. Authorization of the Board of Trustees is required to grant this benefit.

In the area of technological development, during the five-year period, significant progress was made to improve internet access by developing a more efficient wireless network. Also, a first-class telephone equipment was acquired along with applications that allow employees to provide service remotely, in such a way lost calls are minimized. New computers were acquired for the data centers and their physical facilities were improved. This investment, close to \$275,000, allows faculty and students to develop a dynamic and up-to-date teaching-learning process.

The budget allocates a significant amount of resources to the Library, a first class building, located in the center of our campus, which features group and independent study areas, an impressive collection of books, and a Center for Learning and Technology Resources (CART). This center had all its computers replaced in 2021, now it has state-of-the-art machines available for the use of all our students in a professional and excellent environment.

Spirituality and Christian values are the main axis of our mission and vision. Given this fact, one of our most important academic departments is the Department of Religion, in which pastors

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and ministers who serve the Adventist Church in Puerto Rico and around the world are academically prepared. Funds are allocated in the budget appropriation for this department to continually enrich its evangelism and community service labs. These programs play a very important role in the development of the Adventist Church in Puerto Rico, which is our main affiliate entity.

Goal 6 includes the importance of maintaining a nice and welcoming campus, which allows creating a study environment where spirituality and contact with nature are enhanced. Of the available resources, an average of 40% is allocated in the annual budget for the maintenance and protection of the physical plant and green areas of our campus, this item represented nearly \$22,228,000 during the past five (5) years. Such investment has allowed us to present a welcoming campus in a spiritual environment for our students and people who visit us. Constantly, when people visit us for the first time, they say that our campus is beautiful and there is a different atmosphere, they indicate that it is an **“oasis in the middle of the city”**. By maintaining a beautiful campus, we accomplish the mission.

**Decisions Process.** The decision-making process, as well as the designation of the levels of authority and hierarchies are included in the following documents; AAU constitution, the Board of Trustees Handbook, and the Operating Regulations Handbook. These documents define the processes and functions of the administrators in the execution of their positions.

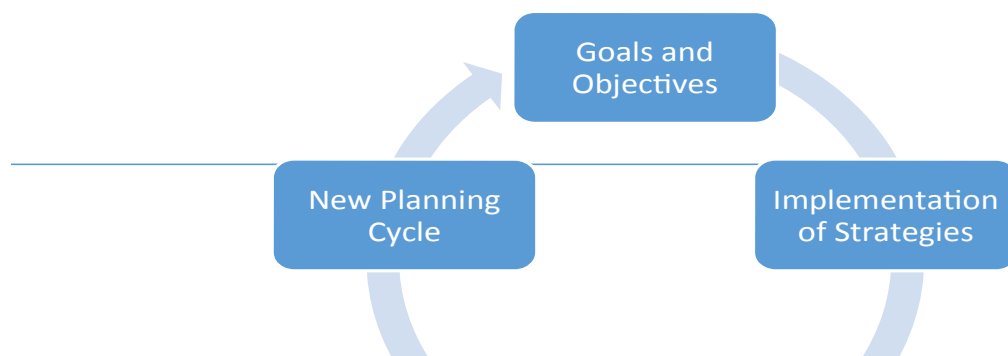
### **Communicate Planning and Improvement Processes that Provide Participation and Incorporate the use of Assessment Results**

Antillean is committed to progressive planning and continuous assessment. Our institutional strategic plan is an active document, developed with input from students, faculty, and staff and emerging from prior Strategic Plan 2012-2017.

Our current plan, developed in 2017, reflects the University’s vision: Spirituality, excellence, and service and the five strategic initiatives, that guide the University’s work: (a) Spiritual Development; (b) Student Success; (c) Academic Quality; (d) Administrative Effectiveness, and (e) Social Commitment and Collaborative Relations. The purpose of these initiatives is to facilitate the fulfillment of the mission, by identifying the key elements.

AAU has a system that integrates strategic planning with resource allocation, and assessment. The results obtained by the assessment processes guide the planning and allocation of financial resources. This system is evidenced in the following steps followed by the institution for the development of its strategic plan : 1) Formulation of goals and objectives; 2) Identification and implementation of strategies, projects, activities, and initiatives that operationalize the goals and objectives; 3) Allocation of institutional and supplemental resources (e. g. external funds as: state and federal grants, private donations, private or organizational funding, among others.); 4) Assessment of results; and 5) Use of the results for informed decision-making and continuous improvement in the next planning cycle.

Figure 6.1 Steps to develop the Strategic Plan



The planning process in AAU involves the three (3) existing administrative levels and is described in the Guide for Institutional Effectiveness of the year 2022. At the institutional level, the strategic plan is the document in which the long-term (5 years) goals and objectives of the institution are outlined. The scope of the strategic plan allows the institution to fulfill its mission and remain relevant in the current context of higher education.

The Strategic Plan is a document prepared with the participation of the entire university community, under the direction of the Strategic Planning Committee and in alignment with the MSCHE and Adventist Accreditation standards. It is the Board of Trustees that grants the final approval of the document once completed. The document is subject to constant review in order to keep it updated and relevant. After the updates, if any, the Strategic Plan is presented again to the Board of Trustees.

At the administrative level, strategies are formulated and objectives are defined to make the goals of the Strategic Plan operational. Each administrative vice-presidency, based on its area of execution, carries out the aforementioned process individually, always ensuring that its operational plans are completely aligned with the Institutional Strategic Plan. The Work Plans by vice-presidencies are evaluated by the Strategic Planning Committee and the President's Executive Committee, and then submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

At the departmental level, both academic units (schools and departments) and non-academic units (general administration and services) formulate, document, and implement an annual work plan, which objectives and strategies should lead to the achievement of the objectives of the operational plan of their area. In the annual work plan, the units must identify the specific and priority actions to be carried out during the year to achieve the established goals.

The participation of the university community in the planning processes is achieved through the Strategic Planning Committee, which integrates a representation of the faculty, support and service staff, the administration, and the students. The approved Strategic Plan is circulated to all the vice presidents, deans and unit directors, so that they can work on their annual plans and budget requests in alignment with it. The document is also posted on the university website and a copy will be found in the Office of the Vice President for Planning and Development, available to the general public.

The evaluation of the planning process is carried out annually, using the method of achievement reports. Each academic and non-academic unit, prepares a report that includes the achievements obtained in relation to the annual plan of that unit. Similarly, in the vice

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presidencies, a report is made that includes the achievements of these, aligned with the goals and objectives of the institution described in the strategic plan. The Institutional Effectiveness Department prepares a general achievement report each year, based on all the reports described above, which is presented to the Board of Trustees by the President of the University for the corresponding approval. The general achievement report shows the way in which the institution is fulfilling its mission and also integrates statistical data that indicates the achievement of goals and objectives. The achievement report is a key tool used to identify those aspects and areas that need to be strengthened, therefore, findings of weakness or noncompliance are converted into recommendations, for changes in planning, or to improve the assessment process. The vice-presidents, deans, and directors are responsible for participating, and implementing the annual planning of the institution. The results and findings of the assessment process should be included in the plans for the following year. The general achievement report for each year, in addition to being shared with the entire staff, is available at the university's website and in the Department of Institutional Effectiveness, where the entire university community has access to it.

The Covid 19 pandemic required changes in the way in which education was traditionally provided in Puerto Rico. Due to this pandemic, the institution has kept, in the last two years, reviewing and updating the Strategic Plan. Through meetings, important and relevant information was collected that helped revise the Strategic Plan to the changes that the moment required.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrates that Antillean Adventist University possesses strategic goals and objectives that are used for the development of operational plans and the allocation of resources. Based on the self-assessment of the Criteria for Standard VI, AAU has identified the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement:

### **Strengths**

- Antillean Adventist University has been financially stable for the past five years. It has been able to comply with the strategic plan despite the economic crisis in our country. It continues to provide its students with an education of excellence. It has complied with the established plan to strengthen the infrastructure. New buildings were constructed and facilities were improved, such as the Simulation Hospital, the Eagle Fitness Center, and the Antillean Guesthouse, among others. In addition, several projects were started, some still under development, such as the Student Center, the sports center, new classrooms, and the temple. Significant investments were made in the area of technology.
- The university has audiovisual equipment, communications, computers and programming that allow it to be more efficient in the teaching process and in distance education. It has maintained an accounting transaction registration system that complies with all the standards of the regulatory institutions; this is evidenced by external audits (all unqualified opinions), demonstrating its commitment to integrity in financial management. It has maintained the debt service in full compliance, which allows the university to go to the financial market to seek financing sources to continue developing its operations.

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## Challenges

- Demographic models project a continued decline in the island's high school students over subsequent years.
- Although resources have been sufficient to support programs and services, fiscal resources are overly compromised in personnel and day-to-day operational expenses.
- The frequency of anomalous events in recent years (i.e., hurricanes, earthquakes, and the pandemic) have made it difficult to monitor and validate assumptions for budget and financial planning.

## Opportunities

- The university has the ability to continue improving its financial position. It must continue with a vision of development and expansion in all areas, from academic programs to direct services to students. We plan to strengthen distance education to develop new programs online. We will develop new professional certifications and study programs. We expect that the revenues remain constant or increase in the immediate future, allowing for growth in net assets, to invest those resources in fulfilling our mission.
- Antillean Adventist University, as part of its identity, seeks to promote academic development within a framework of Christian coexistence. This commitment is maintained to continue promoting this environment of Christian coexistence for the enjoyment of all members of our community. We continue searching for external financial resources that allow us to maintain the efficient functioning of the infrastructure that we already have and allow us to develop new projects for students' general wellbeing.

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## **~~MSCHE~~ Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

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

RA 12: The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.

RA13: A majority of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict-of-interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution's district/system or other chief executive office shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.

RA 14: The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

This Chapter addressed the followings Institutional Priorities (IP):

- D. Emphasize the integration of community service experiences.

### **Analysis of Key Issues**

#### **~~Compliance with Criteria and Requirements~~**

Antillean Adventist University has a clearly defined and transparent governance structure, with by-laws and regulations in place to define roles and responsibilities at each level. AAU President, the chief executive officer, has the necessary qualifications and authority to implement changes that benefit the university. Since the President's hiring in 2022, these have



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included developing a new strategic plan and implementing by new leading, resulting in enhanced institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Antillean academic and administrative staff members are qualified and effective at their work. In addition to classroom activities and departmental meetings, they regularly engage with each other and with the students through mechanisms established and supported by the university. Assessment mechanisms are in place to ensure that governance, leadership and administration are operating smoothly and effectively and that problems are quickly identified and addressed. The Board of Trustees continues to engage in the assessment regarding their role and responsibilities to assure good practice in board governance. The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution (Operation Regulations, 23).

### ***Antillean Adventist University's (AAU) Existing Decision-Making Structure***

The University is operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization and as such is governed by the Puerto Rico Union of Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has jurisdiction over all Seventh-day Adventist institutions in Puerto Rico. The Board of Trustees, the President's Executive Council, and the University Administrative Council ensure that the Institution fulfills its mission and objectives, maintains its integrity, and offers excellent academic programs.

**The Board of Trustees.** The Board of Trustees is the University's legal representative. It is composed of thirty-one members: five ex-officio members reside in Florida as they work for the Seventh-day Adventist Inter-American Division Headquarters participating only in extraordinary board meetings. Twenty-one members of the Board reside in Puerto Rico. Eleven of these twenty-one members are nominated because of their position in the Seventh-Day Adventist church's organizational structure, and the other ten members are educators, lawyers, health professionals, businessmen, administrators, or lay people committed to helping the Institution fulfill its mission and goals. The University's President represents the Institution as the Secretary of the Board of Trustees and the University's Vice-Presidents are standing invitees with voice. The Board of Trustees recently updated the Board of Trustees Manual to bring it in line with best practices in higher education.

The Boards' objective is to ensure that the Institution adheres to its educational philosophy and fulfills its stated mission. The Board has produced a series of documents that describe and evidence their work and responsibilities:

- Institutional Constitution and Statutes- explanation of how the identity and mission are institutionalized.
- Pertinent documents that establish the institution's relationship with other entities including the community.
- Board Operation Manual which includes evidence of administrative -hirings and evaluations. These documents include the approval indicators regarding performance.
- Board Operations Manual which include evidence of faculty and non-faculty hirings and contract extensions. These documents also include the accepted indicators concerning overall performance.



- Board Operations Manual concerning teaching and curriculum in accordance to the mission and values of the institution. These documents also include the accepted indicators concerning overall performance.
- Objectives approved by the Board concerning the spiritual mission of the Institution and accepted indicators.

***Meetings of the Board of Trustees.*** The Board usually meets four to six times a year, however, whenever necessary, additional meetings are scheduled. Furthermore, the Board requires a quorum for the transaction of business and the approval of the meetings scheduled.

***Functions of the Boards of Trustees.*** Within its functions, the Board:

- Selects and evaluates the University President,
- Approves the University's academic and working policies,
- Reviews institutional assessment results to collaborate in the strategic planning process,
- Approves the University's strategic plan to achieve short and long term goals,
- Approves the University's annual Budget,
- Hires and promotes faculty and department directors,
- Approves the University's academic programs, and
- Develops adequate financial support for the operation of the University.

***Training of the Board of Trustees.*** The University coordinates seminars and workshops, especially when new Board members are elected, to familiarize them and help them understand their responsibilities. The last workshop was offered in April 26, 2022 with representatives from the General Conference and the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

***Evaluation of Board of Trustees.*** ~~*Evaluation of the Board of Trustees.*~~ The Board members were asked to complete a self-evaluation survey in **2011**, and ten of them responded the questionnaire. 80% state that they know the philosophy and mission of the University, and 90% said that they understand and meet their responsibility as members of the Board of Trustees. 90% also attend and participate actively in the meetings of the Board. 80% said that they are aware of the needs and concerns of the University community.

***Recently (Oct, 2021) an evaluation of the members was accomplished and the results are currently being analyzed and will be shared.*** The last evaluation of the Board of Trustees was held during the **SP 2019 semester**~~semester~~, coordinated by AU's Department of Institutional Effectiveness. According to the results shared from a total of 10 participants, 100% confirmed knowing AU's philosophy and mission, 90% understood and fulfilled their particular responsibilities as a member of the Board. All participants acknowledged feeling as being a part of the University.

The Board is also divided into particular sub committees with specific duties and responsibilities which include the following:

• ~~*Academic Commission-*~~  
~~*E.-*~~  
*Academic Commission*

- Explores through its officers in each association and union, the academic program needs of the Adventist and non-Adventist community served by AU.

F.—

G.—*Planning and Development*—

- Explores possible fundraising and financing strategies for different prioritized projects.

H.—

I.—*Student Services*—

- Establishes the institutional parameters that govern the services and activities of the students; ensures that these are met through an evaluative process.

J.—

K.—*Finances*—

- The Finance Commission will be responsible for advising the University administration on financial operations. It also acts as a review committee for the audited financial statements of the University, after being evaluated by the Audit Committee and recommending their approval to the Board of Trustees.

L.—

M.—*Religious Affairs*—

- Coordinates religious activities within the academic and social program of the University and intertwines them with those of the church, in consultation with the president of the University. Also plans and promotes activities that highlight the moral and religious values of the university family in accordance with the University's head pastor.

N.—

O.—*Audit*-----

- Evaluates the firms of accountants authorized to carry out the audit work of the University and recommends their hiring to the Board of Trustees.

#### *Recommendations:*

The Board of Trustees ensure that the University responds to the needs of Puerto Rican society and constitutes an essential element in the effort to solve the problems faced by our people. The Board should stimulate the development of the University's talents and resources to make the core values of our society a reality.

### **University AdministrationLeadership**

~~University Administration~~—The University administration is composed of the following five officers: University President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Financial Affairs, Vice President for Students Affairs and Vice President for Planning and Development.

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**University Presidency**-During the past 12 years Dr. Obed Jimenez ~~Dr. Obed Jiménez~~ was the elected ~~University~~ President. Nevertheless, in April 2022, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Myrna Colón as a new President. She has the appropriate credentials and professional experience to hold the position. She hold the rank of emeritus professor and has an extensive academic background.

~~President in October, 2010. (The previous President lasted 9 years.)~~ As such, ~~she~~ ~~he~~ oversees the general operations of the Institution and represents the University on the Board of Trustees and on the Executive Committee of the Puerto Rico Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization.

Among the President's responsibilities are:

- Serve as Secretary to the University's Board of Trustees;
- Fulfill the mandates of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee;
- Maintain and promote the Institution's objective and mission,
- Plan, coordinate, direct, and supervise the work of the administration, faculty, and staff;
- Develop and maintain an academic program, including research and service that meet students' needs;
- Develop strategies, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, to obtain the financial resources needed to operate the Institution;
- Provide the Institution with a healthy and well balanced administrative structure;
- Promote the Institution's best interest within federal and national agencies;
- Promote spiritual activities for the University family, student and community.

The President has demonstrated the necessary authority and autonomy to fulfill his responsibilities regarding the development and implementation of the institutional Strategic Plan, the Annual Work Plans, and the allocation of resources to guide the institution toward the achievement of goals and objectives. Most of the developed and implemented activities have been aligned with the Institutional Priority D2-establish collaborative agreements with the community representatives. During the past five year, the President achieved eight collaborative agreements to increase educational opportunities that allowed students develop their skills.

Also, AAU Antillean University is an academic institution with a vision intended to contribute in community service activities. The University has a civic commitment to serve through the integration of missionary and community service projects. The intended outreach allows for the participation of students, faculty and staff in curricular and extracurricular activities. This is done so through collaboration agreements with community leaders which offer educational opportunities for students to strengthen their skills and obtain valuable experience in their particular fields of study.

To fulfill all duties and responsibilities, the President relies on a highly committed and competitive administrative staff. Table 7.1 shows the qualifications of personnel under the direct supervision of the President.

**Table 7.1 Qualifications of Administrative Staff under Direct Supervision of the President**

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Degree, Field, University</u>	<u>Years of Experience in Higher Education</u>
<u>Interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs</u>	<u>Yolanda Pérez</u>	<u>MA, Business Education, Interamerican University of PR</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Vice-President for Financial Affairs</u>	<u>Luis Acobes</u>	<u>MA, Business Administration-Accounting, University of Arizona</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Vice-President for Students Affairs</u>	<u>Sigfredo Morales</u>	<u>EdD, Educational Leadership, Interamerican University of PR</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Interim Vice-President for Planning and Development</u>	<u>Digna Williams</u>	<u>EdD, Educational Leadership, University of Puerto Rico</u>	<u>21</u>

Source: Human Resource Department

**Vice-Presidency for Academic Affairs.** The Vice-President for Academic Affairs oversees all academic aspects of the Institution, which include: curriculum, library, [registrar office](#), [distance education](#), faculty, and academic departments. As second in command, the VP for Academic Affairs acts as president in the event the President is unavailable. The VP for Academic Affairs chairs the Academic Affairs Executive Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee, and the Academic Norms Committee. Through these committees the VP facilitates curriculum improvement, academic policy guidelines, and decision-making for meeting students' academic needs. The chief Academic Officer also promotes faculty development, and provides an academic environment that is congruent with the Institution's mission and philosophy.

**The current VP for Academic Affairs has held the position since 2019, she is Dr. Zilma Santiago. The Vice President for Academic Affairs evaluation was performed in October, 2021. A 360 evaluation process was followed which included a questionnaire submitted to diverse components with their respective pondered measurements:**

- **Self-evaluation** — **10%**
- **Supervisor** — **30%**
- **Peers** — **20%**
- **Supervisees** — **30%**
- **Faculty** — **10%**

**Interviewees and evaluators were asked to do a written evaluation of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. The President discussed the evaluation results with the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. The Board of Trustees ratified the Vice-president for Academic Affairs for one more year, pending an evaluation within that year.**

**Vice-Presidency for Financial Affairs.** -This office oversees matters relating to budget, accounts, funds, and auxiliary services such as the maintenance of buildings and grounds. The VP for Financial Affairs prepares and implements the Institution's annual budget,

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supervises the areas of accounting, financial aid, and student finances. He/she chairs the Financial Affairs Executive Committee. The current VP of Financial Affairs was named to the position on February 23rd, 2021.

~~The Vice-president for Financial Affairs evaluation was performed in March 2011. A 360 evaluation process was followed which included a questionnaire submitted to diverse components with their respective pondered measurements:~~

- ~~• Self-evaluation ————— 10%~~
- ~~• Supervisor ————— 40%~~
- ~~• Peers ————— 20%~~
- ~~• Supervisees ————— 30%~~

~~Interviewees and evaluators were asked to do a written evaluation of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Vice-President for Financial Affairs. The President discussed the evaluation results with the Vice-president for Financial Affairs. The Board of Trustees ratified the Vice-president for Financial Affairs until the year 2015.~~

***Vice-Presidency for Student Affairs.*** The Vice-President for Student Affairs oversees services related to students. His responsibilities include: promoting Christian values within the student body, promoting congruency between the Institution's philosophy and the different student organizations, supervising student publications, orientation and counseling services, residence halls, cafeteria, and maintaining the campus safety, among others. He chairs the Student Affairs Executive Committee. The current VP of Student Affairs was named to the position May 17th, 2021.

~~The Vice-president for Student Affairs evaluation was performed in March 2011. A 360 evaluation process was followed which included a questionnaire submitted to diverse components with their respective pondered measurements:~~

- ~~• Self-evaluation ————— 10%~~
- ~~• Supervisor ————— 30%~~
- ~~• Peers ————— 20%~~
- ~~• Supervisees ————— 30%~~
- ~~• Students ————— 10%~~

~~Interviewees and evaluators were asked to do a written evaluation of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Vice-President for Student Affairs. The President discussed the evaluation results with the Vice-President for Student Affairs. The Board of Trustees ratified the Vice-President for Student Affairs until the year 2021.~~

***Vice-Presidency for Planning and Development.*** This office oversees several aspects of the Institution, including: institutional effectiveness and institutional research, marketing, admissions, recruitment, fund raising, and alumni. The VP chairs the Planning and Development Executive Committee. The current VP of Planning and Development was named to the position on April 26, 2021.

e. The current VP of Planning and Development was named to the position April 26th, 2021. Antillean Organizational Structure is the framework in which administrative processes converge to provide operational functionality to the institution. Figure 7.1 also shows an organizational structure of appropriate size, with relevant components to assist the President in the fulfillment of his functions and responsibilities.

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**Figure 7.1**  
**Institutional Organization Chart**

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~~The Vice President for Planning and Development evaluation was performed in March 2011. A 360-evaluation process was followed which included a questionnaire submitted to diverse components with their respective pondered measurements:~~

- ~~• Self-evaluation ————— 10%~~
- ~~• Supervisor ————— 40%~~
- ~~• Peers ————— 20%~~
- ~~• Supervisees ————— 30%~~

~~Interviewees and evaluators were asked to do a written evaluation of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Vice President for Planning and Development. The President discussed the evaluation results with the Vice-President for Planning and Development. The Board of Trustees ratified the Vice-President for Planning and Development in his position until the year 2021.~~

***The President's Executive Council.*** This is the President's administrative and legislative body, whose members are: the President and all the Vice-Presidents. The responsibilities of the Executive Council are, among others:

- Advise the President and vice versa in areas which they consider relevant;
- Decide complex and vital issues that require immediate action or confidentiality;



- Support and enforce provisions of the University budget, the Strategic Plan, the Spiritual Master Plan and the Institutional Master Plan;
- Verify compliance of Board of Trustees decisions;
- Develop agenda points to be presented at the University Administrative Council;
- Verify compliance of recommendations made by the external auditor, and government and accreditation agencies; and
- Develop strategies to improve institutional effectiveness.

**University Administrative Council.** The University Administrative Council is the body with executive and legislative power of highest rank within the University, responsible for the study, evaluation, and decision making on recommendations of the internal committees, within the parameters established by the Board of Trustees. The duties are clearly defined in the [Working Policy Handbook \(pp. 29-33\)](#).

~~In 2007, the Administrative Council and the University Council merged to form the University Administrative Council thus opening up greater opportunities for participation in the administrative processes of the institution.~~

Matters dealt by the University Administrative Council, which require the approval of the Board of Trustees, are referred through the President of the University. The President has the prerogative to refer matters directly to the Board of Trustees. The members of the Administrative Council are:

- President of the University – Chair
- Vice-President for Academic Affairs – Secretary
- All other Vice-Presidents
- University Chaplain
- University Church Pastor
- Deans of Schools and Directors of Academic Departments
- Representatives chosen by the Faculty
- Representatives chosen by the Staff
- President of Student Council
- President of the graduating class

### **Assessment of the Effectiveness of Governance, Leadership and Administration**

As part of the process of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services, AAU prepares and submits to the President an Annual Report of Institutional Effectiveness detailing the outstanding achievements and identifying areas for improvement. In addition, multiple audits are conducted by internal and external regulatory agencies, as indicated below:

- **Contracted External Audits**—The Institution recruits external auditing firms to perform annual assessments of the effectiveness of different administrative, operational, academic, and fiscal processes related to financial aid programs to prepare the financial statements and the single audit.
- **Federal Audits**—Federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education, regularly assess AAU in its administrative processes, including student services such as Veterans Affairs and Financial Aid.

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Following these evaluations, the institution develops and implements improvement plans to address concerns raised by audits and submits them to the relevant agencies. The regularity of the audits ensures compliance with the plan submitted by the institution and is useful to assess the effectiveness of governance and administration.

## **Changes in Antillean Adventist University's Systems Structure**

### **Vice President for Academic Affairs**

After the former VP retired, she was appointed to her position by the Board of Trustees in 2019 a new Vice-president which was for three years after the former VP retired. However, she quit in February 2022, for that reason at this time we have an interim in the position.

### **Vice President for Student Affairs**

With the new administration at AU, the former VP for Student Affairs was promoted to occupy the position of VP for Planification and Development. A new VP for Student Affairs was appointed by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2021.

### **Vice President for Financial Affairs**

The past Vice President for Financial Affairs was promoted to occupy another position within the Puerto Rican Union of Seventh Day Adventists. The new VP for Financial Affairs was appointed by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2021.

### **Vice President for Planning and Development**

The position of VP for Planning and Development was left vacant when the former vice president accepted another leadership position within the Seventh Day Adventist University structure. The position will be filled in 2021. After serving as VP of Student Affairs, the VP for Planning and Development was appointed by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2021. However, he resigned from the position because of that reason, and the Board of Trustees appointed an interim Vice-Presidente in March 2, 2021.

Changes in institutional leadership can have a significant impact on strategic and operational planning as well as on the assessment of institutional effectiveness. There has been positive change brought about by the new leadership, and there is a nurturing and supportive environment with open communication and empowerment at every level.

### **Conclusion**

Antillean's Board of Trustees is committed to incorporating innovative practices into its governance, communication, and work plans. In addition, the Board is proactive in its efforts to follow best practice models in higher education. This analysis has allowed us to identify the following strengths, challenges and opportunities to improve.

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## **Strengths**

- Antillean possess a clearly defined organizational structure to provide the necessary guidance and direction to facilitate effective governance, as well as the functioning of all work units.
- The institution has a work team focused on results.

## **Challenges**

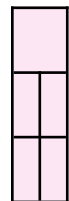
- Conduct periodic evaluations on the effectiveness of institutional management and governance and the corresponding processes, given changes in administration.

## **Opportunities for Improvement**

- Improve the efficiency of office and department administrators facilitating training for these purposes.

*How effectively does the administration regularly engage with community representatives to fulfill collaborative agreements?*

Antillean University is an academic institution with a vision intended to contribute in community service activities. The University has a civic commitment to serve through the integration of missionary and community service projects. The intended outreach allows for the participation of students, faculty and staff in curricular and extracurricular activities. This is done so through collaboration agreements with community leaders which offer educational opportunities for students to strengthen their skills and obtain valuable experience in their particular fields of study.



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The evidence presented demonstrates a commitment to community service. University participation in service projects has increased in the last year, which expands the opportunities for service and the fulfillment of its particular mission.

*Recommendations:*

- We understand that we need to educate, empower, and evaluate middle management in order to improve institutional governance.
- Consistent, periodic assessment/ evaluation of governance and leadership.
- To continue the assessment process for academic reorganization.

More time is needed to evaluate how effective recent changes have been.