

Historic agreement in benefit of science ^[1]

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Calificación:



Cited from [endi.com](#) ^[2] By: Joanisabel González They can be rivals un track and fields, under the hoop or perhaps they compete to enroll the best talents, but as of yesterday, nine institutions of superior education decided to form a team to turn Puerto Rico into a platform for research and and development (R&D). This agreement that creates Puerto Rico Pharma Cluster, brings together the University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras, Interamerican University, Turabo University, University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, among others, to unite their efforts and intellect with the private industry to pave the way for research on new drugs and treatments in the Island. According to Daneris Fernandez, vice-president of pharmaceutical operations of Merck and president of the conglomerate, for years, Puerto Rico has been very effective in manufacture, but it lost "the ambition to get more aggressively into Research and Development". Puerto Rico Pharma Cluster would come, indeed, to fill that emptiness, because the new alliance looks to create a critical mass of investigators and Puerto Rican scientists whose talents would focus down towards investigation of new molecular components and the later creation of procedures and processes to produce, commercialize and trade these discoveries. The agreement took form yesterday in Abbott Laboratories in Barceloneta, and represents the first integrating effort on behalf of the universities in the field of life sciences, because unlike other Latin American countries, an advisory board did not exist in Puerto Rico. In addition, until now, the universities had developed, each one by their side, research efforts directly with the pharmaceutical companies. "We must have a solid base of scientists. The industry would provide the technical resources and the academia would develop the talent necessary to attract R&D activity in the Island", said Fernandez, when adding that fomenting this initiative will imply the creation of new businesses in the Island and will even promote the creation of small companies of scientific research. "This is a new model", said Gladys Escalona, director of the Rio Piedras campus of the

University of Puerto Rico. She explained that each academic institution would contribute its strengths to the research process and they could include talents, equipment or diverse technologies. "The moment has arrived for recognizing that in the union is the force", said Marcelina Santiago, director of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ponce. In next the 60 days, the group will draw up a strategic plan where the participant institutions will identify work areas, they will designate responsibilities and discuss other aspects like the participation and protection of the intellectual property that is developed from the research efforts.

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