

Dangerous political precedent: Research could be affected by budget changes imposed on the University of Puerto Rico ^[1]

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By Frances Rosario y Javier Colón Dávila / puertoricohoy@elnuevodia.com ^[2] From endi.com ^[3]

The House of Representatives will not reconsider the determination to stop a measure through which funding is assigned to the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), cutting the main higher education center's budget by almost \$40 million, declared the House president, Jose Aponte, last night. The decision was presented after the Senate approved a joint resolution, by legislators Lucy Arce and Migdalia Padilla, that looked to de-stall the 9.69% financing formula and guarantee the UPR the millions that it will now lack. If it had the 9.69% formula the UPR would have received \$790 million, but since it has been stopped, it will only get \$752 million. Aponte explained that the UPR had the opportunity to choose between the financing formula or special allocations and they chose the last alternative. Therefore, he said that they will only receive a budgetary benefit. "I think that the school of Public Administration must help the president (of the UPR, Antonio Garcia Padilla) to identify areas to save" said Jose Aponte, President of the House of Representatives. In addition, the congressional president maintained that if all the Government is saving, the UPR would have to also do it. On the other hand, the president of the congressional Budget Commission, Angel Perez, indicated that "the University is not being assigned a cent less than what it had last year, and they increased registration fees". Garcia Padilla, who was lobbying yesterday in the Capitol in favor of the UPR, did not want to emit commentaries after knowing Aponte's determination. However, he trusted that the House will reconsider its position. A group of UPR professors mobilized to the Capitol yesterday to make a claim in favor of the UPR.

According to members of the Confederation of Associations of University Professors (CONAPU), the almost \$40 million loss, would put in danger investigations, wage increases for professors and the stability of the cost of matriculation. The freezing of the formula would imply a violation of the Fiscal Law of Autonomy of the UPR, noticed professor Marta Arroyo Arango. In addition, it opens the door to another increase in the matriculation, said Arroyo Arango, who indicated that the millionaire loss similarly puts in risk the agreement of a wage increase for the teaching staff already in place with Garcia Padilla. "We hoped that there is good will... This would be an ominous precedent", said Arroyo Arango.

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