

Budget cut could destabilize the UPR ^[1]

Submitted on 29 June 2006 - 11:47am

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By Libni Sanjurjo Meléndez / lsanjurjo@elnuevodia.com ^[2] From endi.com ^[3] Antonio Garcia Padilla, president of the University of Puerto Rico, warned that the \$37 million cut in UPR's budget threatens to destabilize the system and limit new recruitments, academic programs and faculty salaries. However, Garcia Padilla does not anticipate increases in the cost of matriculation. The most recent one was in August of 2005. "We do not think that we have to get to that point (to increase matriculation)", said Garcia Padilla in interview with El Nuevo Dia. The President of the first teaching institution of the Country said that he cannot "say exactly what we would do in August" if the Legislature keeps stalled the formula that would have granted the UPR an increase of \$37 million for fiscal year 2006-2007. He indicated that the academic offer, that includes recruitment of faculty, materials for laboratories, research opportunities, trips and studies, among others, would be hit. He did not anticipate massive dismissals of personnel. "I do not anticipate a closing of programs, but the recruitment of professors for some programs can be affected", indicated. Also, research projects, internationalization openings for students, and cultural projects could be harmed. He mentioned the Pilot Plant of Bioindustrial Processes in Mayagüez as an example. Garcia Padilla emphasized that the salary increase for professors, that would take effect in July, can be affected. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a "competitive wage" to avoid the exodus of professors abroad. Even so, the President of the UPR said that he has hopes that the Legislature reconsiders the cut in an extraordinary session. "We have confidence that the university is going to prevail and is going to obtain its resources", it declared. At the moment, he will continue demanding the Legislature and the Executive those \$37 million. The academic maintained that he would not discard going to the courts to demand the use of Law Number 2 that grants the \$37 million. The 9.69% formula provides the institution with money from the General Fund. "If the university does not prevail, in the end, it would be surrounded with uncertainty", emphasized Garcia Padilla.

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