

Yale and University of Puerto Rico team to create new M.D.-Ph.D.s ^[1]

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Yale President Peter Salovey and his wife, Marta Moret, welcomed Uroyoán Walker Ramos, president of the UPR, and other dignitaries at Woodbridge Hall to celebrate a new cooperative agreement between the two institutions. (Photo by Michael Marsland)

Top officials from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) met July 15 with Yale President Peter Salovey in Woodbridge Hall to celebrate a new cooperative agreement designed to increase the research experiences of students at both institutions.

Under the new M.D.-Ph.D. program, students accepted in the M.D. program at the University of Puerto Rico Medical School can enroll in Yale's Combined Program in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences and will be assigned student and faculty mentors while studying for their Ph.D.s in New Haven.

Among the visiting dignitaries attending the ceremony were University of Puerto Rico President Uroyoán Walker Ramos; Dr. Edgar Colón, dean of the UPR School of Medicine; Dr. Marcia Cruz, director of the Office of Research for the UPR School of Medicine; and Noel J. Aymat, chancellor of the UPR medical science campus.

"The M.D.-Ph.D. program at Yale embodies the School of Medicine's mission of training leaders in biomedicine, and it is very exciting to be able to share the research and clinical opportunities available in New Haven with students from UPR's Medical School," said Dr. Barbara Kazmierczak, associate professor of medicine and of microbial pathogenesis and director of the program

The training and mentoring UPR students receive at Yale should prepare them for careers as physician-scientists who positively influence health care in the United States and globally, she said.

“This program would serve to spearhead new research and medical initiatives between both institutions,” said Daniel Colón-Ramos, associate professor in cell biology and cellular neuroscience. “It will also serve as a pilot program that, if successful, could be extended to other institutions in the U.S. and globally.”

UPR students in the cooperative program will come to Yale for eight weeks during the summer after their first year of medical school to complete a laboratory rotation with the intention of building familiarity with Yale and exploring research opportunities in Ph.D. departments

After completing the third year of medical studies, the UPR students will return to Yale. They will have an option to complete two additional rotations and identify a faculty adviser. They will register for courses in the Graduate School and will formally affiliate with a Ph.D. program by the start of the spring semester. This timeline will put them in sync with other M.D.-Ph.D. students at Yale.

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