

UCC, PR Trust team on fellowships [1]

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By [Caribbean Business](#) [2]

cbnews@caribbeanbusinesspr.com [3]

Building on its strengths in scientific research while at the same time attracting and retaining local talent, the Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC) announced it is currently seeking applicants for two postdoctoral fellow positions – one to characterize natural product compounds with anticancer activity using medicinal chemistry, and the other to identify biomarkers through the use of proteomics.

Through the newly created Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program, the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust is funding 50 percent of the positions' cost as part of its mission to foster applied research and to empower local universities to create jobs through science and innovation, which will in turn allow the universities to contribute even more to Puerto Rico's economic development.

"Universities are engines of economic development, and many are unaware that local scientists bring millions of dollars in direct federal funds to the island and create thousands of jobs," said Thomas Forest Farb, executive director of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research

Trust. “The research going on at private and public institutions generates direct jobs and additional funding and, for every dollar invested, four times that much goes back into the economy in the form of indirect jobs.”

Working in partnership with the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust has awarded millions of dollars to attract top scientists to UPR through the Centennial Fund. The Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program is a complementary initiative aimed at research institutions that commit to provide matching funds to retain young scientists who can be considered for tenure-track positions, added Farb.

The two postdoctoral research fellows will be assigned to the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies (OADRGS) at UCC, and will be selected on the basis of their academic background, educational and research experience, and scientific training in specialized research techniques.

Candidates will also be evaluated by the number of research and other professional publications, the amount and caliber of awards and honors received, and for their potential to develop into independent researchers and attract new funding to Puerto Rico. A previous record of patents, patent applications, and invention disclosures will be factored in as well.

“Our long-term goal is to keep expanding our postdoctoral research fellows program to provide opportunities right here in Puerto Rico so scientists and researchers don’t have to leave the island to do this kind of work”, said Dr. José Ginel Rodríguez, president at UCC. “There are a lot of highly talented people here who need this level of support so that Puerto Rico can continue developing local research groups, commercialize their efforts to create innovative products, and generate more jobs.”

In order to attract and retain high-quality candidates who demonstrate the potential for successful careers as researchers and academicians, UCC will also enhance the candidates’ chances for success and future employment as faculty members by providing a longitudinal professional development program tailored to their needs. The institution will also provide financial support for candidates to participate in offshore professional activities related to their areas of expertise, receive mentoring by experienced researchers, and benefit from other incentives such as institutional support in the preparation and submission of proposals for external funding and the submission of articles for publication.

“Our institution started its postdoctoral program a few years ago with just one test case,” said Dr. Luis Cubano, associate dean for research and graduate studies at UCC. “With the help of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust, we are now able to expand those efforts and provide opportunities for scientists to do their postdoctoral work on the island and generate additional funding that will feed the local economy.”

The OADRGS has already mailed position announcements to institutions with similar research interests where candidates are likely to be found, and has also posted the openings online.

“Economic development based on technology and research cannot happen without the private sector,” said Farb. “The Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust has the unique ability

to foster job creation by investing in science and technology to empower the private sector so it can contribute even more to in Puerto Rico's economic development."

About the Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship Program

The Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program is a new program of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust's Grants and Foundations Support Office aimed at sponsoring cutting-edge applied research with high commercial potential in private and public Puerto Rican universities. To be eligible, universities must commit: 1) to protect, via patents or other mechanisms, and to commercialize the results of their research; 2) to partner with the trust's Technology Transfer Office to commercialize university technologies via licensing and start-up formation; 3) to provide matching funds for the Postdoctoral Research Fellow positions; 4) to consider the Postdoctoral Research Fellows for tenure-track positions subject to performance of the young scientists. Applications (one per Institution, or per campus for university systems) is accepted for review the last Friday of each calendar quarter. Please allow 30-60 days for review. For applications, please contact Dr. Jesús Soriano, senior adviser to the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust, at grants@prsciencetrust.org [4].

About Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC)

The Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC) was originally founded as the Cayey School of Medicine in 1976. Since then, the school has evolved into a health-sciences university with fully accredited academic programs in Medicine, Medical Images Technology, Biomedical Sciences, and Substance Abuse Counseling. During 1990, the university facilities were integrated on the grounds of the Dr. Ramón Arnaud Hospital in Bayamón and currently house the School of Medicine, the Graduate Program in the Biomedical Sciences, the Radiologic Technology Program, and the Substance Abuse Counseling Program, with a solid background in research activities in neurosciences, immunology, virology, substance abuse research, and cellular and molecular biology. UCC is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCET), the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), and is licensed by the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education (PRCHE).

About the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust

Created under the provisions of Law 214 of August 18, 2004, the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust is a private non-profit organization focused on positively impacting Puerto Rico's economic growth by creating jobs through science and innovation. To achieve this goal, The Technology Trust promotes scientific research, the commercialization of research into useful products, and helps locally-owned innovative startup companies get their ideas and research to market by providing seed capital, investor contacts, and expert planning assistance.

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